



# VOICEMAIL

## PROGRESSIONS

Our new season bears the title of 'Progressions' since we are not only marking our progress out of the pandemic and back to our *cappella* tradition, but also complementing some past commissions with several wholly new works. Audiences and singers will be able to chart how far we've come as an organization, not only in advocacy for new music, but also in championing women composers from around the globe. And besides that, it's also a pleasure to revisit some of the wonderful works that have been written expressly with you and our choir in mind. So, look forward to a season peopled with friends old and new, presented in some of our favorite venues, notable for their architecture and traditions, located in St. Louis City, and the counties of both St. Louis and St. Charles.

As always, we don't neglect the established choral 'canon', performing music by landmark composers from diverse backgrounds and periods. For example, at Christmas we will present the complete "Christmas Story Cantata" by **Hugo Distler**, written in the face of Nazi aggression. Following the example of his fellow Lutheran, **J. S. Bach**, this modern German composer employed verses of a familiar chorale to punctuate his account of the birth of Jesus.

A month prior to that festive concert, we reveal the broad influences upon the Renaissance master, **Orlandus Lassus**, through a complete performance of his 'Good Wine' Mass – a full bodied blend without too much fruit! And to begin the season, we sing a stirring motet that was written for King's College, Cambridge, by **Edward Naylor** – a name unfamiliar to many people now, but in his day a major figure in English music. These three pieces alone support our mission "not only to entertain, but to educate and inspire."

This season will also introduce **Kerensa Briggs**, our latest composer-in-residence and the sixth holder of this post. Like **Sasha Johnson Manning**, Kerensa is British. She shares another similarity with Sasha being steeped in the choir experience from a very young age. (Read more on page 3.) Her first commission for us will be premiered at our February concert, so mark your calendars now, to hear her distinctive compositional voice and greet her in person.

**Philip Barnes**



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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

It feels as if we have travelled unusual roads and paths for the last three seasons. In 2019-20, we had to cancel some concerts. In 2020-21, we had no traditional, live concerts; we replaced them with programs that we hoped were interesting and educational – but very, very different. In 2021-2022, we returned to live concerts, but explored new paths with musical accompaniment for virtually each concert.

While the last three seasons have been interesting, challenging and a bit of an adventure, I expect many of you, like me, will be happy that our 67th season feels more like a return home to “normal.” I look forward to a full season of live concerts in interesting venues, featuring complex, challenging *a cappella* music performed as only the Chorus can do. This season, as we have for years, we will again feature women

composers. As part of that focus, we are excited to introduce you to the music of our new Composer-in-Residence, **Kerensa Briggs**.

Many of us have invested our time, energy, love, and effort in the St. Louis Chamber Chorus for many years – including you, as subscribers, as members of the audience, as singers in the Chorus and as members of the Board. We do that because we share the Chorus's values – that it is important “not only to entertain, but to educate and inspire.” The Chorus worked creatively to achieve those goals in very different circumstances over the last three seasons. Now, I welcome the new season, with the opportunity for the Chorus to entertain, educate and inspire us the way they have for years and years. Welcome Home!

**Dick Brickson**

## SHANA ALBRIGHT – PROFESSIONAL FUNDRAISER AND CONCERT COORDINATOR—



Shana has been involved behind the scenes with the Chamber Chorus since 2011. Despite her position on the audience side of the aisle, music has been a driving force in her life for as long as she can remember.

Shana grew up surrounded by musicians. The home she grew up in served as a practice space for various family

member's bands, which ranged from country music to rock and metal. From her early teens on, much of her free time was spent finding and listening to music of all kinds.

She gravitated toward visual art. Shana graduated from Fontbonne University with bachelor's degrees in studio art (concentration in metal smithing) and communication. She received her master's degree from St. Louis University. After graduation she got a job as a grant writer, and for many years early in her career also taught as an adjunct instructor at Fontbonne and Saint Louis University. She's served on several boards including Trailnet and Perennial St. Louis. For the last 7 years she's worked at Easterseals Midwest as the Vice President of Development.

The Chamber Chorus came into her life through **Daniel Ruder** in around 2009, after he was hired to record the live performances. Shana and Daniel met when they

were both seniors in college, Shana at Fontbonne and Daniel at Webster University.

A few months into Daniel's first season as the audio engineer for the Chorus, Shana attended a performance with him at a church near their home in south city. Her memory of the experience was other-worldly, and she went on to attend every concert left in the season. These were performances that were precise and beautiful, but could also be irreverent and funny, haunting, or meditative. She also loved getting to see such a variety of historic churches and buildings, as well as the occasional boxing gym, bar, or cemetery. Soon she was attending every concert.

Shana's professional work as a fundraiser led to many conversations with then Executive Director **Linda Ryder** about grants or other fundraising projects. This in turn led to volunteering at the sales desk during concerts, assisting with the 60th anniversary gala event, grant writing or other fundraising work, and most recently accepting a part-time position as the concert coordinator.

While her nonprofit work takes up most of her time, Shana and Daniel are renovating an old building they bought, originally built in 1876, and in need of serious repair. Once completed, Shana looks forward to building a metal smithing and art studio in the lower level of the building that will one day hold Daniel's recording studio. In the meantime, she does a lot of sewing, rock climbing, and baking.

**Gill Waltman**

## CAROLINE IBNABDELJALIL - SLCC SINGER AND ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR



Caroline was born in New Hampshire but grew up in a small town in Missouri. She began her formal musical journey when she was 6 years old and took private piano lessons. She began singing from the time she could talk and sang in church, elementary school plays and at the top of her lungs at home! She began playing French horn in the school band in 6th grade and the same year joined

the 8th grade jazz band because no other student could play piano! In high school, Caroline joined the choir and began taking vocal lessons. During her freshman year, her parents took her to “Phantom of the Opera” at the Fabulous Fox Theatre – a life-changing experience.

By her junior year, Caroline decided to pursue a career in music. She earned an Associate of Arts degree in Music at the nearby junior college transferring to Southeast Missouri State University receiving a Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Music Education in Vocal Performance and Vocal Music Education, graduating Cum Laude. She studied under **Dr. Chris Goeke** and **Dr. John Egbert** and received phenomenal training in vocal performance and choral music education. She won the American Choral Director Association Conducting competition.

While at Southeast, she was introduced to early music by longtime patron of the Chamber Chorus, **Jeff Noonan**. They performed together in various radio appearances and recitals and in a concert series for “3 sopranos and lute”. He urged her to audition for SLCC, and as they say, “the rest is history”.

Right before starting her teaching career in 2001, Caroline sang at an Opera Summer Camp at Georgia State in Atlanta. One of the directors gave advice that has lasted throughout her professional life as a musician, “Never stop singing and listening to the music you grew up with. Remain true to your roots and keep a part of that music in your voice. That’s what makes you unique. You’ll be giving yourself to your audience and that is what they’ll always come back for...” This philosophy is how Caroline approaches her teaching as well. She has been the Director of Choral Activities at University City High School since 2002.

Caroline has directed close to 30 musicals, over 100 choral concerts and performances, and organized a variety of St. Louis Suburban district events. Her choirs and students have received several outstanding awards and honors and sang in the world premiere of Sydney Guillaume’s “Alleluia Amen” with the SLCC. She has performed in countless weddings, churches, and gigs all over the city, watching and learning from **Philip Barnes**, **Orin Johnson**, **Mary Chapman** and **Andy Jensen**, and building relationships with fellow singers, musicians and friends.

Her husband Fayçal, originally from Morocco, is a foreign language teacher at UCHS where they met. He is also a tennis pro at Missouri Athletic Club and has offered Caroline his unwavering support ever since. They have three children, Zayn, Ayden and Amelia and love to travel, spend time at the beach, zoo, pool, and different parks around St. Louis.

Caroline says “I feel so fortunate living in a city that is so musically close knit. I’ve learned from the best by watching my peers direct their own concerts. I am absolutely thrilled to be the new assistant conductor of the SLCC!”

**Gill Waltman**

## NEW COMPOSER-IN RESIDENCE - KERENSA BRIGGS

Back in 1998 we began a program, somewhat inaccurately dubbed a ‘residency’, in which a contemporary composer would write works specifically for us and St. Louis audiences over a period of several years. To begin with, the success of this initiative was largely due to the cooperative spirit and enthusiasm of the first such ‘Composer-in-Residence’, **Sasha Johnson Manning**, and it is not surprising that we have continued to commission her long after her official position with us ended. She was followed by a succession of outstanding artists from around the world, and this new season will reprise some of their contributions to us.

This season will also introduce the sixth holder of this post - **Kerensa Briggs**, who like Sasha is British. Kerensa’s formative years were spent singing in the girls’ choir at Gloucester Cathedral where her father

**David Briggs** was organist and choirmaster. We should note that the SLCC performed his “When Waters Kiss” back in the 49th season, so this appointment certainly reminds us of the march of time!

Following Gloucester, Kerensa studied at Cambridge, where she sang in the top-notch Trinity College Choir, and then undertook graduate studies at King’s College, London (where our own **Philip Barnes** also studied). Since then, she has written music for performance in such celebrated settings as St. Paul’s Cathedral and Rome’s Sistine Chapel. The characterization of her music by the New York Times as “poignant, ambivalent, quietly devastating” is but one of many plaudits, and we are confident her new music for St. Louis will garner similar praise.

**Philip Barnes**

# NOTEWORTHY NOTES

## LOCATING SYLVIA PANKHURST

While visiting England this summer, **Philip Barnes** was asked to record a Schubert song for an upcoming documentary on the life and legacy of Sylvia Pankhurst. Coming from a family synonymous with Britain's suffragette movement, Sylvia was the most radical advocate for women's rights one century ago. Her father loved to sing "Who Is Sylvia?" to her, and this was the song that Philip sang for the opening credits of the film, "Locating Sylvia Pankhurst." Coincidentally, Philip's great grandmother was also a contemporary of the Pankhurst family in Manchester, and she supported the campaign for women's votes. And, by the way, Philip's daughter is named ... Sylvia!



*Philip Barnes with sound engineer, Adrian Rhodes*

## SLCC SECOND GENERATION SINGERS!

Singing in the opening concert of the new season will be two new members with a special tie to the Chorus. To our knowledge, this is the first time in sixty-seven years that 'second generation singers' have performed with us. **Sienna Haubein** and **Madelyn Munsell** follow in the footsteps of their mothers, Carrie and Suzanne respectively. (Suzanne still sings with us from time to time!). Both recall attending our concerts when they were very small, and this contributed to their love of choirs. Sienna then studied at Luther College in Iowa, famous for its choral tradition, while Madelyn graduated from Boston's Berklee School of Music, where our former Composer-in-Residence, **Yakov Gubanov**, had taught. It's a small world indeed.

## WAVES OF GALLIPOLI - ON YOUTUBE

When we commission a new piece, it is always our intention to add to the wider choral repertoire; so, it is gratifying if another choir follows our lead and performs a piece that we premiered. This has now happened with "Waves of Gallipoli" by a past Composer-in-Residence, **Melissa Dunphy**. A spectacular recording by the Vancouver-based men's choir, **Chor Leoni**, has recently been uploaded to YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MCrXCpJjTnI>

[Subscriptions are on sale now](#) for *Progressions*. After 18 months without a live performance, our 67th season sees the choir return to its *a cappella* traditions. We can revisit some of our past commissions and hear intriguing works like **David Matthew's** *Aequam Memento* (an appeal not to waste good wine), **Ivan Moody's** *O Viridissima Virgo* and *The Music of Light* that **Steven Stucky** completed in his final days. This is a golden opportunity to experience afresh some of the most distinctive music the Chorus has ever commissioned, alongside brand-new works from **Kerensa Briggs** and **Dobrinka Tabakova**. Audiences will hear what makes this choir so distinctive and appreciate its significant contribution to the wider choral repertoire. You are warmly invited to take your place among their number.

For concert dates and locations, and to purchase subscriptions, visit our [website](#)

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