

SAN FRANCISCO LYRIC CHORUS



presents

Musical Poetry



*20th Century British
and
American Choral
Settings of Poetry*

ROBERT GURNEY, MUSIC DIRECTOR

SUNDAY, APRIL 18, 1999 5 PM

TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

SAN FRANCISCO LYRIC CHORUS



ROBERT GURNEY, *MUSIC DIRECTOR*





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Welcome to the 1999 Spring Concert of the San Francisco Lyric Chorus. Since its formation in 1995, the chorus has offered diverse and innovative music to the community through a gathering of singers who believe in a commonality of spirit and sharing. The debut concert featured music by Gabriel Fauré in addition to the *Solemn Mass* by Louis Vierne. The chorus has been involved in several premieres, including Bay Area composer Brad Osness' *Lamentations*, Ohio composer Robert Witt's *Four Motets to the Blessed Virgin Mary* (West Coast premiere), and San Francisco composer Kirke Mechem's *Christmas the Morn* (San Francisco premiere). In Spring 1998, we featured exciting multicultural and international music from around the globe, including music from Alaska's Inuit people, the Shona people of Zimbabwe, and American folk song, spirituals, and gospel. Summer 1998 brought a performance of Johannes Brahms' incomparable German Requiem, and in Fall 1998 we presented a concert entitled *The English Sound*, which included music suited to the sonorities of the English cathedral, featuring Thomas Tallis' recently discovered *Missa Puer Natus Est Nobis*, Gregorio Allegri's *Miserere*, and Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*, as well as smaller works by Gibbons, Parsons, and Manz.

Please sign our mailing list, located in the foyer. Thank you.

SAN FRANCISCO LYRIC CHORUS

SOPRANO

Susan Alden
Didi Boring
Robbie Brada
Nikki Bruno
Emily D. Ferrigno
Cassandra Forth
Lisa Gartland#
Cristina K. Gerber
Jennifer Grappone#
Debra Greenblat*
Terri Lane Griffin
Liz Humphreys
Anna Lee
Laura Miller
Andrea Obana
Kelly Ryer
Lynn Sagramoso
Franziska Schädeli
Beverly Schmidt
Kathryn Singh
Elizabeth S.Venne
Sheila Wells
Helene Whitson#
Hannah Wolf*

ALTO

Rae Anderson
Michele Baroody
Bernice Biggs
Hallie Clark
Christine Colasurdo
Marisa A. Coutts
Caroline Crawford
Alana D'Attilio#
Claire Diepenbrock*
Barbara Greeno*
Laurie B. Harris
Susan Hendrickson
Delia Molloy
Mark Paige
Colleen Reading
Laura Rich
Jill Roberts
Hannah Rogers
Pamela Schmid#
Ludmilla Sinai
Stephen Michael Schultz
Jennifer Spaulding
Anne Szabla*
Dolores Wagner

BASS

Albert Alden
James M. Campbell
Daniel Hiatt
Jim Hogan
James Houchell
Timothy Johns*
Roger LaClear#
Lee B. Morrow
Bradley Arthur Peterson
Steve Reading
David Wieand
Bill Whitson*
Paul Zangaro

TENOR

Tom Abels
Chris Bucchere
Jeffrey Chiu
J. Davey Gerhard
Peter Holman
Howard Kong
Peter Kuna III
Jim Losee*
Murphy Madison
Matthew McClure
Won Sup Park
Robert Rogers
James Watt

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*Section Representative

Program

Kirke Mechem Blow Ye the Trumpet
from the Opera John Brown

Kirke Mechem Blessed Are They

Kirke Mechem To Music

Randall Thompson Alleluia

Randall Thompson The Best of Rooms

Intermission (15 minutes)

Benjamin Britten Rejoice in the Lamb

Lisa Gartland, Soprano

Anne Szabla, Alto

Jeffrey Chiu, Tenor

Lee Morrow, Bass

William Harris Faire is the Heaven

Paul A. Jacobson, Piano and Organ

Please no photography or audio/video taping during the performance.

We are taping this program for archival purposes.

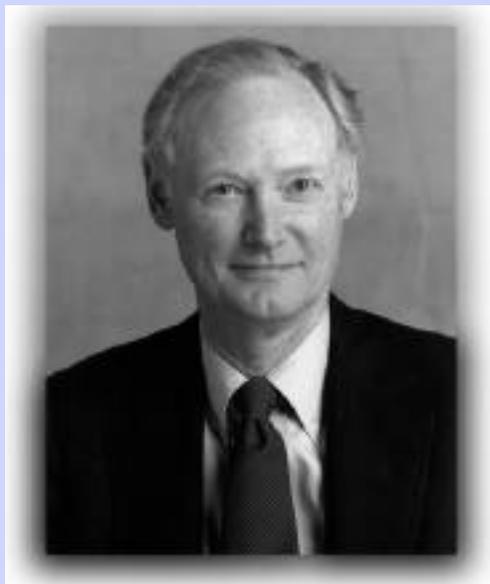
If your child becomes uncomfortable during the performance,
please take him/her to the foyer. Thank you.

San Francisco Lyric Chorus Discovery Series

Our Winter Concert 1996 inaugurated a new aspect of the San Francisco Lyric Chorus' desire to feature unusual and innovative programming. *The Discovery Series* identifies compositions or composers which are not well known, but which are exceptional and of special interest.

Program Notes

Today's program looks at 20th century English and American composers' settings of poetry. Of all the written arts, poetry comes the closest to eliciting the same passionate responses from a reader/listener as does music. Both use sound, meter, and expression to move us, to stimulate our feelings and emotions, to engage our very beings in a world of imagination. Poetry and music both can carry us to the heights of exaltation or to deepest sadness through creating specific images or more abstract moods and feelings. Join with the members of the San Francisco Lyric Chorus as we share the ways four 20th century composers have interpreted verse with music.



KIRKE MECHEM

A native of Wichita, Kansas, San Francisco's Kirke Mechem comes from a creative family. His father was an historian, a writer of published novels, plays, and poetry, and for twenty years was Executive Director of the Kansas State Historical Society. His mother was a pianist who studied in Germany.

Young Kirke began studying piano with his mother about the age of six, but took lessons only for two or three years, because he was far more interested in sports of all kinds, especially tennis. As a high school student, he was the number one tennis player in Kansas. As a child, he also had an interest in writing, and in his teen-age years won several national journalism writing contests. He was offered a journalism scholarship to Northwestern University, but went to Stanford to major in English. He kept up his

interest in tennis as well, participating for four years as a member of the Stanford tennis team. Music was a part of his life, although not formally, and at age 16 he taught himself to write his own songs, despite never having seen a harmony book.

Program Notes

As a Stanford sophomore, Kirke Mechem took a harmony course "just to see what it was like." His harmony professor, Harold Schmidt, had just come to Stanford as the choral conductor. Professor Schmidt had great enthusiasm and love for choral music, and required all members of his classes to sing in the chorus. Even though Mechem protested he couldn't sing, Professor Schmidt directed him to the tenor section. That first rehearsal changed his life, as he listened, sang, and discovered the beauty and power of choral music. At the end of his junior year, he switched his major from English to music.

Professor Schmidt became the composer's mentor and the most important person in his development as a choral composer and conductor. He advised Mechem to study at Harvard with Randall Thompson and Walter Piston. Thompson especially had a great influence on him. After graduating from Harvard, Kirke Mechem returned to Stanford as Assistant Choral Conductor for three years, composing both choral and instrumental music. Professor Schmidt then suggested that he spend time in Vienna, another experience that changed his life. After three years, he returned to the Bay Area and became Composer-In-Residence at the San Francisco College for Women (later called Lone Mountain College, still later becoming a part of the University of San Francisco), teaching at various times also at Stanford and at San Francisco State University. Since 1972, he has been a full-time composer, lecturer, and conductor.

Kirke Mechem has composed over 200 works in almost every genre and style – choral works, both accompanied and unaccompanied, songs for solo voice with accompaniment, keyboard works, chamber music, orchestral works, including symphonies, and operas. Among his best-known works are his opera, *Tartuffe*; his dramatic cantata, *The King's Contest*; his suite *Songs of the Slave*, from his opera-in-progress *John Brown*; his *Psalm 100*, selected as one of three American works for the 20th anniversary of the United Nations; *Singing Is So Good A Thing*, a choral and instrumental work on the words of Elizabethan composer William Byrd; *American Madrigals*, five madrigals based on American folk songs; *Professor Nontropo's Music Dictionary*, a humorous a cappella look at Italian musical directions; and the *Seven Joys of Christmas*, which the San Francisco Lyric Chorus performed in 1997. He is the recipient of numerous honors and commissions from many groups, including the United Nations, the National Gallery, the American Choral Directors Association, and the Music Educators National Conference. He has won the Boott prize at Harvard, the Sigma Alpha Iota triennial American music award for a vocal work, and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, 1977-1978. He often is invited to be a speaker, panelist, and musical adjudicator.

Considered by some the dean of American choral composers, Kirke Mechem understands the meaning and musicality of words. He notes that music is a language, and the conductor, the performers and the audience all should be able to understand that language. The composer's background as a writer and a student of English language and literature give him a unique ability to find the music in words and to set words to music. His knowledge of literature allows him to explore the far reaches of written creativity to find expressive and meaningful texts. When he sets a poem to music, he tries to express the feeling of that poem in musical terms. He wants to give the conductor, the singers and the audience a heightened sense of the poem through the music. Yet paradoxically, he comments, the music also must stand on its own without the words. Kirke Mechem believes that vocal music has a built-in closeness to nature, a connection to the drama and emotion of the human experience.

SFLC *Program Notes*

BLOW YE THE TRUMPET (1991) from the Opera "John Brown"

Kirke Mechem notes that *Blow Ye the Trumpet* was abolitionist John Brown's favorite hymn. The words are simple and open in the manner of early American hymnody and poetry, and Mechem has set them in the same style, evoking the sincere piety of 19th century America in a plain, folk-hymn style.

Traditional text as quoted in Stephen B. Oates *To Purge This Land: A Biography of John Brown*, New York, 1970.

Blow ye the trumpet, blow.
Sweet is Thy work, my God, my King.
I'll praise my Maker with all my breath.
O happy is the man who hears.
Why should we start, and fear to die,
With songs and honors sounding loud.
Ah, lovely appearance of death.

BLESSED ARE THEY (1998) (SAN FRANCISCO PREMIERE)

Commissioned in honor of Robert Martin, Memorial Presbyterian Church
Midland, Michigan

SAN FRANCISCO LYRIC CHORUS DISCOVERY SERIES

Kirke Mechem's selections from *The Beatitudes* are taken from the King James version of the *Bible*, one of the great English language literary texts. The text taken from *Matthew 5:4-5, 7-8, 12a* creates a gentle listing of descriptive qualities, "mourners, meek, merciful, pure in heart," followed by the resolution for their actions, "comfort, inheritance, mercy, seeing God." Mechem sets these phrases to quiet, contemplative music, followed by energetic, exuberant passages as the blessed "rejoice, and be exceeding glad." Calmness in phrase and music end with "great is your reward in heav'n."

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.
Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.
Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven.

SFLC *Program Notes*

TO MUSIC (1998) (SAN FRANCISCO PREMIERE)

Commissioned in gratitude to Priscilla Salgo, Chancel Choir Director,
Presbyterian Church, Sunnyvale

SAN FRANCISCO LYRIC CHORUS DISCOVERY SERIES

In this work, Kirke Mechem crafts a paean to music, with settings of words from the *Bible*, and thoughts about music from philosophers, poets, essayists, and musicians. He uses phrases from *Psalms* texts, in which we "greet the Lord with the sound of music," "we sing unto Him a new song," we "make a joyful noise," and we clap our hands. Mechem sets three *Psalms* texts with smooth energy, interspersing the entire composition with the staccato sounds of clapping. He sets the words of Shakespeare with lush sonorities, Plato with rising energy and quiet thoughtfulness, Beethoven and Carlyle with complementary short passages, Nietzsche with wry directness, and Heine with gentleness. He ends as he began, with quotations from the *Psalms*, concluding with the same comforting text from *Isaiah 55*, "ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace," used by his teacher, Randall Thompson in the cantata *The Peaceable Kingdom*.

Let us go to meet the Lord; let us greet Him with the sound of music. *Psalms 94*

Sing unto Him a new song. *Psalms 33*

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord. *Psalms 100*

Clap your hands. *Isaiah 55*

Let the sounds of music creep in our ears: soft stillness and the night become
the touches of sweet harmony. *Shakespeare*

Music is a moral law. It gives wings to the mind, soul to the universe, flight to
the imagination, charm to sadness, life to everything. *Plato*

Music is the speech of angels. *Carlyle*

Music is the wine that inspires. *Beethoven*

Without music, life would be a mistake. *Nietzsche*

When words leave off, music begins. *Heine*

Ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace. *Isaiah 55*

RANDALL THOMPSON (1899-1984)

Noted composer and influential teacher Randall Thompson was born in New York on April 21, 1899. He graduated from Harvard University in 1920, where he studied with Ernst Bloch, among other teachers. In 1922, he received a three-year fellowship to study at the American Academy in Rome. He was well-known as a teacher, including Professor of Music at Wellesley College (1927-1929, 1936-1937), University of California, Berkeley (1937-1939), Director of the Curtis Institute (1939-1949), Head of the Music Division of the University of Virginia's (Charlottesville) School of Fine Arts (1941-1946), and Professor of Music at Princeton. In 1948, he became a Professor of Music at Harvard, serving as Chair of the department for five years. He retired from teaching in 1965, and devoted his time to composing and conducting.

SFLC *Program Notes*

Randall Thompson's students include Leonard Bernstein, Lukas Foss, Leo Kraft, Ivan Tcherepnin, and Kirke Mechem. He was the recipient of many awards and honorary degrees.

Writing in a rich, melodic, harmonic style, Randall Thompson is best known for his choral music. He wrote for a wide variety of vocal ensembles, from part-songs to large choral works, in addition to composing many songs for solo voice. He often used Biblical texts, the texts of American and English poets, and texts which describe events in American history.

ALLELUIA (1940)

Probably Randall Thompson's most familiar work, the *Alleluia*, was commissioned by Serge Koussevitsky for the opening of the Berkshire Music Center and was first performed there on July 8, 1940, under the direction of G. Wallace Woodworth.

Alleluia is the Latin version of the biblical Hebrew praise-shout *hallelujah*. *Hallelu* means *praise ye*, and *jab* – or *yab*, in modern transliteration—is a short form of the personal name of the God of Israel. This name, spelled YHWH in the Hebrew Bible, has been long considered too holy to pronounce and has been read as *Adonai* (my Lord, the Lord) or *Elohim* (God) or – with even greater awe – simply, *ba-Shem* (the Name). Yet within the context of this praise shout and abbreviated to a single syllable the name has been retained, thus the unambiguous translation *Praise ye the God of Israel!*

Amen is a Hebrew word well known in English, but its use and meaning are seldom considered. It simply means *surely – without hesitation – yes, of course* and it was used by listeners to ratify an oath, an order, or praise uttered by another (hence its use in both synagogue and church). Here *amen* affirms the command to praise the God of Israel.

Consisting of no more multiple repetitions of this beautiful praise-shout, *alleluia*, and a concluding *amen*, the work has a meditative, trance-like quality – the text offers us a *mantra* on the adoration of God.

Program notes about Randall Thompson's "Alleluia" by Bradley Arthur Peterson

THE BEST OF ROOMS

Born into a family of goldsmiths, Cavalier poet Robert Herrick (1591-1634) is best known for his diverse and jewel-like works, including odes, lyrics about the many aspects of love, nature poetry, and epigrams, as well as religious texts. His poetry is one of the most often set by composers. After his father's death his wealthy uncle reared him and sent him to Cambridge University, where he graduated in 1617, and earned a master's degree in 1620. In 1623, he became a priest in the Church of England. He was appointed vicar of Dean Prior, Devonshire, in 1629. Loyal to King Charles I, he lost this position when the Commonwealth government came into power, returning to Devonshire in 1662 upon the restoration of the monarchy.

SFLC Program Notes

Known as one of the 'sons of Ben' (poet Ben Jonson), he joined friends in local taverns for pleasant afternoons and evenings. Through their encouragement and his gifts, he became a poet. He published only one book, *Hesperides*, a collection of 1400 poems, both secular and sacred. He was inspired by poetry of the past, as well as music of the court.

Randall Thompson's setting of *Best of Rooms* by Robert Herrick (from *Christ's Part*, 1647) is characteristic of his choral style. He follows the poetic text carefully with expressive phrasing, using dynamics and smooth passages to lead to the musical and poetic climax of the poem "grant him the nobler part of all the house."

THE BEST OF ROOMS (1963)

Christ, He requires still, wheresoe'er he comes,
To feed, or lodge, to have the best of rooms:
Give Him the choice; grant Him the nobler part
Of all the house: the best of all's the heart.

BENJAMIN BRITTEN (1913-1976)

Considered by many as the most important English composer since Henry Purcell, Benjamin Britten was born in Lowestoft, England. His mother was an amateur singer, and he began composing at the age of five. English composer Frank Bridge noticed the talented youth at the 1924 Norwich Festival, and accepted young Britten as a pupil. Britten's early years with Bridge helped him to develop excellent compositional technique, as well as introducing him to the music of other composers, from England as well as from abroad.

In 1930, Britten entered the Royal College of Music, studying piano with Harold Samuel and Arthur Benjamin in addition to composition with noted composer John Ireland. In 1935 he began composing music for documentary films created by England's General Post Office. It was during this period that Britten met and began collaborating on works with poet W. H. Auden. In the late 1930's Britten moved to the United States with his companion and well-known tenor, Peter Pears. In 1942, he read an article about the English poet George Crabbe, and realizing that he missed his home, returned. *A Ceremony of Carols* was composed in 1942 on the ship bringing him home from America. The period 1936-1945 included a varied and creative outpouring of music, including the song cycle with orchestra *Our Hunting Fathers*, the opera *Paul Bunyan*, *A Ceremony of Carols*, and *Rejoice in the Lamb*, which was published in 1943. During the war years, Britten, a conscientious objector, and Pears gave many public concerts.

During and after the war he continued his compositional activities in a wide variety of genres, including opera, instrumental music, music for children, and choral music. In the 1940s and 1950s he composed many of his most familiar works, including the 1945 opera *Peter Grimes* based on characters in the poems of George Crabbe, the cantata *St. Nicholas*, the *Spring Symphony*, the *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* and *Noye's Fludde* (the latter two for children).

Program Notes

Benjamin Britten's creative work continued in the 1960s and 1970s. The 1960s brought the composition of his choral parable *Curlew River* (recently performed by Chanticleer), his opera *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and his monumental 1962 *War Requiem*, setting to music poems by the young World War I poet Wilfred Owen for the consecration of the new Coventry Cathedral. In 1970, he wrote the opera *Owen Wingrave* for BBC Television, and his opera *Death in Venice* was produced in 1973. Thereafter he wrote no more large scale works, concentrating on smaller instrumental, choral, and song compositions until his death in 1976.

REJOICE IN THE LAMB (1943)

Text from *Jubilate Agno* by Christopher Smart (18th century)

Set to selected texts from 18th century English poet Christopher Smart's long work *Jubilate Agno*, Benjamin Britten wrote his 1943 Festival Cantata *Rejoice in the Lamb* in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the consecration of St. Matthew's Church, Northampton. Christopher Smart (1722-1771) was the son of a steward of large estates in Kent, England. When he went to Pembroke College, Cambridge, he became a profligate, sleeping in class, only awake when he was drinking in the tavern. In spite of his dissipations during his college years, he continued to write. He became a fellow of Pembroke College, lecturing on philosophy. At the age of 30 he left Cambridge and went to London to earn his living as a journalist.

Christopher Smart was committed to an asylum for three years. He had demonstrated signs of mental illness during his college years, and the illness became more pronounced as he grew older. He would ask people on the street to pray with him, and fall on his knees and say his prayers in the street. While in the asylum, he wrote, although he was given no pen or paper. Some say he wrote on the walls with a key. After his release from prison, he was funded by his friends, but would not stop drinking and could not get a job. He was thrown into debtor's prison, where he died at age 49.

Rejoice in the Lamb is a work which celebrates the nature of God in all things, from Old Testament characters to Smart's own cat Jeoffry, a brave mouse, flowers, and musical instruments. Smart even mentions his own troubles, noting that Jesus will save him from his hardships. Britten has set the work following the moods and topics of the different sections, from the beginning calm, yet emphatic praise to God, to the cat-like melody and phrasing in describing Jeoffry, the dark and stressful sounds of Smart telling of his own torments, finishing with serene acknowledgement of the artist's relationship to God.

Program Notes

CHORUS

Rejoice in God, O ye Tongues, give the glory to the Lord, and the Lamb.
Nations, and languages, and every Creature, in which is the breath of Life.
Let man and beast appear before him, and magnify his name together.
Let Nimrod, the mighty hunter, bind a Leopard to the altar, and consecrate his spear to the Lord.
Let Ishmael dedicate a Tyger, and give praise for the liberty in which the Lord has let him at large.
Let Balaam appear with an Ass, and bless the Lord his people, and his creatures for a reward eternal.
Let Daniel come forth with a Lion, and praise God with all his might through faith in Christ Jesus.
Let Ithamar minister with a Chamois, and bless the name of Him, that cloatheth the naked.
Let Jakim with the Satyr bless God in the dance.
Let David bless with the Bear – The beginning of victory to the Lord –
to the Lord the perfection of excellence
Hallelujah from the heart of God, and from the hand of the artist inimitable,
and from the echo of the heavenly harp in sweetness magnificent and mighty.

TREBLE SOLO

For I will consider my Cat Jeffry.
For he is the servant of the Living God, duly and daily serving him.
For at the first glance of the glory of God in the East he worships in his way.
For this is done by wreathing his body seven times round with elegant quickness.
For he knows that God is his Saviour.
For God has blessed him in the variety of his movements.
For there is nothing sweeter than his peace when at rest.
For I am possessed of a cat, surpassing in beauty, from whom I take occasion to bless Almighty God.

ALTO SOLO

For the Mouse is a creature of great personal valour.
For – this is a true case – Cat takes female mouse – male mouse will not depart,
but stands threat'ning and daring.
....If you will let her go, I will engage you, as prodigious a creature as you are.
For the Mouse is a creature of great personal valour.
For the Mouse is of an hospitable disposition.

TENOR SOLO

For the flowers are great blessings.
For the flowers have their angels even the words of God's Creation.
For the flower glorifies God and the root parries the adversary.
For there is a language of flowers.
For flowers are peculiarly the poetry of Christ.

Program Notes

CHORUS

For I am under the same accusation with my Saviour—
For they said, he is besides himself.
For the officers of the peace are at variance with me, and the watchman smites me with his staff.
For Silly fellow! Silly fellow! is against me and belongeth neither to me nor to my family.
For I am in twelve HARSHIPS, but he that was born of a virgin shall deliver me out of all.

RECITATIVE (BASS SOLO) AND CHORUS

For H is a spirit and therefore he is God.
For K is king and therefore he is God.
For L is love and therefore he is God.
For M is musick and therefore he is God.

For the instruments are by their rhimes.
For the Shawm rhimes are lawn fawn moon boon and the like.
For the harp rhimes are sing ring string and the like.
For the cymbal rhimes are bell well toll soul and the like.
For the flute rhimes are tooth youth suit mute and the like.
For the Bassoon rhimes are class pass and the like.
For the dulcimer rhimes are grace place beat heat and the like.
For the Clarinet rhimes are clean seen and the like.
For the TRUMPET of God is a blessed intelligence and so are all the instruments in HEAVEN.
For God the father Almighty plays upon the HARP of stupendous magnitude and melody.
For at that time malignity ceases and the devils themselves are at peace.
For this time is perceptible to man by a remarkable stillness and serenity of soul.

CHORUS

Hallelujah from the heart of God, and from the hand of the artist inimitable,
and from the echo of the heavenly harp in sweetness magnificent and mighty.

WILLIAM HARRIS (1883-1973)

Born in Petersfield, England, William Henry Harris is known as a composer in the English Romantic tradition. Son of a postal official and honorary organist of a parish church, he exhibited musical skills as a child. He won an organ scholarship to the Royal College of Music in 1899, studying composition with Henry Walford Davies and Charles Wood, and organ with Charles Stanford and Walter Parratt. In 1911, he was appointed assistant organist at Lichfield Cathedral. During this time, he also was composing, and his choral composition, *The Hound of Heaven* (from Francis Thompson's poem) was premiered by the Birmingham Festival Choral Society in 1919. He became organist at New College, Oxford, in 1919, and became a professor of organ and harmony at the Royal College of Music in 1923, remaining there until 1953. In 1929, he became

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CHORUS

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Trinity Episcopal Church

Trinity Episcopal Church, founded in 1849, was the first Episcopal congregation west of the Rocky Mountains. Some of the parish pioneers were among the most prominent San Franciscans of their day: McAllister, Turk, Eddy, Austin, Taylor, and many others.

The parish's significant role in the history of San Francisco continues today in the vision of its current rector, the Rev. Robert Warren Cromey. Notable among Trinity's many community and social programs is the founding of Project Open Hand by Ruth Brinker in 1985.

The present church structure, built in 1892, was designed by Arthur Page Brown, who was also the architect of San Francisco City Hall and the Ferry Building. Inspired by the Norman-Romanesque architecture of Durham Cathedral, it is built of roughhewn Colusa sandstone and features a massive castle-like central tower.

The Trinity organ was built in 1924 by Ernest M. Skinner and is one of the finest remaining examples of his artistry. Built after his second trip to Europe, it reflects the influence of his long creative association with the great English builder Henry Willis, III. The instrument's four manuals and pedal contain many of the numerous orchestral imitative voices perfected by Skinner. Among them, the Trinity organ contains the French Horn, Orchestral Oboe, Clarinet, Tuba Mirabilis, and eight ranks of strings. This wealth of orchestral color provides a range of expressiveness evocative of a symphony orchestra.

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Program Notes

the organist at Christ Church Cathedral, and in 1933, the organist at St. George's Chapel, Windsor. While at Windsor, he continued composing, as well as preparing music for many important royal occasions, including the funerals of Princess Victoria and King George V. He gave weekly music lessons to Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret. He was Director of Musical Studies at the Royal School of Church Music from 1956-1961, when he also resigned his appointment at Windsor. He was known as a fine trainer of choirs, as well as a composer in the Anglican tradition. He also had a deep love of literature, and spent many hours reading.

FAIRE IS THE HEAVEN (1925)

Text by Edmund Spenser (16th century)

William Harris' most famous composition is the rich, double chorus anthem *Faire is the Heaven*, set to text excerpted from Tudor poet Edmund Spenser's (1552?-1599) longer poem *An Hymne of Heavenly Beautie*, 1596. Born in London, Spenser was the son of a clothmaker. He was educated at the Merchant Tailors' School, and was able to attend Cambridge, where he received his master's degree in 1576. He became secretary to Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, one of Queen Elizabeth's favorite companions. Here he met Leicester's nephew, the poet Sir Philip Sidney to whom he dedicated his first major poem, *The Shepheardes Calendar*. At this time, he also began to write *The Faerie Queene*, an allegorical poem. In 1580, he was appointed secretary to Arthur Grey, the new lord deputy of Ireland, and moved to Ireland. For the next 15 years, he lived in Ireland, performing his duties and writing. Sir Walter Raleigh was so impressed by *The Faerie Queene* that he induced Spenser to return to London to supervise its publication. The first three books of this six-book allegory were published in 1590. Spenser returned to Ireland, but during the Irish turmoil of 1598, his home and manuscripts were burned. He returned to London and died there in 1599.

Harris sets the words with quiet passion, mirroring their lustre. His skills as a musical colorist show most clearly when he sets the text describing Cherubins, Seraphins, Angels and Archangels.

Faire is the heav'n
Where happy soules have place.
In full enjoyment of felicitie;
Whence they doe still behold the glorious face of the Divine Eternall Majestic;

Yet farre more faire be those bright Cherubins
Which all with golden wings are over dight.* [*adorned]
And those eternall burning Seraphins,
Which from their faces dart out fiery light.

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Yet fairer than they both and much more bright,
Be th'Angels and Archangels
Which attend on God's owne person, without rest or end.
These then in faire* each other farre excelling [*fairness]
As to the highest they approach more near.

Yet is that highest farre beyond all telling
Fairer than all the rest which their* appear. [*there]
Though all their beauties joynd together were,
How then can mortall tongue hope to expresse
the image of such endlesse perfectnesse?

Program notes by Helene Whitson

Donations

The San Francisco Lyric Chorus has been chartered by the State of California as a non-profit corporation and approved by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service as a 501c(3) organization. This status means that the Chorus may accept charitable donations, and donors may claim those donations as tax deductible.

The San Francisco Lyric Chorus is a young chorus, and we have grown tremendously in musical ability and in numbers during our few short years. We will continue to provide beautiful and exciting music for our audiences, and look forward to becoming one of San Francisco's premiere choral ensembles. We would like to perform works with chamber orchestra and other combinations of instruments, hire an accompanist for rehearsals, and occasionally perform in other sites. Continued growth and development, however, will require us to find increased financial support from friends, audiences and other agencies.

Monetary gifts of any amount are most welcome. All contributors will be acknowledged in our concert programs. For further information, e-mail rgurney@choralarchive.org/SFLyric or call (415) 775-5111. Donations also may be mailed to the following address to: San Francisco Lyric Chorus, 950 Franklin Street, #49, San Francisco, California 94109.

Adopt-A-Singer

For as little as \$20 you can support the San Francisco Lyric Chorus by adopting your favorite singer. For \$100 you can support an entire section (soprano, alto, tenor, or bass)! For \$150 you can adopt our esteemed Music Director, Robert Gurney. All contributors will be acknowledged in our concert programs. Donations to this program are tax deductible. Look for the descriptive insert in your program.

The Artists

ROBERT GURNEY, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Founder and Music Director Robert Gurney is Organist-Choirmaster at San Francisco's historic Trinity Episcopal Church, Organist at Marin County's Temple Rodef Sholom, and one of the Museum Organists at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor.

A resident of San Francisco since 1978, he has been an active church musician, organ recitalist, vocal coach, and has served as Assistant Conductor-Accompanist for the San Francisco Choral Society, the Sonoma City Opera and the Contra Costa Chorale.

A native of Ohio, he received his education at Youngstown State University and the Cleveland Institute of Music, studying conducting with William Slocum. At Youngstown, he served as Student Assistant Conductor of the Concert Choir which won first place in a college choir competition sponsored by the BBC. In Summer 1997, he was invited to participate in an international choral music festival Music Of Our Time, held in Parthenay, France, and directed by John Poole, Conductor Emeritus, BBC Singers.

Robert Gurney has directed the San Francisco Lyric Chorus in innovative performances of little known works by composers of exceptional interest. The Chorus' Discovery Series has introduced an eight-part *Ave Maria* by Tomás Luis de Victoria, the West Coast premiere of *Four Motets to the Blessed Virgin Mary*, by Robert Witt, music of Amy Beach, including her monumental *Grand Mass in E Flat* and the *Panama Hymn*, written for San Francisco's 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition, and premieres of works by San Francisco composer Kirke Mechem.

LISA GARTLAND, SOPRANO

Lisa Gartland has sung with and performed occasional solos for choruses throughout the United States, including the Pittsburgh Oratorio Society, the Cincinnati Choral Society and the Seattle Peace Chorus. A career highlight was singing for Boris Yeltsin (in Russian) with the Seattle Peace Chorus at a luncheon in his honor. She has sung in trio and solo for the San Francisco Lyric Chorus, including Aaron Copland's *Simple Gifts*, Johannes Brahms' *Liebeslieder Waltzes* and Robert Witt's *Four Motets to the Blessed Virgin Mary*. She currently also sings with the VOICI Women's Choral Ensemble.

ANNE SZABLA, ALTO

Anne Szabla began singing with the San Francisco Lyric Chorus in January 1998, inspired by the warmth of the group's 1997 performance of Britten's *Ceremony of Carols*. She has performed in various smaller ensembles, including the Sanford Dole Ensemble, Indiana University Contemporary Vocal Ensemble, University of Washington Chorale and Madrigal Singers, and Stanford Chorale, and was a soloist at Indiana University in Reich's *The Desert Music* and at the University of Washington in Stravinsky's *Cantata* and various chamber works of student composers.

The Artists

She has also performed with the local Brazilian percussion ensemble Orixá Bá Bá, and participated in workshops in Bahia, Brazil, with composer and percussionist Carlinhos Brown. Anne got her B.A. and B.Mus. in music history at the University of Washington, has taught music theory at the San Francisco Girls' Chorus, has studied voice with Elizabeth Appling and Marie Gibson, and is currently a student of Kristin Womack.

JEFFREY CHIU, TENOR

Having recently moved to San Francisco from New Jersey, this is Jeffrey Chiu's first season with the San Francisco Lyric Chorus. His previous choral experience includes four years with the Rutgers University Kirkpatrick Chapel Choir and two trimesters with the University of York Glee Club in York, England. Jeff is really enjoying his new adventure in San Francisco, is thrilled to be singing in the Lyric Chorus, and is most happy that he finally landed a permanent job. Jeff works for UCSF Stanford Health Care in the Human Resources Department.

LEE MORROW, BASS

Born in Cleveland, Ohio, Lee Morrow is a graduate of the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music. He also did graduate work in voice at the University of Michigan. He previously sang with the San Francisco Community Choir and the Presidio Army Chorus. He is studying voice with Randy Brown. He was a soloist in the San Francisco Lyric Chorus' West Coast premiere of Robert Witt's *Four Motets to the Blessed Virgin Mary*, and sang the solo in *Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen*, in the Lyric Chorus' Spring 1998 concert.

PAUL A. JACOBSON, PIANO AND ORGAN

Paul A. Jacobson is Organist-Choirmaster at the Episcopal Church of St. John the Evangelist, San Francisco. He holds a doctorate in liturgical history from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, and is on the staff of the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley.

Mr. Jacobson holds dual Masters degrees in Organ Performance and Worship and Music from the Yale University Institute of Sacred Music, where his teachers were Gerre Hancock and Charles Krigbaum. In 1979-1980 he was a Marshall Fellow at the Royal Danish Conservatory in Copenhagen, studying organ with Grethe Krogh and conducting with Dan-Olof Stenlund. Specializing in Scandinavian organ music, Jacobson is preparing a performing edition of the unpublished organ works of Niels W. Gade.

From 1984-1991 Mr. Jacobson was on the faculty of the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul, Minnesota, responsible for courses in organ, church music, music history, women's chorus, and music theatre. He was also the Director of Liturgical Music in the College Chapel, and was an active recitalist, soloist and coach.

The Artists

Mr. Jacobson has been organist for numerous national meetings, and was featured at the 1995 San Anselmo Organ Festival. He has given solo recitals in Denmark, France, and Israel, as well as throughout the United States. With oboist Lorna Nelson of Montana State University, Mr. Jacobson is the co-founder of the Nelson-Jacobson Duo. He has also served as Assistant Conductor of the San Francisco Chamber Singers. He recently served as Sub Dean for the San Francisco Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. He has accompanied the San Francisco Lyric Chorus in concert since Spring, 1997.

DAVID HATT, REHEARSAL PIANIST

David Hatt, organist, pianist, and harpsichordist, has been represented by Artist Recitals Concert Promotional Services for the past three years. He has concertized from Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania to the University of Alaska in Fairbanks. He received an MA in Music at the University of California, Riverside. He studied with Raymond Boese at the University of Redlands School of Music and also briefly with Anthony Newman at the University of California, San Diego. Currently he is organist at Hillcrest Congregational Church in Pleasant Hill and Dean of the San Jose Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. He also now serves as Assistant Cathedral Organist at St. Mary's Cathedral, San Francisco. Mr. Hatt served as organ accompanist in the San Francisco Lyric Chorus' Summer 1998 performance of the Brahms *Requiem*.

Acknowledgements

The San Francisco Lyric Chorus sends a warm, special thanks to:

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Trinity Episcopal Church

Trinity Episcopal Church, founded in 1849, was the first Episcopal congregation west of the Rocky Mountains. Some of the parish pioneers were among the most prominent San Franciscans of their day: McAllister, Turk, Eddy, Austin, Taylor, and many others.

The parish's significant role in the history of San Francisco continues today in the vision of its current rector, the Rev. Robert Warren Cromey. Notable among Trinity's many community and social programs is the founding of Project Open Hand by Ruth Brinker in 1985.

The present church structure, built in 1892, was designed by Arthur Page Brown, who was also the architect of San Francisco City Hall and the Ferry Building. Inspired by the Norman-Romanesque architecture of Durham Cathedral, it is built of roughhewn Colusa sandstone and features a massive castle-like central tower.

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