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Ensemble Concerts: University Concert Choir, March 21, 1976

Donald Armstrong Conductor

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The University Concert Choir On Tour, 1976



Dr. Donald Armstrong, Conductor

First Baptist Church—Mattoon, Illinois; 8:00 p.m., Sunday, 21 March
Rend Lake College Theatre—Mt. Vernon, Illinois; 8:00 p.m., Tuesday, 23 March
First United Methodist Church—Anna, Illinois; 7:30 p.m., Wednesday, 24 March
Zion Lutheran Church—Belleville, Illinois; 8:00 p.m., Thursday, 25 March

Illinois State University

MOTET TU ES PETRUS

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina
1525-1594

From the second book of motets, 1572

MISSA TU ES PETRUS

Parody mass based on motet—discovered ca. 1850

Kyrie eleison—Christe eleison—Kyrie eleison
Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in Terra Pax
Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem
Sanctus—Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis Pacem.

SONGS OF WISDOM, Opus 14 (1970)

Kirke Mechem
b. 1925

Texts compiled from the Old Testament

- I Recitative, Bass—Ecclesiastes
- II The Song of Moses, Chorus—Deuteronomy
- III Recitative, Alto—Ecclesiastes
- IV A Love Song, Chorus—The Song of Solomon
- V Recitative, Tenor—Ecclesiastes
- VI The Protest of Job, Chorus—Job
- VII Recitative, Soprano—Ecclesiastes
- VIII A Song of Comfort, Chorus—Ezekiel and Isaiah
- IX Recitative, Bass—Ecclesiastes
- X A Song of Praise, Chorus and Soli—Psalms

Soloists—Paul Jung, Bass; Carol Dilley, Kim Hughes, Altos; Peter Moore, Tenor; Kathleen Kopp, Soprano

THREE ABOUT JESUS (1973)

L.L. Fleming, arranger

- I Every Time I Think About Jesus
- II Give Me Jesus
- III Ride On, King Jesus

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Program Notes

Palestrina, most certainly the giant of counter-reformation Italian composers, composed more than 250 true motets, plus many other liturgical compositions which are motet-like in character and scope. He composed three settings of the text 'Tu es Petrus' (Matthew 16: 28—"thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church"—proper for the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, June 29), one each in five, six, and seven voices. The six-voice motet was published in the second motet book in 1572. It is a perfect example of those traits of balance and euphony which mark the entire choral output of Palestrina. The texture gracefully combines chordal declamation with phrases of imitation in four, five and six voices. As always the text is clearly elucidated, and the "expressiveness" is bound up within the musical material.

Most of Palestrina's masses were parody masses. The term parody, however, must be understood free from the modern connotation of a poor copy or imitation. Parody technique in the renaissance was a method many composers employed in building larger works, by basing the entire polyphonic texture upon a pre-existent piece, in this case upon a composition of his own. Many composers—Palestrina included—employed secular pieces, and popular songs of the day, as models for parody compositions. In the *Missa 'Tu es Petrus'*, the six-voice motet is divided into its constituent phrases and used as basic material for the new music. Needless to add, in the hands of a master like Palestrina, the result is a superb new composition, with only structural and technical relationship to its forbear.

Kirke Mechem is one of the outstanding choral composers of the younger generation in America. His output includes several major works for mixed voices as well as women's and men's choruses. His study with Randall Thompson at Harvard is clearly discernible in the impeccable attention he gives to the true choral appropriateness of his compositions for choir.

Songs of Wisdom is a set of movements compiled by the composer with texts from the Old Testament. Each choral movement is preceded by a descriptive solo recitative, offering illumination to the following text. The musical materials include strong declamation with flawless textual prosody, frequent fugal passages, and largely diatonic harmony, although with dissonance and chromaticism freely employed.

No other American poet has had more influence upon vocal and choral composers of the last seventy-five years than Walt Whitman (1819-1892). Not only American composers, but English and European composers, have seen in his poetry a viewpoint and philosophy that speaks most intimately to modern man. His humanistic yet theistic feelings have, for some composers, taken the place of texts of a more traditionally ecclesiastical or even liturgical nature. The strength and vigor of the language, combined with the severe challenges inherent in setting blank-verse poetry, have given modern vocal performers a wonderful body of poetry expressive of the essentials of man's position in the universe. The poetry seems most appropriate to the choral medium since so much of the message is concerned with brotherhood and personal encounter.

Both Howard Hanson and Norman Dello Joio have turned to Whitman more than once. In the two compositions on the present program, the musical language and approaches are poles apart, yet seem to capture the exact essence of the text at hand.

Attention of musical performers during the American bi-centennial years has been focused consistently, and correctly, upon nearly all facets of American music—historical music, major composers of America, music of the American ethnic groups. However, one area seems in danger of being inordinately overlooked. Unquestionably, one of the most indigenous forms of American music has been the popular standard, with its roots in theatrical and art music simultaneously. It seems appropriate to remember that hardly any other type of music is at once so American in nature and viewpoint, and has remained so ingrained in the American psyche as has the popular standard.

In the choices represented on this concert, and in the arrangements and performances, several guidelines have been central to the study. Songs were chosen which presented some or all of these criteria: a strong and satisfying melody; a text or lyric that was qualitatively independent; harmonic and rhythmic practices that were without gimmicks or stylistic-tricks; and familiarity to a large portion of audiences. In the presentations, the essential music has been adhered to. The songs have been treated in arrangement as any other worthy musical material would be, with dignity and poise. It has been uppermost in this pursuit to avoid as much as possible those tricks and colloquialisms which have become so much a part of "popular" performance today. Finally, in performance the attempt is made to present these songs observant of those sophisticated choral practices which are customarily part of a concert choir's habit, using appropriate artistic tone quality, correct diction techniques, and above all a respect for the music.

- OMNIS SPIRITUS LAUDET DOMINUM (1973) Lloyd Pfautsch
 English words from preface to 'Psalms, Sonnets & Songs of Sadness and Piety,' William Byrd (1543-1623)
- SONG OF DEMOCRACY, Opus 44 (1957) Howard Hanson
 b. 1896
 Texts from the poetry of Walt Whitman
 Pianist—Richard Foltz
- SONG OF THE OPEN ROAD (1953) Norman Dello Joio
 b. 1912
 Texts from the poetry of Walt Whitman
 Pianist—Richard Foltz
 Trumpeter—Wesley Woolard
- FIVE STANDARD AMERICAN SONGS Donald Armstrong, arranger
 Jeannie With the Light Brown Hair—1854 Stephen C. Foster
 All the Things You Are—1939 Jerome Kern,
 Oscar Hammerstein, 2nd
 Stardust—1929 Hoagy Carmichael,
 Mitchell Parish
 Ebb Tide—1953 Robert Maxwell,
 Carl Sigman
 Begin the Beguine—1935 Cole Porter

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**University Concert Choir
Personnel, Spring 1976**

Abel, Anita, Marshall, IL
Anderson, Heidi, Rockford, IL
Blick, Robert, Rock Island, IL
Detloff, Mary Beth, Oak Lawn, IL
Dilley, Carol, Mt. Vernon, IL
Ellinor, Diane, Elizabeth, IL
Etter, Mark, Collinsville, IL
Gage, Robert, Grand Ridge, IL
Hoerner, Carol, Pontiac, IL
Hughes, Kimberly, Normal, IL
Jung, Paul, Matteson, IL
Keen, Jeffrey, Canton, IL
Kopp, Kathleen, Pontiac, IL
Kregor, Joe, Kankakee, IL
Kunde, Gregory, Kankakee, IL
Leverett, T.Doyle, Manteno, IL
L'Heureux, Patricia, 29 Palms, CA
Lonze Laurelle, Palatine, IL
Lorie, Jamie, Wyoming, IL
Lowe, Marilyn, Yankton, SD
Malone, Eileen, Omaha, NEB
Menza, Cyndi, Clarendon Hills, IL
Miller, Robert, Belleville, IL

Moore, Peter, Dixon, IL
Morrissey, Dennis, Bloomington, IL
Muriello, John, Oak Park, IL
Nesemeier, Laurie, Lanark, IL
Proctor, Joyce, Cerro Gordo, IL
Reece, David, Rockford, IL
Saunders, David, Harvard, IL
Share, Jo Ann, Morton Grove, IL
Smith, Marjorie, Oak Forest, IL
Snyder, Michael, Manhattan, IL
Sparks, Sally, Pontiac, IL
Steiner, Lynda, Pocahontas, IL
Talbot, Susan, Manito, IL
Vallance, Audrey, Peoria, IL
Vandeventer, Gary, Newman, IL
White, Kathleen, Arlington Hts., IL
Yarbrough, James, Mokena, IL

Foltz, Richard, Fairbury, IL
 accompanist
Wollard, Wesley, Washington, IL
 trumpeter

Department of Music
College of Fine Arts
Illinois State University
Normal-Bloomington