



The Sixty-fifth Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,609th Concert

Davidson Fine Arts Chorale

James Dunaway, *conductor*

Paul Hennessy, *pianist*

March 18, 2007
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Part I

Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548–1611)

Ecce nunc benedicite Dominum

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

Regina coeli

Gioacchino Rossini (1792–1868)

Cantemus Domino

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

Unsere Väter

Part II

Sir John Tavener (b. 1944)

Song for Athene

Vytautas Miškinis (b. 1954)

Diffusa est gratia

Samuel Barber (1910–1981)

Agnus Dei

Norman Dello Joio (b. 1913)

Of Crows and Clusters

Eric Whitacre (b. 1970)

Leonardo Dreams of His Flying Machine

INTERMISSION

Part III

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Largo

Arranged for mixed chorus by Ward Swingle

John Lennon (1940–1980) and Paul McCartney (b. 1942)

Ticket to Ride

Arranged for mixed chorus by Alexander L'Estrange

Johnny Mercer (1909–1976)

Autumn Leaves

Arranged for mixed chorus by Malin Strömdahl

Lennon and McCartney

Drive My Car

Arranged for mixed chorus by Simon Leslie

Part IV

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908)

Flight of the Bumblebee

Arranged for mixed chorus by Ward Swingle

Undine Smith Moore (1904–1989)

Daniel, Servant of the Lord

The Musicians

Located in Augusta, Georgia, the Davidson Fine Arts School was founded in 1981. It has consistently been named the number one public school in academic achievement in the state of Georgia based on students' high SAT scores, and it has earned repeated praise for their artistic achievements as well. In 2004 the Grammy Foundation named the school the National Grammy Signature School, as home to the top high school music department in the nation. In 2005 the foundation designated the Davidson Fine Arts School a Grammy Gold Signature School.

The Davidson Fine Arts Chorale is composed of advanced vocal students from grades nine through twelve. The group performs regularly at prestigious events in Georgia and across the nation. It has sung in the National Cathedral, the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, and the Temple Square Concert Series in Salt Lake City. It has recently performed at conventions of the Georgia Music Teachers Association and the American Choral Directors Association. Last year the chorale was featured in the Dunwoody United Methodist Church Concert Series in Atlanta, and in February 2007 it was showcased at the Music Educators National Conference, Southern Division, in Charleston, South Carolina.

Renowned for the scope of its repertoire, the ensemble performs major choral works, including operas and works for double chorus. Recent repertoire choices include Johann Sebastian Bach's *Singet dem Herrn* and *Lobet den Herrn*, Johannes Brahms' *Nänie*, Howard Hanson's *Song of Democracy*, Joseph Haydn's *Little Organ Mass*, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Missa Brevis in F Major*, Giovanni Palestrina's *Stabat Mater*, Henry Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, John Rutter's *Gloria*, and Eric Whitacre's *When David Heard*.

James Dunaway has been the director of the choral program at the Davidson Fine Arts School since 1996. His teaching career spans positions in the public schools in Cedar City, Utah; at McMurry University in Abilene, Texas; and at McNeese State University in Lake Charles, Louisiana. He holds a doctor of philosophy degree from the University of Utah and has guest-conducted and presented clinics in several states.

Pianist Paul Hennessy, a graduate of The Catholic University of America, also came to Davidson in 1996. He has concertized in Switzerland, Italy, and the United States. In addition to his duties as instructor of piano at Davidson, he is also the choir director at Saint Thomas Aquinas School in Augusta, Georgia.

Program Notes

Tomás Luis de Victoria was born in Spain, studied and worked in Rome, and spent his final years in his homeland. His style is often described as Palestrinian, but it is marked by a certain mysticism—akin to that found in the art of his contemporary El Greco—that sets him apart from other Renaissance composers. Victoria wrote *Ecce nunc benedicite Dominum* near the end of his life, when his style was evolving. This work bears the principal hallmarks of the Venetian baroque polychoral style, which primarily consists of dialogue and echo.

While working for the archbishop of Salzburg, Mozart wrote a significant body of sacred music. The archbishop was never very supportive of Mozart and often registered criticism of the young composer's offerings. In the case of *Regina coeli*, he maintained that Mozart borrowed much of it directly from opera and deemed frivolous the brief quotations of Handel's *Hallelujah Chorus*, an example of Mozart's irrepressible sense of humor.

Gioacchino Rossini, best known for his lively operas, wrote music that is teeming with humor and wit. Indeed, some consider his *Petite Messe solennelle*, which is neither small nor liturgical, to be a musical joke. This work is one in a group of pieces Rossini wrote toward the end of his life that he called *Les Péchés de vieillesse* (The Sins of Old Age). Another in this group is *Cantemus Domino*, a double-chorus motet written in the style of the Renaissance masters. In a cadential formula commonly used during that period and used in this work, the outer voices sustain the final chord while one or two inner voices sing moving notes. Rossini's sense of humor intervenes at the end of this beautiful and solemn piece, when the tenors sing a twelve-note flourish as the other voices sustain.

More than any other composer represented in this program, Johannes Brahms turned to forms and styles of the nineteenth century to enrich his neoclassic works. *Unsere Väter* (Our Fathers) is essentially a Venetian polychoral motet with Brahmsian harmonic textures.

The contemporary English composer Sir John Tavener is sometimes confused with the English Renaissance composer John Taverner (c. 1490–1545). Since 1999, the year in which Tavener’s *Song for Athene* was included in the funeral service of Princess Diana and his *Acclamation for the Millennium* was played at the opening of the Millennium Dome in Greenwich, England, he has been described as Britain’s most prominent and popular living composer. His minimalist approach in *Song for Athene* shows that the simplest materials can produce profound expression.

A prolific composer, Vytautas Miškinis is also renowned as a conductor and an international choral adjudicator. He is the artistic director of the Azuoliukas Boys’ and Men’s Chorus, a professor of choral conducting at the Lithuanian Academy of Music, and the president of the Lithuanian Choral Union. His groups have performed throughout the world and have garnered the highest honors in international competitions.

The 1938 premiere of Samuel Barber’s *Adagio for Strings* by the NBC Orchestra under Arturo Toscanini catapulted the composer to fame. This now instantly recognizable piece was originally the slow movement of a string quartet Barber had written as a student, which Toscanini suggested he rearrange for string orchestra. Nearly thirty years later, in 1967, the composer again reworked the *Adagio*, this time for unaccompanied mixed chorus, using the *Agnus Dei* from the Latin mass as the text.

Norman Dello Joio won the 1957 Pulitzer Prize for Music for his *Meditations on Ecclesiastes*, which was first performed at The Juilliard School on April 20, 1956. Another of his famous works is *Scenes from the Louvre*, based on his Emmy Award–winning documentary, *The Louvre*. His *Variations, Chaconne, and Finale* won the New York Critics Circle Award in 1948. Having written more than forty-five works for chorus over a span of almost seventy-five years, Dello Joio continues to compose.

Eric Whitacre rapidly emerged onto the American choral scene in the mid-1990s with dramatic compositions that explore searing dissonances and demonstrate the composer's uncanny knack for expressing text. After graduating from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Whitacre attended The Juilliard School, where he studied with John Corigliano and David Diamond. A recording of his choral works by the Brigham Young University Chorale was nominated for a Grammy Award in 2003. *Leonardo Dreams of His Flying Machine* is both a tribute to the Renaissance and a wild fantasy that explores Da Vinci's curiosity and torment.

Known for his innovative vocal arrangements that blur the lines between jazz, pop, and classical music, Ward Swingle is equally renowned for his vocal octet, the Swingle Singers, who have made dozens of recordings—five of which won Grammys—and toured the world. Between his arrangements, which suggest a conviction that the voice can do anything that an instrument can do, and the ensemble's performances of them, Swingle has raised the bar for vocal virtuosity among choral singers. In fact, many choir directors rank his artistry with that of J. S. Bach and Ralph Vaughan Williams. Although Swingle is now officially retired, the Swingle Singers continue today in England, with input from the founder.

The Swingle Singers' first experiments in the early 1960s were focused on J. S. Bach's music, because it was already familiar to many listeners. In Swingle's arrangement of Bach's *Largo*, the chorus becomes a baroque string orchestra as the soloist ornaments the melody in the manner of a jazz instrumentalist. In a similar vein, Alexander L'Estrange's arrangement of John Lennon and Paul McCartney's *Ticket to Ride* takes advantage of contemporary audiences' familiarity with the music of The Beatles. L'Estrange has written many arrangements for the Swingle Singers and played double bass for their fortieth anniversary tour in 2003. Simon Leslie, a friend of the Swingle Singers', arranged *Drive My Car* specifically for the group. Malin Strömdahl, the arranger of *Autumn Leaves*, is not affiliated with the Swingle Singers but without question has been influenced by the ensemble. She sings with the Swedish vocal group Bara Vox.

Undine Smith Moore, often referred to as the “Dean of Black women composers,” began composing while at Fisk University. Although she wrote works for piano and instrumental groups, Moore is best known for her choral works, many of which draw inspiration from African American sources. *Scenes from the Life of a Martyr*, based on writings of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. In her 1981 keynote address to the First National Congress on Women in Music, Moore noted that she considered herself a “teacher who composes, rather than a composer who teaches.”

Program notes by James Dunaway

Next Week at the National Gallery of Art

Thomas Mastroianni, *pianist*

Liszt, works from *Années de pèlerinage deuxième année, Italie*

Debussy, *Préludes pour piano, Book 2*

March 25, 2007

Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm

West Building, West Garden Court

For the convenience of concertgoers
the Garden Café remains open until 6:00 pm.

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the
performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones,
pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that late entry or reentry of
the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

Music Department
National Gallery of Art
Sixth Street and Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC

Mailing address
2000B South Club Drive
Landover, MD 20785

www.nga.gov