

Program Notes

The fall concert here at Drexel functions like a “leveling” course in academics: we do a wide range of pieces intended to bring our returning singers back to the peak skill level of the previous spring, while we try to teach our new singers the fundamental skills necessary for the more challenging programs ahead.

This fall, however, we are doing a somewhat more difficult program which features the return of the Main Auditorium pipe organ; two years ago we had to take the organ offline, as two of the wind chests (which powered 2,000 of its 4,000 pipes) had severe leaks. Those wind chests were repaired last spring and we chose our first two pieces on today’s program to show off the beauty and power of the instrument.

The *Prayer of Calvin* was commissioned by Trinity Presbyterian Church of Midland, Texas and took advantage of their first-rate pipe organ. It allows us to feature the lyric capability of ours, as well. This brief piece takes as its text one of the “Leçon au Commentaries” of John Calvin.

Benjamin Britten was one of the great British composers of the 20th century, and is well-known for his operas and his sacred music. Today’s work, the *Festival Te Deum*, demonstrates many of Britten’s favorite techniques: the use of multi-meter, complex meters, and poly-meter (with the organ and the singers in unrelated time signatures for large sections of the piece), along with constantly changing textures from polyphonic to homophonic to unison.

We follow with three spirituals in somewhat different styles: *Gimme yo’ hand* evokes a gospel style with swung eighths throughout; *Joshua fit de battle of Jericho* is a well-known piece, set here by one of the masters of the field, Jester Hairston; and *Great Day* is a complex arrangement with seven fully independent parts in its final section.

The Chamber Singers come on stage next with a variety of madrigals, chansons, and lute songs from the Renaissance period (c. 1600, when Shakespeare was writing his plays).

The Chorus then returns with our largest work of this afternoon’s concert: Vaughan Williams’ *In Windsor Forest*.

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958) was the preeminent composer of his generation in Great Britain. He was a late bloomer, writing nothing of significance before the age of 40, but once he found his voice, following a stint studying with Maurice Ravel, his work helped revitalize the British musical scene. He wrote in all genres, but is particularly known for his 9 remarkable symphonies, his numerous choral/orchestral works, his songs and several movie scores written in the 1940’s. While some have tried to deride him as a “folk-song” composer, his predominant influence is actually the early Tudor sacred music (Elizabethan period), with its modal harmonies and flexible treatment of rhythms.

One genre in which Vaughan Williams did not have much success was opera (the task of rejuvenating English opera would fall to his younger colleague, Benjamin Britten—who wrote the *Festival Te Deum* on today’s program). It was not, however, for lack of trying. This cantata is excerpted from his first full-length opera, *Sir John in Love*, based on Shakespeare’s *Merry Wives of Windsor*. It obviously didn’t help Vaughan Williams that he was writing an opera to the same libretto as Verdi’s *Falstaff*, one of the great works in the operatic literature. But where Verdi emphasized the comedy, Vaughan Williams tried to emphasize the love story and wound up with some beautiful music and some lovely scenes, but without a lot of dramatic tension or momentum. *In Windsor Forest* contains some of the most beautiful music from the opera, and the missing libretto shouldn’t affect our enjoyment.

The University Chorus and Chamber Singers

FALL CONCERT



ANTOINETTE WESTPHAL
COLLEGE OF MEDIA ARTS & DESIGN

Sunday, December 7, 2008

3:00 p.m.

Main Auditorium

Program

Prayer of CalvinSteven Powell
Festival Te Deum..... Benjamin Britten (1913–1976)
Victoria Spellman, mezzo-soprano
Brian Dilts, organ

Gimme Yo' Handarr. Steven Powell
Jeremy Toll, baritone

Joshua fit de Battle of Jericho arr. Jester Hairston
Great Dayarr. Warren Martin
Christina Curreri, soprano Anthony Kotula, tenor

UNIVERSITY CHORUS

Music to be selected from the following:

Rest, sweet nymphs Francis Pilkington (?–1638)
What if I never speede John Dowland (1563–1626)
Mon coeur se recommande à vous Orlando di Lassus (1532?–1594)
Sing we at pleasure Thomas Weelkes (1575–1623)
Music divine Thomas Tomkins (1572–1656)
Flora gave me fairest flowers John Wilbye (1574–1638)
Come away, sweet love Thomas Greaves (fl. 1604)

CHAMBER SINGERS

In Windsor ForestRalph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)
I. "The Conspiracy"
II. "Drinking Song"
III. "Falstaff and the Fairies"
Jamie Tijerina, soprano Jennifer Chesterson, soprano
Marielle Octaviano, soprano Danielle Traitz, soprano
IV. "Wedding Chorus"
V. "Epilogue"

BRIAN DILTS, KEYBOARD
STEVEN POWELL, CONDUCTOR
UNIVERSITY CHORUS

Translation

Mon coeur se recommande à vous

I give you my heart,
all filled with worries and torment,
less with resentment than jealousy.

Bid me then, goodbye.

My mouth knows to smile and to speak graciously,
do not curse now as I am banished from your eyes.

Bid me then, goodbye.

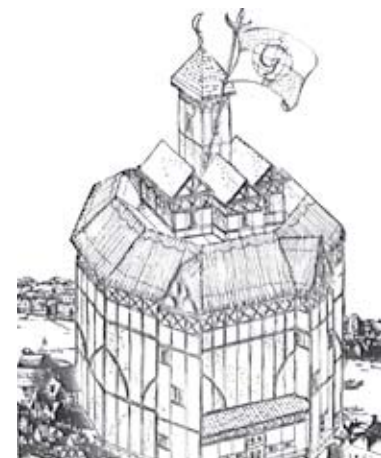
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The Nineteenth Annual Madrigal Dinner

Friday and Saturday
February 27 and 28, 2009

Tickets go on sale January 5.

Call the Department of Performing Arts, 215-895-1275, to order.



Drexel Chorus
Dr. Steven Powell, director
Brian Dilts, accompanist

Soprano

Chloe Brulia-----Music Industry
Jen Chesterson-----Graphic Design
Christina Curreri-----Mechanical Engineering & Mechanics
Charlotte DiGiorgio-----Architecture
#Jessica Finkowski-----Chemical Engineering
Katelyn Hancock-----English
Sozit Kurtu-----Chemistry
Xingzi Lin-----Business Administration
Emma Louth-----Culinary Arts
Jessica McLaughlin-----Communication
#Johanna Mikitka-----Architectural & Civil Engineering
Jess Neumann-----International Area Studies
•#Marielle Octaviano-----Information Systems
Hannah Olin-----Graphic Design
Katarzyna Pieklo-----Information Technology
#Elizabeth Plowman-----Electrical Engineering
Sheena Pradhan-----Nutrition
Shefali Ramsinghani-----Business Administration
Nicole Rosen-----Film & Video
Laura Salciunas-----Behavioral Health Counseling
Neetu Singh-----Biological Sciences
Jamie Tijerina-----Biology/Pre-Med
Danielle Traitz-----Graphic Design
Alicia Wise-----Health Sciences
Sabrina Zeile-----Entertainment & Arts Management

Alto

Christina Bartkus-----Nursing
Emily Bell-----Environmental Science
Chrystina Cappello-----Architectural Engineering
Madison Eggert-Crowe-----Political Science/Mathematics
Bri Galligan-----Biomedical Engineering
Rachel Hara-----Communication
Michelle Krichilsky-----Music Industry
Lynn Lan-----Business and Engineering
Erica Louth-----Interior Design
Elaine Lubaszka-----Fashion Design
Anastasiya Maslova-----Business Administration
•Chelsea Meyer-----Graphic Design
Judy Quarles-----Biomedical Engineering
Samantha Ranagan-----Interior Design
Meghan Signora-----Music Industry
Victoria Spellman-----Teacher Education

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Victoria Spellman-----Teacher Education

Tenor

Sean Ballentine -----Mathematics
 Michael Jeffers -----Engineering
 William Kehs -----Biomedical Engineering
 •#Anthony Kotula-----Chemical Engineering
 Shaun Kozlowski -----Computer Engineering
 Matthew Lesnak-----Computer Science
 Michael Long-----Film & Video
 Nate Mendoza -----Biomedical Engineering
 Kyle C. Norton-----Finance
 #Richard Price-----Software Engineering
 #Alex Schiano-----Psychology
 #Brian Summers-----Computer Science
 Joe Weidman-----Graphic Design

Bass

Chris Curtis -----Business Administration
 Colin Eggert-Crowe -----Mechanical Engineering
 Carter Erwin-----Biomedical Engineering
 Jonathan Greenblatt -----Computer Engineering
 Tim Hanson -----Mechanical Engineering
 Stephen Lombardelli -----Music Industry
 Peter Mowen -----Music Industry
 #Steve Pribis -----Materials Engineering
 •Luke Rodgers -----History
 Stefan Seltz-Axmacher -----Business Administration
 Levi Toback-----Psychology
 #Jeremy Toll -----Music Industry
 #Matthew White-----Mechanical Engineering and Mechanics

• Section Leader
 # Pi Nu Epsilon Member

Chamber Singers

Soprano

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 Emma Louth
 Marielle Octaviano
 Elizabeth Plowman
 Danielle Traitz

Alto

Erica Louth
 Elaine Lubaszka
 Samantha Ranagan
 Jamie Tijerina

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