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Message from the President

Welcome to today's concert, Maclean & Monteverdi, the final concert of the 53rd season of the Saint Louis Chamber Chorus. Claudio Monteverdi is with us in spirit only, but we are delighted that our current composer-in-residence, **Clare Maclean**, has traveled from her home in Australia to be with us for this performance of compositions written for the chorus. We invite you to greet her after the concert.



Barbara Uhlemann,
SLCC Board President

As the season comes to a close I want to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Board of Directors for their commitment to the organization, and in particular for the thoughtfulness and hard work that went into the writing of the long range planning document that will guide our work for the coming several years. Executive Director **Linda Ryder** deserves special recognition for her superb attention to detail which makes the business side of the organization run so smoothly, and for her energy and vision. Artistic Director **Philip Barnes** continues to amaze us with his programs, and, of course, we are indebted to the talented and dedicated singers who are the heart of the organization.

Having come to the final concert in this series of *Collaborations I*, we very much hope that you will be with us in the coming season for *Collaborations II*. Philip has put his usual care into plans for the season, finding an acoustically-appropriate venue for each program. It promises to be a fine season and we urge you to purchase a subscription and take advantage of the considerable savings over the cost of single tickets. You'll also be guaranteed the best seats for each concert.

Thank you for being with us today. I look forward to seeing you at our first concert of the 54th season on October 4 at the Saint Louis Abbey.

The Saint Louis Chamber Chorus

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Barbara Uhlemann
SLCC President

When the Barkers Heard

Last spring the Saint Louis Chamber Chorus premiered a piece entitled *When David Heard That Absalom Was Slain* by British composer **Francis Pott**, who traveled to St. Louis for its world premier. **John and Gailya Barker**, who commissioned the piece, enjoyed a delightful evening with Francis while he was in St. Louis. The three of them expressed a hope that their paths might one day cross again. That opportunity presented itself this spring when the commissioned piece received its U.K. premier at Bath Abbey. John and Gailya traveled to England and joined Francis for the occasion.



Vasari singers at Bath Abbey.



Bath Abbey, England. From left, Gailya Barker, conductor Jeremy Backhouse, composer Francis Pott, John Barker.

The Vasari Singers, a prominent London-based choral group directed by **Jeremy Backhouse**, performed *When David Heard* during choral evensong on Sunday, April 19. Reporting later about the experience Gailya said, "It was quite emotional. Being with Francis in that magnificent setting and hearing his very moving piece sung by such a wonderful choir is an experience that will stay with us forever." After evensong the Barkers talked informally with members of the Vasari Singers and then socialized with Francis over tea and scones.

Gailya Barker

Chorus Extracurricular Activities

SLCC Assistant Conductor **Orin Johnson** recently recorded and published several pieces of music through GIA publications, one of the country's larger Catholic music publishers. In Nov. 2007, Orin, together with his friend and partner-in-ministry **Shannon Cerneka**, recorded a sixteen-song CD titled *Walk Away Different*. Eleven of these contemporary hymns were published recently in a new hymnal called *Cross Generation* which contains about 250 pieces of sacred music created by new composers and artists. It also contains many older hymns and even some Gregorian chant. There are several titles bearing Orin's name including a setting of Psalm 122, *Let us Go, Rejoicing*, which Orin wrote in a gospel-style for his wedding ceremony five years ago.

In addition to his role as a singer and board member with SLCC, **Jon Garrett** is also an aspiring opera singer! The fledgling company New Opera St. Louis has just completed its second season and Jon sang in the chorus for *I Pagliacci* and performed as the notary and a chorus member in *Don Pasquale*. This summer, he will be singing in the chorus with Union Avenue Opera in *Il Trovatore* and has the role of Hadji in *Lakmé*.

In the April issue of the monthly journal of the American Choral Directors' Association, a lengthy article was published by **Philip Barnes** on two recorded anthologies of Mendelssohn's choral music that have recently been released. Philip also publishes regular CD reviews that appear in *Choral Journal*.

Congratulations to you all!

Meet the Singers — Nathan Ruggles

Born in Mountain View, California, **Nathan Ruggles** lived for the first four months of his life in Pacifica, just south of San Francisco. At four months old, the family moved first to Massachusetts, then to Henniker, New Hampshire, where he spent his formative years.

Nathan always enjoyed music; he got his first solo singing opportunity in second grade when he sang the second verse of *Deck the Halls* in front of the entire town. Voice has always been his instrument despite a brief foray into alto saxophone in fifth and sixth grade. He joined the choir in middle school, and eventually became one of the leaders of his high school choir. He figured he was pretty good when he received the fifth highest score among basses for the all-state choir auditions his sophomore year (although that was tempered when he missed the cut entirely the following year!).

He was hesitant to pursue musical studies or a musical career, partly for financial reasons, but also because he didn't want music to be a "job." So Nathan decided to go into mechanical engineering! This brought him to St. Louis, and Washington University. His well-laid plans not to major in music lasted a semester and a half; by the end of his freshman year, he was a vocal music major, studying voice with **John Stewart**.

Nathan's first exposure to the Chamber Chorus was during his sophomore year, when the Washington University Chamber Choir (70 members) sang a joint concert with the SLCC at the Cathedral Basilica. This was also his first exposure to Granville Bantock; Nathan says "I never dreamed that I would be recording a CD of Bantock's music 12 years later." In his senior year his choir teamed up again with the Chamber Chorus, again singing...Bantock.

Graduating with a Bachelor of Music in 1999, Nathan moved back to New Hampshire for two

years. In 2001 he returned to pursue a Master of Music degree. After graduation in 2003, he joined the voice faculty at Washington University, where he has been for the past six years.

In the meantime, Nathan also acquired a teaching certificate in K-12 vocal music and will be serving as an elementary teacher in the Ferguson-Florissant district next year. He has performed extensively with Washington University Opera, Union Avenue Opera, and other companies in St. Louis and New Hampshire.



Nathan Ruggles

Now for the romance! In 2001 Nathan started dating another singer named **Stephanie Scherrer** who that year joined the Chamber Chorus as an alternate. In 2003 she mentioned that they were looking for tenors. Nathan says his voice has always vacillated between baritone and tenor, so he decided to audition for a tenor slot. At the audition, **Philip Barnes** announced that he didn't think Nathan would fit as a tenor, but Philip was impressed enough to create another bass slot for him, even though they weren't really looking for any basses. Stephanie became a full-time singer at the same time. Six years later they are both still singing, but Stephanie is now Stephanie Scherrer Ruggles!

So why the kilt, you may ask? Nathan's Scottish heritage is scattered through both sides of his family. The Davidson tartan which he wore to his wedding is allegedly his maternal grandmother's clan, although there is some confusion there: the Tulloch family (his grandmother's) is technically a member of the Ross clan, but the Davidson's home castle is Tulloch castle, the residents of which were known as the "Davidsons of Tulloch." The couple honeymooned in Scotland, and actually stayed at Tulloch castle, now a hotel. Nathan, whose middle name is Tulloch, thinks that is where their branch of the Tullochs originated.

Gill Waltman

Noteworthy Notes

Preview of 54th Season

Next season, the SLCC will continue to champion new music through commissions recent and new. The opening concert features several works originally premiered by the choir, and throughout the year there will be world premieres from past and present composers-in-residence **Sasha Johnson Manning** and **Clare Maclean**, British academic **Magnus Williamson**, and a newcomer to us, **Yakov Gubanov**, a student of Shostakovich who now lives on the East Coast.

Since the season is dubbed *Collaborations II*, it should come as no surprise that the Chorus will again be working with other musicians both locally and further afield. Two of St. Louis's finest collegiate choirs will be joining us—from Webster University with Professor **Kathryn Smith Bowers** in November, and from Washington University with Professor **John Stewart** in February. We will also be spicing up our repertoire with a recital of works for choir and guitar, including some haunting Brazilian pieces by Villa-Lobos. Other highlights in the new season include Tchaikovsky's *Vespers*—never before heard in St. Louis—and a monumental homage to J.S. Bach by the German Romantic, Max Reger. Early music also won't be neglected thanks to iconic mass settings by Andrea Gabrieli and William Byrd, and motets from Tudor England and Renaissance Portugal. Once more, St. Louis audiences can look to the Chamber Chorus to present some of the most uplifting, if challenging, examples of the repertoire.

Philip Barnes

Chorus Auditions

There are still places for experienced singers for the 2009-2010 season. The Chorus is especially seeking capable sopranos. Auditions will be held June 1-6. Additional June dates may be available upon request. Contact us (see below) for more information or to schedule an audition.

For more information about
concerts, tickets or auditions:

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Graphic Designer, Amanda Verbeck

Artistic Director takes Sabbatical in England

Though **Philip Barnes** will open and close our next season, and has of course selected the music and venues for every concert, he will actually be spending much of the year in England. He will be spending his sabbatical at Norwich Cathedral as one of its *lay clerks*, the title given to the adult singers in the cathedral choir. He will also study with one of England's foremost voice teachers, **David Lowe**, learning new techniques that he can apply to his work with the Chamber Chorus upon his return.

Stabat Mater at April Concert

At the last concert in April, the audience was treated to not one, but three versions of the poem *Stabat Mater* by Jacopone Di Todi. Beginning the second half was



From left, Philip Barnes, Stacey Albin-Wilson and Stephen Paulus.

Palestrina's classic setting with the world premier of the same poem, also in Latin, by American composer **Stephen Paulus** ending the program. Halfway through the second half, **Orin Johnson** and the Chorus, in cahoots with former composer-in-residence **Sasha Johnson Manning**, surprised **Philip Barnes** with a birthday treat of a specially composed and lyrical version of the work in English.

Leaving the Paulus to be sung as the very last piece of the concert was a masterful choice as it is a moving, emotionally draining and magnificent composition that brought listeners to their feet in a standing ovation; not a routine occurrence for this discerning audience. The work was commissioned by **Dr. M. Stacey Albin-Wilson** in memory of her father.

Advance Ticket Purchases:

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