

About the Ensemble

The nonprofit Isthmus Vocal Ensemble comprises a temporary community of dedicated choral singers, drawn together for two weeks of intensive rehearsals and a single public performance. Now in its sixth year, the ensemble's performances have

been featured on Wisconsin Public Radio, WORT, and on our acclaimed commercial recording, *Andrew Rindfleisch Choral Works*, released on Clarion Records. Listen and learn more about us on-line at: www.isthmusvocalensemble.org

Soprano

Sarah Brailey
Sarah Brooks
• Mary Duff
Beate Gersch
Deanna Gibeau
Lynn Keller
Sonja Kremer
Katrina Lemens
Julie Ottum
Cat Pippitt
Nicole Relyea
Jennifer Sauer

Tenor

Steve Brick
Michael Gallagher
Grant Harville
Steve Johnson
Don Liddicoat
Mike Mangan
David Murphy
Larry Nash
Brian Schmidt
Douglas Swiggum
Andrew Taylor •
Joseph Testa

Alto

Kristine Beck
Susannah Brooks
Monica Degeneffe
Ena Foshay
• Leslie Frank
Carrie Kruse
Mihcal McClelland
Sharon Morrow
Kathleen Otterson
• Vickie Peters
Connie Von Der Heide
Mary Woodworth Schmidt

Bass

John Bohman
Nelson Flynn
Elliot Friedman
Peter Gibeau
Steve Larkin
Rob Littell
Dennis Reece
Bernie Schlafke
Jim Pippitt
Phil Rosten
Don Stanislawski
Mark Werner

Jane Peckham, Rehearsal Accompanist

• = board members

isthmus

vocal ensemble

Scott MacPherson, conductor



*Friday, August 3, 2007, 7:30 pm
Luther Memorial Church
Madison, Wisconsin*

Concert Program

- I. Jesu, meine Freude, BWV 227
(sung in German)
Kathrine Handford, organ; Anton Tenwolde, cello
1. Chorale: Jesu, meine Freude...
 2. Es ist nun nichts Verdammliches...
 3. Chorale: Unter deinen Schirmen...
 4. Denn das Gesetz des Geistes...
 5. Chorale: Trotz dem alten Drachen...
 6. Ihr aber seid nicht fleischlich...
 7. Chorale: Weg mit allen Schätzen...
 8. Andante: So aber Christus in euch ist...
 9. Chorale: Gute Nacht, o Wesen...
 10. So nun der Geist...
 11. Chorale: Weicht, ihr Trauergeister...

Intermission

- II. Не рыдай Мене, Мати, Op. 58, No. 11
(sung in Church Slavonic)
Серенада
(sung in Russian)
Anton Tenwolde, cello
- Веники
(sung in Russian)
arr. F. Rubtsov
- III. Lux aeterna
(sung in Latin)
Brian Schmidt, tenor; John Bohman, baritone
- Daemon irrepit callidus (sung in Latin)
Water Night
György Orbán (b.1947)
Eric Whitacre (b. 1970)
- IV. How Can I Keep From Singing
Sharon Morrow, mezzo soprano
arr. Ronald Staheli
- Hark I Hear the Harps Eternal
Jennifer Sauer, soprano
arr. Alice Parker

About the Conductor

Scott MacPherson is the founding Artistic Director of the Isthmus Vocal Ensemble, and has consistently earned praise for the high standard of performance of this and other choirs under his direction. His programming blends a variety of musical styles ranging from early music through new works commissioned especially for him and his ensembles.

MacPherson is in demand as a guest conductor, choral clinician, and adjudicator, and has extensive orchestral conducting experience. His research of contemporary choral music and choral teaching techniques in Germany have led to guest appearances with the award-winning Modus Novus Chor in Cologne, the Vokalensemble Kölner Dom of the Cologne Cathedral, and Arcanum musicae of Dresden.

His international reputation has also drawn acclaim in Taiwan, where he conducted collegiate choirs and led workshops in conducting, choral eurhythmics, diction and warm-ups at conferences in Pingtung City and Taipei.

MacPherson currently serves as Professor of Music and Director of Choral Activities at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. Before moving to San Antonio, he served on the choral faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Music where he was a colleague of the late Robert Fountain. MacPherson is also the founding Artistic Director of the San Antonio Chamber Choir.

Acknowledgments

Our sincere thanks to Luther Memorial Church and Director of Music Bruce Bengtson for providing this glorious space for our performance and our rehearsals, and allowing use of the lovely portative organ; to Kathrine Handford for accompanying us at the organ; to Anton Tenwolde for his cello solo and continuo; to Jane Peckham for her assistance as rehearsal accompanist; to our recording engineer Bill Lund for his essential part in making us sound good; to Peter Gibeau and Joseph Testa for leading sectional rehearsals; to Mary Schmidt for her assistance in the audition process and sectionals; to Dr. Bruce Holl, Associate Professor of Modern Languages and Literatures at Trinity University, for coaching Russian diction; to Douglas Swiggum for being our steward and guide in Luther Memorial; to Jim Pippitt for being our official photographer; to Ena Foshay and WORT for their extensive and thoughtful coverage of our work; to the classical music team at Wisconsin Public Radio for broadcasting so much of what we do; to Samuel Taylor, Abigail Taylor & Diana MacPherson for selling our CDs (go buy one...now).

And, of course, our thanks to you for sharing this concert with us. We hope you are happy you came. And we hope you decide to join us for years to come.

Odds & Ends

Our CD!

The Isthmus Vocal Ensemble's debut commercial CD, *Andrew Rindfleisch Choral Works*, is available from Clarion Records (www.clarionrecords.com). The result of a multi-year collaboration with noted contemporary composer Andrew Rindfleisch, the CD received high praise in *Fanfare*: "This...first all-Rindfleisch disc in the catalog introduces a composer with a refreshingly wide range of both style and subject....The performances by the Madison-based Isthmus Vocal Ensemble are exemplary...warmly recommended..."

CDs are available for sale in the narthex before and after tonight's performance.

Summer Music Consortium

Isthmus Vocal Ensemble is part of the Summer Music Consortium, a collective of organizations presenting great music in Madison in June through September. We encourage you to explore their events this summer or next:

- Madison Early Music Festival
www.memf.dcs.wisc.edu
- Madison Savoyards Ltd.
madisonsavoyards.org
- Bach Dancing & Dynamite Society
bachdancinganddynamite.org
- Token Creek Chamber Music Festival
tokencreekfestival.org

Consider a gift to IVE

Our ensemble is dedicated to the power and passing beauty of the musical moment. We're small. We're focused. And our success depends on the collective contributions of time, talent, and treasure that make a concert like this come to life.

If you enjoy the performance this evening, and appreciate the unique voice and vision our organization brings to Madison, please consider a gift in addition to the cost of your ticket. Any amount is significant, and will allow us to continue this new choral tradition with even more energy and intensity in summers to come. Make checks payable to "Isthmus Vocal Ensemble, Inc."

Isthmus Vocal Ensemble, Inc., is a non-profit organization. All donations are tax deductible.

Interested in auditioning for 2008?

IVE auditions new members for the choir each year, generally in the spring. Please send us an e-mail or visit our web site with your interest:

e-mail: info@isthmusvocalensemble.org
web: www.isthmusvocalensemble.org

Welcome!

Many thanks for joining us at our 6th annual concert! This evening's program features a variety of composers representing an even wider variety of musical styles spanning the 18th through 21st centuries.

J.S. Bach wrote at least six motets, which, according to most scholars, were most likely written for funerals. "Jesu, meine Freude," BWV 227, perhaps the earliest of the six, was written in 1723 while Bach served at the Thomaskirche and choir school in Leipzig. It is the longest, most epic in proportion, of the six motets. Its eleven movements follow a deliberate architectural scheme, alternating settings of Johann Franck's chorale text and freely composed movements employing different groups of voices. After a dramatic climax in the penultimate movement precisely echoing the second section, the motet closes with the final chorale verse mirroring the opening words "Jesu, meine Freude."

The second half of the concert consists of three groups of pieces in contrasting styles and tempi. Representing the rich tradition of Russian choral music is a selection from Gretchaninoff's "The Seven Days of Passion," aptly illustrating the Russian composer's love of deep voices and thick harmonic textures; a truly beautiful lullaby setting by Arensky for cello soloist and choir; and Rubtsov's Russian tongue-twister folk song!

These are followed by a set of three compositions written in past decade or so.

Timothy Kramer wrote "Lux aeterna" specifically with the acoustic of the Cologne Cathedral in mind. Its long lines and soft, glowing textures beautifully express the image of eternal light. In stark contrast, both musically and textually, is Orbán's "Daemon irrepit callidus," a decidedly wicked short setting of a Goliardic text. The set closes with Eric Whitacre's soothing "Water Night," an English-language setting of Octavio Paz' image-filled poem.

Closing the concert are contrasting arrangements of American folk hymns that are sure to warm your heart and set your foot a tapping!

It is the purpose and pleasure of the Isthmus Vocal Ensemble to bring great choral works, passionate singers, and enthusiastic audiences together for the moment we're sharing tonight. We hope you enjoy the experience, and we look forward to seeing you next year.

Texts & Translations

Jesu, meine Freude (Jesus, my Joy)

(Chorale text: Johann Franck, 1653)

1. Chorale (Verse 1)
Jesus, my joy, my heart's repose,
Jesus, my treasure, oh how ceaselessly
my fainting heart longs for thee.
Lamb of God, my bridegroom,
no one on earth is dearer to me.
2. There is therefore now no condemnation
to them who are in Christ Jesus,
who wander not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.
Romans 8: V. 1
3. Chorale (Verse 2)
Under your shelter, I am free from the storms of all enemies.
Let Satan threaten, let the fiend rage, Jesus stands by me.
Even though lightning cracks and flashes,
even though sin and hell terrify me;
Jesus will protect me.
4. For the law of the Spirit which gives life in Christ Jesus
has set me free from the law of sin and death.
Romans 8: V. 2
5. Chorale (Verse 3)
Defy the old dragon, defy the jaws of death, defy fear as well!
Rage, oh world, and quake, here I stand, singing in perfect peace!
The might of God protects me;
Earth and abyss shall be silent, however much they roar.
6. You, however, are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit,
if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in you.
Indeed, anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ
does not belong to him.
Romans 8: V. 9

Hark I Hear the Harps Eternal

(American folk hymn)

Hark, I hear the harps eternal, ringing on the father shore,
As I near those swollen waters, with their deep and solemn roar.
Hallelujah, praise the Lamb, Hallelujah, glory to the great I AM.
And my soul though stained with sorrow, fading as the light of day,
Passes swiftly o'er those waters to the city far away.
Hallelujah, praise the Lamb, Hallelujah, glory to the great I AM.
Souls have crossed before me, saintly, to that land of perfect rest;
And I hear them singing faintly in the mansions of the blest.
Hallelujah, praise the Lamb, Hallelujah, glory to the great I AM!

Don't miss our performance next year:

Friday, August 1, 2008

7:30 pm

Madison, Wisconsin

Details to come at:

www.isthmusvocalensemble.org

Water Night

(Poem by Octavio Paz; English translation by Muriel Rukeyser)

Night with the eyes of a horse that trembles in the night,
night with eyes of water in the field asleep is in your eyes,
a horse that trembles is in your eyes of secret water.
Eyes of shadow-water, eyes of well-water, eyes of dream-water.
Silence and solitude, two little animals moon-led
drink in your eyes, drink in those waters.
If you open your eyes night opens doors of musk,
the secret kingdom of the water opens flowing from the center of the night.
And if you close your eyes, a river, a silent and beautiful current,
fills you from within, flows forward, forward, darkens you.
Night brings its wetness to beaches in your soul.

How Can I Keep from Singing

(American folk hymn)

My life flows on in endless song; above earth's lamentation,
I hear the real though far off hymn that hails a new creation.
Through all the tumult and the strife, I hear that music ringing;
It sounds an echo through my soul: How can I keep from singing.

When tyrants tremble sick with fear and hear their death-knells ringing,
When friends rejoice both far and near, how can I keep from singing.
In prison cell or dungeon vile our thoughts to them are winging.
When friends by shame are undefiled, how can I keep from singing.

What if my joys and comforts die? I know the Truth is living.
What tho' the darkness 'round me close? Still Truth its light is giving!
No storm can shake my inmost calm while to that Rock I'm clinging;
Since Love is Lord of heav'n and earth: How can I keep from singing.

I lift my eyes, the cloud grows thin, I see the blue above it.
And day by day this pathway smooths, since first I learned to love it.
The peace from love makes fresh my heart, a song of hope is springing.
All things are mine since Truth I've found: How can I keep from singing.

7. Chorale (Verse 4)
Away with all earthly treasure!
You art my delight, Jesus, my pleasure!
Away, vain glories, I will not listen to you,
I remain unaware of you!
Suffering, distress, the cross, disgrace and death;
however much I suffer,
they shall not part me from Jesus.
8. Andante
But if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of the will of sin;
but the Spirit is life because of the will of righteousness.
Romans 8: V. 10
9. Chorale (Verse 5)
Good night, oh being,
which has chosen the world,
you do not please me!
Good night, you sins,
stay far behind me,
do not come into the light!
Good night, pride and vain splendor!
And to you, life of iniquity,
a special good night!
10. But if the Spirit of him that raised up
Jesus from the dead dwells in you,
he that raised up Christ from the dead
shall also give life to your mortal bodies
by his Spirit that lives in you.
Romans 8: V. 11
11. Chorale (Verse 6)
Give way, you spirits of sadness,
for Jesus, my master of joy, is entering in.
Those who love God
must accept even their sadness as pure delight.
Though I endure mockery and derision here,
yet even in my suffering shall
You, Jesus, remain my joy.

Не рыдай Мене, Мати (Do Not Lament Me, Oh Mother)

(9th Ode of the Kanon for Great and Holy Saturday)

Do not lament me, oh Mother, seeing me in the tomb,
the Son conceived in the womb without seed;
for I shall arise, and be glorified;
and, as God, I shall unceasingly exalt all
who extol thee in faith and in love.

Серенада (Serenade)

(Poem by Afanasy Fet)

Softly glows the evening,
gilding the mountains in gold.
The sultry air becomes chilly.
Sleep my child!

The nightingales have already sung their song,
announcing the falling of night,
the strings have timidly sounded.
Sleep, my child!

The angels' eyes look over you,
glowing with fervor,
how gentle is the breath of night!
Sleep, my child!

Веники (Brooms)

(Russian folk song)

Brooms, brooms, yes brooms
sweepers, yes, on the hearth laid about,
yes, from the hearth were torn off.
Godfather Gabriel, godfather Gabriel,
I to Gabriel was saying.

Lux aeterna (Light Eternal)

(from the Roman Catholic Mass for the Dead)

May eternal light shine on them, O Lord,
with Thy saints forever, because Thou art merciful.
Grant them eternal rest, O Lord,
and may perpetual light shine on them.

Daemon irrepit callidus (The Demon Sneaks Expertly)

[text from an eight-verse hymn found in "Anonymi Hungari affectus in Jesum super omnia amabilem" (Anonymous Hungarian expressions to the above loveliest Jesus)]

The Demon sneaks expertly
Tempting the honorable heart;
He sets forth trickery amidst praise, song and dance
However amiably the Demon acts,
It is still worth less than the heart of Jesus.

The Flesh is tempted by sensuality;
Gluttony clings to our senses;
It overgrows, it encourages, it stretches.
However appealing the Flesh is,
It is still worth less than the heart of Jesus.

Though the Universe may confer
Thousands upon thousands of praises,
They neither fulfill nor put out the desire of the heart.
However appealing the Universe is,
It is still worth less than the heart of Jesus.