4-26-2013

Chapman University Choir & University Singers in Concert

Chapman University Choir
Chapman University Singers

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Chapman University Choir & University Singers in Concert
April 26, 2013
Stephen Coker, Conductor
SPRING 2013 calendar highlights

February
February 1
University Singers Post-Tour Concert
Stephen Coker, Conductor

February 7
President's Piano Series
Grace Fong & Louise Thomas, duo piano concert

February 14-16, 21-23
Twelfth Night by William Shakespeare
Directed by Thomas Bradac

March
March 7
President's Piano Series
Sergei Babayan

March 8
Chapman Chamber Orchestra & University Singers
Daniel Alfred Wachs, Music Director and Conductor
Stephen Coker, Conductor

March 14-16
Concert Intime
Directed by Alicia Guy

April
April 4
President's Piano Series
John Perry

April 4-6, 11-13
Stage Door
by George S. Kaufman & Edna Ferber
Directed by Nina LeNoir

April 19-21
Opera Chapman presents
The Merry Widow by Franz Lehar
Peter Atherton, Artists Director
Carol Neblett, Associate Director

April 24-27
Student Produced One Acts

May
May 8-11
Spring Dance Concert
Directed by Jennifer Backhaus

May 11
Sholund Scholarship Concert
Daniel Alfred Wachs, Conductor

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CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY
Hall-Musco Conservatory of Music
presents the

University Choir
and University Singers
in Concert

Stephen Coker, conductor
Hye-Young Kim, accompanist

April 26, 2013 • 7:30 P.M.
Wallace All Faiths Chapel, Fish Interfaith Center
Program

I. Mosella
   
To Be Sung on the Water, Op. 42, No. 2
   
William Hawley (b. 1950)

II. An die Heimat, Op. 64, No. 1
   
Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

III. Rouxinol do pico preto
   
Steven Stucky (b. 1949)

IV. Little Birds
   
Eric Whitacre (b. 1970)

V. Two Christmas Motets
   
Psallite

Michael Praetorius (1571-1621)

VI. Es ist ein' Ros' entsprungen
   
Jan Sandström (b. 1954)

VII. Two Madrigals
   
Io son la primavera

Vita de la mia vita

William Hawley

VIII. Hush! Somebody's Callin' My Name
   
Brazeal Dennard

Rosas Pandan

Shenandoah

Brett Gray, tenor

Natalie Uranga, soprano

Hye-Young Kim and Elliott Wulff, pianists

The Combined Choirs

The Chapman University Singers

Brief Intermission
Johannes Brahms’ beautifully arched melodies that end musical and poetic sections of the work seem multiple voices per part. However, it is not at all uncommon for choirs to perform the vocal part of this quartet is a nostalgic and impassioned tribute to the poet’s homeland. Indeed, chamber music, originally composed for piano and a solo quartet of voices (as opposed to the full chamber music version), is “an homage to Gabriel Faure, with its running piano part and fluid sensual musical pattern throughout the work, simulating “the sound of the oar...of its blade dipping the stream once more.” Although sometimes reversed, the ostinato is most often located in the men’s voice parts, serving as an undulating accompaniment to the women’s finely wrought melodies that deliver the text of the American poet, Louise Bogan.

The Pulitzer Prize winning American musician Steven Stucky has taught composition at Cornell University since 1980 and has also been associated with the Los Angeles Philharmonic for over twenty years. In 1996 he completed the three-movement choral suite Cradle Songs commissioned by the American choirs: Chanticleer, the Dale Warland Singers, and the Los Angeles based La Vie. “Rouxinol do pico preto” (Nightingale with the black beak) springs from a Brazilian lullaby text and features hypnotic repetitions of the word “rouxinol,” akin to the cooing of the bird that interferes with the sleep of a baby.

Eric Whitacre’s Little Birds is set to a Spanish poem of Octavio Paz and, according to the composer, is “an homage to Gabriel Faure, with its running piano part and fluid sensual melodies....” The original form of this work was set for treble chorus and was commissioned by Kimberly Rinzer, choir director at Green Valley High School of Henderson, Nevada and a very special friend of the Chapman University Choral Department.

Johannes Brahms’ An die Heimat is not choral music per se; its genre is actually that of chamber music, originally composed for piano and a solo quartet of voices (as opposed to multiple voices per part). However, it is not at all uncommon for choirs to perform the vastly rich and irresistible repertory of nineteenth century vocal chamber music. The text of this quartet is a nostalgic and impassioned tribute to the poet’s homeland. Indeed, Brahms’ beautifully arched melodies that end musical and poetic sections of the work seem to embrace the sense of the author’s deep longing for his friendly (freundliche), sheltering (schützende), and loving homeland (liebende Heimat).

The collaboration of Robert Shaw and Alice Parker produced numerous choral arrangements of American hymns and African American spirituals. From the latter group, their My God Is a Rock for soloist and choir features a text whose verses progress through the sung “Chapter Numbers” one through ten, pairing each number with a rhyme that refers to a Biblical event (i.e., the aspect of “creation” is addressed by “...Chapter One when the Lord God’s work was just begun.”). Paul Rardin, Director of Choral Activities at Temple University, is an accomplished choral composer and arranger. His repetitions of the catchy tune of I’m a-Rollin’ are layered with variants, underpinned by a sparse but stylish piano accompaniment.

Psallite and Es ist ein’ Ros’ entsprungen are perhaps the most often performed works written by (or attributed to) Renaissance composer Michael Praetorius. The former work—a joyous miniature, light and “naïve”—will be rendered this evening in its original form. However, the latter work will be found embedded in a striking composition by Swedish musician Jan Sandström. A native of Stockholm, Sandström’s 1990 motet places the Praetorius hymn (almost note for note) within a suspended “cloud” of sound produced by a humming chorus of eight to ten parts.

Hawley’s Six Madrigals, composed in 1986 for the American professional male vocal ensemble Chanticleer, were inspired by his chosen texts of the Renaissance poet Tasso and the sixteenth century madrigal style of such musicians as Monteverdi and Marenzio. “Io son la primavera” and “Vita de la mia vita” are good examples of the composer’s desire to let the prosody of the text guide the flow of the music. For ten-part choir (SSSAAATTBB), “Io son...” features long cascading lines followed by intimate moments of syllabically delivered text. “Vita...” is more polyphonically conceived; numerous brief imitative sections rise in pitch and culminate in resplendent cadences. Its final few measures slowly sink in pitch and volume, capturing the essence of the text “softly you consume and melt me.”

George Hernandez is the founder of the Saringhimig Singers in the San Francisco Bay Area. He studied choral conducting, composition, and piano at the University of the Philippines and received a degree in vocal performance from the San Francisco Conservatory. Rosas Pandan is a rousing Filipino (or Visayan) folk song of joy and love. African-American singer and choral musician Brazeal Dennard (1929-2010) was instrumental in the preservation of the African American spiritual. Eschewing “over-arranged” concert spirituals, his setting of Hush! Somebody’s Callin’ My Name is notably simple and restrained, yet distinct and engaging. Mack Wilberg is conductor of the
Program Notes

Mormon Tabernacle Choir and a prolific composer and choral arranger. His settings of Shenandoah and Saints Bead for Heaven, both for choir and piano four-hands, could hardly be more different in character. Shenandoah is a lush arrangement that patiently waits for its destined climax, while Saints... is an unabashed romp from start to finish.

Texts and Translations

Mosella — sung in Latin
What color that shal, with the late shadows banished by Hesperus, and verdures filling the hills of the Moselle! Everything floats, rippling together in motion; the distant vine-leaf trembles, and the grape swells in the glittering water.

To Be Sung on the Water
Beautiful, my delight,
Pass, as we pass the wave,
Pass, as the mottled night
Leaves what it cannot save,
Scattering dark and bright.
Beautiful, pass and be
Less than the guiltless shade
To which our vows were said;
Less than the sound of an ear
To which our vows were made;
Less than the sound of its blade
Dipping the stream once more.

An die Heimat (To My Homeland) — sung in German
Homeland! Wonderful-sounding word! How on feathery wings you draw my heart toward you, rejoicing, as if I must bring you the greeting of each soul. I turn my steps to you, friendly homeland!

Homeland! The soft-sounding music of old songs awakens in me songs I had forgotten in far away lands. Beckoning sounds of my homeland call me, full of joy; to altering sounds of home. Only you are peace, sheltering homeland!

Homeland! Give me back the peace that I have lost in far away places; give me your thriving happiness! Beneath the trees by the brook, where I was born long ago, give me a sheltering roof, loving homeland!

Rouxinol do pico preto (Nightingale with the black beak) — sung in Portuguese
Nightingale with the black beak, leave the fruit of the laurel tree, Let the baby sleep. He is in his first good sleep. Sleep my baby, your mother will come soon.

Psallite — sung in Latin and German
Sing to Christ, the only begotten Son of God. Sing to our redeemer, our Lord, the child lies in the manger. A little child is in the small crib; all the lovely angels serve the baby and sing to him sweetly.

Es ist ein’ Ros’ entsprungen — sung in German
A rose has come forth from a tender root, as the prophets of old sang to us. From Isaiah came the lineage, and it has brought us a flower in the cold mid-winter at midnight.

Io son la primavera — sung in Italian
I am Spring, Who gladly, lovely women, returns to you With my beautiful, embellished mantle To dress the countryside in greenery and flowers And to arouse in your hearts new loves. For me Zephir sighs; For me

Vita de la mia vita — sung in Italian
Light of my life, you are to me a pained olive or a fading rose; nor are you deprived of beauty, but in every way you please me, whether you flatten or shine; and whether you follow me or flee, softly you consume and melt me.

Rosas Pandan — sung in Filipino
Here I am, Rosas Pandan, coming from the mountains to be with all of you to celebrate this festivity. This song is my only talent, the only legacy from my forefathers, a song that is ancient, the pride of our mountains. A-yay-yay! Here it is as I dance beautifully to it. It’s as cool as the morning dew. Di-ka-dong, hopping like crazy! Oh the poor young man, as he watches his lady, he’s drooling with excitement.

Little Birds — sung in Spanish
The light does not blink
Time, empty of minutes,
Has stopped a bird in the air.
The light rains down
The columns awaken and
Without moving, they dance.
The hour is clear;
We see, if the bird is invisible,
The color of its song.

- Octavio Paz
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