



# ST. MARTIN'S CHAMBER CHOIR

TIMOTHY J. KRUEGER, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

23RD  
SEASON



## THE ST. MARTIN'S VOICE

NEWSLETTER OF ST MARTIN'S CHAMBER CHOIR

23rd Concert Season 2016-2017 :: September 2016 - Vol. XVII No. 1

### GIVE US PEACE: RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

#### FROM CONCEPT TO REALITY: THE FESTIVAL SINGERS

BY TIMOTHY J. KRUEGER, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

In 2010 Michael Christie, Music Director of the Colorado Music Festival, invited St. Martin's Chamber Choir to perform the Bruckner Requiem with them at Chautauqua. The collaboration was a success, and the following year we did the Fauré Requiem. In each case, however, it was found that a bit of subtle sound reinforcement enhanced the balance. Simply put, the 24 voices of SMCC were just not up to producing the amount of sound necessary to balance even a smallish orchestra.

I recall thinking to myself, "If only I had a slightly larger group, still of the professional quality of the Chamber Choir, but filled out with select high-quality volunteers, so that the basic sound of St. Martin's was retained, the salary costs of a concert would be the same, yet there would be enough sheer volume to balance a symphony orchestra."

Similarly, I have looked at certain large-scale a cappella works with longing — pieces such as the choral symphonies of Sir Granville Bantock, *Das Liebesmahl der Apostel* by Richard Wagner, *Masses for Double Choir* by Spohr, Rheinberger, and Cherubini, *Adstant Angelorum Chori* by Horatio Parker, the larger motets of Mendelssohn and Brahms, etc. — and, though a cappella, I say 'with longing' because they are just beyond the scope of a chamber choir.

So the idea of a group of "Festival Singers" (as an expansion of the Chamber Choir singers) took shape and has been germinating for the better part of seven years. Knocking ideas around with friends and SMCC staff and board members, a commitment was made by the St. Martin's organization to make a go of it.

This last spring I began advertising the concept, word spread, and by the first of August I had auditioned 50+ singers. Most of these 50 singers are joining the "core" 24 Chamber Choir singers in the performances advertised on page 1. From the very first rehearsal on August 14, I realized we had done the right thing, and had created something that I know will continue into future seasons. The sound was every bit as pure, lithe, vibrant, and colorful as the chamber choir, without

the heaviness of most of the large choruses I've heard; yet the volume was truly breathtaking. The particular sound of the Chamber Choir, that I have assiduously built and nurtured over the last 23 years, was clearly in evidence; yet it had a robust fullness that could compete with an orchestra.

So come and witness — and judge for yourself — this exciting new initiative and constituent ensemble of the St. Martin's organization on September 16 and 17 (see lead article, p. 1). And then look for the Festival Singers to repeat in future years on a concert or two per season — both in collaborations with orchestras, and in a cappella concerts. See you there! ❖

#### GIVE US PEACE PERFORMANCES

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2016 7:30 PM**

St. Andrew's United Methodist Church  
9203 S University Blvd, Highlands Ranch, 80126

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2016 7:30 PM**

Augustana Lutheran Church  
5000 E Alameda Ave, Denver, 80246

#### TICKETS

PREMIUM (front and center)	\$35
GENERAL ADMISSION	\$25
STUDENT	\$10

Purchase online — [www.stmartinschamberchoir.org](http://www.stmartinschamberchoir.org)

Or - by phone - 303-298-1970

Or - at the door (subject to availability)

These performances are co-sponsored by  
Linda Giedl and Ann Levy,  
with additional support from a  
Scientific and Cultural Facilities District  
Collaboration Grant.



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## Thoughts by a Volunteer Singer { who has also conducted the work }

BRANDON MATTHEWS

Conducting *Dona nobis pacem* was a wonderfully overwhelming experience. From the pummeling percussive music that evokes the battlefield in “Beat! beat! drums!” to the serene longing for war’s end in “Reconciliation” to the elegiac grandeur of the “Dirge” it is nearly impossible to avoid being swept up in the power of Vaughan Williams’s music and Whitman’s poetry. Without a doubt, conducting the “Deadmarch” that serves as the keystone of the work is the most thrilling experience I’ve had on the podium to this point.

While conducting this masterwork is supremely exciting, I must admit that singing in it is no less enthralling--and perhaps even more so. Conducting can be a paradoxical experience; you have the entirety of the work in your mind and you have the responsibility to unify the ensemble with your vision, yet the truth is you do not have the ability to make any sonic contribution to the performance. Being “freed” now to sing the music and words is a fantastic privilege and joy. I am honored and humbled to finally add my voice to the message of *Dona nobis pacem*. ✦

## Observations By A St. Martin’s Chamber Choir Singer

BY LEAH CREEK BIESTERFELD

During last Sunday’s rehearsal, I was struck by the sheer sound of the whole group on some of those fortissimo passages and realized how gratifying it is to really put out some sound. We don’t often do works with the Chamber Choir where both full, rich sound and decibel output is called for. “Beat, beat, drums” is almost operatic in its dramatic scope and sound. The words have to come first, and that informs what you do vocally. Whitman’s text here is almost like a libretto where the words and language actually help move the music. And Vaughan Williams has matched that verbal drama so perfectly with his music. ✦

## “Earthquake”

BY THOMAS MERTON

So tell the earth to shake  
And tell the thunder  
To wake the sky  
And tear the clouds apart  
Tell my people to come out  
And wonder

Where the old world is gone  
For a new world is born  
And all my people  
Shall be one.

So tell the earth to shake  
With marching feet  
Of messengers of peace  
Proclaim my law of love  
To every nation  
Every race.

For the old wrongs are over  
The old days are gone  
A new world is rising  
Where my people shall be one.

For the old world is ended  
The old sky is torn  
Apart. A new day is born  
They hate no more  
They do not go to war  
My people shall be one.

So tell the earth to shake  
With marking feet  
Of messengers of peace  
Proclaim my law of love  
To every nation  
Every race.

There shall be no more hate  
And no more oppression  
The old wrongs are done  
My people shall be one.

# SOUND & SILENCE

Our 2016-2017 Season

## Give Us Peace

DEBUT OF THE ST. MARTIN'S FESTIVAL SINGERS/ ORCHESTRA

In 1936, following his grim experiences in the First World War and amidst the gathering clouds of a second global conflagration, Ralph Vaughan Williams wrote one of the most profound anti-war statements ever composed, *Dona nobis pacem*, using texts by Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Bible to plead his case. In conjunction with the Stratus Chamber Orchestra (David Rutherford, conductor), the *St. Martin's Festival Singers* makes its debut, made up of the Chamber Choir plus 30-some additional voices. Also on the program are RVW's *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis*, together with the choral theme that inspired it, and his *Three Shakespeare Songs* performed by the Chamber Choir alone.

Friday, September 16 - 7:30 St. Andrew's United Methodist Church,  
Highlands Ranch

Saturday, September 17 - 7:30 Augustana Lutheran Church, Denver

## There Is Sweet Music: Shakespeare At 400

CAMEO ENSEMBLE/PIANO

William Shakespeare inspired some of the most beautiful music ever written, and this concert will present a cross-section of it, from settings that were contemporary to Shakespeare (and may have been used in early stagings of his plays – by Thomas Morley, among others) to very modern settings by living composers, and everything in between. Most of the program will be *a cappella*, but the featured work is Vaughan Williams' *Serenade to Music*, with words from *The Merchant of Venice*, originally written for 16 separate voices, and performed here by exactly that, with piano accompaniment.

Friday, November 11 - 7:30 Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Wheat Ridge

Saturday, November 12 - 7:30 St. Gabriel the Archangel Episcopal Church,  
Cherry Hills Village

Sunday, November 13 - 3:00 St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Denver

## Christmas In England: A Willcocks Tribute

FULL ENSEMBLE/ORGAN

To say "Christmas Carol" these days is inevitably to think of the thrilling and beautiful arrangements that Sir David Willcocks, who died in September 2015, wrote when he was the organist-choirmaster at King's College, Cambridge and later director of the Royal College of Music. Paying tribute to this giant of the 20th century choral world, and the Lessons & Carols services that he helped make famous, St. Martin's Chamber Choir invites back acclaimed organist Ralph Valentine, who has thrilled St. Martin's holiday audiences for the last two years with his thundering accompaniments to this Denver Christmas tradition!

Saturday, December 10 - 7:30 Montview Boulevard Presbyterian Church,  
Denver

Sunday, December 11 - 2:30 Bethany Lutheran Church, Cherry Hills Village

Friday, December 16 - 7:30 Saint John's Episcopal Cathedral, Denver

Sunday, December 18 - 3:00 Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Wheat Ridge

## Winter Winds

FULL ENSEMBLE

From icy portrayals of snow, frost, and icicles, to the jolly cavorting of winter delights like skating, sledding, and hot chocolate – we present works by those who know winter best: the Scandinavian and Baltic nations (and their Minnesota kin). There will be a variety of winter-inspired works in this jolly concert—classic *a cappella* with St. Martin's Chamber Choir, sure to send a shiver down your spine and ignite warmth in your heart.

Friday, February 17 - 7:30 Montview Boulevard Presbyterian Church,  
Denver

Sunday, February 19 - 3:00 Saint Paul Community of Faith, Denver

## Forsaken: Victoria's *Tenebrae Responsories*

CAMEO ENSEMBLE

Spanish Renaissance composer Tomás Luis de Victoria's eighteen *Tenebrae Responsories*, sung traditionally on the three nights preceding Easter, are among the most powerful and profound of all Renaissance sacred works. Written for the dowager Empress of Spain, they were performed annually in her private chapel, with Victoria himself singing tenor. Experience the haunting power of these dark and mystical works, sung by an authentically-sized period ensemble of twelve voices.

Friday, March 31 - 7:30

Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Wheat Ridge

Saturday, April 1 - 7:30

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Denver

Sunday, April 2 - 3:00

Saint Paul Community of Faith, Denver

## Sound The Trumpet!

FULL ENSEMBLE/BRASS OCTET AND ORGAN

Belgian composer Joseph Jongen (1873-1953) is remembered for several organ works, the most festive of which is his *Mass for Choir, Brass, and Organ*. Coupled with this exuberant work are the complete works for brass and chorus by Anton Bruckner (1824-1896) – six pieces of power and majesty that couple brass (and sometimes organ) with chorus. A sonic *tour de force* to crown our season with splendor!

Friday, May 19 - 7:30

Saint John's Episcopal Cathedral, Denver

Sunday, May 21 - 3:00

Saint Paul Community of Faith, Denver