



ALWAYS SINGING

Vicki Peters, Artistic Director and Conductor

Saturday, August 17, 7:30 p.m.

St. Michael's Lutheran Church
Roseville

Sunday, August 18, 3:00 p.m.

St. Mary's Chapel - St. Paul Seminary
St. Paul

Free Concerts—Contributions Welcome

www.voxnovachorale.org

Welcome from the Artistic Director

Thank you for attending Vox Nova Chorale's inaugural summer concert series. I believe you will be very happy you came to experience this unique choral performance.

Our name translates to "new voice" and brings with it a hope to educate, strengthen, and encourage emerging singers, conductors, and composers. We also feel fortunate to have a few professional singers mixed in with the young folks, offering their experience and support.

Vox Nova Chorale includes students and recent graduates of Concordia, Gustavus Adolphus, Luther, Mankato, and St. Olaf Colleges this summer. They are hard-working, dedicated singers who love to sing and learn, making this a very rewarding experience for all.

This new project would not have been possible without the encouragement, wisdom, and inspiration given to me by my mentor and choir director, Dr. Matthew Culloton, conductor of The Singers. Thank you Matt. Thanks also to co-founders Benjamin Cramer and Bill Haugen who were instrumental in fleshing out the concept for Vox Nova. They and the other board members have spent many hours providing their leadership and boundless energy to get this idea off the ground.

We have been very fortunate to have Dr. Matthew Culloton and Dr. David Cherwien as the first clinicians for Vox Nova Chorale, working with the choir as well as our student composers and conductors. Their expertise has been invaluable to the choir and has left the choir with a connection to the amazing choral music community in Minnesota—arguably the best in the country.

Eight different conductors will be directing in this concert, including three that are directing their own compositions. I have enjoyed working with them and also with these fabulous singers that you are about to hear. We hope you are deeply touched by our music.

As the program title states, we are Always Singing...even in the summer!

With much gratitude,

Vicki Peters
Artistic Director and Conductor
Vox Nova Chorale



Always Singing

I.

Sing Joyfully Unto God	William Byrd (1543-1623)
Sanctus	Ola Gjeilo (b. 1978)
She Walks in Beauty	Paul Mealor (b. 1975)
Salvation is Created	Pavel Chesnokov (1877 - 1944)
Vicki Peters, Conductor	

II.

The Plans I Have for You Jessica Lowry, Conductor	Jonathan Adams (b. 1962)
The Road Home Benjamin Dulak, Conductor Ariel Gauslow, Soprano	Stephen Paulus (b. 1949)
Sure On This Shining Night Kelsey Letourneau, Conductor	Morten Lauridsen (b. 1943)
Pseudo-Yoik Samuel Eckberg, Conductor	Jaakko Mäntyjärvi (b. 1963)

INTERMISSION

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Instrument of Peace Bill Kempe, Conductor	Bill Kempe (b. 1957)
II. Kyrie from <i>Mass for the Masses</i> Benjamin Cramer, Conductor	Benjamin Cramer (b. 1991)
Lamb of God, Pure and Sinless Benjamin Wegner, Conductor	Benjamin Wegner (b. 1992)

IV.

With a Voice of Singing	Kenneth Jennings (b. 1925)
Splendid Jewel Val Krych, Soprano	Stephen Paulus
Earth Song	Frank Ticheli (b. 1958)
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Always Singing	Dale Warland (b. 1932)
Vicki Peters, Conductor	

I.

Sing Joyfully

William Byrd (1543-1623)

One of the most popular Anthems of its time, *Sing Joyfully* is a sprightly setting of Psalm 81:1-4. In 1559, Queen Elizabeth I of England issued a set of solemn *Injunctions* which impacted the future of the Anglican Church by specifying that all services should contain a hymn or song of praise. This encouraged choral music within the Church service and helped establish the genre that would later be known as the Anthem. *Sing Joyfully*, set for six voices, proved to be one of the most popular and durable anthems of the Elizabethan age.

*Sing joyfully unto God our strength.
Sing loud unto the God of Jacob.
Take the song and bring forth the timbrel,
The pleasant harp and the viol.
Blow the trumpet in the new moon
E'en in the time appointed, and at our feast day.
For this is a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob.*

Sanctus

Ola Gjeilo (b. 1978)

There isn't anything wrong with dissonance, as conflict and discord is a natural part of life and necessary for all positive development and maturation. And in most areas of society, conflict is something we very much want to resolve...I think people naturally and instinctively want to experience transcendence, resolution, the feeling of redemption, joy, and peace that the resolving of discord can yield.

~Ola Gjeilo

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.
Hosanna in excelsis.

*Holy, Holy, Holy
Lord God of Hosts.
Full are heaven and earth of Thy glory.
Hosanna in the highest.*

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.
Hosanna in excelsis.

*Blessed are those who come in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.*

She Walks in Beauty

Paul Meador (b. 1975)
Text by Lord Byron (1788-1824)

Welsh composer Paul Meador is best known for the performance of his *Ubi Caritas* at the 2011 royal wedding. Published in 1815 as a part of his volume *Hebrew Melodies*, this poem was inspired by an actual event in his life. By one account, while at a ball, Byron happened upon the mourning Mrs. John Wilmot, his cousin by marriage, wearing an elegant black dress set with spangles. He was struck by her unusual beauty. Light and dark are contrasted to convey her soft, yet radiant beauty.

*She walks in beauty like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellow'd to that tender light
Which heav'n to gaudy day denies.*

*One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impair'd the nameless grace
Which waves in ev'ry raven tress,*

*Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express
How pure, how dear their dwelling place.*

*And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent.*

Salvation Is Created

Pavel Chesnokov (1877-1944)

Pavel Chesnokov was a member of the Russian Orthodox Church and was inspired to write most of his works for worship in that faith. One of his best-known compositions is this Communion hymn based on a Kievan syndonal chant melody and Psalm 74. Chesnokov was praised, even by Soviet officials, for his skills in choral conducting, though they remained hostile to his sacred music. This piece was one of the very last sacred works he composed before he was forced to turn to secular writing.

*Salvation is created in midst of the earth, O God, our God.
Alleluia.*

II.

The Plans I Have For You

Jonathan Adams (b. 1962)

Jessica Lowry (Luther College '13), Conductor

In this section of scripture, the prophet Jeremiah urges the exiled Jews in Babylon not to give up hope—for he tells them that God has not forgotten them and that in spite of their suffering, he has a plan for their future. Adams' tender setting of this text shares a warm feeling of security and relief.

*"For I know I have the plans for you,"
Declares the Lord,
"Plans to prosper you and never harm you,
Plans to give you hope and a future.*

*"Then you will call upon Me,
And come and pray to Me,
And I will listen to you.
For I know the plans I have for you,
Declares the Lord.*

The Road Home

arr. Stephen Paulus (b. 1949)

Benjamin Dulak (St. Olaf College '14), Conductor

Text by Michael Dennis Browne (b. 1940)

Ariel Gauslow, Soprano

Composer Stephen Paulus and poet Michael Dennis Browne have been collaborating to produce musical gems with poignant texts such as the Holocaust memorial oratorio *To Be Certain of The Dawn, Pilgrim's Hymn*, and *The Road Home* since Paulus was a doctoral student at the University of Minnesota in the 1970s. Their most recent collaboration, *The Shoemaker*, premiered in September 2012.

*Tell me where is the road I can call my own,
That I left, that I lost, so long ago?
All these years I have wandered,
Oh when will I know there's a way,
There's a road that will lead me home?*

*Rise up, follow me, come away, is the call,
With the love in your heart as the only song;
There is no such beauty as where you belong,
Rise up, follow me, I will lead you home.*

*After the wind, after rain, when the dark is done,
As I wake from a dream in the gold of day,
Through the air there's a calling from far away,
There's a voice I can hear that will lead me home.*

Sure On This Shining Night from *Nocturnes*
Kelsey Letourneau, Conductor
(Minnesota State University, Mankato '14)

Morten Lauridsen (b. 1943)
Text by James Agee (1909-1955)

A nocturne is inspired by, or evocative of, the night. Historically, nocturne is a very old term applied to night Offices—the official set of daily prayers prescribed by the Catholic Church. Lauridsen most sensitively set this text written by James Agee, first published in his set of poems *Permit Me Voyage* (1934). Referring to his sacred music, musicologist and conductor Nick Strimple says Lauridsen was "the only American composer in history who can be called a mystic, (whose) probing, serene work contains an elusive and indefinable ingredient which leaves the impression that all the questions have been answered."

*Sure on this shining night
Of starmade shadows round,
Kindness must watch for me this side the ground.*

*The late year lies down the north,
All is healed, all is health.
High summer holds the earth.
Hearts all whole.*

*Sure on this shining night
I weep for wonder wandering far alone
Of shadows on the stars.*

Pseudo-Yoik

Samuel Eckberg (Gustavus Adolphus '08, University of St. Thomas '15), Conductor

Jaakko Mäntyjärvi (b. 1963)

Yoik is most directly translated as *song* in the Saame language. While described as an emotional expression of various experiences, Mäntyjärvi's yoik is signified by a repetitive use of short motifs within the 4-5 tone melodic range. The rhythmic patterns are complex and well-developed, with frequent changes in meter. Mäntyjärvi's, born in Finland, emphasizes that this pseudo-yoik is but a parody of a stereotype of the Saame language. The text is pronounced as Finnish and exists merely to give form to the music and to parody the stereotype most Finns associate with Lapland, the northernmost region of the country.

INTERMISSION

III.

Instrument of Peace

Bill Kempe (b. 1957)

This piece was written for a composition contest in Indianapolis. Each entrant was required to utilize a specific translation of the Prayer of St Francis. I took that as license to edit the prayer into a more practical form. The message of love and peace in the prayer of St. Francis is universal; everyone can relate to that message regardless of their faith. In my treatment of the text, I removed the original specific deity references as to communicate with those of non-Christian faiths, as well as those of no faith. Poetically, you will notice that I included much text repetition. When the choir sings, "Where there is hatred, let me sow love;" I have repeated the last two words, "sow love" to the point that the listener will hear not only "sow love", but also "so love".

~Bill Kempe

*Make me an instrument of peace;
Where there is hatred let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;*

*Where there is despair; there is hope;
Where there is darkness, light; sadness, joy.
Light, Hope; make me an instrument of peace.
Let me sow love; Make me an instrument of love.*

II. Kyrie from *Mass for the Masses*

Benjamin Cramer (b. 1991)

I have always been fascinated by the concept of prayer. *Mass for the Masses* was written as a means of exploring the way that humans pray—across cultures and religions. The Greek text of the Kyrie is short and simple, but I think it is too often glossed over. I imagine that this plea for mercy is not a humble prayer, but rather a harsh cry of shame and repentance. This is contrasted by the texture change when asking Christ for Mercy, rather than the Lord.

~Benjamin Cramer

Kyrie eleison. *Lord have mercy.*
Christe eleison. *Christ have mercy.*
Kyrie eleison. *Lord have mercy.*

Lamb of God, Pure and Sinless

arr. Benjamin Wegner (b. 1992)
Text by Nikolaus Decius (1485-1541)

This piece is a product of a lazy October afternoon as well as help from important teachers. I was sitting around the house with nothing to do on fall break. My family is made up of church musicians, and we have a lot of hymnals laying around the house. I like to re-harmonize chorale tunes, and the result was the last verse of the finished piece. My parents encouraged me to expand it over the next few months. I thank Sandra Peter for reading it with her Cathedral Choir, my theory teacher, Amy Engelsdorfer, and my church organist, Fran Harris, for checking my voice leading. Finally, I thank my parents for always pushing me and for encouraging me to always strive for ever-greater musicianship.

~Benjamin Wegner

*Lamb of God, pure and sinless
Once on the cross an offering,
Patient, meek, and guiltless,
Forsaken in your suffering!*

*You died our guilt to banish
That none in sin need perish!
Grant us your mercy, O Jesus!
Thy peace be with us, O Jesus!*

IV.

With a Voice of Singing

Kenneth Jennings (b. 1925)

Jennings joined the music faculty of St. Olaf College in 1953. He was the third director of the St. Olaf Choir, succeeding its founder F. Melius Christiansen and his son/successor, Olaf Christiansen. His writing is marked by elegant and efficient part-writing, rich harmonies, and great attention to communicating the meaning of the text. He retired in 1990, turning over the podium to his former student, Anton Armstrong, who leads the Choir today.

*With a voice of singing
Declare ye and tell this:
Utter it even to the end of the earth.
Hallelujah!*

*Glory be to the Father and to the Son,
And to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever
Shall be, world without end.
Amen.*

*The Lord hath redeemed his servant Jacob. Hallelujah!
Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands.
Sing forth the honor of His name;
Make His praise glorious.*

Splendid Jewel

Val Krych, Soprano

Stephen Paulus

The splendor of the image of Mary rings clearly in the shimmering cadences when the choir sings her name in Paulus's setting of this Catholic anthem. The refrain, "hail, hail, devout virgin," hints at organum and medieval plainchant (indeed, this piece was dedicated to The Rose Ensemble, a professional early music group based in the Twin Cities). In its earliest stages, organum involved two musical voices: a Gregorian chant melody, and the same melody transposed by a consonant interval, usually a perfect fourth or fifth.

*Hail, devout Virgin,
Splendid jewel, Maria!
Now sing we with great delight
Of our perfect love, who prays for us to Christ,
Who is our light and way.*

*All you whose minds are in heaven,
Now sing sweetly, rightly presenting this gift to Christ and
The Virgin Mary.*

*High and glorious lady, mother of the most Merciful Jesus,
You are the rose of heaven, than which there is none more
Beautiful.*

Earth Song

Music and text by Frank Ticheli (b. 1958)

The text of *Earth Song* inspires the musical elements of this piece. Beginning somberly, the mood lifts out of despair into a hopeful assurance that music and singing are a refuge against hardship and trouble. In an interview, Ticheli mentions his undefined approach to composition. "It's such a mystery, the process of composing, which is part of its appeal. The brain and the heart must constantly keep each other in check. I don't know how I compose. I'll probably go to my grave without ever fully understanding it, and that's fine by me."

*Sing, Be Live, See...
This dark stormy hour,
The wind it stirs.
The scorched earth
Cries out in vain:*

*O war and power,
You blind and blur.
The torn heart cries out in pain.*

*But music and singing
Have been my refuge,
And music and singing
Shall be my light.*

*A light of song
Shining strong: Alleluia!
Through darkness, pain and strife,
I'll Sing Be, Live, See...*

Sinner Man

arr. Matthew Culloton (b. 1976)

Culloton's *Sinner Man* is an arrangement of a spiritual—a religious-themed folk song that has roots in African American slavery. The stories that spirituals tell are frequently multi-layered in meaning. A straightforward reading of the text tells the story of an unrighteous individual who is trying in vain to escape retribution. In addition to offering religious lessons, African American slaves used songs to send along coded messages without the notice of their slaveholders. It is possible that *Sinner Man* was used in such a way. Lines such as "run from the light" and "don't make a sound" could have very well been meant to convey plans for escape.

~Scott Senko

*Oh, Sinner man, where you gonna run to
All on that day?
Run from the light, Devil's gonna find you
All on that day.
Don't make a sound, Devil's gonna hear you
All on that day.*

*Oh, run to the mountain
(Mountain will not hide you!),
Run to the sea (the sea will not have you!)
Run to your grave (your grave will not hold you)
All on that day.
Oh, Sinner man, where you gonna run to all on that day?*

Always Singing

Dale Warland (b. 1932)
Text by Ronald Blythe (b. 1922)

Renowned American musician Dale Warland has a keen ability to transport the listener to a state of bliss by selecting a relatable text and sensitively setting it to music which, even if not set to words, can just as well evoke the same emotional atmosphere. The text of this arrangement comes from Blythe's 1969 publication, "Akenfield: Portrait of an English Village," in which he paints a vivid picture of a community struggling to reconcile the vast changes of the twentieth century with the deep continuities of history, tradition, and nature.

*There was such a lot of singing
And this was my pleasure, too.*

*The boys all sang in the fields
And at night we all sang.*

*The chapels were full of singing.
It was singing, singing all the time.
I have had pleasure.
I have had singing.*

About The Chorale

Vox Nova Chorale is a non-profit summer choir based in St. Paul, Minnesota, founded in 2013 by Vicki Peters, Benjamin Cramer, and William Haugen. With the goal of encouraging educators, singers, and composers, the Chorale empowers and provides opportunity for musicians of diverse backgrounds to perform excellent choral music at the highest degree of artistry that enriches their lives and the community.

Learning and singing together are the goals of the twenty-four musicians joining the Chorale in its inaugural season. The diverse musical and educational backgrounds of each member—from current undergraduate students to community and professional singers—creates an environment in which ideas converge into a shared expression of artistry. In this spirit, we are proud to feature three emerging composers and four student conductors to lead the Chorale in rehearsal and performance.

Personnel

Soprano

Ariel Gauslow
Val Krych
Kelsey Letourneau
Hannah Myott
Caroline Swanson
Sarah Weichmann

Alto

Jessica Lowry
Joan O'Donnell
Katrina Rohr
Kristin Sandness
Emily Streeper

Tenor

Benjamin Cramer
Benjamin Dulak
Brent Haagenon
William Haugen
Patrick O'Keefe
Scott Senko
Benjamin Wegner

Bass

Geordie Diener
Samuel Eckberg
Steven Heaton
Bill Kempe
Chris Paulson
Shane Wilson

Vicki Peters, Artistic Director

Vicki Peters enjoys an active career of conducting, teaching, and singing. Vicki co-founded Vox Nova Chorale in 2013 with the idea of bringing emerging choral musicians together to collaborate and hone their skills with other excellent choral musicians. She directed The Summer Singers for eight summers, including appearances at the 2010 North Central ACDA and 2008 Minnesota State conventions. Vicki is a private voice teacher, was a project singer for the Dale Warland Singers, and currently is a singer and soloist for the professional choir, The Singers, under the direction of Dr. Matthew Culloton. She has taught choral music at Fridley High School, and developed and led excellent church choirs, hand bell choirs, and orchestral groups at various churches for sixteen years. In addition, she was the assistant director for the Two Rivers Chorale under the direction of Bruce Phelps and the North High Alumni Choir under the direction of Carl Lipke, and a soloist on European tours with both directors.

Vicki graduated with a Vocal Music Education degree from St. Cloud State University receiving choral, vocal, and opera scholarships and Phi Kappa Phi membership, and is listed as an Outstanding Alumni of the music department. She studied voice, choir, and opera with Charles (Chuck) Peterson. Vicki is also a choral and vocal clinician and judges State Large Group and Solo/Ensemble contests, is a member of ACDA, and serves on the State High School League Contest Music Selection and Review Committee.

Composer and Conductor Biographies

Benjamin Cramer, Assistant Director and Music Adviser, is an avid composer, conductor, publisher and singer. He recently served as a tenor section leader of the Nordic Choir and sang with The Summer Singers, working as a social media intern. During his time at Luther College, Benjamin studied composition with Brooke Joyce and Steve Smith while participating in composition masterclasses with Stephen Paulus, Jocelyn Hagen, Joshua Shank and Kurt Heinecke. He also owns and operates Benj Cramer Publications, an independent music publishing company, and works as a freelance engraver and editor. Benjamin currently serves as Director of Music at Peace Lutheran Church in Plymouth, Minnesota.

Benjamin Dulak is a senior music education major at St. Olaf College and member of the St. Olaf Choir.

Samuel Eckberg teaches elementary music in the Elk River School District and is pursuing a graduate degree from the University of St. Thomas. He sings bass with The Singers.

Bill Kempe is an active composer and performer with several choirs, including the Minnesota Chorale. Bill's compositions have been performed by First Unitarian Chorus and Orchestra, St. Paul Vocal Forum, VocalEssence, CORO!, Zeitgeist, and the UCC Chancel Choir of Mendota Heights.

Kelsey Letourneau is a senior music education major at Minnesota State University, Mankato.

Jessica Lowry is a 2013 graduate of Luther College. She will be student teaching both choral and orchestral music in the Edina School District this fall.

Benjamin Wegner is a senior at Luther College majoring in music education. Several of his choir anthems and congregational psalms have been performed at Jehovah Lutheran Church and at St. Bernard's High School. Benjamin is a member of the Nordic Choir.

Board of Directors

William Haugen, President
Benjamin Cramer, Vice President
Scott Peters, Treasurer
Jessica Lowry, Secretary
Chris Paulson
Vicki Peters, Artistic Director

Acknowledgements

St. Michael's Lutheran Church
St. Mary's Chapel and St. Paul Seminary
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Jill Brown and Emily Feld, rehearsal accompanists
William Haugen and Jessica Lowry, program

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Auditions for 2014

Join us for our second season of music-making and learning opportunities! Rehearsals are Monday nights, 7-10 p.m., at St. Michael's Lutheran Church in Roseville beginning in late June. Those interested in participating should e-mail a vocal resume to Vicki at vickipeters@voxnovachorale.org or Benjamin at benj@voxnovachorale.org by **May 1, 2014**. Compositions must be submitted in PDF format along with an MP3 or MIDI recording.

Mission

Vox Nova Chorale exists to educate, empower, and provide opportunity for singers, emerging conductors, and composers, to collaborate and perform excellent choral music at the highest degree of artistry that enriches their lives and the community.

Support Us

We are grateful for your generous financial contributions, 100% of which goes towards Chorale operations such as securing rehearsal and concert venues, music, accompanists, clinicians, program printing, and more. You may use the envelope enclosed in this program to donate today, or mail your contribution to:

Vox Nova Chorale
1480 Myrtle Court
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Check payable to Vox Nova Chorale

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