

Sunday, December 14, 2014 – 7:00 pm

St. Stanislaus Basilica, Chicopee, MA

Please refrain from applause till the *** at the end of each section.

I

Angelus

Angelus ad pastores ait

Welcome all wonders

Aaron David Miller (b. 1972)

Andrea Gabrieli (c. 1510-1586)

Richard Dirksen (1921-2003)

II

Processional: *Corde natus ex parentis*

Alma Redemptoris Mater

Alma Redemptoris Mater

Traditional

Johannes Ockeghem (c. 1410-1497)

György Orbán (b. 1947)

III

Today the Virgin

John Tavener (1944-2013)

IV

Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme (BWV 645)

In Dulci Jubilo (BWV 608)

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Scott Bailey, organist

V

Herr, nun lässest du deinen Diener in Frieden fahren

(from *Drei Motetten*, Op. 69)

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

VI

Gaudete! Christus est natus

The Darkest Midnight in December

All this night

traditional, arr. Márton Jakobey (b. 1976)

Stephen Main (b. 1963)

Gerald Finzi (1901-1956)

Sunday, December 21, 2014 – 4 pm
Granville Federated Church, Granville, MA

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- I
Welcome all wonders Richard Dirksen (1921-2003)

- II
Alma redemptoris Mater Johannes Ockeghem (c. 1410-1497)
Alma redemptoris Mater György Orbán (b. 1947)

- III
Today the Virgin John Tavener (1944-2013)

- IV
Angelus ad pastores ait Andrea Gabrieli (c. 1510-1586)
Angelus Aaron David Miller (b. 1972)

- V
Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme (BWV 645)
In Dulci Jubilo (BWV 608) Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
Scott Bailey, organist

- VI
Herr, nun lässest du deinen Diener in Frieden fahren Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)
From *Drei Motetten*, Op. 69

- VII
Gaudete! Christus est natus traditional, arr. Márton Jakobey (b. 1976)
The Darkest Midnight in December Stephen Main (b. 1963)
All this night Gerald Finzi (1901-1956)

- VIII
What cheer? William Walton (1902-1983)

Director's Greeting:

Welcome to Christmas with *Novi Cantori!*

It's our delight to return this season to St. Stanislaus Basilica and to Granville Federated Church. But most of all we're delighted that you, our supporters, are experiencing this music with us.

While we have performed at St. Stanislaus many times, we are especially pleased to partner for our concert this year with The Boys and Girls Club of Chicopee. Our proceeds at the door will be shared with this organization which serves and enriches the lives of so many young people. We hope this "concert for a cause" brings attention to the vital work they are doing.

Our 2014-15 season continues with our first-ever composers' masterclass in March, building on the success of our Call for Scores last year, allowing us to offer direct feedback to composers on works-in-progress. Be sure to mark your calendars for "Visions of Peace", our spring concerts in Granville, Northampton and Longmeadow. Continue to visit our website (www.novicantori.org) and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/NoviCantoriOfGreaterSpringfield) as we update you on *News from Novi*. And know that, in this next year and beyond, we look forward to continuing to bring the best of choral music to you.

With warm wishes for the holidays,

Ellen Gilson Voth

Artistic Director

Program Notes:

"Coming home"...of course that phrase can conjure many different images depending on our picture of "home". Wherever it looks like to us – something in us longs for an oasis. Perhaps in this busy season, with so much clamoring for our attention, our need for an oasis becomes even more potent. We hope this concert will be just that: an opportunity to pull away from the din around us and find an oasis, a chance to refresh our spirits as only music can.

Today's program features ancient and modern settings of two different Latin texts associated with the Nativity. The jubilant quality of Miller's setting of *Angelus ad pastores ait* contrasts with the more contemplative setting of Venetian composer Andrea Gabrieli, no doubt composed for the Cathedral at St. Mark's where he served for years as organist. Brief duets and trios alternate continuously till four voices converge at the phrase "Salvator mundi", giving way to the closing "Alleluia."

At first hearing, the Ockeghem and Orbán settings of *Alma Redemptoris Mater* (a liturgical Marian antiphon and prayer of intercession) could not seem more strikingly different. Yet both pieces, written centuries apart, reflect their composers' affinity for writing for voice. Franco-Flemish composer Johannes Ockeghem was trained first as a singer; the fluidity and contours of chant permeate his writing (and, albeit more subtle, the "secular" rhythms of dance to which he would have been exposed as a court composer). The Romanian-born Gyorgy Orbán, later a professor of composition at the Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest, merges fragments of chant-like melodies with traditional counterpoint and contemporary harmonies hinting of jazz. If the Ockeghem setting suggests the Virgin Mary's holiness and our human aspirations toward perfection, the Orbán setting displays her humanity and rawness of emotion, mingled with ours.

Following organ music of J.S. Bach, it is a natural choice to perform music of the Bach revivalist Felix Mendelssohn, whose output of sacred motets may be less familiar than his orchestral and oratorio works, but by no means pales in artistry. His “Nunc Dimittis” (Song of Simeon), written for unaccompanied chorus and solo quartet, is among his last completed choral works (from Op. 69) and shows his mastery of style in his development of rhythmic (especially dotted) motives and his varying polyphonic/homophonic textures throughout.

Our program also includes several English pieces of 20th century composers that evoke centuries past. Dirksen’s “Welcome all wonders”, composed for a live telecast from Washington National Cathedral in 1975, is based on texts of the 17th century metaphysical poet Richard Crashaw. With its parallel moving lines and repeated pedal tones, the influence of Orthodox tradition is heard in John Tavener’s “Today the Virgin”, first performed at Westminster Abbey in London in 1989. Stephen Main’s evocative setting of “The Darkest Midnight in December,” based on a traditional Irish text published in 1728, was first premiered by the Minneapolis-based ensemble, Vocal Essence, in 2007. Finally we conclude our program with Gerald Finzi’s dramatic fanfare for divisi choir, “All this night”, and the festive and harmonically innovative “What cheer?” of William Walton.

We hope you enjoy our program as much as we have enjoyed planning and preparing it, for you.