



Dr. Jeffry A. Jahn
Music Director

Gregg Reynolds
Accompanist

Voices at an Exhibition

SPRING 2014

“Sing unto God” – Judas Maccabaeus	G. F. Handel (1685 - 1759)
Adoramus te, Christe.....	Quirino Gasparini (1721 - 1778)
Exsultate, justi.....	Lodovico Viadana (ca. 1560 – 1627)
Beati quorum via.....	C. V. Stanford (1852- 1924)
Exsultate Deo.....	Hans Leo Hassler (1564 - 1612)
How Can I Keep from Singing?.....	arr. Z. Randall Stroope
Let Me Fly	arr. Robert DeCormier

INTERMISSION

Music, When Soft Voices Die

Eric Nelson

“Voices at an Exhibition”

The Trumpet.....	Anthony Constantino (1995)
Glimmer of Hope.....	David Plank
Bloom.....	Grant Jahn (1992)
Ask.....	Ray Braswell

Daniel, Daniel, Servant of the Lord	Undine Smith Moore (1904 - 1989)
Rockin’ Jerusalem	André J. Thomas (b. 1952)
Alleluia.....	Ralph Manuel (b. 1951)

Program Notes

by Cathy Wolfson,

Founding member of ARS, 1984

“Sing unto God” from Judas Maccabaeus

George Frideric Handel (1685 - 1759) was a German-born composer who is highly regarded as one of the greatest composers of the Baroque era, and highly respected for his oratorios, operas and organ concerti, although Handel's 'Water Music' and 'Music for the Royal Fireworks' are equally famous. He received musical training in Germany and Italy where he was influenced by both the Italian Baroque and polyphonic choral style of German composers. Handel is best known for his oratorio, *Messiah*, although *Judas Maccabaeus* is also a popular work. Hanukkah commemorates the rededication of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem by Judas Maccabeus; 'Sing Unto God,' with its multiple melismas, driving rhythms and joyful choruses, is a celebration of this Jewish hero.

Adoramus te, Christe

This work was originally attributed to Mozart, but musical scholars later discovered that Quirino Gasparini (1721-1778) was the actual composer. He was born near Bergamo, Italy, and although he studied for the priesthood, he devoted most of his life to composing primarily church music. *Adoramus te, Christe*, creates musical tension through a technique known as “chain suspensions” in which a non-harmonic note is added to a harmonic chord and temporarily ‘suspended’ to create dissonance before resolving to the tuned chord. *Adoramus te, Christe* is traditionally performed during the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday.

*Adoramus te, Christe
Et benedicimus tibi,
Quia per sanctam crucem tuam,
Redemisti mundum.*

*We adore you, Christ
And we bless you,
Who through your holy cross,
Redeemed the world.*

Exsultate, Justi

This piece was written by Lodovico Viadana (ca. 1560 - 1627), and arranged by Leland B. Sateren. The composer, a Franciscan Friar born in Italy, was one of the pioneers of the figured bass technique, which was often used during the late Renaissance and early Baroque period. Viadana's style influenced both Italian and German composers including Michael Praetorius and Heinrich Schuetz. *Exsultate, Justi* demonstrates the alternating polyphony and homophony typical of music composed during this era. The joyous praise of the piece is further emphasized by the interchange between two and three beats per measure.

*Exsultate, justi, in Domino,
Rectos decet collaudatio!
Confitemini Domino in cithara,
In psalterio decem chordarum,
Psallite illi.
Cantate ei canticum novum,
Bene psallite ei in vociferatione.*

*Rejoice, ye righteous, in the Lord,
It is fitting for the righteous to give praise!
Praise the Lord with the harp,
With a psaltery of ten strings,
Sing to Him.
Sing to Him a new song,
Sing praises to Him with a loud voice.*

Beati Quorum Via

Sir Charles Villiers Stanford (1852- 1924) was an Irish music professor, composer and conductor born in Dublin. He was educated at Cambridge University, and a founding professor of the Royal College of Music at Trinity College, Cambridge where he taught composition. Two of his most famous pupils were Gustav Holst and Ralph Vaughan Williams. Although Stanford's compositions are known for their technical mastery, *Beati quorum via* is very lyrical.

*Beati quorum via integra est:
Qui ambulant in lege Domini.*

*Blessed are those whose path is righteous:
Who walk in the ways of the Lord.*

Exsultate Deo

Hans Leo Hassler (ca. 1564-1612) was an influential and prolific German composer who studied in Venice during the time when polychoral composition was dominant. Like his contemporary Viadana, his music overlapped both the Renaissance and Baroque era. Though he is believed to have penned a large body of instrumental works, his only directly attributable works are for voice. *Exsultate Deo* reflects the polychoral style of his contemporaries. Based on Psalm 81, Hassler's hymn-like setting glorifies God with its driving rhythms and long melismas.

*Exsultate Deo adiutori nostro,
Jubilare Deo, Jacob,
Sumite psalmum et date tympanum,
Psalterium jucundum cum cythara.*

*Exult in God, all you who worship Him,
Rejoice in the Lord, Jacob,
Submit psalms and give drums,
With joyous harps and lyres.*

How Can I Keep from Singing?

In addition to being a prolific composer of religious tunes, Robert Lowry (1826 - 1899) was a pastor. The arranger, Z. Randall Stroepe (b. 1953), is a prodigious composer and Associate Professor of Conducting, and Director of Choral and Vocal Studies at Oklahoma State University. American writer, Anna Bartlett Warner (1820 - 1915), was also a poet and many of her poems were set to music as hymns. Stroepe's transparent harmonies – sometimes spare and sometimes lush - support Warner's lovely poetic exclamation that "While Love is lord of heaven and earth, How can I keep from singing?"

Let Me Fly

Robert DeCormier (b. 1922), a graduate of the Juilliard School, is a composer, conductor, music director and arranger for many singers and musical groups, including Harry Belafonte and Peter, Paul and Mary. He founded the Robert DeCormier Singers, and is perhaps best known for his arrangement of spirituals. This spiritual incorporates sly humor in many of the lyrics. "Meet that hypocrite on the street, First thing he do is show his teeth, Next thing he do is tell a lie" is one example. *Let Me Fly*, with its spry rhythms, transparent harmonies and tongue-in-cheek text is fun for both the performer and the listener.

INTERMISSION

Music, When Soft Voices Die

Dr. Eric Nelson, is the Director of Choral Studies at Emory University, Artistic Director of the Atlanta Master Chorale and Musical Director at the 2nd-Ponce de Leon Baptist Church. He is well respected as a clinician, lecturer and guest conductor, and has presented workshops for the American Choral Director's Association, Music Educator's National Conference and the American Guild of Organists. The text for this work is a well-loved poem by Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792 - 1822), one of the most famous English Romantic poets and an idol of his generation. *To a Skylark*, and *Music, When Soft Voices Die*, are classics that rank among the best of Shelly's lyrical style, and Eric Nelson's haunting, ethereal setting of *Music, When Soft Voices Die* perfectly illustrates the beauty of Shelley's words.

"Voices at an Exhibition"

Pictures at an Exhibition, by Modest Mussorgsky (1839 - 1881) was originally composed as a piano suite to honor paintings and sketches by Viktor Hartmann, a close friend of Mussorgsky's. However, most music lovers are more familiar with the orchestral version arranged by the French composer and master orchestrator, Maurice Ravel. Both works depict an imaginary tour of an art collection by an individual walking through the exhibition from one picture to the next, indicated by a series of musical interludes, or 'promenades,' between each one. As the viewer stops to look at each artwork, the music 'describes' the paintings Mussorgsky chose to highlight.

In "*Voices at an Exhibition*," which features four artworks by local artists who sing with ARS, the commissioned choral compositions being premiered 'describe' each corresponding artwork, and are tied together with a *Promenade* composed by Music Director, Dr. Jeffrey Jahn. His *Promenade* is loosely based upon the Lenten hymn, "*O Sacred Head, Now Wounded*." And if you listen closely, you can hear Dr. Jahn's tribute to Mussorgsky's recognizable promenade melody, sung by the basses.

The Trumpet

Anthony Constantino selected the poem "The Trumpet" by nineteenth-century English poet Edward Thomas as the text for his choral composition because he was inspired by ARS Bass David Neve's photograph of an angel statue holding a trumpet. Although the poem is an expression of sorrow and loss, it is also an exaltation of courage, represented by the trumpet. Anthony's clarion harmonies and restless rhythms emphasize the brassy hope of the trumpet while his softer harmonies (utilizing the singers' lower registers) honor the contrasting quiet expressions in the poem. The real strength of this choral piece is Constantino's ebb and flow of loud and declamatory musical phrases contrasted with soft and contemplative ones.



*Rise up, rise up,
And, as the trumpet blowing
Chases the dreams of men,
As the dawn glowing
The stars that left unlit
The land and water,
Rise up and scatter
The dew that covers
The print of last night's lovers -
Scatter it, scatter it!*

*While you are listening
To the clear horn,
Forget, men, everything
On this earth newborn,
Except that it is lovelier
Than any mysteries.
Open your eyes to the air
That has washed the eyes of the stars
Through all the dewy night:
Up with the light,
To the old wars;
Arise, arise!*

Glimmer of Hope

David Plank, father of ARS Soprano Lori Green, is a veteran composer, musician and performer. He has written choral works for Tucson area choirs and published choral and instrumental music with well-known music publishing houses. Inspired by his vision of "three white lights" in the painting by artist and ARS Alto, Ingrid Williams, Plank chose a text by the Greek tragic poet, Euripides (480 - 406 B.C.). The poem notes that the gods are capricious and often do not grant what we want or expect, but Heaven still finds a way to "guide our steps." Plank uses blues and jazz harmonies that underline the irony of the gods, and mellow harmonies that encourage us to have a "Glimmer of Hope."



*A thousand shapes our varying fates assume.
The gods perform what we could least expect,
And oft' the things for which we fondly hop'd
Come not to pass. But Heaven still finds a clue
To guide our steps through life's perplexing maze.*

Bloom

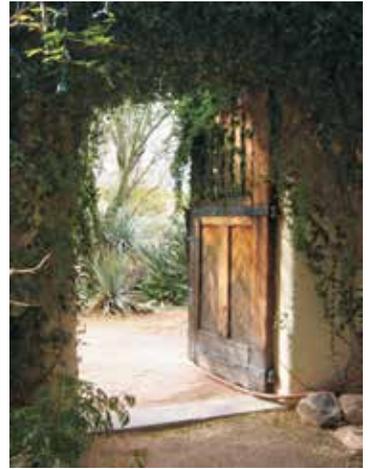
Grant Jahn, son of ARS Music Director Dr. Jeffrey Jahn and his wife Nadeen, one of our sopranos, was inspired by an abstract painting by Sheryl Holland, another ARS soprano. He not only composed the music, but also wrote the text for "Bloom." Jahn underlines the bleakness of "silence and whispers over a dead land" with clashing and discordant harmonies, and accentuates this desolation with instructions for the singers to whisper some of the words in their own rhythm. In contrast, Jahn also expresses the energy and bold colors of Holland's painting through his text "spark of life." He paints a musical image in the voice parts by unfolding them one after the other like a flower blooming in the spring. When the piece approaches the end, the harmonies become much more subdued and tonal to emphasize our ultimate return to the Earth.



*A calm and peaceful silence
Drifts above scorched land
The aged past whispers drifting above the dying land
and through ashes spring awakens
Spring blooms and the ground trembles
with the spark of life and hope
and love that flows like healing water
but as death remains looming
the Earth weeps for her losses
oh how she cries
and a calm and peaceful silence whispers
and we will join the Earth soon*

Ask

Ray Braswell, who sang Bass with ARS for several years, chose to highlight the ‘hope that is ours for the asking,’ symbolized in a photograph by Jan Sturges, a Soprano in ARS. Braswell based his text loosely upon Biblical passages from the New Testament and the teachings of Jesus, who encourages his followers to be seekers, to knock and the Father will open the door “that leads to life.” Ray uses pleasant harmonies and melodic passages that admirably complement the simplicity of the Biblical texts and the inviting photographic image of an open door that leads to opportunity.



*Ask, and it will be given unto you;
seek, and you will find;
knock, and it will be opened unto you.
For everyone who asks receives,
and he who seeks finds,
and to him who knocks it will be opened.
Enter through the narrow gate
wide is the gate and broad is the way
that leads to destruction,
and those who enter by it are many.
For the gate is narrow and the way is hard
that leads to life,
and those who find it are few.*

*The Arizona Repertory Singers would like to specially acknowledge
Dan Buckley for creating a superb video presentation of the
four artworks featured in “Voices at an Exhibition”*

Daniel, Daniel, Servant of the Lord

Undine Smith Moore (1904 - 1989), sometimes known as the “Dean of Black Women Composers,” was the first graduate of Fisk University to receive a scholarship to Juilliard. She was a music faculty member at Virginia State University for 45 years and was named music laureate of Virginia in 1977. Moore is most widely known for choral works, oratorios and spirituals. *Daniel, Daniel, Servant of the Lord*, is a sprightly spiritual with toe-tapping rhythms that celebrate Daniel’s victory over the lion in the den - with the aid of the Lord, of course.

Rockin’ Jerusalem

Born in 1952, André J. Thomas has an international reputation as a distinguished composer, arranger, conductor, and Professor of Choral Music Education at Florida State University. As a clinician, he has led choral workshops all over the world. Chorus America presented Dr. Thomas with its Distinguished Service Award in 2011. The spiritual, *Rockin’ Jerusalem* - with its syncopated rhythms and gospel harmonies - musically demonstrates that no matter what life brings you, you can always hear the archangels singing and the bells ringing.

Alleluia

Ralph Manuel, born in 1951 in Oklahoma City, received a master’s degree in church music from the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife spent 24 years doing musical missionary work for the Baptist Church in Recife, Brazil. His *Alleluia* is a lovely lyrical song of exaltation to the Almighty, and if you listen closely, you can hear passages reminiscent of Randall Thompson’s composition by the same name.

Concert Dates - December 2014

2:00 p.m. Sunday, December 7th

St. Thomas the Apostle Parish
5150 N. Valley View Road

3:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Sunday, December 14th

Benedictine Monastery
800 N. Country Club Road

7:30 p.m. Friday, December 19th

Benedictine Monastery
800 N. Country Club Road



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