



The St. Martin's Voice

The Newsletter of St. Martin's Chamber Choir

“Love Bade Me Welcome”: The Music of Ralph Vaughan Williams

By Timothy J. Krueger, Artistic Director

In the early 1990's a prominent musicologist friend of mine asked me who I thought would be remembered as the most significant composer of the 20th century. When I replied “Ralph Vaughan Williams,” he laughed.

While I make light of this exchange here, I wonder how my friend would react now, with the perspective that the 50 years since Vaughan Williams' death provides us.

While frequency of performance is not necessarily a measure of a composer's greatness, it must have some bearing on it; and I would venture to wager that RVW is one of the most frequently performed and broadcast of all 20th century composers. The breadth of his output, too, is impressive. His early stylistic period, redolent of late Romanticism and heavily influenced by English folksong, continues to have the most appeal to modern audiences. But his later, more esoteric and harmonically adventurous



Caricature of Ralph Vaughan Williams at age 42

style – brought on by his increasing comfort with his place in the musical panoply, and a growing dissatisfaction with the modern world of automobiles and the mass media – is increasingly lauded as containing a depth of feeling and a mode of expression

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“Love Bade Me Welcome”: The Music of Ralph Vaughan Williams

**Saturday, September 27, 7:30 p.m., Augustana
Lutheran Church, Denver**

**Sunday, September 28, 3:00 p.m., St. John's
Episcopal Cathedral, Denver**

Adults \$20 Seniors \$17 Students \$5

Limited Premium seating \$25

(303) 298-1970 or www.StMartinsChamberChoir.org

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that can be identified as entirely and uniquely his own.

Our opening concert of the 2008-09 season, in collaboration with Musica Sacra Chamber Orchestra and their conductor Catherine Sailer, contains music from both periods, as well as a modern homage to his influence by a living composer. RVW's early period is represented by the opening and closing works of the concert – his *Fantasia on Greensleeves* and the *Five Mystical Songs*. His later period will be heard in two other works – *Flos campi*, and *Three Shakespeare Songs*. And Denver composer Terry Schlenker's *The Waking*, a work specially commissioned by St. Martin's and Musica Sacra for this concert, will be premiered by the choir and orchestra, acknowledging Vaughan Williams' lasting influence on a new generation of musicians.

Two acclaimed soloists join the choir and orchestra, baritone David Farwig in *Five Mystical Songs*, and violist Jacquelyn Schwandt in *Flos campi*.

Join us for this exploration of and tribute to the music of this increasingly revered musical icon of the 20th century. I cannot think of a more fitting way to begin our 15th anniversary season!

Here are great ways to support St. Martin's Chamber Choir:

- 1- Contribute to the choir's general fund or the Mark Sheldon Memorial Fund
- 2- Sign up for EFT/ACH monthly or semi-monthly direct deposit donations
- 3- Donate any kind of unwanted vehicle
- 4- Make a gift of stock
- 5- Show your support with a multi-year pledge
- 6- Purchase musical scores for the choir through the Repertoire Fund

More info at
info@StMartinsChamberChoir.org or
303-298-1970

Welcome to St. Martin's Chamber Choir's 2008-09 15th Anniversary Season

The 2008-09 season will be our most exciting and interesting yet. Plan to join us all year for great choral music.

I. "Love Bade Me Welcome": The Music of Ralph Vaughan Williams - Marking the 50th anniversary of the composer's death (a collaboration with Musica Sacra Chamber Orchestra)

Sat., Sept. 27 & Sun., Sept. 28, 2008

II. The Composer's Choice (Cameo Concert*) - How does a composer decide how to set a text?

Fri., Nov. 14 & Sun., Nov. 16, 2008

III. Thou Little Tiny Child, featuring a performance of the Saint-Saens Christmas Oratorio

Fri., Dec. 19, Sat., Dec. 20, Sun., Dec 21, 2008

IV. February, 1809 (Cameo Concert*): We observe the February 2009 bicentennial of the births of Mendelssohn, Darwin and Lincoln.

Fri., Feb. 13 & Sun., Feb. 15, 2009

V. Passio Christi: a program of moving Lenten works featuring Tallis' *Lamentations of Jeremiah* and Ferguson's *Christus*.

Fri., Apr. 3 & Sat., Apr. 4, 2009

VI. Enlightenment A Cappella – Unaccompanied choral music of the 18th century

Fri., Jun. 5 & Sun., Jun. 7, 2009

More information and season or individual tickets at www.StMartinsChamberChoir.org or 303-298-1970

* Q: So, what is a "Cameo Concert"?

A: One hour in length, less expensive tickets, unusual programming, unconventional venues, audience participation!

Musings from a St. Martin's singer:

Thrills and Chills in Choral Music

It is obvious to me that we, as human beings, seek out—consciously or unconsciously—that which lifts us out of our ordinary perceptions. We yearn for those experiences which make our hearts thump faster and our minds and spirits soar. I'm not really referring to that which inspires our "higher selves" or brings us "closer to the Divine." I wish I were. I'd **like** to think that everyone seeks that out, but I'm not sure that everyone does. I do feel strongly though, that all of us humans crave those experiences that bring even momentary bursts of heightened sensory perception, we'll call it "The Thrill."

The Thrill can be found in dramatic, physical activities, like parachuting, car racing, snow-boarding, mountain biking. (I suspect Colorado has a higher percentage of these kinds of thrill-seekers than other states!) It can be found in more passive activities: scary movies, certain video games, spectator sports. Unfortunately, many people choose to find The Thrill in ways that can be self-destructive: gambling, drugs, you know what's on that list. Some folks will do anything to recapture that rush.

Now here's where a scientifically-minded person would speak of adrenaline and neural receptors in the brain, and the chemical causes of addictions. I'm going to skip all that and suggest that the same thrill can be found in music. Imagine, you're sitting, enjoying a concert. The music is lovely, sometimes memorable or inspiring, but not *thrilling*. Suddenly, there's a chord, or a tonality, or a melodic line that halts your wandering thoughts dead in their tracks and sends a chill up your spine. You are momentarily mesmerized. You wonder how music can DO that, and you immediately want to experience it again. That's The Thrill in music.

I believe this thrill is better than the rush that many people seek, and not just because it's not a self-destructive one. With many of the thrill-seeking activities: the violent video game, the skateboarder who can't get enough jumps in, the scary movie, the thrills come so often that the person becomes inured to them. The thrill becomes thrill for its own sake--for that chemical brain rush, and there's little appreciation of anything beautiful or edifying to accompany it. With music, the thrills are spaced apart so that they come often enough to keep you coming back, but not so close

NEW - Feasts of St. Martin for 2008-09

1. **Musical Transitions, Part III** – Maestro Krueger on stylistic shifts between musical eras
2. **A Chautauqua Cameo** – Elegant dinner at the Chautauqua Community House
3. **Our Jolly Wassail Sing-a-long** – Join with SMCC singers in celebrating the holidays
4. **Finlaw's Phantoms at "The Ellie"** – Backstage opera house tour with Ellie Caulkins
5. **Fête-ing the Muse** - A St. Martin's CD Debut, A Composer Is Celebrated! – Terry Schlenker's music
6. **Why Practice Makes Perfect** – Special "open" St. Martin's rehearsal
7. **"If Music Be the Food of Love..."** – Sumptuous dinner with accompanying wines
8. **Spanish Guitarra** - A house recital by Alex Komodore
9. **"See, Nature, rejoicing, has shone us the way..."** - Tours of Capitol Hill gardens
10. **Water Music** – A poolside brunch with nautical music
11. **A 14-er Trek** – Conquer Democrat, Lincoln and Bross peaks in one day

For more information visit

www.StMartinsChamberChoir.org/Feasts_2008-09.htm.

Make your reservations today by calling 303-298-1970 or by emailing info@StMartinsChamberChoir.org.

together that one can't truly appreciate them: to marvel and reflect on them, and look forward to the next one. They also take you by surprise. Unlike a scary movie or a dangerous snowmobile ride, you can't see them coming. This makes the musical thrills all the more pleasurable: you just don't know what's going to give you that chill down your spine.

As a singer, those thrills are even more intense when they hit me. That magical chord or special tonality causes an even greater chill down my spine because I'm a part of it, **inside** of the music, if you will. Furthermore, unlike instrumental music, the vibrations of the music are coming through my own body! While I know that not every part of the music that gives me a thrill will do so for everyone else, there's something really magical about knowing that I get to **share** that thrill with the other singers and with members of the audience. It's something that ties the singer and the listener together in one soaring experience.

“Love Bade Me Welcome”: The Music of Ralph Vaughan Williams

- ☞ St. Martin’s and Musica Sacra Chamber Orchestra join forces for these special concerts
- ☞ Vaughan Williams’ Fantasia on Greensleeves, Three Shakespeare Songs, *Flos Campi*, and Five Mystical Songs
- ☞ World premiere of “The Waking” by Denver composer Terry Schlenker

Where & When:

Saturday, September 27, 7:30 p.m.,
Augustana Lutheran Church,
5000 E. Alameda Ave., Denver

Sunday, September 28, 3:00 p.m.,
St. John’s Episcopal Cathedral,
1350 Washington St., Denver

For tickets call (303) 298-1970 or visit
www.StMartinsChamberChoir.org

St. Martin’s Chamber Choir gratefully acknowledges the generous support of:

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Fifteenth Concert Season, 2008-09

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