

isthmus

vocal ensemble

Scott MacPherson, conductor
Kathrine Handford, organ
Jane Peckham, piano

10
*anniversary
concerts*

*Friday, August 5, 2011, 7:30 pm
Luther Memorial Church
Madison, Wisconsin*

*Sunday, August 7, 2011, 3:00 pm
St. Stephen's Lutheran Church
Monona, Wisconsin*

Concert Program

Hosanna to the Son of David	Orlando Gibbons (1583-1625)
Crucifixus, a 8	Antonio Lotti (c. 1667-1740)
Motet: Komm, Jesu, komm, BWV 229 Continuo: Kathrine Handford, organ; Eric Miller, cello	Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
Wie der Hirsch schreit	Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy (1809-1847)
Fugue in c minor, Op. 37	Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy
Like as the hart desireth the waterbrooks Jennifer Sauer, soprano	Herbert Howells (1892-1983)
Jubilate Deo (in C)	Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

Intermission

Salmo de Alabanza	Andrew Rindfleisch (b. 1963)
Wie liegt die Stadt so wüst	Rudolf Mauersberger (1889-1971)
Sure on this shining night Mary Woodworth Schmidt, conductor	Morten Lauridsen (b. 1943)
Idumea (Sacred Harp) Robyn Chase, Ben Acton; violin Mark Begin, Will Raymer, Ben Acton, Joe Testa; tenors	Ananias Davisson, arr. Richard Bjella
Saints Bound for Heaven	arr. Alice Parker/Robert Shaw

Please be sure to turn off all electronic devices. Thank you!

Welcome to our 10th Anniversary Concerts!

Ten years ago the Isthmus Vocal Ensemble gave its first concert. That concert was an amazing success, particularly considering the fact that we had no idea how many singers would show up! As Artistic Director, I couldn't be happier with how this wonderful group has evolved over the years. The group has nearly doubled in size and has become one of Madison's premiere concert choirs. In addition to the annual concerts on the first Friday of August, IVE released its first commercial CD, *Andrew Rindfleisch Choral Works*, in 2006 and is proud to announce the release of its second CD, *An Isthmus Christmas*, recorded live during our concerts last summer. We also recently found out that IVE was selected to perform a concert at the North Central American Choral Directors Association Conference in February 2012—we are deeply honored to have been invited to this prestigious event.

These accomplishments would not have been possible without the efforts of our board and singers who give so freely of their time and talent to this organization. I want to thank them all for their dedication to choral music by sacrificing a portion of their summers to spend time with me making music.

For this milestone occasion, I have selected a mix of "old" and "new" repertoire—music IVE has performed in the past as well as selections new to us. The program opens with Gibbons' vivacious *Hosanna to the Son of David*, written for six-part choir. The nearly constant web of imitation among all voices allows little rest—a true fanfare for our 10th anniversary! Lotti's slow moving, harmonically tantalizing *Crucifixus* for eight voices follows. It opens with each voice, from low to high, entering on the same mournful melody, interacting with the next voice and creating a flow of constant tension and repose.

Although IVE has performed other motets of J.S. Bach, *Komm, Jesu, komm* BWV 229 is new to our repertoire. The occasion for which this piece was written is not known, but scholars agree it was likely commissioned for a burial service for a prominent figure in Leipzig. Written for double choir, this motet utilizes the Venetian antiphonal style of composition, one choir echoing the other. Bach's sensitivity to text is exceptional—the descending sighs on "my body is tired" and the difficult melodic leaps and harmonies depicting "the difficult bitter path" are but a few examples. When the choir sings "you are the right path, the truth and the life," the music takes on a more uplifting and lilting style. The motet ends with an extraordinary choral Aria; more complex in its melody and part writing than the usual chorale that concludes many of the cantatas. In it the text describes the comfort death brings because "Jesus is and remains the true path to life."

Two contrasting settings of the opening lines of Psalm 42 comprise the next section of the concert. Featuring our long-time accompanist Jane Peckham and drawing from our debut concert in 2002 is Mendelssohn's beautiful opening movement of the cantata *Wie der Hirsch schreit*. Mendelssohn considered this work his "finest piece of sacred music." We are joined by organist Kathrine Handford for English composer Herbert Howells' lush interpretation of the same text. *Like as the hart...* highlights the men's and women's voices separately, bringing them together for peak moments of the piece.

Opening the second half of our concert is Andrew Rindfleisch's dazzling *Salmo de Alabanza*. IVE has had a longstanding relationship with the award-winning composer, having performed many of his pieces throughout the

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years and making the above-mentioned CD recording. Written in 2010, *Salmo* is a vibrantly rhythmic partial setting of Psalm 117 in the Spanish language.

On February 13-14, 1945 the Allies bombed the city of Dresden, Germany—tens of thousands of people perished that night. Rudolf Mauersberger, Kantor of the Kreuzkirche from 1930-1971, narrowly escaped the firestorm, but lost eleven of his choirboys. In the weeks following the bombing, Mauersberger composed his *Wie liegt die Stadt so wüst* as a “Lament for the city of Dresden.” It was first performed in the bombed-out Kreuzkirche in August 1945, and has been sung in a ceremony on February 13th every year since. His deeply moving setting of the Lamentations of Jeremiah texts about the destruction of the beautiful city of Jerusalem is a timeless lament for victims of all wars.

Contrasting the Mauersberger is Morten Lauridsen’s soothing *Sure on this Shining Night*, from *Three Nocturnes*. IVE welcomes assistant conductor Mary Woodworth Schmidt to lead this melodically rich setting of James Agee’s poem by the same name.

Closing the program are two pieces from the American folk tradition. The shape-note hymn *Idumea*, from the Sacred Harp tradition, is heard here in an arrangement by former Lawrence Conservatory choral director Richard Bjella. It features two violins and varied voicings for each verse of text. Lastly, the folk hymn *Saints Bound for Heaven* closes our 2011 program with great exuberance.

The entire Isthmus Vocal Ensemble family and I wish to thank you for your presence and support!

Scott MacPherson
Artistic Director

Thanks & Gifts

Our Thanks

Our sincere thanks to Bruce Bengtson and the staff of Luther Memorial Church for providing such a glorious space for our Madison performance. Equal thanks to the staff of St. Stephen’s Lutheran Church for our Monona performance. Thanks also to Lake Edge Lutheran Church for allowing us to use their choir rehearsal rooms.

Many thanks to Jane Peckham and Ellen Fast for their service as rehearsal accompanists; to our recording engineer Bill Lund for his essential part in making us sound good; to Mary Schmidt for her assistance in the audition process and sectionals and for handling the rehearsal facilities; to Ena Foshay and WORT for their extensive and thoughtful coverage of our work; to Douglas Swiggum for his keymastering; to our intrepid ushers; and of course to *you* for being with us.

Consider a gift to IVE

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 by leaving it with an usher as you leave. *Isthmus Vocal Ensemble, Inc.*, is a nonprofit organization. All donations are tax deductible.

Summer Music Consortium

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

- Madison Early Music Festival
- Madison Savoyards Ltd.
- Bach Dancing & Dynamite Society
- Token Creek Chamber Music Festival

Texts & Translations

Hosanna to the Son of David

(Biblical: Matthew 21:9)

Hosanna to the son of David,
Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the
Lord.
Blessed be the king of Israel.
Blessed be the king that cometh in the name of
the Lord.
Peace in heav'n and glory in the highest places.
Hosanna in the highest heav'ns.

Crucifixus

(from Credo of the Mass Ordinary)

He was also crucified for us under Pontius Pilate;
suffered, and was buried.

Komm, Jesu, komm

(verses 1 & 11 of a funeral aria
by Paul Thymich, 1684)

Double Chorus:
Come, Jesus, come,
For my body is weary;
My strength grows weaker and weaker,
I yearn for your peace;
The bitter path grows too hard for me!
Come, come I will surrender myself to you,
For you are the right way, the truth, and the life.

Aria:
Therefore I entrust myself into your hands
And say: world, good night!
My lifetime may be rushing to its end,
Yet my spirit is content.
It now hovers around its creator,
For Jesus is and shall remain the true path
for living.

Wie der Hirsch schreit, nach frischem Wasser

(from Psalm 42)

As the hart longs after the water, so cries my soul,
O God, for you.

Like as the hart desireth the waterbrooks

(from Psalm 42)

Like as the hart desireth the waterbrooks, so
longeth my soul after thee, O God.
My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living
God.
When shall I come to appear before the presence
of God?
My tears have been my meat day and night,
While they daily say unto me: Where, where is
now thy God?

Salmo de Alabanza

(Psalm 117)

Praise the Lord all ye nations,
Praise him all ye people.
Great is his mercy for us,
And the faithfulness of the Lord is everlasting.
Alleluia.

Wie liegt die Stadt so wüst

(Lamentations of Jeremiah)

How desolate lies the city that was full of people.
All her gates stand deserted.
How the stones of the shrines lie scattered all
over the streets.
He sent a fire from on high into my bones and let
it rage there.
Is this the city, which was called the perfection of
beauty, the joy of all the earth?
She wouldn't have thought this would happen to
her in the end;
Her collapse was horrible, and there was no one
to console her.
Therefore our heart was saddened and our eyes
filled with gloom.
Why, why do you want to forget us so completely
and leave us for the rest of our lives?
Bring us back to you, O Lord, that we may be
restored!
Renew our days as of old. O Lord, behold my
suffering!

Sure on this Shining Night

(James Agee)

Sure on this shining night
Of star-made shadows round,
Kindness must watch for me
This side the ground.

The late year lies down the north.
All is healed, all is health.
High summer holds the earth.
Hearts all whole.

Sure on this shining night
I weep for wonder
Wand'ring far alone
Of shadows on the stars.

Idumea

(Charles Wesley)

And am I born to die?
To lay this body down!
And must thy trembling spirit fly
Into a world unknown?

A land of deepest shade,
Unpierced by human thought,
The dreary regions of the dead,
Where all things are forgot!

Soon as from earth I go
What will become of me?
Eternal happiness or woe
Must then my portion be!

Waked by the trumpet sound,
I from my grave shall rise;
And see the judge with glory crowned,
And see the flaming skies!

Saints Bound for Heaven

(Traditional Folk Hymn)

Our bondage it shall end by and by,
From Egypt's yoke set free,
Hail the glorious jubilee,
And to Canaan we'll return by and by.

Our Deliv'rer He shall come by and by,
And our sorrows have an end
With our three-score years and ten,
And vast glory crown the day by and by.

And when to Jordan's floods we are come,
Jehovah rules the tide
And the waters He'll divide,
And the ransom'd host shall shout we are come.

The with all the happy throng we'll rejoice,
Shouting Glory to our King,
Till the vaults of heaven ring,
And thro' all eternity we'll rejoice!

*Thanks for being with us!
Please join us next year
for our performance on
Friday, August 3, 2012!*

About the Conductor

Conductor Scott MacPherson is the founding Artistic Director of the Isthmus Vocal Ensemble. MacPherson has consistently earned praise for the high standards of performance of 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 resulted in guest conducting appearances with the award-winning *Modus Novus Chor* based in Cologne, the *Vokalensemble Kölner Dom* of the Cologne Cathedral, as well as the male vocal ensemble *Arcanum Musicae* in Dresden. His international reputation has also drawn acclaim in Taiwan, where he conducted collegiate choirs and led workshops in conducting, choral eurythmics, and choral pedagogy at conferences in Pingtung City and Taipei.

Since 2008 MacPherson has served as Associate Professor of Music and Director of Choral Activities at Kent State University in Kent, Ohio, where he conducts choirs and leads the graduate choral conducting program. For 15 years prior to that he was the Director of Choral Activities at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. Before moving to San Antonio in 1993, 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.

He holds degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the University of Southern California. MacPherson is also the conductor of the San Antonio Chamber Choir, a professional choral ensemble based in San Antonio, Texas.

About the Organist

Kathrine Handford is University Organist and Lecturer in Music at Lawrence University's Conservatory of Music, a position she has held since 2004.

She holds a Master of Music degree in Organ Performance and Literature and the highly coveted Performer's Certificate in Organ from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, where she has done post-graduate studies in harpsichord and organ performance. Her principal teachers include the late Russell Saunders, David Craighead, David Higgs, Jerry Evenrud, Paul Manz, and Grethe Krogh from the Royal Danish Conservatory in Copenhagen, Denmark.

A musician of wide-ranging interests and accomplishments, Handford has appeared in recitals in the United States, Canada, England, and Scandinavia. She has been a featured artist at international festivals Norway, Finland, and Italy. In 1993, Handford was the winner of the 35th International J.S. Bach Competition held at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. In the same year, she received first prize in the John R. Rodland Scholarship Competition.

Handford has appeared as a soloist with the Minnesota Orchestra and the Kansas City Chamber Orchestra, and has toured with the Australian Baroque Brass. Her interest in new music has led to premieres of several new works for organ.

About the Pianist

Jane Peckham left a busy piano performance life in Los Angeles some years back to enjoy a quieter time in Madison. It worked. She teaches children and adults about the piano and the Alexander Technique. Now and again she plays a concert. She treasures her work with the Isthmus Vocal Ensemble and is very happy to be playing for you.

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 limited Madison performances. Now in its tenth year, the ensemble's performances have

been featured on Wisconsin Public Radio, WORT, our acclaimed commercial recording, *Andrew Rindfleisch Choral Works*, and our new release, *An Isthmus Christmas*. Listen and learn more online at: www.isthmusvocalensemble.org

Soprano

Deb Anken-Dyer
✱ Mary Duff
Beate Gersch
Deb Heilert
Thea Janisch
Lynn Keller
Katrina Lemens
Amy Lewison
Lucy Moore
Lynn Morgan
Kara Noah
Julie Ottum
Catherine Pippitt
Ronna Rawlins
✱ Jennifer Sauer
Lynda Southwick

Alto

Kristine Beck
Susannah Brooks
Robyn Chase
Ellen Fast
Ena Foshay
Leslie Frank
Hope Horton
Carrie Kruse
Sarah Leuwerke
Mihcal McClelland
Sharon Morrow
Kathleen Otterson
Linda Palmer
Sue Reget
Mary Woodworth Schmidt ✱
Kate Szidon

Tenor

Benjamin Acton
Mark Begin
Josh Blanchette
✱ Steve Brick
Dan Feeney
Elliot Friedman
Steve Johnson
Michael Mangan
David Murphy
Will Raymer
Douglas Swiggum
✱ Andrew Taylor
Joseph Testa

Bass

Jim Adams
John Bohman
Dennis Egge
Nelson Flynn
Jerry Hui
Dale Johnson
Steve Larkin
Rob Littell
Jim Pippitt
Phil Rosten
Bernie Schlafke
Don Stanislawski
Mark Werner

Mary Woodworth Schmidt, Asst. Conductor

✱ designates Board Members