

Denver chamber choir takes meditative approach to 9/11 anniversary concert

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The artistic director of the St. Martin's Chamber Choir decided last year that the ensemble should musically commemorate the 10th anniversary of the devastating attacks of Sept. 11, but the question was: How?

Timothy Krueger quickly realized he did not want to do a patriotic tribute to the United States. Instead, a meditative and somber approach seemed more appropriate to him.

"It's not a rah-rah, 'Yeah, I'm an American' kind of day, as far as I'm concerned," Krueger said. "But it ought to be a day of reflection, of acknowledgement of tragedy.

"I wanted to create a concert that was more along the lines of the universality of human suffering and the fact that we all face a fate where we die."

The resulting program, "Songs of Farewell: A Nation Reflects," will be presented at 7:30 p.m. Sunday at Montview Boulevard Presbyterian Church and broadcast live on Colorado Public Radio (KVOD-88.1 FM in Denver).

While none of the lineup's little-known, mostly modern works deal expressly with the events of 9/11, they all confront the universal emotions surrounding the tragedy, including grief, solace and, ultimately, release.

The first piece that sprang to Krueger's mind for the concert was C. Hubert Parry's "Songs of Farewell," written during World War I just a few years before the noted English composer's death in 1918.

"He knew he was on the way out, so it's sort of a conscious valedictory to life," Krueger said. "I find the text extremely poignant and the music is incredibly moving. His creative powers had not diminished."

The rest of the works, all by American composers, include William Schuman's "Carols of Death," settings of three poems by Walt Whitman; Edwin Fissinger's "Lux Aeterna"; and Eric Whitacre's "Nox Aurumque."

"I think the text of the one by Whitacre is completely appropriate," Krueger said. "It's just sort of spine-tingling, even though he is not referring to 9/11 at all."

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"Songs of Farewell: A Nation Reflects."

Montview Boulevard Presbyterian Church, 1980 Dahlia St. The St. Martin's Chamber Choir presents a 10th-anniversary commemoration of the Sept. 11 tragedies. It will be broadcast live on Colorado Public Radio, KVOD 88.1 FM in Denver. 7:30 p.m. Sunday. \$24 and \$35, \$5 students. 303-298-1970 or smartinschamberchoir.org.