



VOICEMAIL



A CHORAL ATLAS – THE BALTIC STATES

The first concert of the 68th season was held on Sunday October 5 at Second Baptist Church in Richmond Heights. This is a smaller venue than some frequented by the Chamber Chorus, and it boasted both a full house, and a pleasing acoustic.



The theme chosen this year by artistic director **Philip Barnes** takes us on a choral ‘voyage’ around the world, and we began with music written by composers from the Baltic States. As **George Yeh** recorded in his review for KDHX, two of the composers were women, five of the complement of eleven were living composers, and the program included two US premieres with two other works having first-time SLCC performances.

Our journey to visit such Baltic Jewels began in Norway with a beautiful rendition of a spiritual song by **Edvard Grieg**, one of four he wrote at the end of his life. Based on Norwegian folk melodies. *God’s Son Hath Set Me Free* was sung in English and featured **Chris Boemler** as baritone soloist. This was followed by one of the US premieres, *Lead Me, Lord*, by our Swedish friend and former composer-in-residence, Mårten Jansson. Next, we visited Lithuania and heard the work of **Raminta Šerkšnytė** (perfectly pronounced by Philip) whose *Aurei Regina Caeli* set three Latin poems by a Polish poet. This represented another US premiere and the first time the SLCC had performed her music.

Traveling east, we heard from Estonian composer **Arvo Pärt**, a name well known to this choir and audience. The *Woman with the Alabaster Box* puts to music verses from the gospel of St. Matthew’s gospel that describes the anointing of Christ at Bethany. Circling back westward, the concert’s first half concluded with a brilliant *Magnificat* for three separate choruses, published in 1611 by a little-known Polish composer, **Mikolaj Zielinski**.

The second half of the program began in Latvia with *On Friendship*, a past SLCC commission from Eriks Esenvalds’ previous. After this double choir piece, the Chorus employed various vocal techniques (including whispers) to present a modern realization of *I Am The Great Sun* by the Finn, **Jussu Chydenius**. The choir returned to a more familiar singing style for three Romantic piece from Germany (**Fanny Hensel, Johannes Brahms**) and Sweden (**Hugo Alfvén**). The grand finale - *Benedictus Dominus* - came from Denmark with a breathtaking polyphonic showcase from **Carl Nielsen**.

In his extensive review (see link on p. 4), George Yeh happily noted that this performance, along with other recent season-opening concerts in St. Louis, ensured that “the 2023-2024 classical concert season was off to a terrific start.”

Photo Caption: Artistic Director Philip Barnes with assistant conductors Orin Johnson and Caroline Ibnabdeljalil. Photo courtesy of Dan Hanson.

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT Welcome to Concert Two of our 68th Season.

Our mission as a chorus is to “... entertain, educate and inspire.”

We always hope that our music will entertain you and inspire you. And, particularly this year, we hope that our season gives you the opportunity to learn about places, times, and repertoire that St. Louis musicians and choirs do not regularly feature. Today, you have the chance to visit the St. Cecilia Catholic Church. The cornerstone for this building was laid almost 100 years ago. I hope you will take the opportunity to explore this unique building, saved from threat of closure thanks to its current Hispanic associations. For music lovers of any ethnicity, it's gratifying to see images of Cecilia appear multiple times inside the church, since she is the patron saint of music.

The selections today come from Mexican composers over six centuries. We are proud and excited to be the first chorus in St. Louis to perform this broad selection of music by these talented Mexican composers. Hernando Franco, born in Spain, was mainly active in

Renaissance Mexico, living there from 1574 to his death eleven years later. Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla became *maestro* of the cathedral in Puebla de Los Angeles, in 1629. He trained Francisco López Capillas, who went on to compose several Baroque masses, motets and eight *Magnificats* (one of which - for double choir - we present today). Much more recently - about fifty years ago - Carlos Chavez composed a lament in Nahuatl and *Three Nocturnes* (in English), and then, in the early 1990s, the noted woman composer, Maria Granillo, wrote her 'sea songs.' And where would we be without a taste of Manuel Ponce, father of Mexican popular song? We conclude with one of his most endearing songs, written in 1914.

Please sit back, relax, and enjoy what you hear, what you see and what you learn about the development of Mexican choral music today.

On a separate note - we welcome our newest Board Director **Deanna Kuhlmann-Leavitt**. (See page 4.)

Dick Brickson

CHRISTINE GUTHRIE



Christine grew up in Ellisville where she began playing piano at the age of six. She developed her musicianship studying piano from several well-respected piano instructors in the St. Louis area. Through their instruction, she was led to begin accompanying singers and choirs in middle and high school. Her family was always singing and listening

to music when she was growing up, so joining choirs was a pretty natural choice for her. Christine first studied voice lessons with **Tom Lowery**. She earned a bachelor's degree in vocal performance from the University of Missouri Kansas City where she worked with **Frank Curtis**, **Un Chong Christopher**, and **Michael Cousins**. She went on to earn a Master of Music in Choral Conducting from Webster University where her most impactful teacher was probably **Gary Sims**. He not only taught her to be a great singer and musician but shared a good deal of his pedagogy techniques. Most recently, she has studied with **Michael Rocchio** in Ballwin.

Christine's music career has allowed her to perform in North America, including several performances at Carnegie Hall, and in over a dozen countries in Europe. As an accomplished musician, Christine knows that a well-cared for piano is a powerful tool for musicians at all levels. Her passion for helping each piano along to its fullest potential brought her to study piano technology. She started her career in piano tuning at Jackson pianos in 2015 and brought seven years of experience in the field

working as a local piano technician before joining the team at Vanguard Piano Service earlier this year.

Christine, a soprano, first encountered the Saint Louis Chamber Chorus after completing her undergraduate degree and performed with the group for one season, leaving to pursue her own music career. She completed her master's degree from Webster University in 2011, got married and decided that would be a good time to revisit the high-level choral singing she so enjoyed. "One of the things I really appreciate about performing with the Chamber Chorus is the opportunity it gives to its singers to experience and perform music in many genres, both obscure, and newly composed works by living composers. The Chorus is especially intentional in featuring female composers, whose works may be heard at every concert. We are fortunate to include at least one premiere in every season."

Christine lives with her husband Charles and two dogs, a dorgi named Waffles and a chihuahua named Basil, in the Southampton neighborhood of the city. They used to run a food blog called We Eat Stuff. They sold it last summer to make more time for themselves and their various creative projects. "A lot of my free time right now is occupied with disassembling and rebuilding a grand piano with my coworkers in our workshop. One of my work-related goals is to achieve the title of RPT, or Registered Piano Technician. It consists of three difficult exams that cover general piano and musical knowledge, a hands-on skills exam, and an aural tuning theory exam. I am diligently practicing on every piano I encounter to teach myself about tuning aurally, with no outside help. I carry a tuning fork with me always!"

Gill Waltman

DAVID CARPENTER, MD



In several ways, David's singing and professional career has been a wandering one. He was born in Canandaigua, New York, in the Finger Lakes region of western New York state, and began singing in chorus and playing the trombone in 4th grade. In high school, he says that he began by singing in the bass section of the freshman chorus, then

later metamorphosed into a baritone for the remainder of high school. David attended Amherst College in Massachusetts, where he sang in the all-male Amherst College Glee Club, and also in the Amherst Zumbyes, a small all-male close harmony group. "While there, my voice rose further and I found myself singing 2nd tenor parts, meanwhile I continued to play the trombone in the college orchestra. Mercifully, my trombone playing stayed in the same register!"

After college, David moved to St. Louis and attended Washington University School of Medicine, singing one season with the Bach Society Chorus, (as a 1st tenor!) and later joined the medical school jazz ensemble, "The Hot Docs."

After finishing a neurology residency at Barnes Jewish Hospital/Washington University, David began a research fellowship in cerebrovascular disease (stroke) at Washington University. At that time, he auditioned for the Chamber Chorus at the urging of **Roberta Hmiel**, a Chorus member whom he knew at Wash U. Apparently, there was a dearth of tenors at the time because she described the audition process to him as "You're a tenor? In that case the audition is... sing a note, if we

can find it on the piano, you're in." David is still not sure what the note was, but as a result, he has been singing with the Chamber Chorus since 1991.

"In the years I have been with the Chorus, I have sung seemingly countless pieces at countless venues, and I often find pieces that I have sung before, although alas, I can't quite remember when (yet my handwritten notes are in the score!) I continue to be the occasional instigator of piratical outbursts when **Philip Barnes** criticizes us for too-American pronunciation of our Rs (greeted with a hearty 'ARRRR' from the tenor section) and am unreasonably pleased that Phillip once referred to me as a "freakazoid tenor" for my occasional penchant for singing along with the bass part!" (David didn't entirely lose that bass register).

Professionally, David decided to leave academics for private practice in 1993 and worked for 12 years at what is now Mercy Hospital in Saint Louis. During that time, there were considerable advances in therapeutic techniques for patients with stroke, and specialized stroke services became much in demand. As a result, he rejoined the neurology faculty at Washington University as a clinical stroke neurologist and is now a full professor. For the last 14 years he has been the Medical Director of the Barnes Jewish Hospital/Washington University Comprehensive Stroke Center, focusing on patient care and teaching.

"Apart from my continued activity in singing, I enjoy long-distance cycling, including cycling in a variety of charity fundraising events throughout the year, cooking, including charcuterie and barbecue, and sailing (when I can). And I am hoping to rediscover woodworking as I begin to retire from full time patient care in the next few years."

Gill Waltman

SIXTY-EIGHT SEASONS OF REPERTOIRE

Among the copious amounts of information found on the Chorus website is an encyclopedic list of our repertoire – all the pieces we've performed over 68 seasons. Exact details of the years under founder Ronald Arnatt are surprisingly difficult to pin down as we still need to locate many concert program leaflets, but in recent months, online archival detective work has filled in some of the missing titles, and these are now added to the repertoire pages. It is both humbling and impressive to see what Arnatt achieved with his chamber ensemble, introducing St. Louis to some major works by contemporary composers such as Dirksen, Stravinsky, and Vaughan Williams. And this pioneering spirit only confirms us now in our continuing mission, "not only to entertain, but to educate and inspire."

It's clear how we primarily address our educational mandate: we are the most itinerant, and therefore the most adventurous, of any classical music ensemble in St. Louis, introducing singers and audiences to an array of venues of architectural, historical, or social significance. In sixty-eight seasons we've performed in as many settings – in fact, more – and this has driven our eclectic programming. But our educational work reaches further afield, beyond what you might imagine from our work with local students at school and college. Our website also lists all the typographical errors encountered in the scores we've purchased, which prevents other choirs having to "re-invent the wheel." So, no matter where you sing, you can benefit from our pioneering work.

Philip Barnes

NOTEWORTHY NOTES

INTRODUCING NEW BOARD DIRECTOR



Deanna Kuhlmann-Leavitt

Deanna Kuhlmann-Leavitt joined the SLCC board in 2023 and chairs the marketing and advertising campaign sub-committee. As president and lead designer of Kuhlmann-Leavitt, Inc. she brings a strategic and creative point of view to SLCC.

At a young age Deanna wanted to design things and her passion has not wavered. A graduate of Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, she worked at an award-winning Santa Monica design studio before returning to St. Louis nine years later to open a Midwest office for the West Coast firm. In 2001 she founded KLI, a multi-disciplinary design studio known for its work in identity, the built environment, print and digital. Though KLI works nationally, she is especially proud of the contributions she and her team have made to multiple St. Louis entities including the St. Louis Central Library, Kiener Plaza, the Old Courthouse, Rung for Women, Washington University's East End expansion, STL City's HQ and many others.

Deanna has served on the national and local boards for the American Institute of Graphics Arts (AIGA) and was a board member at STL Village, a grassroots group dedicated to helping people age in place. She enjoys the arts, baking, exercising, volunteering, and traveling with family and friends.

JOHN LATTA - IN MEMORIAM

Accomplished singers jump at the chance to sing with the Chamber Chorus, and some drive considerable distances to do so. In the past, we've welcomed members with commutes in excess of 100 miles (Carbondale, Columbia, etc.), and prominent in this dedicated group was former tenor **John Latta**, who for several seasons drove each week to rehearsals and performances from Effingham (IL). Such dedication spoke to his love of the Chamber Chorus, and so we were sad to learn of his passing in late August. John embodied the best of our choir, and we were blessed to enjoy his warm personality and musicianship.



ANNUAL SLCC PICNIC

The rain held off long enough on Saturday August 26 for singers, board members and their families to enjoy the annual picnic together.

Chris Kilfoyle arrived early to start the grill, and **Philip Barnes** brought old towels to dry off any damp surfaces. Other folks brought side dishes to share, and we enjoyed a lovely picnic.

So, thanks to all the participants, and especially to Chris, our Grill Master, for supplying us with tasty meat and non-meat treats. And if any singers missed us at this year's picnic, we hope to see you at our next social event!



Scan the QR Code to read the concert review by George Yeh

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