



VOICEMAIL

May 2019

Sarah Bryan Miller Honored with New Commission

In celebration of and appreciation for the insights and advocacy of **Sarah Bryan Miller**, the classical music critic of the Post-Dispatch, the Chamber Chorus has formed a consortium with several choirs to commission a new piece from the celebrated British composer, **Judith Bingham**. Joining the Chamber Chorus in this initiative are the choirs of St. Peter's, Ladue; Holy Communion Episcopal Church, University City; Third Baptist, Grand Center; Temple Shaare Emeth, Creve Coeur; and Washington University.

Judith will create a new arrangement of Psalm 121 which the ensembles will perform this fall at their various locations.

Bryan wrote her first review of the Chamber Chorus in the spring of 1999, marking this as her 20th year attending and reviewing its performances. Such a recognition of Bryan is long overdue; we have all been challenged by her shrewd observations and have raised our own standards to meet her very high ones. Not since **Frank Peters, Jr.**, has the newspaper and this city enjoyed such a rigorous champion of choral music.

In this issue:

Sarah Bryan Miller Honored with New Commission

Message from the President

Meet the Singers – Chris Boemler

Meet the Singers – Brynna LePique

St. Louis Premieres CD in Post-Production

Noteworthy Notes



Sarah Bryan Miller

The Saint Louis Chamber Chorus

PO Box 11588

Clayton, MO 63105

(636) 458-4343

www.chamberchorus.org

Message from the President

by Dick Brickson

As we close our 63rd season with this final concert, we are very lucky to celebrate several milestones. We are proud of **Philip Barnes**, and we are so grateful to him for having devoted 30 years as our Artistic Director. He has set the tone for the Chorus, leading our focus on commissioning new music, on embracing the music of female composers and on performing consistently beautiful concerts. Leading a group for 30 years, almost half of its existence, is unusual and we know we are fortunate to have had such a rich and wonderful relationship with him. Philip has been recognized for his many accomplishments in another splendid way this month—he was awarded an honorary Doctorate from the Aquinas Institute of Theology, at Saint Louis University. (See back page.)

This year also marks 20 years of **Sarah Bryan Miller's** history of serving as the most significant music critic of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. She has covered the Chorus throughout her illustrious career and knows us better than any other professional critic. She understands us and recognizes the subtle things that make us what we are, and those things we could improve from time to time. Thank you for all you have done for music in St. Louis.

Today marks another milestone—our newest Composer-In-Residence, **Mårten Jansson**, is with us today. And **Tony Silvestri**, the poet who wrote the text for Mårten's first work for us, has also joined us today. Please say hello to them and thank them for their artistic contributions to the Chorus. We hope to see you next season!

Meet the Singers — Chris Boemler

Born and raised in Barnhart, Mo., **Chris Boemler** had a love for music inspired in him from a young age by his mother and father. At the age of seven, he and his twin brother sang duets in church and also sang with the Kirkwood Children's Chorale, where they spent the next six years learning and experiencing the joys of choral singing under the direction of **Mimi Steele**, **Kathy Bhat**, and **Mary Poshak**. At this point, Chris also began studying piano with his mother **Cathy Boemler**, who continues a long and highly regarded career of teaching and collaborating with choral directors.



Chris Boemler

In junior high, Chris played trombone and tuba in the school band, at church and anywhere else someone would let him. He began private lessons in trombone with **Tom Poshak** and voice with **Laura Vaughan**. Chris spent many fond nights singing around the piano with his father **Dale**, who was an incredible tenor, and his brother **Derek**. In high school, Chris formed his own barbershop quartet with his brother and a few other friends and received many district and state music honors. He played in band under the direction of **Randy Hodge**, and sang under the direction of **Mark Cotter**, whom he holds as a major part of the inspiration to go into the field of music education.

From the age of fourteen, Chris knew that he wanted to make music his lifelong career and decided to pursue music in college. At Missouri State University in Springfield, Chris received dual bachelor's degrees in

vocal and instrumental music education, studying under the batons of **Guy B. Webb**, **Belva Prather**, **Jerry Hoover**, and **Robert Quebbeman**, and in studio with **Bill Hartman** and **Michael Stine** in trombone, **Wei-Han Su** in piano, and **Richard Todd Payne** in voice.

Chris especially enjoyed his time spent in the performing ensembles at Missouri State, including the Concert Chorale, the Pride Band, The Beartones, and the Symphony Orchestra, where he served as principal trombonist for three years.

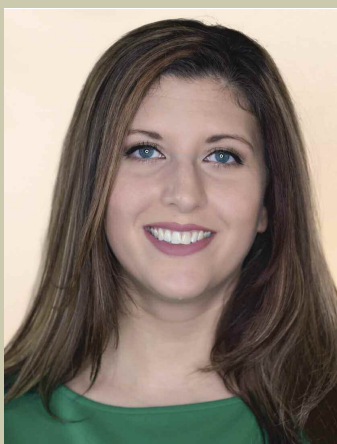
After graduation in 2012, Chris was hired by the Jackson R-2 school district in Jackson, Mo., where he taught for 5 years. In 2014, he received a master's of music education degree from VanderCook College of Music in Chicago, Ill., graduating just 13 months after beginning the program. In 2017, he was hired as the choral director at Festus High School, where he conducts over 180 singers and teaches beginning piano and music theory.

Chris sang with **Bentley** and **Erin Caughlan** at Missouri State and they introduced him to the ensemble. He says he has been honored to perform with the Chamber Chorus now for two seasons. (His was the wonderful bass voice we heard at the last concert as the Znamenny chanter!) In his free time, Chris enjoys collecting vinyl records, hiking, and spending time with his wife, **Laura**.

Meet the Singers — Brynna LePique

When **Brynna** was young, she loved going to church because she knew she would get to sing. She was on cloud nine when it came time for the Christmas program and she was asked to sing a solo! Brynna grew up in Harrisburg, Ill., and says that from a very young age, music allowed her to express herself, relieve stress, and even make friends. Her parents were incredibly supportive of her love for music, paying for private clarinet, voice, and piano lessons throughout her childhood and later encouraging her to study music in college. She had some wonderful music teachers along the way, starting with **John Hart** and his mother **Norma**, who between the two of them, could teach any instrument. Throughout her time in school, Brynna eagerly joined both the band and the choir and participated in every musical theater production she could. She attended Harrisburg High School where one of her teachers, **Kathy Hanrahan**, gave her a chance to teach beginning band students at her old elementary school—she was immediately bitten by the teaching bug! Her high school choir director **David Reeves** was also instrumental in her decision to become a music teacher. He even gave her a packet of choral pieces from the school library to start her on her teaching journey!

Brynna earned her bachelor's degree in music education from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville



Brynna LePique

where she focused on the clarinet as her major instrument. After teaching for a couple of years, she began a master's degree in music education with a focus in the Kodály approach at the University of Central Missouri. She completed her Kodály certification under the guidance of **Ann Eisen** and **Lamar Robertson**, two icons in the music teaching world. Part of completing this certification included participating in choir performances at three levels. This was the first time Brynna had performed with a choir in a long time and she adored the experience, not wanting it to end. She

began taking voice lessons after completing her degree and it was her teacher **Sarah Price**, who introduced her to the Chamber Chorus and encouraged her to audition with **Philip Barnes**. She was thrilled to receive an invitation to join as an alto and continue participating in group singing.

Today, Brynna is enjoying her second season with the Chamber Chorus along with teaching kindergarten through fifth grade general music in the Parkway School District. In her free time, she enjoys spending way too much money going to the theater and traveling with her husband, **Adrian**. They also love staying home and playing with their dog, Mr. Darcy, and will enjoy becoming parents to a baby girl this coming October!

St. Louis Premieres CD in Post-Production

In late February the team from Regent Records (UK) once again assembled at Second Presbyterian Church in the Central West End, to record the latest disc from the Chorus. British producer **Gary Cole** was on hand to supervise the recording of a selection of pieces that were written specifically for the choir. These included pieces from three previous Composers-in-Residence, **Clare Maclean** (*That I Did Always Love*), **Melissa Dunphy** (*Suite Remembrance*), and **Sasha Johnson Manning** (*It Is Not For Kings, Lemuel*, premiered last fall at the Tap Room).

Another 'beery' piece was recorded for posterity—**Robert Walker's** boisterous *An Ale Song Book*—together with more pensive reflections from **Judith Bingham** and **Jon Garrett**. Several Christmas carols were also included, like the recent commission from **Jonathan Dove** (*The Kerry Christmas Carol*), **Eriks Esenvalds** (*In The Bleak Midwinter*), and our own **Orin Johnson** (*Maker Of All Things*). Those who attended this season's opening concert will be delighted to learn that that program's commission, *On Friendship*, also by Esenvalds, rounds off the new recording, which should be released around the turn of the year. A film vignette documenting this new recording is available to be viewed via our website, chamberchorus.org.

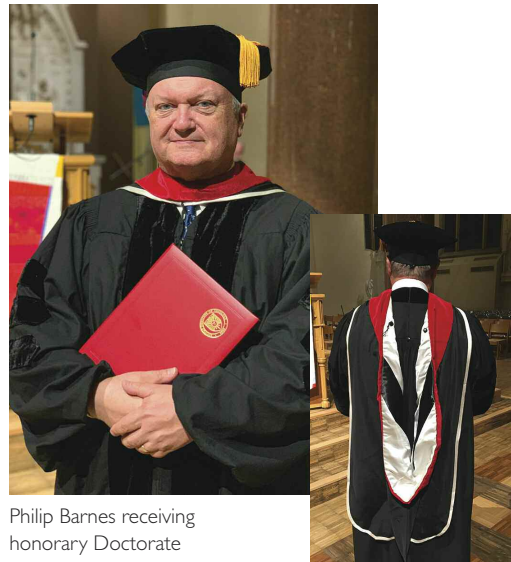
Noteworthy Notes

Barnes Receives Honorary Doctorate

In recognition of his thirty years at the artistic helm of the Chamber Chorus, **Philip Barnes** was earlier this month awarded an honorary Doctorate in Humane Letters from the Aquinas Institute of Theology, at Saint Louis University. The ceremony was part of the Commencement Service that took place in St. Francis Xavier College Church.

Philip was honored for his many contributions to the community by attracting new commissions, performing new works, especially from women composers both current and historical, and from those composers who remain under-represented. Under his direction, the Chorus actively explores many sacred spaces and architectural treasures in the metro area, bringing people to these beautiful and transcendent spaces who otherwise would be unaware.

He has pursued reconstruction of centuries-old sacred music, in some cases partially destroyed by hungry mice—music which would not be heard again without such pursuits. Once such example is a work by Fattorini that was reconstructed by **Prof. Craig Monson** at Washington University. *Repleti*



Philip Barnes receiving honorary Doctorate

Sunt was written for double choir and sung by members of the Chorus at the Commencement Service after Philip was hooded, and conducted by **Orin Johnson**. The Chorus also sang the processional and recessional as well as a psalm setting.

Congratulations to Dr. Philip on being the worthy recipient of this prestigious honor! (Thanks to **Erin Hammond** and Orin Johnson for providing material about this event.)

Reception to Follow the Concert Today

You are invited to stay for a brief reception honoring **Mårten Jansson**, our new Composer-in-Residence from Sweden, who will be in attendance at the concert for his new commissioned work for the Chorus. He will be accompanied by his lyricist for this piece, **Anthony Sylvestri**, joining us from Kansas. We will also recognize **Sarah Bryan Miller** for her close association and support as she completes twenty years attending concerts and writing reviews of the Chorus and **Philip Barnes** for completing 30 years as its artistic director.

New Auditions

Auditions are shortly to be held for several places in the choir. If you, or someone you know, would be interested in finding out more about membership, contact Executive Director **Laura Frank** (636) 458-4343, or visit the relevant pages on our website.

For more information about concerts, tickets or auditions:

PO Box 11588, Clayton, MO 63105
(636) 458-4343
www.chamberchorus.org

Graphic Designer, Amanda Verbeck
Cover Photo, William A. Bascom

Advance Ticket Purchases:

Buy tickets online at our website
www.chamberchorus.org

or contact
Laura Frank, SLCC Exec. Director
(636) 458-4343

For questions, comments or to submit ideas/articles for VoiceMail newsletter:

Gill Waltman, Editor
(314) 941-4455
gillian.waltman@gmail.com