



VOICEMAIL



PROGRESSIONS THEME ENDS WITH 'DEATH TO LIFE'

The last concert of the season was held in the Shaw neighborhood on the Memorial Day weekend at St. Margaret of Scotland Church. In his concert review, KDHX radio critic **George Yeh** quoted remarks by SLCC artistic director **Philip Barnes** who described the necessity of experiencing music live and in person, as opposed to via recordings and even the radio, which require condensing the sound for transmission. Audiences can only appreciate the extremes of soft and loud passages when they are in the same space as the musicians themselves.

The repertoire opened with an early work, "Salvator Mundi", by Thomas Tallis, which was then followed by a lament for Tallis by William Byrd, one of his pupils. Originally composed for solo voice and instruments, here it was sung by over 50 unaccompanied voices.

Included on the program was the first SLCC performance of "O Saviour of the World" by Frederick Ouseley, a 19th century British composer and clergyman, and "Who Shall Separate Us?" by Sir James MacMillan, also British. This was composed as a funeral anthem for Queen Elizabeth II, setting music to one of Her Majesty's favorite biblical passages from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Works by three women composers well-known to our choir were featured. "Ode to a Savior" was the second SLCC commission from **Kerensa Briggs**, our newest composer-in-residence. This work sets the last of the choral odes from Sophocles' "Antigone" in a fresh translation by Philip Barnes.

A moving composition, "Waves of Gallipoli," written by **Melissa Dunphy**, a former composer-in-residence, highlights one of the most tragic campaigns in British military history from World War 1. The text incorporates epitaphs of fallen young soldiers from Australia and New Zealand, and Dunphy interweaves her mournful music with the imitated sounds of waves on the nearby beaches. (See page 4.)

Finally, **Sasha Johnson Manning** (pictured) traveled from England to experience the performance of her "Requiem," written for the SLCC in installments over eight consecutive years after becoming our first composer-in-residence. It comprised the entire second half of the concert.

Unlike many requiem composers this opus relies not on a solely religious Latin text, but includes English and Spanish passages, and combines modern poetry (Dickinson, Wilde, Whitman) and a psalm with the liturgical Latin movements.

Yeh remarked that this concert was fully satisfying and made for a strong conclusion to the SLCC's current season.

Gill Waltman



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THE SAINT LOUIS CHAMBER CHORUS

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT Welcome to our 68th Season!

I look forward to our newest season, *A Choral Atlas*. We will take you to countries, spaces, and different time periods around the world. I encourage you to experience the Chorus in many different ways this season.

For me, the most enjoyable way is live, in concert. Live concerts offer a unique experience. You share them with your family and friends. You feel them differently because of the unique acoustics of the venues we sing in and because the live sound surrounds you in ways you can't duplicate anywhere else. At many of our concerts, you get to meet the talented composers who have written the music you will hear. For example, this year, we have invited **Kerensa Briggs**, our current Composer-in-Residence, and **Melissa Dunphy** to attend our various concerts. And you get to see the joy, effort, and energy of the singers while they are singing and the pleasure and release (and sometimes relief) as they complete each piece.

I also encourage you to become a season subscriber to our live concerts. One very practical way that becoming a season subscriber helps you experience the live concerts is that you will likely enter all of the season dates on your calendar now. That way, they become a priority, and you won't inadvertently forget that a concert is coming up – and you can more easily plan your activities around each of them.

Finally, I also encourage you to experience the Chorus through our twelve recordings. Many of you already find us easily available online on Spotify, on Apple Music and other streaming sources. For the convenience of those of you who like CDs, we continue to make our recordings available in a CD format on our website (www.chamberchorus.org) and at our concerts.

I look forward to seeing you at each of this season's concerts!

Dick Brickson

CHANGING ROLES



Thanks to **Laura Frank** for her many years of devoted service to our organization. Laura served on the Board of Directors and accepted the position of Executive Director in 2017 when **Linda Ryder** retired. She held this position until 2020, stepping

down to become Director of Advancement. For the next three years, Laura diligently wrote grant applications, prepared quarterly/annual reports for granting organizations, pursued new funding opportunities, and oversaw the annual fund. She also produced numerous publications such as the season brochure and program booklet.

Outside of her time with the Chorus, Laura enjoys attending cultural events in St. Louis, singing, exercising, cooking, and engaging in almost any outdoor activity. She is a nature lover and an adoring mom of three sons.

Laura has resigned her current position but will remain a firm SLCC advocate and concertgoer. "I will miss working with the singers and all of the wonderful people associated with the Chorus, but I am still a big fan and supporter! It's been an honor to serve this cultural gem in St. Louis and I won't stray far."

President **Dick Brickson** put it aptly when he said that we will all miss Laura's humor, her dedication, and her joy in helping us make our music. **Philip Barnes** added that it is always bittersweet to say farewell to someone who has been central to what we do, but it does remind us how fortunate we are to have the energy, talent, and enthusiasm of many folks who work to support our mission in diverse ways. We never take their contributions for granted!



Katie Sandquist took over from Laura as Executive Director in July 2020 and is now commuting between St. Louis and Chicago because of her husband's job.

Katie has a background in mathematics and computer science and in software and database design. Knowing

how to apply technology to plan and execute various activities provides an excellent skillset for her role with the Chorus. When she is not commuting between cities, she may be found reading, hiking, and exercising – often with her family and their two dogs.

Katie will continue her relationship with SLCC as its Administrative Manager with responsibility for maintaining the accounts, records, and software needs, and supporting **Nancy Burstein** as she takes over as Executive Director. (See facing page.)

Philip Barnes commented that it's always a sign of strength when an organization can attract and embrace skilled personnel to realize its mission. Linda Ryder served the Chorus initially as a board member before beginning her long tenure as Executive Director, and this model was repeated with the service of Laura Frank. When Laura took on the challenge of Advancement Director, Katie Sandquist stepped in, bringing new skills to support the choir's operations. "Working with the artistic team, coordinating with dozens of artists, and thus producing a concert series – these are challenges that can only be met by seasoned and skilled individuals, exemplified by Nancy, Katie, and our many volunteers. They are the reason why the Chorus remains strong as an organization."

NANCY BURSTEIN - NEW SLCC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Nancy Burstein, a native of St. Louis, is an actor rather than a singer with a strong background in theater arts. She got her first taste of theater at the Mark Twain Institute Summer Stock program starting as a 10-year-old, and graduated from Clayton High School

where she continued her love of the art of acting. As a graduate of the University of Missouri-Columbia she earned a bachelor's degree in Communications with an emphasis in Journalism. She continued her love of drama working backstage on many productions in college.

Nancy also has a background in retail management, working for The Gap. She worked as administrative support staff for the School District of University City while working behind the scenes with the high school band and as costume director of the Spring Musicals for the last 21 years.

When asked about her dedication to the Drama Department, she replied "I was fortunate to have such a wonderful upbringing and experience in theater, at the time being the youngest person in my high school ever to be inducted into the National Thespian Society. I wanted to share my knowledge and enthusiasm with the students at U City High so that they would have the opportunity to have as much fun as I did when growing up".

Nancy has been married to her husband Jay for 41 years. She met him when he was a customer at The Gap and broke her hard and fast rule of 'never date a customer'. They married less than one year later, and together they have two grown sons Dan and Terry, daughter-in-law Katie and just recently, a beautiful grandson Jack, who is 3 months old.

Nancy has spent most of her life promoting the Arts and is looking forward to her new position as Executive Director of the Saint Louis Chamber Chorus. Her responsibilities will include marketing and daily communications as well as concert preparation and promotion, grant writing, advertising and publicity, donations, social media, and subscriptions.

For the past several months, Nancy has been spending time working with past Executive Director **Katie Sandquist** and former Development Director **Laura Frank** who provided a wealth of knowledge and shared their passion for working with the Chorus. "I hope to continue to promote this wonderful organization and its singers with the same tradition of excellence and enthusiasm."

In her spare time, Nancy loves to read both biographical and fiction novels, do needlepoint, and cook extraordinarily decadent and intricate recipes. She says these include Beef Wellington with mushroom duxelles, six-layer chocolate espresso cake with white chocolate ganache, and a recipe for veal and pistachio pâté from her all-time favorite chef and restaurateur, the late Fio Antognini of Fio's La Fourchette. Nancy says it is a labor of love to cook for her friends and family.

Gill Waltman

MAPPING THE MUSIC WITH OUR CHORAL ATLAS

Our new season, true to its title, takes us around the globe in search of engaging and uplifting works written for a *cappella* voices in many different styles. As is our custom, each program demonstrates that great music comes from men and women alike and features contemporary composers like **Kerensa Briggs** and **Melissa Dunphy** who are both writing new pieces expressly for us. They complement historical pioneers, such as Fanny (Mendelssohn) Hensel and Agnes Tyrrell, and composers already well established in their home countries, such as **Clare Maclean** (Australia) and **Raminta Serksnyte** (Lithuania). Side by side with these inspired women will be canonical works by such giants as Benjamin Britten, Carlos Chavez, and Franz Liszt. Our generous size allows the Chamber Chorus to present works written not only for one, but also for multiple choruses. And we are unique in this: where else will you hear such expansive and layered music from the Renaissance to the present day?

One of the most attractive features of these concerts is our marriage of repertoire and location. Once again, we will take you to some of St. Louis's most beautiful buildings and introduce you not only to their physical beauty, but also their distinct acoustics. It will be a particular delight to rediscover The Shrine of St. Joseph, which we've not visited in decades. All these structures are, in a way, our instruments, and we 'play' them to show them and our repertoire at their best.

Opening the season, we demonstrate how choral music is central to the nations that touch the Baltic Sea. Some composers may be familiar to you (though perhaps not via their choral writing) - Brahms, Grieg, and Nielsen - but others will be a revelation. Small wonder that our mission is "not only to entertain, but to educate and inspire."

Philip Barnes

NOTEWORTHY NOTES

PRAISE FROM A LONGTIME SLCC SUBSCRIBER!



Madelyn Gray came to St. Louis in 1990 to become Principal of 11th and 12th grades at John Burroughs School, met **Philip Barnes**, a colleague at the school, and attended her first Saint Louis Chamber Chorus concert that very year.

“As a native New Yorker, I had attended wonderful choral concerts

at Riverside Church and was absolutely thrilled to hear the Saint Louis Chamber Chorus when I moved here. In the last thirty-three years I don’t think I’ve missed more than three of those concerts. What a brilliant sound, what an amazing repertoire! Philip Barnes has brought both previously ignored choral pieces and new choral creations to the world. I could say that I have no words to describe the effect that the concerts have had on my heart and mind. The music has brought to the audience depths of grief, joy, hope, renewal, and the beautiful miracle of the human voice.”



“WAVES OF GALLIPOLI” CONNECTION

A visit to an ancestor’s grave, and to the various other cemeteries, both Empire and Ottoman, that pepper the Gallipoli peninsula, prompted **Philip Barnes** to invite **Melissa Dunphy** to write her “Waves of Gallipoli,” a lament for the lost soldiers from her native Australia.

An extraordinary coincidence then took place. To provide a cover for her piece, Melissa scoured the archives of the Imperial War Museum for a photograph to suggest ‘the fog of war.’ She settled upon a hazy image of British soldiers running at the Turkish guns; from the tens of thousands of possible images, she had selected men from the 6th Battalion of the Manchester Regiment charging forward in early August, 1915 most of whom were killed. Somewhere, either in that image or just out of view, would have been Private Douglas Gray, Philip’s great uncle!



Sasha at Sasha’s

The culmination of our 67th season was the visit by Sasha Johnson Manning, the first of six ‘Composers-in-Residence’ who have worked with the Chorus. She joined us for a repeat performance of her landmark “Requiem” that was subsequently recorded for Regent Records. This introduced the work to a wider audience, and during her visit she gave an in-depth interview about the work to Julie Schuster of Classic 107.3 radio (<https://soundcloud.com/raf-stl/chamber-chorus>) but the best way to appreciate this major work was in a live performance, which Sasha attended.

Prior to the concert day, Sasha was taken by Chorus members to her namesake wine bar on Shaw Avenue and following the performance various singers and audience members dined with her at a South American restaurant in Maplewood.

Her visit also included several opportunities to catch up with old friends and board members, and she joked that St. Louis contributed both to her artistic imagination and her waistline!

Philip Barnes

CLASSICS CONCERT ANNOUNCEMENT

Subscribers will have the opportunity to attend not six, but seven, performances by the Chorus this season, because prior to our ‘regular’ concert in the spring, on Friday 5th April we will sing at the annual conference of North America’s largest regional association for classicists (“CAMWS”), meeting at Washington University. Subscribers may attend this private performance to hear four odes from Sophocles’ *Antigone*, as translated by our own **Philip Barnes**, including a world premiere from **Melissa Dunphy**. It should whet the appetite for our public performance of such Greek settings, which will take place at Graham Chapel two days later.

For more information about concerts, tickets or auditions:

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