



# VOICEMAIL

February 2015

## St. Louis “Firsts”

Over the past two decades the Chorus has developed a reputation for commissioning new music; this challenges the singers, stimulates the audience, and shows St. Louis as a center of excellence, contributing to the wider artistic community. Yet the challenge is to make these freshly minted works available to choral enthusiasts around the globe. Publishers may print them, but there is nothing more persuasive than hearing the music come alive in performance. Though we are exploring the possibilities presented by YouTube, copyright issues often prevent us using this medium. The best way to preserve and promote our new music remains the recording of compact discs, and in this we are fortunate to work with Regent Records. This company enjoys worldwide recognition as a specialist in choral (and organ) music, and securing a contract with them is a major achievement for the Chorus.

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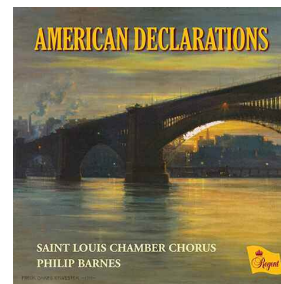
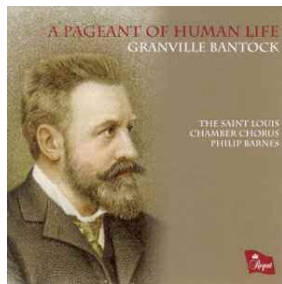
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Major gifts from a longtime supporter of the choir, **Dr. Margaret Albin Wilson**, have made possible not only commissions, but also two CDs with Regent, and the second of these is due to be recorded later in February. On this we will record recent commissions from **Judith Bingham**, **Bob Chilcott**, and **Sydney Guillaume**, to name but a few. The result should be a unique collection of new music that St. Louis audiences experienced first; please consider buying your own copy when it is released later in the year.

Appropriately, the new disc will be called *St. Louis Firsts*. The recording will be made in the warm resonance of Second Presbyterian Church in the Central West End. It will be engineered by **Daniel Ruder**, and the producers will be **Gary Cole** (for Regent) and our own **Martha Shaffer**.

*Philip Barnes*

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# Message from the President

We are already in the second half of our 59th Season! You have already been able to see several steps we have taken to make your concert experience richer and more enjoyable this year. For example, we have re-structured our program notes to be easier for you to follow. We will continue to work on the format of these notes to make them as convenient and as helpful to you during our concerts as we can. If you have recommendations or suggestions, please let me know. We have also replaced the “pre-concert” discussions that many felt were hard to hear and hard to follow with a series of recordings you can listen to from our website (the first was an interview with **Judith Bingham**, the contemporary British composer whose work we performed as a world premiere in October). Earlier this month, we sent our long-term donors special pins recognizing consistent donations over five-, ten- and fifteen-years. If you notice someone with one of these pins at our concerts, take a moment and thank them for their long-term support.

The Chorus plans another recording session later this month so we expect to have a new CD available for you as we approach our 60th season. We'll have more news on that later this year. Please enjoy the last three concerts of this Season. We love putting them on for you, and we hope you continue to enjoy them as you have in the past.

*Dick Brickson*

## Meet the Singers — Jill Ritter Lindbergh

Jill has been singing since she was very young. She has memories of singing solos in front of her church congregation as a little girl with her mother in the front row, ready to feed her the words if she needed them. She learned to pick out harmonies fairly early by sitting next to her mother in church, listening to her sing the alto line.

Jill took piano lessons from early grade school, and started playing French horn in junior high, continuing both through high school. She took voice lessons from a very encouraging and patient teacher, **Carla Roberson**, who was instrumental in coaxing her out of her shell to perform in front of an audience.

She attended Greenville College in Greenville, Illinois, graduating in 2001 with a BA in English, and a minor in Speech Communication and Vocal Music. Jill was privileged to sing in the Greenville College Choir and Chamber Singers, under the expert direction of **Dr. Jeffrey S. Wilson**, who still teaches there.

After graduation Jill moved to St. Louis. In 2003, she began singing as a section leader at Episcopal Church of the Holy Communion, under the direction of **Philip Barnes**. That fall, the Chamber Chorus planned a concert sung by the women only, and Philip asked if she would join them for that concert. She very



Jill Ritter Lindbergh

much enjoyed it, and has been singing with the Chamber Chorus every season since.

Another artistic endeavor that Jill adopted post-college was photography. Since 2001, she has been taking photographs of weddings, actors' headshots, theatrical productions, family portraits, and more. (You can see samples of Jill's work on her website at [www.jillritterphotography.com](http://www.jillritterphotography.com).) By day, Jill has been gaining experience in the banking industry. She is approaching her fifth year with Bank of America, having just accepted a promotion to Operations Analyst in Cash Management.

In 2009, she married Luke Lindberg, who is also a very talented artist. He recently started his own company, KaChing Creative, which does marketing and graphic design work. Jill and Luke met in 2007 while acting in a production of Hamlet. Their best creative collaboration yet, Lillian Jane Lindberg, arrived in August 2012 and she continues to be a great source of joy.

Jill is very thankful for the Chamber Chorus, and the care with which Philip constructs each concert. She says, "I believe being a part of this group has been so good for me--singing is good for the soul. I hope the Chamber Chorus is part of my life for many years to come!"

*Gill Waltman*

## Meet the Singers — Adam Lewis

Adam comes from a very musical family. Both his parents taught piano at various levels, so not participating in music wasn't really an option. He started playing the piano when he was five and was in children's choirs through church and school from an early age. He started playing clarinet in 5th grade and became involved in anything musical that he could.

**J.C. Farrand**, Adam's minister of music, started a youth choir and hand bell choir that allowed him to visit nearly all 50 states with tours and mission trips every summer through high school and into college. Those trips also instilled the power of helping others, which Adam believes helped to shape his current interests.

Adam majored in music theory and composition in college while singing in the university chorale, playing clarinet in band, singing in a barber shop quartet, and accompanying voice students' lessons. After college, he started graduate school at the University of Iowa and sang with the graduate choir *Kantorei* under the direction of **Dr. Timothy Stalter**. This experience solidified his interest in *a cappella* singing and taught him a great deal about singing as an ensemble.

Taking a different tack, Adam completed culinary school in Baltimore, MD, and worked as a pastry chef for several years before deciding to complete a masters' degree in social work at Saint Louis University. Adam says, "While working in restaurants and hotels,



Adam Lewis

I found that I wanted to do more to impact others' lives, so started volunteering at Life Crisis—a 24-hour suicide prevention hotline."

Adam's supervisor was a social worker and she ultimately convinced him to go back to school. This opened his eyes to the needs of those struggling with addiction, and he ended up focusing his practicum experiences on addiction and mental health. Right after school Adam started working as an addictions counselor at an inpatient rehabilitation center. "I feel fortunate to work

with some inspirational individuals who struggle with the disease of addiction."

As a social worker, self care is essential, and being a part of the Chamber Chorus is a part of Adam's regimen. "Singing with Philip and the other choir members has been fantastic. I never know what repertoire is coming next and have been exposed to composers that I might never have encountered otherwise. Given my composition background, the commissions for current composers are especially exciting as we're able to contribute directly to the choral repertoire."

When not singing with the chorus, Adam enjoys time with his husband Leigh and two Doberman pups, Patrick and Elke. His hobbies include crafting (especially crochet projects), puzzles, and cooking at home.

*Gill Waltman*

## Post-Concert Dining

For the past couple of seasons, concert-goers have enjoyed the opportunity to meet after the performance at a pre-arranged restaurant or bar somewhere in the vicinity of each concert. A percentage of each individual's meal purchase is donated back to the SLCC by the restaurant. Please be sure to identify that you are with the Chorus, so that the servers can keep track of those participating.

Thanks to those who met at the Kirkwood Station restaurant and brewery after the December concert. The monies raised are used to support choir activities and receptions to greet visiting composers.

The post-concert venue chosen to follow the Feb 15 performance is Lucas Park Grille. The restaurant is right around the corner from Christ Church Cathedral, just two blocks away, at 1234 Washington Ave.

# Noteworthy Notes

## New Recording Session

Just one week after our February concert the Chorus will reconvene for a performance of a different kind, one that, although private, should be available to everyone within the next twelve months. The British record label REGENT will be recording its fourth CD of the Chamber Chorus, following last year's critical acclaim for our *American Declarations* disc.

This time the focus will be on St. Louis 'firsts,' works that we have either premiered or commissioned, or both. If you've heard our earlier concerts this season, you'll be familiar with some of the repertoire. Included will be the Christmas songs by **Bob Chilcott** and **Francis Pott**, as well as the new cantata by **Judith Bingham** that inaugurated our 59th season. Executive producer **Gary Cole** will fly from England to work with recording engineer **Daniel Ruder**, as we return to the warm acoustic of Second Presbyterian Church in the Central West End to capture the unique sound and work of the Saint Louis Chamber Chorus.

*Philip Barnes*

## Best of 2014 – Review

In the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch's* last Sunday issue of 2014, classical music critic **Sarah Bryan Miller** wrote about great choral music. She referred to the December 21st Chamber Chorus concert held at First Presbyterian Church of Kirkwood:

"Philip Barnes and the St. Louis Chamber Chorus gave a program that sums up what they're about: a carefully chosen, beautifully sung selection of music, much of it unfamiliar, including a pair of commissions. Few cities, particularly of the size of St. Louis, have anything to match them."

## Singing in Tune

Singing in tune combines three basic elements. The first, obviously, is producing vocal sound. The second is listening—hearing the key of the music and then accurately matching the pitches of the voice to it. The third is proper breathing, so that the pitch doesn't go lower (flat) from lack of support, or higher (sharp) from over-singing.

In *a cappella* literature, the singers must rely on their collective sense of pitch. Within each section (alto, bass), singers adjust their individual tone and vibrato to blend into a unison sound. Uniform pronunciation also helps with blend. Slight changes in the shape of the mouth as a singer moves from note to note while singing the same vowel sound can cause a change in pitch. An important skill for *a cappella* singers is "relative pitch"—knowing and remembering the sound of intervals between tones of the scale such as thirds or fifths. Chamber Chorus auditions include a test in which a pitch is played on the piano and the singer is asked to sing a specific pitch at a higher or lower interval. Singers must also recognize these intervals in printed music.

Performances of the Milhaud pieces on today's concert will rely on the chorus members' relative pitch memory. The music is so chromatic that no key signatures are given, just sharps and flats before the individual notes, so the singers are constantly "hearing" the next pitch in their inner ear. The Sandstrom piece presents another problem—a special vocal effect in which individual voice parts are interrupted by humming a non-specific pitch as low as the singer can go, and then accurately joining back into the harmony.

One of the biggest factors in singing in tune, either alone or with a group, is experience. It's difficult to be mindful of pitch, notes, dynamics, pronunciation, and breathing simultaneously, but the more a group sings together, the more collective resources are there for successful live performances.

*Martha Shaffer*

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