



VOICEMAIL



TALES OF THE UNEXPECTED

At our sixth and final presentation of the 65th season on May 23rd, **Philip Barnes** paired his conversation with **Mary Chapman**, longtime soprano and former assistant



conductor with the Chamber Chorus. They discussed some of the quirkier compositions, clever musical arrangements, and interesting collaborations experienced by the Chorus over the years.

Much of the program was light-hearted and amusing, but there were some darker and more moving pieces too. Mary and Philip agreed that whether silly or serious, this Chorus always sings with great passion and commitment. Philip also commented that musical jokes, as with regular comedy, rely on precise timing and delivery.

Old ‘unexpected’ favorites included Richard Genée’s *Italian Salad*, using musical directions for the libretto, the singers responding accordingly. The imaginative score was shown simultaneously on screen. Another was Z. Randall Stroope’s *Old Horatius Had A Farm*, sung in Latin with impressive animal noises shown with a visual guide for the non-Latin speakers by **Dan Hanson** using images from the ancient world.

Robert Walker’s *Gude Ale* featured a drinking song for two choirs, one of which represented a convincing set of bagpipes! The Chorus has always excelled at music for double choirs “having a conversation”, as Philip calls it. Two of the compositions, Stuart McIntosh’s *Birthday Celebration* and Andrew Carter’s *Two for the Price of One* were more challenging, written with two different songs for each choir.

We heard a beautiful Kyrie from *Missus Sonus Musicae*, a parody mass based on *The Sound of Music* and the classical-sounding *Frater, Ave Atque Vale* written by Monica Richards, of Goth fame. Included were a Trevor Jones movie soundtrack (see page 4) and an informal video recording (thank you **Jane Gilbert!**) of the Chorus singing with Barry Manilow in concert!

This has been a challenging but innovative season. Many thanks to our artistic director for his endless creative ideas, and to Dan Hanson and his contributors for the evocative montages for all six presentations – what Dan called “imagining what music looks like”.

We extend a thank you and debt of gratitude to Third Baptist Church and its staff for hosting the Chamber Chorus this season, especially pastor **Dr. Tommy Simons** and the technically savvy duo of **Brent Johnson** and **Hannah Gallop** for helping us create such an effective online season.

Gill Waltman

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THE
SAINT LOUIS
CHAMBER
CHORUS

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

In December 2019, no one could have predicted what shape our 65th Season would take. And no single person could have created our 65th Season. It has been a real pleasure to watch this very large number of talented, creative people devote their time, energy, love, concern, and effort to develop the live performances we brought to you last year.

Philip Barnes led the effort, and he had invaluable help from assistant conductors **Orin Johnson** and **Andy Jensen**. Board member **Dan Hanson** brought us images; **Brent and Hannah** at Third Baptist brought us technical know-how we did not even know we needed; Board member **Ron Gines** brought us a range of sound and electronic miracles; and other Board members thought of many ways to enhance the performances. The point is... this was a terrific collaborative effort to make up a Season for you that you could enjoy and learn from. These people made the Season up out of whole cloth and on the fly... a huge task.

This VoiceMail tells you about **Deane Thompson** and **Avery Springer**, both of whom retired from the

Board this year. They both were on the Board when I joined in 2011, and I have earned a lot from each of them. Deane's experience as a singer with the Chorus always helped him see things from several relevant perspectives. And I always appreciated Avery's thoughtfulness and great spirit in our conversations.

We also will miss **John Clayton** who loved the Chamber Chorus and passed away recently. John attended virtually every one of our concerts and supported us in many, many ways. The Chorus was better because John and his wife, Jill, were so involved with it. We thank you, John.

And now, looking forward, next Season is a-coming! We are excited, and we hope you will enjoy the whole 66th Season as we continue to do our best to entertain, educate and inspire!

Dick Brickson

All of the presentations from last season are available on our YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/STLchamber

AVERY SPRINGER RETIRES FROM THE BOARD



Avery is originally from LaCrosse, Wisconsin, a city on the Mississippi River. After going east for college, she returned to Wisconsin to pursue her graduate degree in Latin and Greek at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Her goal was to teach those subjects, expecting that to be at the university level.

During Avery's graduate study years, she travelled to Italy to pursue research which began a lifelong love affair with that country and most particularly Rome. While in Madison, Avery met and married **Carl Springer**, also a classicist, despite being warned by a professor that this was an unwise move, as it would be very difficult for both to find a teaching position in the same place.

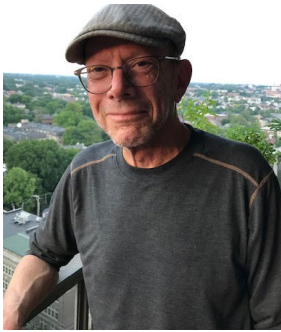
After finishing their PhDs and having their first son, Carl took a position at Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois. Soon thereafter, Avery began teaching part time and continued to do so through the next 13 years with two hiatuses, when the family (now 3 boys and one girl) lived first in Belgium and then in Germany, allowing Carl to pursue his research.

In Madison, Avery also became good friends with fellow classicist **James Lowe** who subsequently moved to

St. Louis to teach at John Burroughs School. When a full time position teaching Latin and Greek opened at the school, he contacted Avery and suggested that she consider applying for the job. Though she never had anticipated teaching at the secondary school level, she was impressed by the Classics Department and learned that JBS offers a level of student engagement and scholarly aptitude that was second to none. Also she met, and was informed by then department chairman **Philip Barnes** that a requirement of the job was to travel with students to Italy every other year – not a problem!

When Avery accepted the position, it meant managing a commuting marriage for several years but eventually Carl was appointed associate dean at Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville. This proximity allowed the growing family to settle in St. Louis. In Avery's first year at JBS, Philip also encouraged her to join the Board of the Chamber Chorus. So for nearly the last quarter century she has been involved in and delighted by the Saint Louis Chamber Chorus. "The music is, of course, sans pareil but also the use of venues all around the area has been a deeply enriching experience which has made St. Louis truly feel like home." After twenty four years of teaching at John Burroughs, Avery has retired but plans to stay connected to St. Louis and the Chorus in the years to come. Her retirement plans include visiting family (especially grandchildren) and travels to Europe, whenever possible.

MARK MANELLI – MUSIC LOVER AND REPORTER



Mark has a long and varied relationship with the Saint Louis Chamber Chorus. A life-long St. Louisan, Mark and his wife, **Suzanne**, who sits on the Chamber Chorus Board, have been subscribers for many years. He has also covered the Chamber Chorus as a reporter and now writes the Chorus's press releases. "I began

covering the Chamber Chorus for St. Louis Public Radio not long after **Philip Barnes** became artistic director and did so for about 14 years. And now I have been writing press releases for each concert for the past 16 years." Mark says it has been exciting to be part of the Chorus's 50th and 60th anniversary seasons, as well as attending various galas and meeting numerous visiting composers. He especially remembers the reception introducing **Melissa Dunphy** as composer-in-residence, saying she brought a unique perspective to her work being a multi-talented performer, as well.

Mark graduated with a degree in psychology from UM-St. Louis, where he and Suzanne met. He worked at a number of professions including selling high-end audio equipment, which fit well with his love of music, before returning to school and eventually landing at St. Louis Public Radio. "My focus at the radio station was the arts. I found it more interesting than straight news, as stories about the arts and organizations like the Chamber Chorus gave listeners a fuller view of

St. Louis." Mark also served for a time as Communications Director for St. Patrick Center, a homeless services agency, and did free-lance public relations work. Before Covid, Mark and Suzanne would search out restaurants near concert venues where Chorus and audience members could meet for dinner following performances.

Suzanne retired from the corporate world last year but continues to teach yoga twice a week. She is also a musician, serving as choir director and organist at St. John's Lutheran Church in South St. Louis, but Mark's musical background is confined to listening. "I grew up with pop, soul and rock...everything from Sinatra and Ella Fitzgerald to the Beatles, Temptations, Aretha Franklin and Bruce Springsteen. Later, I discovered jazz." Mark credits Suzanne and her family for giving him an appreciation of classical music. "But when I met Philip and learned about the Chamber Chorus, I knew I had found something unique. The commitment to commissioning new music and championing female composers not only makes for great listening but is socially important, as well."

Mark's other interests include golf, travel, and classic movies. "It drives Suzanne crazy that I can watch movies over and over again...I've probably seen "The Godfather" 25 times." They are excited to be able to travel again soon, though Mark admits he hasn't missed airports and crowded planes. "I have to believe that someone somewhere is working on a 'Star Trek'-like transporter so that we can just beam to Paris."

SLCC Accompanies Movie Labyrinth

In 2012 the Chorus was invited to record a new Psalm 23 written by **Trevor Jones** for a supernatural mini-series based on the New York Times bestseller, *Labyrinth*, by **Kate Mosse**. Trevor is one of the most respected composers of movie soundtracks, earning several nominations for the Golden Globes and BAFTAs, while the executive producer, Ridley Scott, is one of the most successful filmmakers of his generation. With such pedigrees we knew that we were in illustrious company, so I set about arranging Trevor's music for unaccompanied voices. One cold winter night the singers and I moved into the sanctuary of St. Peter's Church, Ladue, which would serve as our 'studio'. Sound engineer **Daniel Ruder** executed the technical requirements for placing multiple microphones, and the resulting takes were then sent electronically to the mixers in London where the

soundtrack was being assembled. We subsequently gave a public performance of Psalm 23 and included it on our *St. Louis Firsts* CD.

What we had NOT considered was where and how our singing would feature in the finished film, so you can imagine our shock when we found our rendition (in Latin) of "Though I walk through the valley of death, I will fear nothing" used as the defiant Cathars walked into the flames rather than recant before the Albigensian 'crusaders'. The juxtaposition of our music with those grisly images made the scene particularly powerful!

Philip Barnes

[And a quick question - how many of you noticed that Philip's shirts were a different color for each of the six presentations?]

NOTEWORTHY NOTES

DEANE THOMPSON RETIRES FROM SLCC



The Chamber Chorus extends a tremendous thank you to Deane for his many contributions over the years, first as a singer, then as a member of the Board, serving in many roles. We have published a singer highlight about him in a previous newsletter, featured him in an article with two other members about perfect pitch, and enjoyed his own two-part series

of articles about the essential characteristics required to sing a *cappella* choral music.

Deane has sent his own thank you to SLCC. He comments that although he is now retiring from the Board, he retired as a second tenor from the Chorus in September 2005. "Being qualified to be a part of the Chorus was always, during my twenty-four years in the Chorus, almost beyond reach. My perfect pitch was of great benefit when sight-reading the mostly new, unfamiliar and difficult music and helped me overcome my lack of music theory education and familiarity with the foreign languages the Chorus often sang." He also had the challenge of overcoming his Midwestern pronunciation when singing in English!

Deane enjoyed the harmonies, the expression and drama of the music, and the precision-singing all around him. Because the SLCC offers such high-quality classical music sung *a cappella*, Deane wanted to continue his support of this inspiring organization. Following retirement from singing, Deane served in several roles as an SLCC Board member, including as treasurer, keeping the financial records and preparing statements for the monthly Board meetings.

"I sincerely thank Artistic Director **Philip Barnes** for including me in the Chorus and for his amazing, incomparable leadership of the Chorus even beyond the artistic area. I'm also thankful to former artistic directors, **Allen Carl Larson** and **Steven Curtis**. Due to progressive health concerns, my wife Fancine and I have moved from our home of 40 years in Kirkwood, to Aberdeen Heights Assisted Living, also located in Kirkwood."

Deane - we thank you for your many years of expertise, support, and friendship as a former singer and Board member.

Gill Waltman

ANOTHER MOVIE PROJECT AND REVIEW

Several years after our first collaboration, **Trevor Jones** invited us to participate in another project, an independent movie created by his young filmmaker son, **Caspar Seale Jones**. Trevor sent us the outline of an enigmatic part-song called *My Dream Goes On*, which he had written as part of the soundtrack of *To Toyko*. After arranging and rehearsing, we met again to record at St. Peter's Church. Then all went quiet! Trevor explained that independent movies depend upon finding financial backers at each stage causing predictable delays before the finished film is released. Some months later, after the movie picked up nominations and awards at two international film festivals, I learned that Amazon Prime had added *To Tokyo* to its library.

I braced myself for another gory episode accompanied by our voices, but the dreaded scene never came; instead, as the credits rolled at the end, the Chorus was heard reflecting upon the plot and its startling visual images. The part-song was recognizably a piece of the overall cinematic puzzle. The music has yet to be featured in a Chamber Chorus concert, but it is included in our final YouTube presentation of this past season, and at the end of the movie. The review states "With its understated performances, stunning visuals and hypnotic soundtrack, this slow-burn of a horror film is just the thing for fans of the genre looking for something a little different." And if Quentin Tarantino reads this, the Chamber Chorus is available ...

Philip Barnes

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