

Madison Chamber Choir presents

LEONARD BERNSTEIN'S
CHICHESTER
PSALMS



AND OTHER CONTEMPORARY CHORAL WORKS

Anthony Cao, Director

Saturday, March 28, 2009 · 7:30pm
Immanuel Lutheran Church



The Madison Chamber Choir, based in Madison, WI, is a non-profit auditioned ensemble comprised of music educators, music students and skilled amateurs.

MCC's mission is to keep the tradition of performing choral chamber music alive and to inspire a variety of audiences to support and appreciate this collaborative art form. MCC performs music written by a variety of composers, from the art form's inception to more recent compositions, including newly commissioned works. The choir's goal is to attain choral excellence, giving performances of the highest quality.

www.madisonchamberchoir.com

PROGRAM

I.

Da Pacem DomineArvo Pärt (b. 1935)

Alleluia..... Randall Thompson (1899-1984)

Oh My Luve's Like a Red, Red Rose René Clausen (b. 1953)
Bruce Bengtson, piano

II.

Elegy for Matthew.....David Conte (b. 1955)
Bruce Bengtson, piano

III.

Three Songs for Chorus A Cappella Philip Glass (b. 1937)

1. There are some men
2. Quand les hommes vivront d'amour
3. Piere de Soleil

Intermission

IV.

Chichester Psalms.....Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990)

Bruce Bengtson, organ
Margaret Mackenzie, harp
Keith Lienert, percussion
Noah Sauer, soloist
Nicole Krenke, John Bohman, Mark Begin, and Jenn Sauer,
Soloists

V.

Festival Te Deum R. Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)
Bruce Bengtson, organ

THE CHOIR

Soprano

Deb Anken-Dyer
Carmen Fisher
Margaret Hadley
Lynn Keller
Ronna Rawlins
Jennifer Sauer

Tenor

Mark Begin
Michael Brunner
Chad Grote
Peter Narum
Paul Schick
Joseph Shapiro

Alto

Leslie Cao
Meagan Deaner
Jane Ferris
Catherine Jagoe
Nicole Krenke
Heather Stewart
Amanda Uphoff

Bass

John Bohman
Mike Peterson
Jim Skinner
Joel Spiess

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Joel Spiess
Amanda Uphoff

SPECIAL THANKS

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Bethany United Methodist
Church
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Aaron Cao
Peggy Cooper
Dale Wiedemann

Artwork used throughout this program was created by
Peggy Cooper.

THE DIRECTOR

Anthony Cao received his BME in music education from the University of Wisconsin – Madison in 2002, where he was named winner of the annual student concerto competition. He also twice won the National Association for the Teachers of Singing auditions in 2000 and 2001.

Cao has worked as guest clinician/composer with local groups such as Madison Youth Choirs and UW Summer Music Clinic and with many other choirs throughout the Midwest. He has also served as director of music at University United Methodist Church and Lake Edge United Church of Christ, where he helped to found the contemporary “Noisy Worship” as bandleader of “The Lift.” Equally comfortable in many genres of music, he has a wide variety of recent performance credits, including baritone soloist with the Oakwood Chamber Players, “Thuy” in Four Seasons Theatre’s Miss Saigon, assistant music director for Madison Repertory Theatre’s Carousel, and pianist for Academy-Award Winner Jorge Drexler and for rock legend Boz Scaggs.

He and his wife Leslie perform a jazz/pop cabaret show weekly at Maduro and The Ivory Room. He has been the director of choirs at Madison West High School since 2004.



TRANSLATIONS

Da Pacem Domine

Give peace, O lord,
In our time
Because there is no one else
Who will fight for us
If not You, our God.

Three Songs: Quand les hommes vivent d'amour

When men live in brotherly love
There will be no more misery
And the good days will begin
But as for us, we shall be long gone, my brother

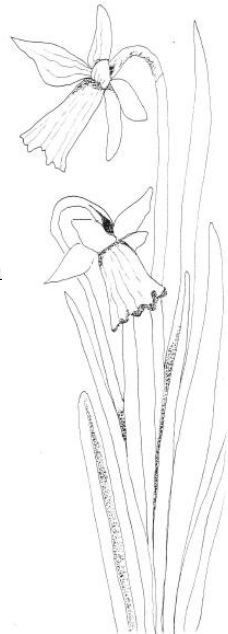
When men live in brotherly love
There will be peace on Earth
Soldiers will be troubadours
But as for us, we shall be long gone, my brother

Through the course of this life
Which we had to experience
In which we had to play a part
We were dealt a bad hand

When men live in brotherly love
There will be no more misery
And the good days will begin
But as for us, we shall be long gone, my brother

But when men live in brotherly love
And there is no more misery
Perhaps they will think one day
Of us who are no longer, my brother

Of us in bad times
In hatred and then in war
Looked for peace, looked for love



Which they will know my brother

Through the course of this life
To have a better time
There always have to be some losers
That's the price you pay for wisdom

When men live in brotherly love
There will be no more misery
And the good days will begin
But as for us, we shall be long gone, my brother

Three Songs: Piere de soleil (Sunstone)

When life was really ours
When are we really what we are
In truth as individuals we do not exist
We never exist except as dizziness and emptiness

Life is never ours
It belongs to others
Life doesn't belong to any one
Individual we are all life

We nurture one another
All the others whom we are
Let me come out of myself
Look for me amongst the others
The others who are not
If I don't exist
The others who give me existence
The others who give me existence

There is no Me It is always Us
Life is others always over there
Further away beyond you beyond me
Always on the horizon
Beyond you beyond me always on the horizon
When life was really ours
When we are really what we are.

TRANSLATIONS

Chichester Psalms

I

Ps. 108, v. 2:

Awake, psaltery and harp:

I will rouse the dawn!

Ps. 100:

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord all ye lands.

Serve the Lord with gladness.

Come before His presence with singing.

Know ye that the Lord, He is God.

It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves.

We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

Enter into His gates with thanksgiving.

And into His courts with praise.

Be thankful unto Him, and bless His name.

For the Lord is good, His mercy is everlasting,

And His truth endureth to all generations.

II

Ps. 23:

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures,

He leadeth me beside the still waters,

He restoreth my soul,

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness,

For His name's sake.

Yea, though I walk

Through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil,

For Thou art with me.

Thy rod and Thy staff

They comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me

In the presence of mine enemies,

Thou anointest my head with oil,

My cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy
Shall follow me all the days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord
Forever.

Ps. 2, vs. 1-4:

Why do the nations rage,
And the people imagine a vain thing?
The kings of the earth set themselves,
And the rulers take counsel together
Against the Lord and against His anointed.
Saying, let us break their bands asunder,
And cast away their cords from us.
He that sitteth in the heavens
Shall laugh, and the Lord
Shall have them in derision!

III

Ps. 131:

Lord, Lord,
My heart is not haughty,
Nor mine eyes lofty,
Neither do I exercise myself
In great matters or in things
Too wonderful for me.
Surely I have calmed
And quieted myself,
As a child that is weaned of his mother,
My soul is even as a weaned child.
Let Israel hope in the Lord
From henceforth and forever.

Ps. 133, vs. 1:

Behold how good,
And how pleasant it is,
For brethren to dwell
Together in unity.

PROGRAM NOTES

Arvo Pärt was born in Paide, Estonian, in 1935, and began studies in composition at the Conservatory of Music in Tallinn, Estonia's capital, in 1954. After experiencing early success as a composer, some of Pärt's music, such as his 1968 Credo, was banned. After long periods of self-imposed contemplative silence, and his studies of medieval choral music, a new phase of composition began in 1976, what Part calls a "tintinnabuli style" (from the Latin, little bells). The music that emerged from this time is called "sacred minimalism." His well-known works include *De Profundis*, *Stabat Mater*, *Te Deum*, *Fratres*, *Berlin Mass*, and *Kanon Pokajanen*. Due to the Soviet occupation of Estonia (1944-91), Pärt emigrated with his wife and two sons in 1980 to Vienna, and has lived in Berlin since 1982.

Da pacem Domine (2004), is as near-perfect an evocation of text as the composer has ever achieved—and typically he does this not through any overt gesture, but through more subtle techniques, including an almost complete subordination of rhythmic influence and the relegation of melody to a more or less implied presence, thus forming both his framework and expressive fabric from the most elemental materials—sonority, voicing, and rudimentary harmonies. The harmonies slowly shift and turn and change color, and there's a true sense of direction—but there is no discernible tempo or metrical pattern; rather, the music's effect is made over longer, larger stretches of space and time, the sensation of movement like the deep, easy rise-and-fall breathing of some great yet placid being. (Or perhaps the feeling of motion and the music's concurrent changes in hue and texture could be compared to looking across a plain from a moving car to distant mountains, their shapes gradually changing, and the shifting light and perspective creating continually varied shadows and shades of color.) Importantly, the periodic open-ended, unresolved soprano interjections throughout the piece are an ingeniously effective illustration of the prayer's air of both uncertainty and profound hope. – David Vernier, *ClassicsToday.com*, used by permission.

Submitted by Peter Narum

American composer Randall Thompson (1899-1984) wrote *Alleluia*, his most popular work today, during the first five days of 1940. The piece was commissioned by director of the Tanglewood Festival Serge Koussevitzky, who wanted a "fanfare" for voices to celebrate the opening of the new Berkshire Music Center. Thompson, profoundly affected by World War II raging in Europe and the recent fall of France, responded with a subdued, introspective piece, rather than the exuberant work Koussevitzky undoubtedly expected. Thompson wrote of *Alleluia*, "...my *Alleluia* cannot be made to sound joyous. It is a slow, sad piece, and...it is comparable to the Book of Job, where it is written, 'The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.'"

On a personal note, I can't sing this piece without remembering the first time I had the privilege of performing it, in the early '90s at my college chorus's spring concert. Looking out into the audience I was moved to see a rather formidable professor of religious studies sitting with his eyes closed, head back, tears streaming down his face. To me, Alleluia typifies the almost mystical ability of some music to overwhelm the intellect and speak to deeper parts of our selves

Submitted by Jenn Sauer

In 1998, as a junior in high school, I had the honor of being chosen as a member of the Wisconsin State Honors Choir. Our director that year was the one and only Rene Clausen from Concordia University in Moorhead, MN. We performed a wonderful array of music under his direction but one of my favorites was the piece he wrote for his wife, a setting of Robert Burns' poem *O My Luve's Like a Red, Red Rose*. We were one of the first groups to perform the piece, right behind his St. Olaf Choir.

The song was a surprise for his wife, Frankie (yes, *his* name is Rene and *his wife's* name is Frankie!). It was their anniversary and he wanted to do something special for her. He wrote the song and had his choir record it, then presented it to her with a single red rose as she listened to the song (at this point in his story all of us girls in the choir were just dying with "awwwwwwws" galore!). A romantic at heart, this song was truly music to my ears and left a deep impression on me.

This song has since risen to huge popularity. My high school choir sang it later that year and I was thrilled to be able to request it again and have it chosen for this concert. To this day, I look back at the honors experience as one of the highlights and pillars of my choral experience. Now as a choir director myself, I often refer back to that choir and that director and the landmark experience that it was. Thank you, Rene Clausen! I hope you all enjoy his song.

Submitted by Carmen Fisher

Elegy for Matthew was composed in the wake of the shock and revulsion felt by our entire nation in response to the brutal events that took place shortly after midnight on October 7, 1998.

The Matthew Shepard Foundation published this brief chronicle:

The life and death of Matthew Shepard changed the way we talk about and deal with hate in the United States. For the past eight years, the legacy of this remarkable young man's life has challenged and inspired millions of individuals to erase hate in all forms. Although his life was short, it continues to have a great impact on both young and old alike.

The story of Matthew Shepard begins on December 1, 1976 when he was born prematurely to Judy and Dennis Shepard in the small city of Casper, Wyoming. Matthew attended school in Casper until his junior year of high school when he finished his primary education at The American School in Switzerland. His experience abroad fueled his love for travel. He took the opportunity to explore Europe and learn multiple languages including German and Italian. Matthew always put his family and friends first and had a special gift of relating to almost everyone. He was the type of person that was very approachable and always looked to new challenges. Matthew had a great passion for equality and always stood up for the acceptance of people's differences.

Throughout his life he expressed his love for acting by becoming very active in community theater both on and off stage. Matthew's college career took him to a number of different universities and later ended up studying political science, foreign relations and languages at the University of Wyoming in Laramie. He was extremely interested in politics and was chosen as the student representative for the Wyoming Environmental Council. The horrific events that took place shortly after midnight on October 7, 1998 went against everything that Matthew embodied. Two men, Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson, lead him to a remote area east of Laramie where they demonstrated unimaginable acts of hate. Matthew was tied to a split-rail fence where he was beaten and left to die in the cold of the night. Almost 18 hours later he was found by a cyclist who initially mistook him for a scarecrow.

Matthew died on October 12 at 12:53 am at a hospital in Fort Collins, Colorado. His entire family was by his side for the last few days of his life. His funeral was attended by friends and family from around the world and gained the appropriate media attention that brought Matthew's story to the forefront of the fight against hate. This tragedy helped the nation wake up to the fact that hate and discrimination still lives in our communities, our schools and our families. Although his life was cut short, the impact of his spirit is great.

In 1998, I was a performing member of the New York City Gay Men's Chorus. We were all terribly distressed, saddened and angered by the homophobic murder of young Matthew Shepard. Vigils for Matthew were being held across the country, and the 100+ members of our chorus participated in such a vigil, marching down the streets of Manhattan. But for many of us, this was an incomplete expression of our grief, and an inadequate tribute to this lost life. Our discussion led to a decision to commission a musical tribute in Matthew's memory; and the generosity of one of our members enabled us to ask a composer we had known and much admired, David Conte, to write this piece for us. David brought in a poet

with whom he had previously collaborated, John Stirling Walker, who wrote a striking and moving text for the piece. The result was the composition you will hear this evening, "Elegy for Matthew." Originally arranged for men's chorus, this beautiful piece was later rearranged by the composer for performance by a mixed SATB chorus. On this 10th anniversary of the death of Matthew Shepard, we are honored to bring this piece to Madison.

Submitted by Joe Shapiro

A student of Nadia Boulanger, American composer Philip Glass was influenced by the Indian music of Ravi Shankar. Glass's minimalist style came out of his observation that Indian classical music is built up of "cells." In Western music, the melodic line is divided into measures; in Indian classical music the melodic line is built by combining musical "cells." It was Glass's implementation of this "cell"-building that created his characteristically mechanistic sound, or minimalist sound, and the music heard in his monumental opera, *Einstein on the Beach* (1976).

Philip Glass's *Three Songs for Chorus A Cappella* was commissioned for the Quebec 1534-1984 Festival. Although created from the same simple harmonic and melodic material, each song embodies a different atmosphere and seems complete in and of itself. However, Glass's philosophy of "cell"-building applies to the entire work; the work is greater than the sum of each of the three songs.

The first of the *Three Songs* is stunningly powerful and melodious. The text of this movement is taken from the poetry of Leonard Cohen. The second and third songs typify the minimalist style of Philip Glass and use the poetry of Raymond Lévesque and Octavio Paz, respectively.

Personally, I am a huge fan of contemporary music that is so lucky to have married a man who shares this same passion to an even greater extent. It was my husband who introduced me to the piece *Three Songs for Chorus A Cappella* by Philip Glass.

Submitted by Heather Stewart

I was the "boy soprano" soloist in the *Chichester Psalms* back 30 years ago in my undergrad days at the UW Stevens Point. That beautiful Bernstein Psalm 23 has always been in my soul. I've always wanted to sing the choral parts some day after that moving experience in my youth!

Submitted by Jane Ferris

It has been a great pleasure for me to work on repertoire chosen by choir members. Many of the pieces were new to me. Some of them I may have even overlooked had it not been for others' suggestions.

The Festival Te Deum is the only piece in which I had some part in the selection. Vaughan-Williams name was thrown around in numerous emails among choir members, along with 10 or more other titles. I thought of this piece, however, with its boisterous organ and choral fanfares as a perfect piece to compliment the Chichester Psalms and to end our program for you here tonight.

Submitted by Anthony Cao

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