

South Bend Symphonic Choir

7:30 pm Friday, April 25, 2014 Campus Auditorium

Jesu, meine Freude, BWV227 J. S. Bach

1. Chorale: Jesu, meine Freude
2. Chor: Es ist nun nichts Verdammliches
3. Choral: Enter Deinen Schirmen
4. Terzett: Denn das Gesetz des Geistes
5. Charal: Variation
6. Fuge: Ihr aber seid nicht fleischlich
7. Choral: Weg mit allen Schätzen
8. Terzett: So aber Christes in Euch ist
9. Choral: Variation: Gute Nacht, o Wesen
10. Chor: So nun der Geist
11. Choral: Weicht, Ihr Trauergeister

Five Mystical Songs Ralph Vaughn Williams

1. Easter (Rise heart)
2. I Got me Flowers
3. Love Bade me Welcome
4. The Call
5. Antiphon (Let all the world)

Program Notes

Jesu meine Fruede - Johan Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

For 45 of the 50 years Bach made a living as a musician, his job was to provide Lutheran church music, first as a teenage soprano, then as a church organist, and finally as cantor cantor of St. Thomasschule in Leipzig, where he was composer, music director, contractor, school principal, and teacher. His approach to his job was inventive and eclectic, particularly when he worked with an eye toward prospects involving nearby Catholic royalty. To Bach's contemporaries "motet" meant a simple vocal work without independent instrumental parts (though instruments sometimes doubled the voices). Motets often began the Sunday service, and were typically sung by inexperienced singers. In a 1730 memo to the Leipzig town council, Bach mentioned boys in his school who were "motet singers, who need further training in order to be used eventually for figured music," by which he meant the more elaborate and demanding music of the cantatas. But Bach's own motets, like all his music, are quite demanding, and he likely did not use them in church services. It is not clear exactly what their purpose was. One of them is known to have been sung at a prominent person's funeral, but theories about specific occasions for his other motets, including *Jesu, meine Freude*, have not held up over the years. Most 18th-century Lutheran church music is based on hymns, called "chorales," that dated from the previous two centuries and were familiar to everyone. In *Jesu, meine Freude*, the odd-numbered movements are settings of verses of Johann Franck's 1653 chorale of the same name, while the even-numbered movements set excerpts of Paul's Epistle to the Romans. The eleven 11 movements have an overarching symmetry, much of it not apparent, or important, to the listener, though it's worth noting that the first and last movements are identical harmonizations of the chorale, the second and tenth movements work with the same musical material, the central sixth movement is an elaborate fugue, and Bach reduces the texture to three voices in the fourth and eighth movements.

- by Lawyer and lutenist Howard Posner, who also annotates programs for the Salzburg Festival.

Biographies

Five Mystical Song –Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Following the death of Purcell in 1695, English music went into a long period of decline that was not reversed until the late 19th century with the emergence of Elgar, followed by a whole new generation of talented composers. The leading figure of this younger group of musicians was Ralph Vaughan Williams, who for nearly sixty 60 years remained one of the most influential figures in English music, his nine symphonies and succession of major choral works being widely regarded as his greatest achievements.

Like Elgar, Vaughan Williams was a late developer, reaching his mid- thirties before attracting serious attention as a composer. He eventually developed his own unique musical style, which was profoundly influenced by his love of Tudor music and his immensely important work in collecting English folksongs.

In 1908 Vaughan Williams studied with Ravel for a brief three months, and shortly afterwards produced a series of major works, including the song-cycle *On Wenlock Edge*, the Fantasia on a Theme by *Thomas Tallis* and, in 1911, *the Sea Symphony and the Five Mystical Songs*, the latter a setting of poems by George Herbert (1593 – 1633). Despite his declared atheism, which in later years mellowed into what his wife Ursula described as ‘a cheerful agnosticism,’ Vaughan Williams was inspired throughout his life by much of the liturgy and music of the Anglican church, the language of the King James Bible, and the visionary qualities of religious verse such as Herbert’s.

The baritone soloist is prominent in the first four of the Mystical Songs, with the chorus taking a subsidiary role. In the opening song, the lute and its music are used as a metaphor for the poet’s emotions at Easter. The second song features a simple but moving melody for the baritone soloist, who is joined by the chorus for the third verse. In the third song the choir can be heard intoning the ancient plainsong antiphon, O sacrum convivium, whilst the fourth movement, The Call, is for baritone solo. An accompaniment suggestive of pealing bells introduces the triumphant final song of praise, in which the chorus is heard to full effect.

Baritone, Stephen Lancaster performs regularly in concert, opera, and recital. He was declared winner & audience favorite in the 2013 Nico Castel International Mastersinger Competition at Weill Recital Hall, and is the Central Region winner in the 2014 NATS Artist Awards. He has made solo debuts in Carnegie Hall, as guest artist with the Notre Dame Concert Band, and Chiang-Kai Shek Memorial Recital Hall in Taipei.

On the operatic stage highlights include *Dancaïro* with Eugene Opera, *Count Almaviva* with Opera Notre Dame, and *Schaunard, Falke, and Morales* with Arbor Opera Theater. Concert credits include engagements with the South Bend Symphony Orchestra, Warren Symphony, Holland Symphony, South Bend Chamber Singers, and Oakland Symphony Orchestra.

A passionate recitalist, he is on the roster of the Brooklyn Art Song Society, for whom he performed *Winterreise* in 2012 and has performed recitals in France, Germany, Taiwan, Canada, and throughout the United States. A lover of new music, he has sung premieres as a Stern Fellow at SongFest and a Resident resident artist at the Atlantic Music Festival and recently performed Richard Danielpour’s “An American Requiem” at Western Michigan University.

He holds degrees from the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, the University of Notre Dame, and the University of Michigan, and is currently Assistant assistant professional specialist of music at the University of Notre Dame. For more information, visit www.stephenlancaster.net.

South Bend Symphonic Choir

Marvin Curtis, director

Conner Stigner, piano

SOPRANO

Molly Gordon*

Champaigne

J. Fick

Jennifer Ann Fisher

Lynne Hartman

Haskel

Long-Cecil

Connie Lee Swain

MEZZO-SOPRANO

Mary Mills*

Katelyn M. Andrysiak

Ellen L. Maher

Joan Tweedell

Wesolowski

Sue Wright

ALTO

Amy L. Davis* Carol J.

Glenda D. Bogucki Barbara

Julie M. Cain

Susan L. Fuhrer Jessica

Susan A. Norborg Pamela M.

Kathleen D. Thomas Ginny

TENOR

Aaron M. Bobson*

Stephen E. Fountain

Edward A. Kline

Marvin Lynn

Karl H. Marcussen

Bob Mills Melinda A.

BASS

Thomas A. Umbaugh*

Reynaldo F. Hernandez

Tuck Langland

Julius Cruse Miller

Lawrence Antwon

Mitchell-Matthews Christopher S.

Norborg

John M. Smith

Mark Edward Unwin

* Section Leaders