



The St. Martin's Voice

The Newsletter of St. Martin's Chamber Choir

A Boy was Born

By Timothy J. Krueger, Artistic Director

Benjamin Britten's set of Choral Variations "A Boy was Born," Op. 3, was initially penned as a student exercise while studying at the Royal College of Music under Ralph Vaughan Williams. The 35-minute work was published in 1934 and premiered by the BBC Singers; and Britten subsequently revised it in the 1950's, presumably correcting youthful errors and giving it the sure-handed touch of a mature composer. It now stands as the earliest example of the genius that was to manifest itself later in the *War Requiem*, *Peter Grimes*, *Ceremony of Carols*, and so many other beloved works for both church and stage.

One can hear the mystical folk-influence of



Woodcut by Albrecht Dürer, 1511

Vaughan Williams instantly in Britten's modal harmonies, his selection of Medieval texts, and the assuredness of the voice-leading. But there's a modernity about it that complements the older influences quite sublimely, and it remains my personal favorite extended Christmas work. St. Martin's performed it once to critical acclaim in

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A Boy was Born

Concert sponsors – Robert & Juanita Kniss (Dec. 17)
Scientific & Cultural Facilities
District, Boulder County (Dec. 18)

Friday, December 17th, 7:30 p.m.
Saint John's Episcopal Cathedral, Denver

Saturday, December 18th, 7:30 p.m.
First United Methodist Church, Boulder

Sunday, December 19th, 4:00 p.m.
King Center, Auraria Campus, Denver

Tickets: \$22 General Admission, \$5 Student; \$30 Premium (lim. avail.)
303-298-1970 or www.StMartinsChamberChoir.org

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1999; but, just as Britten revised his score as a more mature composer, I am revisiting the performance of this masterwork with, hopefully, the greater insight of a much more experienced conductor.

Three carol arrangements by Terry Schlenker, all written for and premiered by St. Martin's Chamber Choir over the last dozen years – but never performed by us together as a set – will begin the concert. Then the world-premiere of a newly-commissioned set of pieces by New York City composer Robert S. Cohen, to texts by Christina Rossetti, will take place in the presence of the composer. The works are written for chorus and French horn. These pieces will be complemented by other beloved settings of Christina Rossetti poems, including a sing-along for the audience of Gustav Holst's "In the Bleak Mid-Winter." A brief but charming cantata by early 20th-century British composer Martin Shaw called "The Crib" will feature our new Mark Sheldon conducting intern Adam Kluck; and the first half of the concert will end with a preview of the second half, Britten's beloved *Hymn to the Virgin* conducted by the winner of a student conductor competition – a new venture between St. Martin's and Metropolitan State College of Denver.

Upcoming 2011 Concerts

Feb. 11 & 13 – King Solomon's Love Songs

April 15 & 17 – Hosanna! Music of Palm Sunday

June 10 & 12 – A Mighty Fortress

More details at www.StMartinsChamberChoir.org or
303-298-1970

"Holiday Notes"

Special Discount on St. Martin's Chamber Choir CDs

3 CD's (any titles) for \$40 - regular price \$18 each. Through the office or at Dec 17-18-19 concerts only

Christmas Sing-Along "Feast" with St. Martin's Chamber Choir

Saturday, Dec 11, 2010 at 2:30pm, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 2015 Glenarm Place, \$35 / person Sit next to St. Martin's singers and sing along as they rehearse their concert repertoire, then enjoy a wassail reception hosted by choir members.

Buy "A Boy was Born" Tickets NOW

The Christmas concerts are our best-attended concerts of the season, and last year's concert at St. John's Cathedral was sold out. Buy early by phone or online, and be assured of a seat!

Parking Suggestions for Dec 17 Concert

Parking for the concert at St. John's Cathedral can be a challenge. There is limited parking in the Cathedral lot and on nearby streets, but ample parking is available across 14th Avenue in the large lot behind Argonaut Liquors.

Group Sales

10 or more tickets purchased at the same time qualify for a 10% group sale discount. Enjoy a shared musical experience with family and friends, work associates, students and faculty, church choir members, book or bridge club - any group of 10 or more.

A Letter from the Executive Director

When I first learned of St. Martin's in 1994 while living in another city, I knew that Denver and Colorado had a new jewel in its performing arts "crown." I had met Tim Krueger as a fellow chorister at St. John's Cathedral in the mid-1980's, and had followed his education in Germany and England, and then his return to Denver. Word about St. Martin's Chamber Choir spread quickly in those early years, and I kept close tabs on the Choir.

My desire to actually hear St. Martin's was realized when I moved back to Denver from Omaha in 2007. I attended nearly every concert, and I was profoundly impressed by the caliber of singing, the depth of musicianship, and the camaraderie and



dedication within the choir and its loyal audience. I was asked to join the St. Martin's Board of Directors in 2008, and I experienced there an amazing level of commitment to the choir by its volunteer Board members.

Last month I succeeded Brock Erickson as Executive Director of St. Martin's. As I reflect on my journey with St. Martin's Chamber Choir this holiday season, I am both thrilled and awed by the opportunity to serve what the *Denver Post* called in

June 2009 "the ensemble of the year" in this region. Both the challenges and the possibilities are immense. Attendance numbers and audience enthusiasm for St. Martin's are at an all-time high. The passion of Board members, singers, donors and volunteers is amazing. However, we need financial support more than ever as the effects of the financial downturn continue to challenge our ability to maintain and grow.

Please consider a gift to St. Martin's before the end of the calendar year. You may mail a check, call the office with a credit card gift, or donate online (click "Support" at www.stmartinchamberchoir.org). You may consider a three-year pledge, which helps us to better project our future growth and artistic planning. Finally, you may prefer a regular gift by way of Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) from your bank account, which makes smaller, regular giving add up without too great a strain on your cash flow.

We promise to steward your gift well by continuing to "perform classical choral music to the highest professional standards" (from our Mission Statement) while maintaining the lowest possible operating costs. I thank you sincerely, and I share with you my gratitude for this opportunity to serve St. Martin's Chamber Choir.

Warm regards,

Steve Grupe

"In ordinary life we hardly realize that we receive a great deal more than we give, and that it is only with gratitude that life becomes rich."

– Dietrich Bonhoeffer



St. Martin's Chamber Choir

2015 Glenarm Place, Denver, CO 80205-3121

Seventeenth Concert Season, 2010-11

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A Boy was Born

- Benjamin Britten's stunning choral variations "A Boy was Born", as well as his shimmering "Hymn to the Virgin"
- Settings of the poetry of Christina Rossetti, including her beloved "In the Bleak Midwinter", by Holst, Darke and Cohen
- Three luminous carol arrangements by Denver's Terry Schlenker including SMCC audience favorite "O Come, Emmanuel"

Where & When:

Friday, December 17th, 7:30 p.m.
Saint John's Episcopal Cathedral
1350 Washington St., Denver

Saturday, December 18th, 7:30 p.m.
First United Methodist Church
1421 Spruce St., Boulder

Sunday, December 19th, 4:00 p.m.
King Center Auditorium
Auraria Campus, Denver

St. Martin's Chamber Choir' 17th Season is sponsored by:

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