



VOICEMAIL

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Announcing New SLCC Composer-in-Residence

Born in the Ukraine, trained in Moscow, and now teaching in Boston, Mass., **Yakov Gubanov** has agreed to serve as our new Composer-in-Residence. His pedigree is peerless, first as a student of **Dmitri Shostakovich**, then as a world expert on music for early Soviet Cinema, and more recently as a highly regarded composer teacher at the Berklee College of Music.

In this issue:

New Composer-in-Residence

Message from the President

Concert Previews

Meet the Singers – Charlie Grames

Noteworthy Notes

Such a wealth of experience, though, included very little choral music; it is only in recent years that Yakov has turned his own compositional talents to writing for choirs. So he has eagerly grasped the opportunity to forge a close relationship with one of America's leading chamber choirs, especially after our first collaboration, his carol *The Garden of Roses* (heard on our latest Christmas CD). The three-year 'residency' will see him writing a new piece for the Chamber Chorus each season; the first is scheduled for May 2012, and addresses the martyrdom of the last Tsar and Tsarina of Russia.



Yakov Gubanov

"This will be my first commission as SLCC's Composer-in-Residence. I consider this appointment one of the most fortunate turns in my career as a composer; it will allow me to work in close touch with this prominent choir; many members of which have already become close friends. The audiences in St. Louis are sincerely responsive and extremely sensitive to music, and this is a powerful inspiration for me. I look forward impatiently to my next trip to St. Louis in May and hope that my new work will contribute to the music life of this beautiful city."

We eagerly await this new piece, and Yakov's visit to prepare for the premiere.

Philip Barnes

The Saint Louis Chamber Chorus

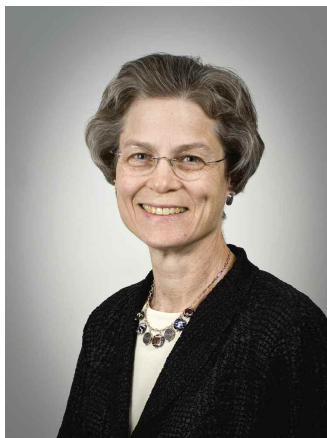
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Message from the President



I am very pleased to welcome you to today's concert, *A King's Christmas*, the third concert in the 56th season of the St. Louis Chamber Chorus. You may have enjoyed hearing broadcasts of the service of *Lessons and Carols from King's College, Cambridge* but you may not have had the opportunity to experience this traditional English service in a live setting. Our venue for today's concert, the lovely English-collegiate-style St. Vincent de Paul Chapel, is the perfect St. Louis setting for music commissioned for the occasion. We are delighted to return to this beautiful space and to offer you once again the opportunity to engage your mind and refresh your soul with glorious choral music celebrating the holiday season.

If you are new to the St. Louis Chamber Chorus I extend a warm welcome and hope that you will attend our future concerts. Having said that, please note that our next concert, *A Chorus Carouse*, which will take place on February 19, 2012 at the Schlafly Tap Room, is already sold out. We do have tickets available for the final two concerts in this season. Details are available in the program book or on our website at www.chamberchorus.org.

Thank you for being with us today, and on behalf of the members of the Chorus and the board of directors I wish you a very happy holiday season.

Barbara Uhlemann
SLCC President

Concert Previews

After two concerts this season that featured new editions of old music—a motet by **Palestrina** and a ballade by **Ockeghem**—we now come to three concerts that feature entirely new music. Our Christmas program includes **Sasha Johnson Manning's** ingenious and infectious marrying of Old and New World carols, *Ding Dong! Merrily On High*, and Longfellow's poem, *Christmas Bells*.

Then, in a remarkable change of gear, we present in February a new song cycle appropriate to our venue, the Schlafly Tap Room; the composer is renowned British composer (and beer enthusiast) **Robert Walker**.

It will be a pleasure to welcome to St. Louis both Robert and another composer, **Sydney Guillaume**, who will travel here in April for the world premiere

of an evocation of Haiti. Both words and music for this piece have been commissioned from Sydney and his father, **Gabriel Guillaume**, a widely recognized poet. Their composition forms the climax of a concert devoted to travel, which takes us to islands as different as Haiti and Iceland, and to wild, almost mythical destinations, like Mont Blanc, Samarkand, and the Orient.

Our setting for this performance is only slightly less exotic—the magnificent sanctuary of First Presbyterian Church in Kirkwood! This concert offers all of the glamour, but none of the discomfort, especially if you bring your very own SLCC cushion to the venue.

Philip Barnes

Meet the Singers — Charlie Grames

Charlie Grames was born in Brigham City, Utah, and moved around the country quite a bit before his family settled in the St. Louis area. A constant in his house, however, was music. His parents were avid listeners of classical music, shaping Charlie's musical interests from an early age. He has fond memories of his Mom singing while doing housework or cooking. She also sang regularly in the church choir. Charlie was puzzled that his father, who had a lovely, but rarely heard, tenor voice normally sang in a bass monotone.

Charlie sang in the children's choir in church and graduated to the adult choir in junior high, starting as an alto and working his way to baritone over the next year. Charlie says "I also chose to play bassoon in the orchestra, since a guy singing in the chorus was reason for ridicule at my school." He moved to choral singing in high school and sang in a few musicals and "composed the program for our Thespian induction my senior year—it was campy but fun!"

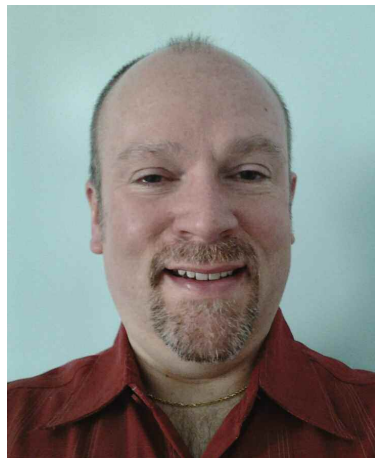
He toyed with the idea of pursuing a music major in college, but Charlie says he had always been a math and science geek, so he pursued computer science at the recommendation of a high school physics teacher. "It turned out to be a great combination of scientific application and art form, and I have never regretted the choice." Charlie graduated from Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville with Bachelor of Science degrees in both Mathematics and Computer Science. However, he continued to pursue musical endeavors while in school, singing in both the SIUE Concert Chorale and Community Chorus with **Leonard Van Camp**.

His first job was at McDonnell Douglas Corporation (now The Boeing Company) as a software engineer in flight simulation, building aircrew training devices. Charlie always received curious looks when he tried to describe his job, so he finally gave up and started telling people that he built multi-million dollar video games. "Not only was that technically true, but it earned me a lot of 'cool' points from my peers."

After moving to Florissant after college, Charlie attended St. Barnabas Episcopal Church, whose

choir was directed by **Bruce Vantine**. He sang in the choir and joined the Bel Canto chorus, also directed by Dr. Vantine. This association led to a number of seasons of participation in the Cornerstone Chorale and Brass.

St. Barnabas led Charlie to his wife, Sandy. "We got engaged six weeks after we began dating and married nine months later. Many have commented on our whirlwind courtship, but we have been married for 23 years, so feel we have stood the test of time."



Charlie Grames

Later, Charlie sang with the Bach Society of St. Louis under **Dennis Sparger** for ten years. During that time, they started raising their family and began attending the Episcopal Church of the Holy Communion in University City. The children's activities ultimately required a hiatus from choral singing other than the church choir. At that time, Charlie met **Philip Barnes** when he replaced **Stuart McIntosh** as choir director at Holy Communion. Some time after the family relocated to St. Charles, they looked for a church closer to home. Philip informed

Charlie that if he no longer planned to sing in the church choir that he needed to join the Chamber Chorus! Charlie accepted his offer and has now been in the Chorus for eight years.

The family now includes daughter Sarah, 19, a sophomore at the Missouri University of Science and Technology ("a computer science major: yay!"), daughter Sophie, 16, a junior at St. Charles West High School, and full/part-time live-in "sons" Francis Ackumey and Thompson Amonoo, both from Ghana. Charlie continues to work at Boeing as a software engineering manager, and also sings in the Powerhouse praise band at the First United Methodist Church of St. Charles, a very different musical experience than Chamber Chorus.

Charlie says, "The St. Louis Chamber Chorus has provided a wonderful opportunity to pursue my musical outlets. The repertoire is challenging and unusual, and my fellow choristers are both very accomplished musicians and wonderful people. I have learned much and am grateful to be part of a group of such caliber."

Gill Waltman

Noteworthy Notes

News from Former Composers-in-Residence

As we introduce our new Composer-in-Residence, news arrives of his two predecessors. **Sasha Johnson Manning**, who inaugurated these 'residencies' in 1998, has received a major commission from the BBC not only to write a major new work for Holy Week 2013, but also to provide incidental music for a series of radio dramas.

Her successor, **Clare Maclean** has recently been the focus of a new CD on the Australian 'Tall Poppies' label. The Sydney Chamber Choir has recorded a second disc devoted to her music (the first was issued in 1995), and among the works recorded are two works Clare wrote for the SLCC, *Os anthos chortou* and *Vive in Deo*, as well as two which we introduced to North American audiences, *In the Year that King Uzziah Died* and *We Welcome Summer*. The Sydney choir performs all these works, as well as Clare's new *Osanna Mass*, with passion and precision; their new CD [Tall Poppies 218] is available through their website.

Philip Barnes



Philip Barnes with Christine Diepenbrock, after the concert at the Abbey

CD Sales & Reviews

The wait is over! The new SLCC Christmas CD, *Christmas from Saint Louis*, is now available for \$20. Pick yours up at the intermission or after today's concert. In celebration of the new release, we are offering a special on all of our other CDs as well. Buy any combination of three CDs (except for new Christmas CD) for only \$20.

We highly recommend all of our CDs for holiday gift giving, but for unbiased recommendations visit our website to read the latest complimentary reviews from Gramophone Magazine, The St. Louis Post-Dispatch, and International Record Review.

Ancestral Ties

Among the audience members at the first concert of the season was **Christine Diepenbrock**, a junior at Washington University whose ancestor (uncle of her great, great grandfather) was composer **Alphons Diepenbrock**.

Christine, whose major is molecular biology and biochemistry, is planning to pursue a career in patent law. She plays cello in Washington University's Symphony Orchestra and plays the guitar and ukulele for fun. Christine also sings at church where she met soprano **Jill Clayton** and was introduced to the Chamber Chorus. This was Christine's third SLCC concert. "The concept of choosing pieces based on the venue was entirely new to me, as was the chance to hear a group of this caliber on a regular basis; it is easily one of my favorite parts of St. Louis."

For more information about concerts, tickets or auditions:

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