



The St. Martin's Voice

The Newsletter of St. Martin's Chamber Choir

Noël nouvelet

“The French word *Noël* originates in the 13th century as a generalized cry of joy or announcement, similar to the old English ‘Hear ye!’ or ‘News!’”, writes St. Martin’s Artistic Director Tim Krueger. “By the 15th century it had come to mean the advent of a holy (holi-)day; and by the 16th it was specific to Christmas. It then became synonymous with the idea of a Christmas Carol.”

“Marc-Antoine Charpentier (c.1645-1704) is the French Baroque composer most associated with incorporating *Noëls* into his sacred works, most notably his *Messe de Minuit* (Midnight Mass). Written in the 1680's, it was probably intended for the private chapel of his first employer, the Duchess de Guise, who boasted a very numerous musical establishment. Other than this, the reasons for its writing are unknown; but its incorporation of numerous well-known *Noël* tunes of the day leaves no doubt that it was intended for performance on Christmas Eve.”



An engraving from the 1682 *Almanach Royal* thought to be Marc-Antoine Charpentier.

The Baroque Chamber Orchestra of Colorado’s Artistic Director Frank Nowell continues, “With its enduring combination of solemnity, mystery and joy, it is not too surprising that a number of composers through the centuries have chosen to create music for the Christmas Eve Midnight Mass. Most of the works on our “*Noël nouvelet*” program, including Arcangelo Corelli’s so-called ‘Christmas Concerto’, were composed specifically for this purpose.”

See “Noël nouvelet”, page 3

Noël nouvelet

with the Baroque Chamber Orchestra of Colorado

**Concert sponsors:
Robert and Juanita Kniss (December 18th)**

Friday, December 18th, 7:30 p.m.

St. John’s Episcopal Cathedral, Denver

Saturday, December 19th, 7:30 p.m.

First United Methodist Church, Boulder

Sunday, December 20th, 7:30 p.m.

St. Paul Lutheran Church, Denver

Tickets: \$22 General Admission, \$5 Student, \$30 Premium (Lim. Avail.),

303-298-1970 or www.StMartinsChamberChoir.org

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St. Martin's releases eleventh CD "Enlightenment A Cappella"



On November 14th St. Martin's released its newest CD, a collection of Baroque-era *a cappella* gems titled "**Enlightenment A Cappella**". You can get your copy of "Enlightenment A Cappella", "The Waking: Choral Music of Terry Schlenker, or any of St. Martin's other nine acclaimed CDs at an upcoming concert, or through the SMCC website. All St. Martin's recordings are also available at www.Gothic-catalog.com or www.Amazon.com, or as digital downloads from iTunes, Napster, eMusic or any other online digital retailer.

www.StMartinsChamberChoir.org/discogra.htm

Receive "The St. Martin's Voice" via email

Send us an email today saying you'd like your "Voice" delivered via email, and you'll save SMCC the cost of printing and mailing your newsletter. (You'll receive all of the latest St. Martin's news even more quickly, too!)

info@StMartinsChamberChoir.org

A huge thank-you to the special underwriters of Noël nouvelet!

Our special very thanks go to **Robert and Juanita Kniss**, the **Colorado Council on the Arts (CCA)**, and the **Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD)** for their very generous support of the *Noël nouvelet* concerts.

Bob and Juanita are tremendous supporters of the arts at St. John's Episcopal Cathedral, and have made a special gift to underwrite St. Martin's performances there. The CCA awarded St. Martin's a special grant this year to support this concert collaboration with the Baroque Chamber Orchestra, and in addition to the SCFD's general operating support of St. Martin's through Denver County, Boulder County SCFD made a grant specifically to support of the choir's four Boulder concert appearances this season.



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Looking forward and Bach to February's Cameo concerts

It's not too early to be thinking about St. Martin's Cameo concert "De-constructing Bach", coming this February 5th, 6th and 7th. Twelve singers will join Tim Krueger and our concert audience in exploring Bach fugues and motets, and what makes them tick. Plan to celebrate the 325th anniversary of J. S. Bach's birth with this special interactive program, being offered in Boulder, Castle Rock and Denver. More details at www.StMartinsChamberChoir.org or 303-298-1970.

"Noel nouvelet", from Page 1

"The Concerto Grosso in G minor (opus 6, no. 8) is one of twelve concerti grossi composed by Corelli published posthumously in 1714. The concerto bears the title *Fatto per la notte di Natale* or "made for the night of Christmas". It was likely composed in Rome around 1690 for Corelli's patron Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni. By concluding with a Pastorale movement, Corelli tapped into a long tradition of pastoral music at Christmas time that goes back to at least the 16th century. Musical motifs -- drone bass, lilting melodies, and parallel thirds and sixths -- were employed to imitate the music-making of Italian shepherds playing their pipes at Christmas time. (The listener makes a natural connection in the mind and ear to the ancient shepherds who witnessed Christ's birth.) A number of Corelli's contemporaries and successors also composed Christmas concertos with pastoral themes, and the tradition was extended to cantatas and oratorios as well. A well-known example is the instrumental *Pifa* or pastoral symphony that serves as an interlude in the Christmas section of Handel's *Messiah*."

"Charpentier's *Messe de Minuit*", continues Krueger, "forms the centerpiece of St. Martin's second collaboration with the Baroque Chamber Orchestra of Colorado this Christmas -- a joyous marriage of voice and instrument, words and music. Other works include not only the Corelli *Christmas Concerto*, but also instrumental versions of *Noëls* by Charpentier, Renaissance Christmas motets by Sweelinck and Aichinger including the word *Noël*, and the premiere of a modern setting of a 15th century *Noël* tune by Micaëla Larsen Brown."

"Of wider interest to those interested in learning about the *Noël* tradition behind the *Messe de Minuit*", Krueger also notes, "St. Martin's is presenting a special Sing-Along fundraiser on Saturday, December 12th at 2:30pm, where every *Noël* to be found in the Charpentier will be learned, and then the portions of the Mass wherein these carols were used will be sung, giving added depth to the understanding of Charpentier's joyous work. Each participant will be placed between St. Martin's singers, thus making for the unique experience of "singing with St. Martin's Chamber Choir."

Nowell concludes, "On a personal note, I want to

express my excitement about this upcoming collaboration between the Baroque Chamber Orchestra of Colorado and St. Martin's Chamber Choir! The two ensembles have partnered on several projects the past few years, most notably the regional premiere of the Fux *Kaiserrequiem* in February 2008. I am delighted to help present this December concert focusing on the French *Noël*, with a joint performance of the exquisite *Messe de Minuit* by Charpentier as its centerpiece, and hope it will be a splendid and joyous addition to the community's holiday offerings."

Feasts of St. Martin for 2009-10

St. Martin's Chamber Choir has designed another terrific season of fascinating fundraising events to tempt, treat and tantalize you!

How does a spring wildflower walk at Roxborough Park sound, or an "organ crawl" on Bach's birthday? Does the idea of a breathtaking snowshoe hike appeal, or an exploration of *synaesthesia* in the work of painter Vance Kirkland? How about a special wine tasting event, or avant-garde musical evening? Oh, and did we mention the **holiday open rehearsal and sing-along with SMCC** on December 12th?

For more information about the 2009-10 **Feasts of St. Martin**, call 303-298-1970, e-mail info@StMartinsChamberChoir.org, or visit www.StMartinsChamberChoir.org. Don't forget, you can make your reservations by phone or through the SMCC website!

End-of-year tax deduction! We can help!

Your tax-deductible 2009 contribution to St. Martin's is just the thing to make your accountant **smile**.
Make your contribution today!



St. Martin's Chamber Choir
2015 Glenarm Place, Denver, CO 80205
Sixteenth Concert Season, 2009-10

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Noël nouvelet

with the Baroque Chamber Orchestra of Colorado

- ☞ St. Martin's Chamber Choir collaborates with the Baroque Chamber Orchestra of Colorado in the most beautiful holiday program in Colorado
- ☞ Marc-Antoine Charpentier's *Messe de Minuit pour Noël* ("Midnight Mass for Christmas")
- ☞ Arcangelo Corelli's "Christmas Concerto" (Concerto Grosso Op. 6, No. 8)
- ☞ Other Noël-based works by Charpentier, Gregor Aichinger, Micaëla Larsen Brown and Jan Pieters Sweelinck

Where & When:

Friday, December 18th, 7:30 p.m.
St. John's Episcopal Cathedral
1350 Washington St., Denver

Saturday, December 19th, 7:30 p.m.
First United Methodist Church
1421 Spruce St., Boulder

Sunday, December 20th, 7:30 p.m.
St. Paul Lutheran Church
1600 Grant St., Denver

St. Martin's Chamber Choir' 16th Season is sponsored by:

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