



ST. MARTIN'S CHAMBER CHOIR

TIMOTHY J. KRUEGER, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

21ST SEASON

THE ST. MARTIN'S VOICE

NEWSLETTER OF ST MARTIN'S CHAMBER CHOIR

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Honoring a Pivotal Moment in History



A PREVIEW BY MARC SHULGOLD, FOR SCFD SCEN3

We all know a little something about America's bloody Civil War – mostly who won and who lost, the names of a few generals and battles, and how the country seems still divided between North and South. Sadly, the one thing we really don't know is the music directly inspired by that war, both old and new.

Oh sure, there's Dixie. And that fiddle tune from Ken Burns' PBS Civil War documentary, a lament that beautifully captured the eternal sadness of the conflict. But then, it seems that any music about this

painful chapter in our history is bound to be mournful.

Timothy Krueger understood that sentiment and the challenge he faced when assembling a Civil War program for his St. Martin's Chamber Choir. "I know that the subject matter can be pretty depressing," the conductor admitted. "But we'll be trying to dwell on the positive, monumental aspects of that war."

It turns out that his timing is perfect for the upcoming commemorative program, titled "Beat! Beat! Drums." The choir's concerts, April 10-12, coincide with the 150th anniversary of the war's conclusion. Robert E. Lee signed the Confederacy's surrender at Appomattox on April 9, 1865, while April 10 marks the anniversary of Lee's eloquent farewell to his troops, followed on April 12 by the Confederacy's formal surrender. Lincoln would be assassinated only two days later in that fateful year. A remembrance of these historic occasions on this important anniversary also fit neatly into the theme for St. Martin's current season, Krueger observed. "We've titled our 21st season 'Coming of Age.' And, in a sense, the end of the Civil War is when America came of age."

The April programs mark the second of this season's two Cameo Concerts, shorter events held in smaller settings and performed by a reduced St. Martin's contingent. Stepping aside from his usual po-
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BEAT! BEAT! DRUMS! - AMERICA COMES OF AGE

Friday April 10 7:30 pm

Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 4500 Wadsworth Blvd., Wheat Ridge 80033

Saturday, April 11, 7:30

Sunday, April 12, 3:00

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 2015 Glenarm Pl., Denver 80205

TICKETS

PREMIUM (front and center) \$25

GENERAL ADMISSION \$20

STUDENT \$10

Tickets and Information: stmartinschamberchoir.org or 303-298-1970



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dium introductions, the conductor has enlisted three speakers who will offer readings as preludes to sung selections. Authors of those memorable words include Lincoln, General Lee (represented by his Farewell to the Army of Northern Virginia, mentioned above), Frederick Douglass and a young Confederate diarist named Sarah Morgan. Several of the texts will be read by Civil War antiquarian Richard DeTar.

And what about the music? Some of the tunes will be familiar, if not immediately associated with the war – Shenandoah, Battle Hymn of the Republic and two spirituals (Way over in Beulah Lan' and Angel Band). In addition, Krueger said he may find a way to include that sad little tune from the PBS series, titled Ashokan Farewell by contemporary fiddler Jay Ungar. "I might have the singers hum it, since we'll be ending the program with a reading of the letter written by Sullivan Ballou the day before he died in battle," the conductor said, referring to the soldier's poignant words spoken over Ungar's melody in Ken Burns' documentary.

The powerful Walt Whitman poem that gives the program its title shows up as part of a choral work with guitar, composed by Jeffrey Van (soloist will be Alex Komodore). His Procession Winding Around Me is built in four movements, each drawn from Whitman's Leaves of Grass (as is O Captain, My Captain!, represented later on the St. Martin's program in a contemporary setting by John White).

That approach is carrying over to the choir's 2016-17 season, he continued. "I'm thinking of titling it 'Choral Chronicles,' in which all of the concerts have elements of story-telling."

Assembling a St. Martin's evening is no simple task, Krueger said. "It's quite a balancing act. Many of those attending our concerts have said they enjoy the spoken introductions, while others have complained that there's too much talking."

Realizing that he can't please everyone, the conductor is left to follow his own tastes. "I always want to do high-quality pieces," he stressed. "But I want to present them in creative ways." ✦

Alex Komodore



Alex Komodore is a Denver-based virtuoso guitarist. His powerful interpretations, formidable technique, and natural musicianship have won unanimous praise from critics, audiences, and many of the world's finest guitarists. First Prize National winner in the Music Teachers National Association 1985 guitar category, his subsequent appearances on NPR and PBS broadcasts brought swift

national acclaim. John Dileberto of PBS Echoes, gave his collaborative 1990 CD Redstone with flutist Rod Garnett a rare highest rating, which also earned the coveted "Best of Westword" best classical recording of 1990. He has played as soloist, chamber musician, and orchestra soloist in virtually every concert venue along the Front Range. He has performed extensively across the United States, including at New York's Town Hall at the age of 11, a solo recital in historic New York's St. Paul's Chapel at the age of 16, and an appearance at the United Nations while still a music performance major at New York University. His 1994 solo debut recording Passport won praises from several of the world's most prominent guitarists, including Christopher Parkening and Sharon Isbin. A tireless teacher, Alex heads the guitar program at Metropolitan State University of Denver, where he is assistant professor of guitar and music theory. Many of his former students have placed in international guitar competitions and top graduate music schools in the U.S. and abroad. ✦



Turning the Tables

BY TIMOTHY J. KRUEGER, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

You are usually applauding me and the choir, but I want to take this opportunity to applaud you for being such a fantastic audience. I was reminded of this three times in February:

In your embracing the very unusual concept and atypical format of "Take One," our recording session/concert mix of an Hardouin Mass. This was certainly not everybody's "cup of tea" in terms of a concert experience, but the unexpectedly healthy turnout, and the enthusiastic comments I heard afterwards confirmed my confidence

in the adventurous and curious nature of St. Martin's supporters!

As I've been reviewing the recording takes from that event, I have been astounded by the utter silence of the audience. One would not be able to tell that nearly 150 observers were in that room during 99% of the recordings! Who's to say that an audience can't be rated in terms of its discipline and professionalism, any less than the performers can? And in this category, St. Martin's supporters came up trumps!

The enthusiastic response of our supporters to our hosting of the Santa Fe Desert Chorale – what a marvelous reception you gave them, and what a warm Denver welcome. They left with a positive impression of Denver in general, and of St. Martin's Chamber Choir specifically.

So I give you a standing ovation for your support of this ensemble in the month of February. I look forward to seeing you at the "Beat! Beat! Drums!" concerts in April. ✦