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Bach Mass in B minor

performed with 27 short films by Bastian Clevé

Friday, April 8, 2011 at 8 pm

Saturday, April 9, 2011 at 8 pm

St. Olaf Catholic Church

215 South 8th Street

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Concert Conversation on Saturday, April 9, 2011 from 7-7:30pm with
Classical Minnesota Public Radio's Steve Staruch and Philip Brunelle

Maria Jette, *soprano*

Lisa Drew, *alto*

Brian Link, *male alto*

James Taylor, *tenor*

Aaron Larson, *bass*

VocalEssence Ensemble Singers

The Lyra Baroque Orchestra, Jacques Ogg, *director*

Philip Brunelle, *conductor*

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**In remembrance*

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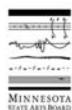
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- **This performance is being recorded** — please help us keep the sanctuary quiet. Take a moment now to check that cell phones, paging devices and wristwatch alarms are turned off before the concert begins. Thank you for your cooperation!
- **Recording devices and cameras** are prohibited. No photography, video, or audio recording is allowed in the concert hall. Please refrain from tweeting, texting or checking email during the concert.
- **Student and group discounts** are available for most VocalEssence concerts. Half-price tickets are available to students (ages 6-18 and college) with a student ID. Groups of 10 or more save 15% on tickets. Children under age 6 are not allowed at VocalEssence performances, except for select community and family concerts, including ¡Cantaré! and Star of Wonder.
- **Accessible seating** is available at all of our concert venues. However, some of our facilities do not have elevator access to the balcony level. Please make your needs known when you order tickets.
- **You may return VocalEssence single concert tickets** for resale up to 48 hours prior to a performance. No refunds or exchanges can be given; however, you will be sent a receipt for your tax-deductible contribution. (VocalEssence subscribers may call 612-371-5642 to request free ticket exchanges and lost ticket replacement.)
- **Latecomers will be seated** at appropriate pauses in the concert according to the conductor's wishes. Please plan plenty of time for locating the concert venue and parking. Or better yet, allow an extra hour and join us for Concert Conversations with the composers and artists, held one hour before most concerts.
- **Programs and artists** are subject to change without notice.



This activity is made possible in part by a grant provided by the Minnesota State Arts Board, through an appropriation by the Minnesota State Legislature from the Minnesota arts and cultural heritage fund with money from the vote of the people of Minnesota on November 4, 2008, a grant from the Wells Fargo Foundation Minnesota, and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

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Introduction to *The Sound of Eternity*



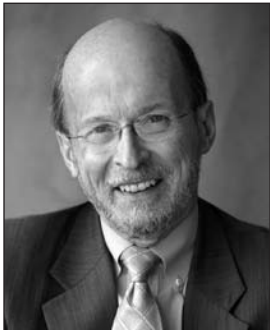
For me personally, the Mass in B minor is an incredibly inspiring, reflective, euphoric and jubilant experience, almost as if, far from a single person's destiny, a door opens into heaven. Out of this breathtaking experience the individual films have been created.

The cinematic form of 27 short films is based on the 27-part musical structure of the Mass itself, beginning with "Kyrie eleison" (Lord, have mercy upon us) and ending with "Dona nobis pacem" (Grant us peace).

Each of the 27 episodes is a self-contained piece, in form and content thriving for jewel-like perfection. Though wordless, it is about life and lives, birth and death, about individuals, families, politics and world history. It is about art, science, intuition, and mysticism. It is about the endless pilgrimage of mankind in search for fulfillment and peace.

The vision behind the film is to let the audience take inspiration through their ears and eyes, leave them contently carried away, feeling fulfilled and complete, and — one hopes — to keep this happiness for a little while.

—*Bastian Clevé*



Filmmaker Bastian Clevé has a deep affection for Bach's Mass in B minor and has created a fascinating set of images to go with each individual movement. Opening with the birth of Bach and paintings from his time (and later the smiling adult Bach), the film then depicts pilgrims searching for hope as they ascend a mountain ("Kyrie"). Later birds soaring over the mountains show us the desire for freedom as expressed in the second "Kyrie." The joy of rebuilding a monastery is captured in the "Gloria," followed by a constant connection of faces, all with their eyes in the same focus, as Clevé depicts mankind as one, with goodwill to all.

He captures the humor of a smiling Bach in the "Laudamus te" and the search for the meaning of life with the Three Kings in "Qui tollis." Aerial views of San Francisco, as if the Holy Ghost were hovering above, accompany "Cum sancto spiritu." Each movement has its own distinct meaning until we arrive at the ending, with the first "Osanna" showing us the celebration of a reunited Berlin. The second "Osanna" brings together the glory of Baroque architecture with the awe of outer space (*in excelsis*, in the highest).

—*Philip Brunelle*

Special Thanks

Ann and David Buran
Bastian Clevé
Johannes Graulich
Bill Lentsch, Delta Air Lines
Cindy Marvin
Peter and Judy Mitchelson
Oregon Bach Festival
Michael Anderson
George Evano
Dave Goudy
Plymouth Congregational Church
Helmuth Rilling
Earl Rivers
Kathy Romey
Steve Staruch, Minnesota Public Radio
Katherine Su
Anne Susag, St. Olaf Catholic Church

Text and Translation: Mass in B minor

Kyrie

Chorus

Kyrie eleison.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Duet: Soprano and Alto

Christe eleison.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Chorus

Kyrie eleison.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Gloria

Chorus

Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.

Glory be to God on high, and on earth, peace, good will toward all.

Aria: Alto

Laudamus te, benedicimus te, adoramus te, glorificamus te.

We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee.

Chorus

Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam,

We give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory.

Duet: Soprano and Tenor

Domine Deus, Rex coelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens, Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe altissime; Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filium Patris,

Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty, the only begotten Son Jesus Christ most high; O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,

Chorus

Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram.

Thou that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer.

Aria: Alto

Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis.

Thou that sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy upon us.

Aria: Bass

Quoniam tu solus Sanctus; tu solus Dominus; tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe.

For Thou only art holy; Thou only art the Lord; Thou only art most high, O Christ.

Chorus

Cum Sancto Spiritu in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

With the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Intermission

Symbolum Nicenum

Chorus

Credo in unum Deum,

I believe in one God,

Chorus

Patrem omnipotentem, factorem coeli et terrae, visibilibus omnium et invisibilibus.

The Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

Duet: Soprano and Alto

Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum, filium Dei unigenitum, et ex patre natum ante omnia saecula, Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine, Deum verum de Deo

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, light of light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one

vero, genitum non factum, consubstantiali Patri; per quem omnia facta sunt, qui propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem descendit de coelis,

substance with the Father; by whom all things were made, who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven,

Chorus

Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria virgine, et homo factus est,

And was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man,

Chorus

Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato, passus et sepultus est,

And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, suffered and was buried,

Chorus

Et resurrexit tertia die secundum scripturas, et ascendit in coelum, sedet ad dexteram Dei Patris. Et iterum venturus est cum gloria iudicare vivos et mortuos, cujus regni non erit finis.

And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father, and He shall come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose Kingdom shall have no end.

Aria: Bass

Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum et vivificantem, qui ex patre Filoque procedit, qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur et conglorificatur, qui locutus est per Prophetas. Et unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father and Son, who together with the Father and Son is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the Prophets. And I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.

Chorus

Confiteor unum baptisma in remissionem peccatorum, et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum, et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.

I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Sanctus

Chorus

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, Dominum Deus Sabaoth, pleni sunt coeli et terra Gloria ejus.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.

Osanna

Chorus

Osanna in excelsis.

Hosanna in the highest.

Benedictus

Aria: Tenor

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.

Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Chorus

Osanna in excelsis.

Hosanna in the highest.

Agnus Dei

Aria: alto

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, Miserere nobis.

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Dona nobis pacem

Chorus

Dona nobis pacem.

Grant us peace.

Program Note: Mass in B minor

by Peter Bergquist



Johann Sebastian Bach's Mass in B minor differs from his other monumental works in that it was composed piecemeal during the twenty-five years prior to the work's final assembly, which took place between August 1748 and October 1749. The Sanctus is the earliest part of the score, composed for performance on Christmas Day 1724.

In 1733 Bach composed a Missa and sent it to the Elector at Dresden, Friedrich August II, in the hope of obtaining an honorific title in the court's musical establishment (the title was awarded only in 1736). This Missa, like most Lutheran masses of the time, including Bach's other four, consisted of only the Kyrie and Gloria of the Latin Ordinary. It was far more elaborate than usual, since Bach wanted to make a strong impression on the Dresden court, and music for such an establishment could, in any case, be more expansive than was possible at Leipzig. The manuscript of the Symbolum Nicenum or Credo was written out during Bach's last years; it is very likely his last major piece of church music. Bach gathered together these three separate compositions—the Missa, Credo, and Sanctus—and provided the remaining sections, the Osanna, Benedictus, Agnus Dei, and Dona nobis pacem, by inserting the Latin words into earlier pieces, most of which were cantata movements.

The complete Ordinary of the Mass that we know as the Mass in B minor was evidently assembled to serve as a collection of model settings of the Latin ordinary in a large variety of styles rather than for functional use in the liturgy. Its length makes it far too long for any service, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, or other, and the separate composition of its various sections argues against a unified conception on Bach's part, at least in the early stages. The fact remains though, that in its final assembled form, the Mass in B minor is a unified work that Bach never surpassed in the field of church music.

The Mass follows the plan sometimes called "cantata-mass," in which the five major parts of the text are divided into several segments set as self-contained numbers, in this case arias, duets, and choruses. The Kyrie is in three large movements, one for each acclamation in the text. The prayerful nature of the words is reflected in the orchestra, where the bright trumpets are excluded and oboes are replaced by softer oboes d'amore, and in the minor key of the two choruses. The first "Kyrie eleison," after the choral introduction, consists of a large fugue, beginning in the orchestra, then taken up by the chorus. Many of the choruses in the Mass are fugues, which for Bach are always expressive as well as rigorously formal. "Christe eleison" is a duet for two sopranos accompanied by violins in unison and continuo. Addressing the Second Person of the Trinity by two voices is one of the numerous musical symbols to be found throughout the Mass. The second "Kyrie eleison" is in *stile antico* or ancient style, that is, in imitation of Renaissance vocal polyphony, with no independent instrumental parts except the basso continuo.

In the Gloria the principal key of the Mass moves from B minor to D major; the Mass as a whole is in fact more truly in D than B minor. Bach divided the long text of the Gloria into eight movements, symmetrically organized into three subgroups. The choruses "Gloria in excelsis Deo" and "Gratias agimus" flank the aria "Laudamus te;" these three movements set the first main section of the text, the jubilant offering of praise, thanks, and glory to God. The duet "Domine Deus" and aria "Qui sedes" frame the chorus "Qui tollis," the central portion of the text for Bach, in which Jesus Christ is asked for forgiveness. The final two pieces, the aria "Quoniam tu solus Sanctus" and the chorus "Cum Sancto Spiritu," which are connected, conclude in a more jubilant mood. It is noteworthy that in the four solo movements Bach used representatives of four different instrumental groups as obbligato instruments (violin, flute, oboe, and horn).

The Credo has an even more elaborate symmetrical construction. Two choruses open and two close the Credo; both pairs begin with a movement in *stile antico* ("Credo in unum Deum" and "Confiteor") followed by a concerted movement with full orchestra ("Patrem omnipotentem" and "Et expecto"). These pairs of choruses

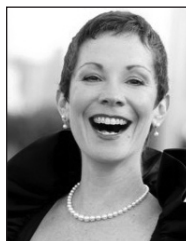
frame two solo pieces, the duet “Et in unum Deum” and the aria “Et in Spiritum Sanctum.” These in turn frame the central part of the Credo, the choral triptych—“Et incarnatus,” “Crucifixus,” and “Et resurrexit”—which states the fundamental tenets of Christian belief: Christ’s incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection.

The older Sanctus fits perfectly into its place in the Mass; differences in scoring, notably the six-part chorus, are the main factors that betray its separate origin. It is in two consecutive sections, the majestic processional of the Sanctus leading directly into the quicker fugue of the “Pleni sunt coeli,” a succession that very much resembles a French overture. The Lutheran Communion service, for which Bach originally wrote the Sanctus, did not include the Osanna and Benedictus as part of the Sanctus, so when Bach assembled the Mass, he was obliged to provide additional music for these texts as well as the Agnus Dei. This he did by using older pieces, as he had already done in at least two movements of the Gloria and four movements of the Credo, though all these movements are substantially revised from their originals.

The last numbers of the Mass, however, seem only to have had the new words fitted to the old music; one must say “seem,” since a model for the Benedictus is unknown, though it appears to be a reworking of earlier music. The big Osanna for double chorus is heard after both the Sanctus and Benedictus. Both times it is followed by a slow aria for only a few performers — which is an effective contrast as well as appropriate to the restrained texts of the Benedictus and Agnus Dei. The final “Dona nobis pacem” repeats the music of the chorus, “Gratias agimus,” from the Gloria. The rounding provided by this repetition is a most satisfying conclusion to the Mass and convincing evidence that Bach was concerned for the structure of the entire work as well as its individual parts.

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Biographies



Maria Jette, soprano

Soprano Maria Jette has performed extensively on the concert stage, appearing with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Houston Symphony Orchestra, New York Chamber Symphony, Saint Paul Chamber

Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra and many others. She has been a regular guest at the Oregon Bach, Victoria Bach and San Luis Obispo Mozart Festivals, the Oregon Festival of American Music, and on Public Radio International’s *A Prairie Home Companion*.

Maria has performed more than 45 operatic roles, including the role of “Mrs. Olson” which she created for the May 2002 Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra premiere of Garrison Keillor’s operatic excursion, *Mr. and Mrs. Olson*. Maria performed with VocalEssence for the world premiere of Francis Grier’s *The Passion of Jesus of Nazareth* in 2006 and concerts of William Bolcom’s music during the **ILLUMINATING BOLCOM** festival held in Spring 2007. In 2008–2009, she joined VocalEssence in the **40th Birthday Party** celebration hosted by Garrison Keillor and also performed as soprano soloist in the world premiere of Lawrence Siegel’s *Kaddish*.

Along with Bradley Greenwald, Simone Perrin and T. Mychael Rambo, Maria will appear in the upcoming **Philip & Friends Cabaret** event at the Dakota Jazz Club on May 1, 2011.



Lisa Drew, alto

Lisa Drew has sung alto solos in many performances with VocalEssence, including William Bolcom’s *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, Sven-David Sandström’s *High Mass*, Steve Heitzeg’s *Nobel Symphony* and Arthur Honneger’s

King David. Lisa’s opera roles have included “Genevieve” in the Minnesota Opera’s production of *Pelleas and Melisande*, “The Sorceress” in Glorious Revolution Baroque’s production of *Dido & Aeneas*, “Bradamante” in Ex Machina’s production of *Alcina*, “Mrs. Ott” in the Berkshire Opera Company’s production of *Susannah*, and “The Fairy Queen” in The Gilbert & Sullivan Very Light Opera Company’s production of *Iolanthe*. In addition,



Philip & Friends Cabaret

T. Mychael Rambo



Simone Perrin



Maria Jette



Bradley Greenwald



Sunday, May 1, 2011 at 6 pm
The Dakota Jazz Club
1010 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Please join VocalEssence for an eclectic musical soirée featuring the talented Bradley Greenwald, the luscious Maria Jette, the charming Simone Perrin and the delightful T. Mychael Rambo with Maestro Philip Brunelle at the piano.

Tickets: \$125 & \$100* (includes light supper, beef or vegetarian risotto option)
RSVP: www.vocalescence.org/cabaret or 612-547-1473

**All proceeds benefit VocalEssence Community Engagement Programs. WITNESS teaching artists and ¡Cantaré! composers make 200 classroom visits each school year, reaching more than 7,000 students throughout the metropolitan area.*

she has performed in over 75 productions with San Diego Opera Chorus & The Minnesota Opera Chorus. Since 2002, Lisa has been actively performing with the early music chamber vocal ensemble The Rose Ensemble. Lisa is the alto soloist at Plymouth Congregational Church in Minneapolis under the direction of Philip Brunelle.

Brian Link, male alto

A member of the VocalEssence Ensemble Singers, Brian Link, has performed internationally with choruses, orchestras and in solo recital. As alto soloist and section leader with the Christ Church Cathedral Choir of Men and Boys in Indianapolis, he was featured soloist in works of Bach, Handel, Purcell and others. As a countertenor soloist, Brian has performed Handel's *Messiah* with the Portland Baroque Orchestra, the Indiana University Baroque Orchestra and the Twin Cities' own Lyra Baroque Orchestra. Locally, Brian was a frequent performer with the Ex Machina Baroque Opera company, singing the roles of Ottone in Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, and the namesakes in Cavalli's *Giasone* and Handel's *Giulio Cesare*. Brian is currently alto soloist and section leader at the church of St. Louis, King of France in St. Paul, and directs the Renaissance chorus The Waltham Abbey Singers and baroque chamber group Ensemble Polaris. Brian can be heard on recordings released by Koch International Classics and Meridian Records.



James Taylor, tenor

With a repertoire ranging from the Renaissance to the 21st century, tenor James Taylor devotes much of his career to the oratorio and concert literature. Highlights of his 2010–2011 season include Haydn's *Paukenmesse* and

Purcell's "Behold I Bring You Glad Tidings" with Les Violons du Roy; Handel's *Messiah* with the National Arts Centre Orchestra and with the Bach Collegium Japan; Mozart's *Requiem* with the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Colorado Symphony; and Mendelssohn's *Elijah* with Helmuth Rilling and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Among other recent performances, Mr. Taylor sang Bach's Mass in B minor with the Pittsburgh Symphony and the Los Angeles Chorale at Walt Disney Hall.

James can be heard on over 30 recordings including Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, *Magnificat*, *St. John Passion* and *Easter Oratorio*. New releases include Britten's *War Requiem* with

Helmuth Rilling and the Mozart *Requiem* with Andreas Delfs and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. Since May 2005, James has been an associate professor of voice in the Early Music, Song, and Chamber Ensemble program at The Yale Institute of Sacred Music and Yale School of Music.



Aaron Larson, bass

Aaron Larson has garnered notice for his dynamic stage presence, musical versatility, and artistic insight. Recent concert performances include the title role of Telemann's comic opera *Pimpinone* with Lyra Baroque Orchestra, cantatas with Bach Vespers at Holy Trinity NYC, Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with the National Lutheran Choir and Ensemble Sebastian, and the world premier of Paulus' *When Church Bells are Ringing* with the Minnesota Orchestra. Recent opera performances include Mega in Paulus' *The Star Gatherer* with the St. John's University Boys' Choir, Le Dancaire in the Minnesota Orchestra's staging of *Carmen*, and Ruggiero in Francesca Caccini's *La Liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola d'Alcina* with the New York Continuo Collective. He has toured with the Waverly Consort since 2003. Aaron earned his master's degree in vocal performance at Boston University and his bachelor's degree at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

What Makes a Period Orchestra?

A period instrument orchestra is distinguished from other orchestras by both the way musicians play and the instruments they use. Although other orchestras perform Baroque music, they use modern instruments. They may emulate historically informed performance practices, such as playing with a distinctive, highly rhythmic, and vocally inspired style. Using period instruments, however, enhances the effect. The Lyra Baroque Orchestra's string players perform on strings made from sheep gut rather than metal and use Baroque style bows which allow for an entirely different mode of shaping musical phrases. Wind players perform on thin-walled wooden flutes and oboes and the trumpets used are valveless. The resulting sound of such an ensemble is lighter and brighter than that which modern instruments produce.

The Lyra Baroque Orchestra

Violin I

Cindy Marvin, *concertmaster*
Joanna Shelton
Miriam Scholz-Carlton
Inger Dahlin
Margaret Humphrey

Violin II

Marc Levine
Ginna Watson
Terry Elliott
Conor O'Brien

Viola

Cheryl Zylla
Lisa Merrill

Cello

Laura Handler
Julie Elhard

Bass

Sara Thompson

Flute

Paul Jacobson
Rachel Hest

Oboe

Stanley King (oboe d'amore)
Ellen Rider (oboe d'amore)
Ivar Lunde

Bassoon

Theresa Koenig
Bill Sherfey

Trumpet

Kris Kwapis
Tom Pfothenauer
Bruno Lourensetto

Horn

Celeste Holler

Timpani

Lawrence Barnhart

Organ

Tami Morse



The Lyra Baroque Orchestra

The Lyra Baroque Orchestra, under the artistic direction of Jacques Ogg, is a nonprofit baroque ensemble based in St. Paul, that has been performing regionally and internationally since 1985. Lyra presents historically informed, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century musical performances to a diverse audience, using period instruments to provide a unique musical experience. Lyra currently performs in St. Paul and Rochester, Minnesota, and does outreach throughout the state. Lyra has expanded its reach to include concerts in Spain, collaborations with numerous acclaimed local and international guest artists, and educational programs for children and adults.



Jacques Ogg

Jacques Ogg has been the artistic director of the Lyra Baroque Orchestra since 2000. With Lyra, Mr. Ogg has toured in Spain multiple times and, in addition to their concert activities, recorded Antonio Soler's five Villancicos. One of the most prominent and influential modern masters of harpsichord and fortepiano, Jacques Ogg performs worldwide as a soloist and continuo player. He is a member of one of the world's leading period-instrument ensembles, the Orchestra of the 18th Century, and also works with baroque orchestras in Salamanca and Sevilla, Spain. Highly sought after as a pedagogue, he is the principal harpsichord professor at the Royal Conservatoire of The Hague, one of the world's foremost institutes for early music. Mr. Ogg co-directs the Vancouver Early Music Programme and Festival, an intensive summer music course in Vancouver, BC, and his discography includes more than sixty recordings with labels such as Philips, Sony, EMI, Deutsche Harmonia Mundi, and Glossa. *Fono Forum*, Germany's largest music magazine, named Mr. Ogg's CD of Bach's *Goldberg Variations* the finest recording of this work presently available.



Soprano

Jennifer French
 Angela Grundstad
 Amanda Inhofer
 Amy Johnson
 Carolyn J. Mitchell
 Krista J. Palmquist
 Margaret Sabin
 Ann L. Schrooten
 Mari M. Scott

Alto

Diane Fernald
 Robin J. Helgen
 Marita Link
 Anna George Meek
 Clara Osowski
 Sandra Schoenecker
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Tenor

Kevin L. Bailey
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Bass

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VocalEssence Ensemble Singers

The *Oxford Times* (UK) has declared that the VocalEssence Ensemble Singers “have a blend that could — and should — be the envy of every choir in the business.” Founded in 1991, the Ensemble Singers are acclaimed for their “superbly blended sound” (*Birmingham Post*, UK) and “exemplary technique” (Minneapolis *Star Tribune*). Lauded by the *Times* of London as “polished, bright and brilliantly balanced,” this 32-voice professional chorus is directed by VocalEssence founder Philip Brunelle and associate conductor Sigrid Johnson.

Striving always to create perfection in their choral sound, the Ensemble Singers genuinely engage the audience with their vivid personality and expressive singing. They are equally at ease with works dating from the Baroque era to the modern day, approaching each musical endeavor with originality and freshness. Dominick Argento, Sir Richard Rodney Bennett, Aaron Jay Kernis, Libby Larsen, Stephen Paulus and Alvin Singleton are among the many composers who have written world premieres expressly for their voices.

Well-known to public radio listeners as the “house choir” on *A Prairie Home Companion*, the VocalEssence Ensemble Singers are featured on three CDs with Garrison Keillor: *Over the River & Through the Woods*; *Hymn to Potatoes (and other choral masterpieces from A Prairie Home Companion)*; and their newest concert recording, *Gratitude, Gravy & Garrison*.

Two other recent albums on the Clarion label feature the voices of the Ensemble Singers. *The World Beloved: A Bluegrass Mass* is the world premiere recording of a work by Carol Barnett commissioned especially for the group to sing with bluegrass ensemble. *The Songs We Sang — Favorite American Folksongs* is a collection of charming choral arrangements with guitar, harmonica, accordion, bass and piano.



Philip Brunelle

Born in Faribault, Minnesota in 1943, VocalEssence Artistic Director and Founder Philip

Brunelle showed signs at an early age of the adventurous spirit that has driven his lifelong enthusiasm for all forms of choral, vocal, opera and symphonic music. At the age of six, he requested and received a vocal score of Handel’s *Messiah* for Christmas. As a teenager he was already working as a professional church organist; at 19 he became a full-time member with the Minnesota Orchestra.

At the age of 25, Philip was appointed choirmaster-organist of Plymouth Congregational Church in Minneapolis. He immediately

established the Plymouth Music Series, which has become today's choral music organization VocalEssence. Philip played piano on the very first episode of *A Prairie Home Companion* in 1974, forging a connection with Garrison Keillor that has resulted in many creative ventures over the years.

Philip has been invited to guest conduct choirs and orchestras across the United States, South America and Europe, including the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Berkshire Choral Festival, the BBC Singers and the Seattle Symphony. He is called upon to adjudicate choral competitions all over the world, with recent visits to South Korea, China, Norway and Hungary.

Philip is currently a board member of Chorus America and the International Federation for Choral Music (IFCM), where he serves as Vice President/Treasurer and on the planning committee for the Ninth World Symposium on Choral Music, to be held in Argentina in 2011. He was a member of the Artistic Committee for the Eighth Symposium in 2008 and served as President of the Sixth Symposium, held in Minneapolis in 2002.

Philip has been recognized for his commitment to choral music

by Norway (Commander of the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit), the United Kingdom (Honorary Member of the Order of the British Empire), Hungary (Kodály Medal) and Sweden (Royal Order of the Polar Star). In 2003, Chorus America honored Philip with its highest award, the Michael Korn Founder's Award for Development of the Choral Art.

He been honored with a "Local Legend" award from General Mills and the United Negro College Fund; American Composers Forum "Champion of New Music"; U.S. Bank Sally Ordway Irvine Award for Commitment, recognizing lifetime achievement, contribution and leadership in culture and the arts; and the F. Melius Christiansen Lifetime Achievement Award, American Choral Directors Association-Minnesota Chapter's highest honor. Philip holds honorary doctorates from St. Olaf College, Gustavus Adolphus College, St. John's University and United Theological Seminary.

In those rare moments when he is not pursuing his passion for choral music, Philip may be found catching up on his next book club selection, running five miles a day, or enjoying gourmet cuisine. He is married to visual artist Carolyn Brunelle; they have three grown children and six grandchildren.



Sigrid Johnson

As the associate conductor of VocalEssence, Sigrid Johnson is affectionately

known as "Ears" — for her unique skill in helping develop the choral blend and balance that give the VocalEssence Chorus and Ensemble Singers their signature sound. She provides expert input in the selection of repertoire and assists throughout the audition process. Her ability to achieve excellence in choral blend and intonation is a priceless asset to VocalEssence.

Sigrid is a member of the voice and choral faculty of St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, and the conductor of the Manitou Singers, St. Olaf's 100-voice first-year women's chorus. She maintains an active schedule as a guest conductor and clinician at choral festivals, workshops and all-state music festivals across the country. She is known internationally for her work with musicians at all levels, having conducted workshops in Australia, the Netherlands, Sweden and Finland. In August 2008, Sigrid was one of the featured lecturers for the Eighth World Symposium on Choral Music in Copenhagen; in 2011, she will be featured in the Ninth World Symposium, to be held in Argentina.

Sigrid is active in the American Choral Director's Association, the Music Educator's National Conference, the International Federation for Choral Music, and Chorus America.



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ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



VocalEssence

In 2010-2011 VocalEssence celebrates its 42nd season as a unique choral music organization, distinguished by its innovative exploration of music for voices and instruments. Every year, VocalEssence presents an engaging collection of concerts featuring the 130-voice VocalEssence Chorus, the 32-voice Ensemble Singers, guest soloists, and instrumentalists. The organization has enjoyed tremendous success with world, United States, and Midwest premieres; famous guest artists; commissions of new works; and a reputation for surprise.

In addition to championing lesser-known works of the past, VocalEssence has an unwavering commitment to today's composers, resulting in more than 140 world premieres. The organization has received the ASCAP/Chorus America Award for adventurous programming of contemporary music an unprecedented five times. VocalEssence has been honored with more Chorus America awards than any other ensemble nationwide, including the once-in-an-organizational-lifetime Margaret Hillis Achievement Award for Choral Excellence.

VocalEssence was founded in 1969 as the Plymouth Music Series, an arts outreach program of Plymouth Congregational Church in Minneapolis. In the very first season, Aaron Copland came to conduct a program of his own choral music—the first time he had ever been asked to do so! In May of 2002, the organization changed its name to VocalEssence, recognizing its status as one of the nation's most innovative ensembles and capturing the essence of its mission to explore music for the human voice, from the spoken word to choral singing.

Last fall, VocalEssence released a new Christmas CD, *Behold This Heavenly Night*. VocalEssence has also recorded *The WITNESS Collection*, a series of four compact discs of music by African American composers and artists.



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Just click on the "Sign Up"
button on the right side of
any page at
www.vocalescence.org.

Audition for VocalEssence!

VocalEssence is now holding auditions for new members of the VocalEssence Ensemble Singers & Volunteer Chorus for the 2011-2012 Season.

Auditions will be held on:

Saturday, April 16

Sunday, April 17

Saturday, May 7

Saturday, May 21

(Ensemble Singers callbacks: Thursday, May 26, 6-9 pm)

**Online registration is now open:
www.vocalescence.org/audition**

For more information, contact Elissa Weller at eweller@vocalescence.org or 612-547-1452





vocalessence
Philip Brunelle, Artistic Director

**Grab your passport...
It's time to join
Philip Brunelle
and VocalEssence
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of musical adventures!**

The Gift of Fire

October 9, 2011 • Orchestra Hall

North Star Tour: Homecoming Concert

November 6, 2011 • The Fitzgerald Theater

Welcome Christmas

December 3, 4, 9, 10 & 11, 2011

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WITNESS: In the Spirit of Being

February 19, 2012 • Ordway Center for the Performing Arts

Música de México

March 9 & 10, 2012 • Ted Mann Concert Hall

Brits & Brass

April 13, 2012 • Central Lutheran Church, Minneapolis

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vocalessence
¡cantaré!

Community Concerts

Celebrating Mexico in Song

Thursday, April 28, 2011
at 6pm and 8pm
Memorial Auditorium
714 13th Street, Worthington, MN

Featuring new choral works by Mexican composers
Jesús Echevarría and Diana Syrse, written for and performed
by area school and community choirs and the VocalEssence
Ensemble Singers

Tuesday, May 24, 2011 at 7pm
Ordway Center for the Performing Arts
345 Washington Street, Saint Paul, MN

Featuring world premieres of music by Mexican composers
Lilia Vázquez and Horacio Uribe sung by area elementary, high school
and community choral singers with the VocalEssence Chorus
& Ensemble Singers

Tickets to all concerts are free; for more information visit
www.vocalessence.org/cantare



About ¡Cantaré!

¡Cantaré! is a unique program designed to bring the talents of composers from Mexico directly into Minnesota classrooms.

In 2010-2011 the VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! program has engaged communities in Worthington and in the Twin Cities. Four composers have participated in fall, winter and spring residencies with their student and community groups, writing new music for each music to premiere in concerts taking place in April and May 2011.

On April 28th and May 24th, over 350 students and community members will take the stage alongside the VocalEssence Ensemble Singers in Worthington and St. Paul to perform the world premieres of compositions written specifically for them. An exciting blend of authentic Mexican folk songs and contemporary styles, the third annual ¡Cantaré! Community Concerts will feature vivacious rhythms performed with colorful flair.

Over the past school year, participants learned about the music of Mexico from esteemed composers **Diana Syrse, Jesús Echevarría, Horacio Uribe** and **Lilia Vázquez**. Each composer spent three weeks getting to know the singing abilities of the ensembles, then wrote music specifically for them. Selections include a vivacious pairing of Mexican folk songs "La Bruja" and "La Petenera" with jazz band, and an exploration of Huasteca-style music featuring *jarana*, a small guitar from that region.



VocalEssence is a fiscal year 2011 recipient of an Arts Learning grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board. This activity is funded, in part, by the Minnesota arts and cultural heritage fund as appropriated by the Minnesota State Legislature with money from the Legacy Amendment vote of the people of Minnesota on November 4, 2008.

Donor Spotlight: Peter and Judy Mitchelson, VocalEssence Ambassadors



In VocalEssence, Peter and Judy Mitchelson have found a lifelong connection — musical inspiration and a commitment to sharing the joy of music with future generations.

It all began more than a decade ago when Chorus member Craig Shulstad invited them to a VocalEssence post-concert reception. “From the camaraderie, good will and sheer fun in this introduction, we immediately saw that

VocalEssence was something special,” said Peter. “I joined the board in 2000 and served for six years on the Finance Committee.”

This introduction became a focal point of Peter and Judy’s lifelong love of music. They grew up singing in the same church choir in Detroit, Michigan, and continued their studies in piano, baritone and alto saxophone, and oboe. Peter even picked up double bass in high school and played in a dance band with classmates. “No one else wanted to lug it around,” said Peter jokingly. “I had to get a loaner car just so that I could take it to gigs.” Peter continued singing in college glee club, several church choirs, the Minneapolis Commodores Barbershop Chorus in the 1970s and ’80s and, most recently, with the Masterworks Chorale at Augsburg College for 15 years. But in VocalEssence, Peter and Judy found the perfect fit with their musical passions.

Just like VocalEssence, Peter and Judy want to share their love of music with the next generation. One of their favorite experiences has been attending **Star of Wonder** concerts at Christmas with their grandchildren. “Philip’s music is always educational and the Ensemble Singers’ annual rendition of the Twelve Days of Christmas, with hearty audience participation (using ‘outdoor voices

brought inside’) will never be forgotten,” said Peter. “The year 2010 was very special in that we ‘graduated’ and took the grandkids to see their first performance of **Welcome Christmas** at Plymouth Church. It was a resounding success!”

“We love the commitment VocalEssence has to making each performance a learning experience for performer and listener,” said Judy. “Its openness to new ideas is legendary and it encourages this goal with purposeful links to new composers, who are often in attendance when their music is being performed, which is an added treat. Audiences can hardly wait to see what is coming next!”

Why do Peter and Judy support VocalEssence? “Quality, quality, quality!” said Peter. “Philip has proven time and time again that great things come in small packages!” Peter spent the majority of his professional career in small organizations and said he knows first hand the amount of work that is involved to create success with limited resources, but he also knows that it can be done and VocalEssence proves this conclusively. “If you aim for the top,” remarked Peter, “it’s surprising how often you can actually get there. Organizations like VocalEssence simply **MUST** be supported because they provide so much good to the community.”

Judy and Peter know that once you connect with VocalEssence, you’ll never want to leave. “Come with us to a VocalEssence concert and we will show you some of the best musical experiences you will ever enjoy. We guarantee that you will be inspired and will join us in supporting this fantastic organization and have a joyful time in the process.”

Thank you, Judy and Peter, for your commitment to sharing our music with the community. You are both winning ambassadors for VocalEssence!

The Endowment Honor Roll

VocalEssence salutes the individuals and corporate and private foundations whose generosity and leadership sparked the creation of the Endowment Fund. This permanent fund was established in 1987 and is now valued at \$2.3 million. Its interest income provides ongoing support to VocalEssence. We welcome new contributions to the Endowment Fund and extend our deepest appreciation to the following for their generous gifts.

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