



2011-2012
Our 43rd Season

The Gift of Fire

Sunday, October 9, 2011 at 4 pm

Orchestra Hall

1111 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis

Concert Conversation at 3 pm with William Bolcom and Michael Daugherty

Jeffrey Biegel, piano

Magnum Chorum, Christopher Aspaas, artistic director

The Singers, Matthew Culloton, artistic director

St. Olaf College Manitou Singers, Sigrid Johnson, conductor

VocalEssence Chorus & Ensemble Singers, Philip Brunelle, conductor

Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, William Schrickel, conductor

The Program

Gustav Holst: *The Hymn of Jesus*

William Bolcom: *Prometheus**

Intermission

Samuel Barber: Overture to *The School for Scandal*

Michael Daugherty: *Mount Rushmore (2010) for Chorus and Orchestra**

**Regional Premiere — Co-Commissioned by VocalEssence*

We would like to thank Jack & Linda Hoeschler, Mike & Donna Wolsted, Piper Jaffray & Co. and Target Foundation for making this concert possible.

**2011-2012
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PiperJaffray

Minnesota classical
Monthly MINNESOTA PUBLIC RADIO

The Program

The Hymn of Jesus

Gustav Holst
(1917)

Magnum Chorum
The Singers
St. Olaf College Manitou Singers
VocalEssence Chorus & Ensemble Singers
Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra
Sigrid Johnson, *conductor*

“I believe most thoroughly in comradeship in all shapes as being the ideal of this world. And as regards the future, I am Hindu enough to believe that comradeship becomes transmuted into Unity, only this is a matter that lies beyond all words.”

—*Gustav Holst*

Glory to Thee, Father! Amen.
Glory to Thee, Word! Amen.
Glory to Thee, O Grace! Amen.
Glory to Thee, Holy Spirit! Amen.
We praise Thee, O Father;
We give thanks to Thee, O shadowless light! Amen.

Fain would I be saved:
And fain would I save.

Fain would I be released:
And fain would I release.

Fain would I be pierced:
And fain would I pierce.

Fain would I be borne:
Fain would I bear.

Fain would I eat:
Fain would I be eaten.

Fain would I hearken:
Fain would I be heard.

Fain would I be cleansed:
Fain would I cleanse.

I am Mind of All!
Fain would I be known.

Divine Grace is dancing:
Fain would I pipe for you.
Dance ye all! Amen.

Fain would I lament:
Mourn ye all! Amen.

The Heavenly Spheres make music for us.
The Holy Twelve dance with us. All things join in the dance.
Ye who dance not, know not what we are knowing. Amen.

Fain would I flee:
And fain would I remain.

Fain would I be ordered:
And fain would I set in order.

Fain would I be infolded:
Fain would I infold.

I have no home:
In all I am dwelling.

I have no resting place:
I have the earth.

I have no temple:
And I have Heaven.

~Continued next page~

Special Thanks

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Prometheus

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To you who gaze, a lamp am I.
 To you that know, a mirror.
 To you who know, a door am I.
 To you who fare, the way.
 Give ye heed unto my dancing:
 In me who speak, behold yourselves;
 And beholding what I do,
 Keep silence on my mysteries.
 Divine ye in dancing what I shall do;
 For yours is the passion of man that I go to endure.

Ye could not know at all what thing ye endure,
 Had not the Father sent me to you as a Word.
 Beholding what I suffer, ye know me as the Sufferer.
 And when ye had beheld it, ye were not unmoved;
 But rather were ye whirled along,
 Ye were kindled to be wise.
 Had ye known how to suffer,
 Ye would know how to suffer no more.
 Learn how to suffer, and ye shall overcome.
 Behold in me a couch: Rest on me!

When I am gone, ye shall know who I am;
 For I am in no wise that which now I seem.
 When ye are come to me, then shall ye know:
 What ye know not, will I myself teach you.
 Fain would I move to the music of holy souls!
 Know in me the word of wisdom!

And with me cry again:
 Glory to Thee, Father! Amen.
 Glory to Thee, Word! Amen.
 Glory to Thee, Holy Spirit! Amen.

Prometheus

William Bolcom
 (2008)

Jeffrey Biegel, *piano*
 Magnum Chorum
 The Singers
 VocalEssence Chorus & Ensemble Singers
 Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra
 Philip Brunelle, *conductor*

~Regional Premiere~
Jack and Linda Hoeschler dedicate "Prometheus"
to David McDonald in honor of his indomitable leadership of the
World Press Institute, kindling a free press across the globe.

I.
 TITAN! to whose immortal eyes
 The sufferings of mortality
 Seen in their sad reality,
 Were not as things that gods despise;
 What was thy pity's recompense?
 A silent suffering, and intense;
 The rock, the vulture, and the chain,
 All that the proud can feel of pain,
 The agony they do not show,
 The suffocating sense of woe,
 Which speaks but in its loneliness,
 And then is jealous lest the sky

Should have a listener, nor will sigh
 Until its voice is echoless.

II.

Titan! to thee the strife was given
 Between the suffering and the will,
 Which torture where they cannot kill;
 And the inexorable Heaven,
 And the deaf tyranny of Fate,
 The ruling principle of Hate,
 Which for its pleasure doth create
 The things it may annihilate,
 Refus'd thee even the boon to die:
 The wretched gift Eternity
 Was thine—and thou hast borne it well.
 All that the Thunderer wrung from thee
 Was but the menace which flung back
 On him the torments of thy rack;
 The fate thou didst so well foresee,
 But would not to appease him tell;
 And in thy Silence was his Sentence,
 And in his Soul a vain repentance,
 And evil dread so ill dissembled,
 That in his hand the lightnings trembled.

III.

Thy Godlike crime was to be kind,
 To render with thy precepts less
 The sum of human wretchedness,
 And strengthen Man with his own mind;
 But baffled as thou wert from high,
 Still in thy patient energy,
 In the endurance, and repulse
 Of thine impenetrable Spirit,
 Which Earth and Heaven could not convulse,
 A mighty lesson we inherit:
 Thou art a symbol and a sign
 To Mortals of their fate and force;
 Like thee, Man is in part divine,
 A troubled stream from a pure source;
 And Man in portions can foresee
 His own funeral destiny;
 His wretchedness, and his resistance,
 And his sad unallied existence:
 To which his Spirit may oppose
 Itself—and equal to all woes,
 And a firm will, and a deep sense,
 Which even in torture can descry
 Its own concenter'd recompense,
 Triumphant where it dares defy,
 And making Death a Victory.
 —George Gordon (Lord) Byron (1788-1824)

Intermission

Overture to *The School for Scandal*

Samuel Barber
(1931)

Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra
William Schrickel, *conductor*

Mount Rushmore

Michael Daugherty
(2010)

Magnum Chorum
The Singers
VocalEssence Chorus & Ensemble Singers
Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra
Philip Brunelle, *conductor*

~Regional Premiere~

Commissioned by VocalEssence and the Pacific Symphony Orchestra

I. George Washington

Let tyrants shake their iron rod,
And slav'ry clank her galling chains,
We'll fear them not; we trust in God,
New England's God forever reigns.
—“*Chester*,” *Revolutionary War Anthem*
by William Billings, 1770

I will move gently down the stream of life, until I sleep with
my fathers.

—*Letter from George Washington to the*
Marquis de Lafayette, February 1, 1784

II. Thomas Jefferson

Ogni dolce Aura che spira *Each sweet breeze that blows*
par che dica ecco il mio ben *Seems to say, “Behold my beloved.”*
l'alma in sen d'amor sospira *The soul in the breast of love sighs.*
qua l'attendo e mai non vien *Here I await but my love never comes...*
—*Ogni Dolce Aura; song by Maria Cosway*
for Thomas Jefferson, December 24, 1786, Paris, France

my Head
my Heart

—*Letter from Thomas Jefferson to Maria Cosway,*
1786, Paris, France

Music is the passion of my soul

—*Letter from Thomas Jefferson to Giovanni Fabbroni,*
June 8, 1778

Declaration
Tyranny
Liberty
Slavery
Necessity
Justice

Declaration of Independence

—*Declaration of Independence; Thomas Jefferson,*
July 4, 1776

III. Theodore Roosevelt

There is delight in the hardy life of the open.
Forest and rivers
Mountains and plains
There is delight in the hardy life of the open.

There are no words that can tell the hidden spirit
of the wilderness,
that can reveal its mystery, its melancholy, and its
charm.

Leave it as it is.
The ages at work

There is delight in the hardy life of the open.
Wonderful grandeur
Majestic beauty
Natural wonder
There is delight in the hardy life of the open.

Keep it for your children.
Leave it as it is.

—*Speech at the Grand Canyon, May 6, 1903;*
African Game Trails; Theodore Roosevelt, 1910

IV. Abraham Lincoln

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought
forth on this continent a new nation, conceived
in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that
all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing
whether that nation, or any nation, so conceived
and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met
on a great battlefield of that war. We have come
to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final
resting place for those who here gave their lives
that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting
and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate—we can
not consecrate—we can not hallow this ground.
The brave men, living and dead, who struggled
here, have consecrated it, far above our poor
power to add or detract. The world will little
note, nor long remember what we say here, but
it can never forget what they did here. It is for
us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the
unfinished work which they who fought here
have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather
for us to be here dedicated to the great task
remaining before us—that from these honored
dead we take increased devotion to that cause
for which they gave the last full measure of
devotion—that we here highly resolve that
these dead shall not have died in vain—that this
nation, under God, shall have a new birth of
freedom—and that government: of the people,
by the people, for the people, shall not perish
from the earth.

—*Gettysburg Address; Abraham Lincoln,*
November 19, 1863

Program Note: The Hymn of Jesus

by Philip Brunelle

It was just one year after completing *The Planets* (1916) that Holst wrote another masterpiece, *The Hymn of Jesus*. This marvelous work for two choruses, treble chorus and orchestra was dedicated to Holst's good friend, Ralph Vaughan Williams and was an overwhelming success at its first performance in 1920 at the Queen's Hall in London. The work has been heard once before on a VocalEssence concert, at Cathedral of Saint Paul on April 18, 1989.

I would like to quote some sentences from the Holst biography of 1947 by the English composer, Edmund Rubbra. They describe *The Hymn of Jesus* beautifully:

Holst's genius flowered into another masterpiece with *The Hymn of Jesus*, releasing all the latent mysticism in Holst's character and gave it a glowing objectivity. Holst made his own version of words translated from the Apocryphal Acts of St. John with its mixture of ritual and dancing, giving the work its fascinating blend of earthly activity and heavenly serenity.

The work begins with a slow orchestral prelude based on the Latin hymn *Pange lingua gloriosi* giving the opening phrases to the trombone — the instrument he played. The function of the treble chorus (to be placed at a distance from the two choirs) is to punctuate the main body of sound with "amens". After the dance section (with the tambourine being used to mark the rhythm) the final section is a recapitulation of the first. No philosophical or moral attitudes are taken, but instead there is a sheer delight in a clear statement of beauty through texture.

Holst left no followers or imitators, but those of us who were privileged to be his pupils, know that the most valuable thing he gave was a sense of direction from within. He wrote once to a friend, 'Music, being identical with heaven, isn't a thing of momentary thrills, or even hourly ones. It is a condition of eternity'. And shortly after completing *The Hymn of Jesus* he wrote: 'Art like Nature is always creating and never repeating.'



Composer's Note: Prometheus

By William Bolcom, VocalEssence Honorary Director

It is undeniable that our century and millennium have not gotten off to an auspicious start, with Sept. 11, 2001, our worldwide economic crisis, and all the ills the 20th century has foisted on the 21st. The ancient legend of Prometheus is a perfect metaphor for our time; in it the god is chained to a rock with a huge bird gnawing at his vitals, which are eternally renewed and eternally destroyed each day.

To much of the rest of the world the West is Prometheus, whose fire has fueled the technological expansion of the last 500 years — electricity, steam, oil, the atom, and the computer. The sense of power we've all gained thereby has simultaneously pulled us away from religion, and freed of its restraint we in the West have brought ourselves to a level of technical sophistication unknown to any other era. We've wedged our way into almost-divine capability, unlike Prometheus who as a god was born with it — but at a price. We are now all Prometheus, chained to our rock of technological dependency; there is no question that our unprecedented advance has given the world enormous benefits we have no desire of relinquishing — nor should we — but we are enjoined to see the dark side of this bounty.

George Gordon, Lord Byron (1788-1824) is, with Percy Bysshe Shelley and William Blake, among the first poets to speak of the new interest in science of his era. His poem Prometheus, coming as it does from the early industrial revolution, examines the antipodes we are haplessly hurled between constantly as well as the West's altruism that has fueled so much of the modern world's predicament. When I was requested to write the present work for the same forces as Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy*, I felt the piano part would be ideal in portraying Prometheus's eternal agony; my Prometheus is perhaps the antithesis of the joyous mood of the Beethoven but is not devoid of hope, particularly if it points us to begin to understand our situation. This piece is dedicated to that hope.

The opening piano solo evoking Prometheus's eternal struggle against his chains precedes the first stanza of Byron's poem, in a contoured, unpitched recitation by the chorus with the piano. This is followed by an apocalyptic fanfare from the orchestra and the first statement, in falling brass triads, of the central motive of the piece; the piano returns, gently this time, with the rest of the orchestra, moving toward a climax. The subsequent solo piano passage depicting the giant bird's attacks points toward the first movement's quiet closing.

Movement II, marked in the score "lively; like sparks," involves for the first time the entire ensemble of piano, chorus, and orchestra; in it Prometheus's inescapable fate is shown. A short piano interlude derived from the work's opening ensues, followed by the chorus and orchestra lamenting both

Prometheus's fate and Zeus's regretful meting of his dire punishment by lightning bolts, portrayed by the piano. The movement ends on a tragic note, employing the earlier triadic motive in a quiet ending, which flows *attacca* into the final section.

The chorus, alone for the first time, intones "Thy Godlike crime was to be kind," in antiphony with the brass. Here, again with piano and the rest of the orchestra, follows the meditation at the core of the poem: "Like thee, Man is in part divine, / A troubled stream from a pure source." After the strife of the rest of *Prometheus* comes a peace derived from greater understanding that I feel we will someday acquire, and for which I pray fervently.

Performer's Note: Prometheus

By Jeffrey Biegel

I find the correlation between the fact that Beethoven composed his *Choral Fantasy* in 1808 to William Bolcom's *Prometheus* in 2008 remarkable. Both deal with struggles in their own time, and the usage of the Byron poem of "Prometheus" and how it relates to our own times, fate and destiny is quite clever on the part of the composer.

The piano part is the kind that people will feel a sonic effect, which provokes their emotions to feel the inner sense of struggle, much as Prometheus did. Punished by the gods for giving simple humans a god-like use of fire, I have to feel as though I am Prometheus, which Mr. Bolcom intends for the pianist. At the same time, I must create these aural effects on the piano which are not typical to the traditional melodic style of piano writing. The filigree Mr. Bolcom employs in the piano part, especially near to the end, is quite ethereal and magical. He uses the piano to evoke emotions of struggle, fate and destiny. These are the technical challenges as well, which also include being sure the piano part fits perfectly with the chorus parts down to the thirty-second note and rests.

The rehearsal process is wonderful—naturally because the composer is present—but also because it is a learning experience for everyone at the same time. There are no pre-determined interpretations, as we are setting the benchmark for future performances. That in itself is extremely exciting!

Program Note: Overture to *The School for Scandal*

by William Schrickel

Samuel Barber (1910-1981) was born in West Chester, Pennsylvania, and began studying piano at the age of six. He started composing the following year and entered the first class of the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia at the age of fourteen. He attended Curtis for eight years, and later returned to the school to teach composition from 1939 to 1942.

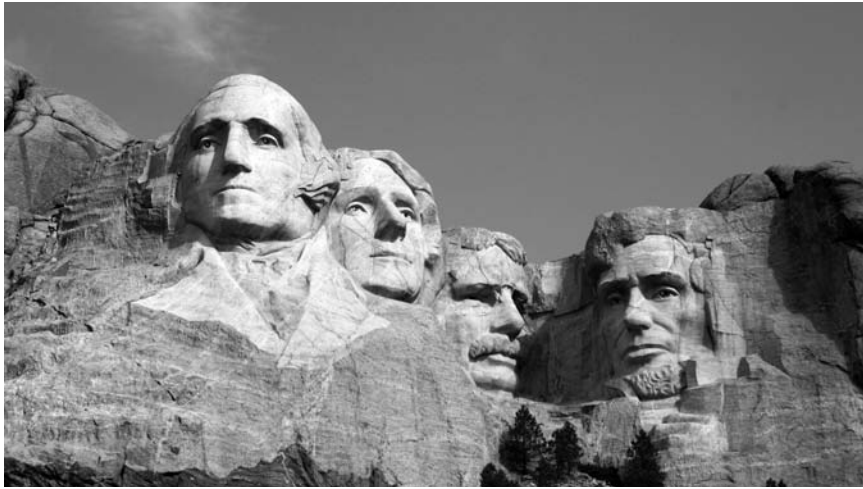
Barber began work on his first piece for full orchestra, the Overture to *The School for Scandal*, while on summer holiday in Italy in 1931. Although he was inspired by British playwright Richard Sheridan's 1777 comedy of manners, Barber's overture was conceived from the outset for the concert hall, never as incidental music for a production of the play. The piece was premiered in 1933 by the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Sheridan's play revolves around a group of characters who live their lives immersed in the world of gossip, and Barber wrote that he created his music to be "a reflection of the play's spirit." The overture is bright and sassy and intones a snipey sense of humor from its very first chord, a biting bitonal juxtaposition of D major in the strings and winds and E-flat minor in the trumpets. Violins whisper fragmented phrases that are answered by spiky woodwind interjections and threatening mutterings in the lower strings, all leading to the full-voiced first theme in D minor. Woodwinds and brass indulge in a rapid-fire exchange of sardonic musical quips that form a bridge to a lyrical second theme in the solo oboe. A pianissimo clarinet ushers the music into its development section, wherein Barber plays his musical ideas against one another with brilliance and virtuosity, culminating in a violent outburst in the brass that leads to the recapitulation of the first theme. The English horn reprises the sweet melody previously sung by the solo oboe, and the sly clarinet tune returns to open the door to the work's coda, complete with a hushed and nimble fugue in the strings, snickering woodwind figurations and a quiet, gentle denouement in the clarinets before the trumpets bring down the curtain with one final blazing fanfare.

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Composer's Note: Mount Rushmore (2010) for Chorus and Orchestra

By Michael Daugherty



Mount Rushmore (2010) for chorus and orchestra is inspired by the monumental sculpture, located in the Black Hills of South Dakota, of four American presidents: George Washington (1732–1799), Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826), Theodore Roosevelt (1858–1919) and Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865). The American sculptor Gutzon Borglum supervised the carving of these figureheads into the granite mountainside of Mount Rushmore, from 1927 until his death in 1941. Created during the Great Depression against seemingly impossible odds with a small crew of men, Mount Rushmore came to symbolize an attitude of hope against adversity. Borglum described the monument as “American, drawn from American sources, memorializing American achievement.” Drawing from American musical sources and texts, my

composition echoes the resonance and dissonance of *Mount Rushmore* as a complex icon of American history. Like Mount Rushmore, my libretto is carved out of the words of each President.

For the first movement, I have selected a fragment of George Washington’s final letter, upon his retirement from military and public life to Mount Vernon, to the French General Marquis de Lafayette, his Revolutionary War comrade in arms: “I will move gently down the stream of life, until I sleep with my Fathers.” Perhaps Washington predicted his future place at Mount Rushmore where, as America’s first President, he “sleeps” with other important “fathers” of American history. Musical echoes of popular Revolutionary War anthems (“Chester,” by William Billings, and “Yankee Doodle”) are a reminder of Washington’s role as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War.

Thomas Jefferson, the third President of America, was a brilliant political writer and also an accomplished violinist, who wrote that “Music is the passion of my soul.” As the American Minister to France (1785-89), the recently widowed Jefferson met Maria Cosway in Paris, and fell in love with this young, charismatic, Anglo-Italian society hostess, musician, and composer of salon music. The second movement of my composition intertwines a love song composed by Cosway for Jefferson (“Ogni dolce Aura”) together with a love letter composed by Jefferson for Cosway (“Dialogue of the Head vs. the Heart”) and key fragments from Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence.

The third movement is based on the words of America’s 26th President, Theodore Roosevelt, who was a great explorer of the uncharted wilderness. As President, Roosevelt created the National Park Service and successfully saved, against great opposition from commercial developers, over 234 million acres of plains, forests, rivers and mountain ranges of the American West. It was during his retreats into the barren Badlands of North Dakota (not far from Mount Rushmore) that Roosevelt, as a young man, realized that the “majestic beauty” of the American wilderness needed to be left “as it is” for future generations. I have composed music to suggest the robust and mystical sense of Roosevelt’s “delight in the hardy life of the open” and “the hidden spirit of the wilderness.”

The fourth and final movement of *Mount Rushmore* is dedicated to Abraham Lincoln, who successfully led the United States through the Civil War and initiated the end of slavery. I have set the rhythmic cadences and powerful words of his *Gettysburg Address* (1863) to music that resonates with echoes of period music from the Civil War. I created a musical portrait of the 16th President of the United States, who expressed his vision with eloquence, and with hope that the human spirit could overcome prejudice and differences of opinion in order to create a better world.