

The St. Martin's Voice

The Newsletter of St. Martin's Chamber Choir

Brahms' View of Mortality

By Timothy J. Krueger, Artistic Director

Most great composers wrote music dealing with death, some more than others. Brahms was one of those who wrote a great deal about it, not least his justly famous *German Requiem*. Uncomfortable with the theology presented in the Catholic Requiem Mass, he opted to select his own texts from Martin Luther's translation of the Bible – hence, he called it a “German” Requiem, not so much because he chose German texts, but to distinguish it from a liturgical, “Roman” Requiem. Hence, it is probably more accurately translated as a “Personal” or “Layman's” Requiem, in terms of what Brahms intended by the word “German.”

And Brahms showed something of his more agnostic side when he chose to include texts that were addressed to and concerned with those who were left behind – the bereaved and grieving – rather than those who had died. The texts he chose were not so much a catalogue of what was presumed to be happening to the transmigrating soul – as in the traditional *Requiem Mass* – but a source of comfort and hope to those still left on



this side of the great chasm, and wrestling with doubts and loss and sorrow.

Shortly after the premiere of his *German Requiem*, Brahms made a 4-hand arrangement of the entire work, such that it could be performed with more limited forces and therefore have a greater dissemination. It

See “Brahms”, page 2

Brahms *Requiem*

Concert sponsors – Robert & Juanita Kniss (October 1)

Friday, October 1st, 7:30 p.m.

Saint John's Episcopal Cathedral, Denver

Sunday, October 3rd, 7:30 p.m.

Montview Blvd. Presbyterian Church, Denver

Tickets: \$22 General Admission, \$5 Student; \$30 Premium (lim. avail.)

303-298-1970 or www.StMartinsChamberChoir.org

What's Inside?

Brahms' View of Mortality	1
SMCC at CMF	2
“Music and Moore” at DBG	2
Choral Futures	3
2010-11 Season Preview	3

"Brahms", cont. from page 1

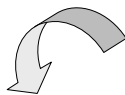
was, in fact, this version of the *Requiem* which represented the work's first performances in Britain and America, among other places. It is this more intimate, chamber version of the piece that St. Martin's presents in its opening concerts of the 2010-11 Season, and it is highly suited to a performance by 24 singers.

I stress that this is not merely a transcription of the orchestration for piano, but Brahms' own reworking of his masterpiece for smaller forces. In our rehearsals thus far, I have been astonished by the new things I have heard in this work which I *thought* I knew very well, and which bring a rejuvenated admiration of Brahms' particular genius. We are joined by the fine pianists Tamara Goldstein and James Myers in this rarely-heard version of the work.

Even if you are familiar with the piece, and believe that you might be a bit disappointed by a rendition without the colors and power of a full orchestra, I urge you to give this chamber arrangement a chance, for I believe it will give you fresh insight into the work, as it has done for me.

Also on the program are two of Brahms' late-career *a cappella* motets, both about death, and lending added insight into Brahms' own wrestling with the issue as he approached closer to it (the *Requiem* being a relatively early work, by comparison).

You can **receive this newsletter electronically** by contacting the SMCC office at info@StMartinsChamberChoir.or calling 303-298-1970 and requesting email delivery of "The St. Martin's Voice". Call today and save a tree!



St. Martin's triumphant August appearance with the Colorado Music Festival Orchestra

St. Martin's Chamber Choir joined with the Colorado Music Festival's chamber orchestra in early August for two performances of Anton Bruckner's seldom-heard but truly wonderful *Requiem in D minor*. In front of large audiences at Boulder's Chautauqua Auditorium and at the Stanley Hotel in Estes Park, the choir and orchestra delivered a sensitive, dramatic reading of this wonderful early work of Bruckner's. Audience reaction was tremendous, and CMF Music Director Michael Christie, who conducted the work, was excited both by the spirit of the collaboration and by the artistic results of this pairing of two of the area's fine professional music ensembles. St. Martin's Artistic Director Tim Krueger looks forward to future opportunities for the choir to work with the CMF orchestra.

SMCC at the Botanic Gardens

On September 15th St. Martin's presented a series of choral vignettes titled "Music and Moore" at the Denver Botanic Gardens. This special DBG members-only event celebrated the ongoing exhibit of Henry Moore's sculptures, which have been placed throughout the gardens and ponds. As the late-summer sun set on families and other Gardens members strolling and picnicking, St. Martin's provided a number of selections by Stanford, MacDowell, Pearsall, Sullivan and others that featured water, evening and flowers. It was a beautiful evening, and we hope to see some of our new "Gardens" friends at upcoming concerts!

Choral Futures...

Containing about 45 minutes of music personally culled by Artistic Director Krueger from last season's live concert recordings, we have assembled a special "St. Martin's Live" Sampler CD. (See below for a track listing.) This CD has been sent to our patrons who purchased season tickets last season.

This offer continues for the upcoming season – if you buy season tickets this year, you will receive a sampler of the coming season's live concert recordings in August of 2011. Think of it as investing in "Choral Futures," much like purchasing "Wine Futures," where the grapes have not been harvested yet!

Tracks contained on "St. Martin's Live 2009-10"

From concert "Music of the Tsars" (September 2009)

1. Bortniansky, "The Cherubic Hymn, No. 7"
2. Cui, "My Soul Magnifies the Lord"
3. Golovanov, "Our Father"

From concert "Noel Nouvelet" (December 2009)

4. arr. Charpentier, "Vous qui désirez sans fin"
5. arr. Charpentier, "Joseph est bien Marie"
6. Charpentier, *Gloria*, from *Midnight Mass*

From concert "With Fresh Ears" (June 2010)

7. Lovelace, "Mercy, Pity, Peace and Love"
8. Baksa, *Sanctus* from *Latin Mass*
9. Kodály, "Jesus and the Traders"
10. Redford, "What the Bird Said"

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- Individual donations or pledged support
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- Contributions to the Mark Sheldon Fund
- Purchases of CDs or downloads of SMCC music
- Attendance at performances and special events

Call 303-298-1970 or visit
www.StMartinsChamberChoir.org for more info.

2010-11 Concert Season Preview

From Brahms' *German Requiem* to the love songs of King Solomon, from the joy and passion of the music of Palm Sunday to the Renaissance splendor of Victoria's 6-voice *Requiem*, from the drama and wonder of Britten's "A Boy was Born" to a rarely heard Mass of Herbert Howells, this season promises surprise, wonder, beauty, and the glorious choral sounds you've come to expect from St. Martin's Chamber Choir. Please consider purchasing a flexible subscription package so that you can join us for many performances during the 2010-11 season.

I. Brahms *Requiem*, Oct. 1 & 3, 2010

Johannes Brahms' own 4-hand piano chamber arrangement of his beloved German Requiem, and two of Brahms' a cappella motets. SMCC is joined by pianists Tamara Goldstein and James Meyers.

II. *Lux Perpetua*, Nov. 12 & 14, 2010

Tomás Luis de Victoria's soaring six-voice *Requiem*, and other musical exequies.

III. A Boy was Born, Dec. 17, 18 & 19, 2010

"One of the region's most magical holiday traditions" (Denver Post) will feature Benjamin Britten's "A Boy was Born" and other beautiful seasonal works.

IV. King Solomon's Love Songs, Feb. 11 & 13

Romantic, evocative texts from the "Song of Solomon" set by Palestrina and many other composers.

V. *Hosanna! Music of Palm Sunday*, Apr. 15 & 17, 2011

Music for Palm Sunday, including an *a cappella* Passion by Renaissance composer Christoph Demantius.

VI. A Mighty Fortress, Jun. 10 & 12, 2011

20th century settings of Psalm 90, "Lord, thou hast been our refuge" by Vaughan Williams, Ives, and Bairstow; Howells' rarely heard *Missa Aedis Christi*.

For single or season tickets call 303-298-1970 or visit www.StMartinsChamberChoir.org



St. Martin's Chamber Choir
 2015 Glenarm Place, Denver, CO 80205-3121
Seventeenth Concert Season, 2010-11

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Brahms *Requiem*

- ☞ Brahms' own rarely-performed chamber arrangement of his *German Requiem* for piano four-hands
- ☞ Guest artists Tamara Goldstein and James Myers, piano
- ☞ Concert also features Brahms' motet *Begräbnisgesang*, as well as his *a cappella* motets *Ich aber bin elend* and *Warum ist das Licht gegeben*.
- ☞ Sunday's concert marks SMCC's first-ever appearance at Montview Presbyterian Church

Where & When:

Friday, October 1st, 7:30 p.m.
 Saint John's Episcopal Cathedral
 1350 Washington St., Denver

Sunday, October 3rd, 7:30 p.m.
 Montview Blvd. Presbyterian Church,
 1980 Dahlia St., Denver

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

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