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Rural Musicians Forum presents

Two Magnificats

ANCIENT TEXTS - MODERN VOICES

**Works of Alan Hovhaness and Jonathan Willcocks
for Chorus and Orchestra**

Conductor: Gregory Dennis

Christina Kay – soprano

Katie Butitta – alto

J. Adam Shelton – tenor

Derek Miller - bass

Friday December 5

St. John's Church, Spring Green, 7:00 pm

Sunday December 7

St. Luke's Church, Plain, 3:00 pm

These concerts are made possible, in part, by generous support from the
Spring Green Area Arts Coalition, the Spring Green Arts & Crafts Fair
and from Kraemer Brothers LLC

Text and Translations

Luke 1:46-55

Magnificat anima mea Dominum: et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo.

My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.

Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae: ecce enim ex hoc beatam me decent omnes generationes.

For he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden: for behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est: et sanctum nomen ejus.

For he that is mighty hath magnified me: and holy is his name.

Et misericordia ejus a progenie in progenies timentibus eum.

And his mercy is on them that fear him throughout all generations.

Fecit potentiam in brachio suo: dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.

He hath showed strength with his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

Deposuit potentes de sede, et exalavit humiles.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek.

Esurientes implevit bonis: et divites dimisit inanes.

He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent empty away.

Suscepit Israel puerum suum, recordatus misericordiae suae. Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros, Abraham et semini ejus in saecula.

He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel. As he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed forever.

Gloria Parti, et Filio, et Spiritui Santo.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen

Orchestra

VIOLINS Lynne Wymore, Caroline Hamblen

VIOLA Steven Ethington

CELLOS Eric Miller, Linda Marquardt

BASSES James Anderson, James Markham, Melanie Buechler

HORNS Rebecca Schroeder, Mary Jo Wilson

TRUMPETS Zachary Masa-Myers, Kevin T. Dolfi

TROMBONE John Bausch

FLUTES Mili Chang, Terri Ellis

OBOE Andy Olson

BASSOONS Adam Lee Thune, Gina Johnson

CLARINETS Kellen Dorner, Paul Yu

PERCUSSION Gaile Burchill, Lauren Jensen

TIMPANI Chris DiBernardo

PIANO Robert Willoughby

Sopranos

Eliana Baccas

Abigail Colby

Nancy Cullen

Diane Dennis

Terry Kerr

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Beth Novak

Sandra Shane-DuBow

Christina Shepherd

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Jan Spredemann

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Altos

Marge Ferstl

Mary Gottschalk

Susan Greenwood

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Dena Shepherd

Charlotte Mitchell Smith

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Tenors

Janice Boettcher

John Christensen

Mark Hallett

Al Ikeler

Nick Luther

Ryan Putz

Greg Sieckman

Dick Weber

Basses

Earl Barnes

Tom Forseth

Aaron Hunt

Bob Klassy

Carl Leaf

Kent Mayfield

Derek Miller

Peter Putz

Mike Smith

Ron Towle

Rehearsal Accompanist

Bob Willoughby

About the Soloists (cont.)

recent productions of *Pirates of Penzance* and *Cinderella*. In 2011 she became the tour manager for Opera for the Young and has since become operations manager for the organization. She is exceedingly grateful for the presence of music in her life and for the unfailing support of her family, friends, and husband, Andy.

J. Adam Shelton, lyric tenor, was tenor studio artist in the inaugural year of the Madison Opera Studio program performing in *Un Ballo in Maschera* as Il Giudice, Damon in *Acis and Galatea*, and covering Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*. He apprenticed two seasons with Des Moines Metro Opera where he performed Elder Gleaton in *Susannah* and Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi*. He originated Prince Charming for Opera for the Young's adaptation of Massenet's *Cendrillon* in English in 2012 and toured as Count Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* in 2013. He also shared the Madison Opera stage with Susanne Mentzer and Daniella Mack portraying Howard Boucher in the riveting drama *Dead Man Walking* with composer Jake Heggie and Sister Helen Prejean in attendance.

Most recently, he recently received his doctorate from the University of Wisconsin where his dissertation was titled "The Singing Dream: A 21st Century Critical Edition of Tauberlieder." During his time at UW, he served as the Wisconsin Distinguished Graduate Fellow in Voice. A native of Knoxville, TN, he holds other degrees from the University of Tennessee and the University of Arizona.

Between engagements, Dr. Shelton owns and operates the Shelton Private Voice Studio, LLC along with creative and fun recital engagements.

Bass **Derek Miller** has had a lifelong interest and involvement in choral music. In college, he was privileged to sing in choirs under Dr. Chuck Smith at Michigan State University as well as the legendary Dr. Robert Fountain at UW-Madison. Following college, Derek has continued with occasional community musical theater productions, community choirs, and other musical events. Derek has served as bass soloist twice before for Rural Musicians Forum performances, including the winter 2011 production of Handel's *Messiah*. Derek lives in Spring Green with his wife, Debra. They have five children, one of whom is still at home.

Founded in 1986 by local artist and musician Nancy Giffey, Rural Musicians Forum presents concerts and outreach programs in the Wisconsin River Valley and beyond. All donations go to enhance our ability to bring excellent music and musicians of all genres to our audiences. RMF is a 501c(3) not-for-profit organization. For more information, visit us at ruralmusiciansforum.org, write to us at P.O. Box 411, Spring Green, WI 53588, or contact Kent Mayfield at

The Program

Magnificat – Jonathan Willcocks

Chorus, orchestra, and soprano solo

I. Magnificat

II. Et misericordia

III. Fecit potentiam

IV. There Is No Rose of Such Virtue

V. Gloria Patri

~~~INTERMISSION~~~

### Magnificat, Opus 157 – Alan Hovhaness

I. Celestial Fanfare (orchestra)

II. Magnificat (chorus)

III. Et Exsultavit (tenor)

IV. Quia Respexit (soprano)

V. Omnes Generationes (women's chorus)

VI. Quia Fecit Mihi Magna (bass & chorus)

VII. Et Misericordia (soprano)

VIII. Fecit Potentiam (alto)

## About the Composers

### **MAGNIFICAT – Jonathan Willcocks**

*Splendor, vitality and joyful excitement*

Jonathan Willcocks is known for a vitality and expressiveness entirely his own. A recent critic noted that not only is his musicianship masterful, “his spirit, friendliness and warmth are immediately evident ...” The son of composer and director Sir David Willcocks, his early years were spent in Cambridge, where he was a chorister at King’s College and, while studying for his degree, he held a choral scholarship at Trinity College. As a composer, Willcocks covers a broad range of choral, orchestral, and instrumental chamber music, much of it written for commissions from choirs, festivals, instrumental ensembles, and television and film companies, as well as for King’s College Christmas celebrations. He is the conductor and musical director of the Portsmouth Choral Union and Chichester Singers, and of the professional chamber orchestra Southern Pro Musica, and he is a regular guest conductor, these engagements taking him to the USA and Canada, as well as to Singapore, South Africa, Australia, and many European countries. Since 1989 he has been director of the Junior Academy of the Royal Academy of Music in London.

His *Magnificat*, an approachable, uplifting and celebratory work for choir, soloists and brass group, illustrates his expert understanding of vocal music. It is a melodious, rhythmic and colorful piece, set in five contrasting movements from the Latin with two additional 15<sup>th</sup> century English texts in praise of Mary. ([www.jonathanwillcocks.com](http://www.jonathanwillcocks.com) – selected)

### **MAGNIFICAT – Alan Hovhaness**

*Mystery, inspiration and radiant beauty*

Alan Hovhaness ranks among the most intrepid of musical explorers in 20th century classical music. He was a widely recorded and lauded American composer in the 1950s and ‘60s and the recipient of numerous awards. Hovhaness’ music reveals a unique and thoroughly convincing assimilation of highly disparate traditions coming to the fore and receding over the course of his career, including Renaissance polyphony, South Indian classical music, Japanese gagaku music and Korean ah-ak music. Of course, many 20th century composers flirted with such exotica, but in Hovhaness it finds the most seamless alchemy of all because it was more than mere flirtation. Never conventionally religious, yet feeling more attuned with ancient civilizations than modern society, Hovhaness readily warmed to the musical and mystical possibilities offered by biblical texts. His was a musical engagement on an aesthetic and spiritual as well as technical level. As he said in a 1968 interview: “One must penetrate beneath the surface beauty - one must listen to it with a certain concentration before it reveals all that I have to say.... I wish to create something for the unconscious mind.”

Radiating such a spirit is the *Magnificat* of 1957, a work commissioned by the

## About the Composers (cont.)

and idioms makes for highly contrasting moods and textures, while retaining an overall mystical cohesiveness. Certainly Hovhaness achieved in this work his stated aim of evoking “the mystery, inspiration and mysticism of early Christianity.” (from Marco Shirodkar-selected)

## About the Director and Soloists

**Gregory Dennis** is a retired music educator. His final nine years of teaching were at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville where he conducted two mixed choirs and taught elementary and secondary general music and choral music methods courses in addition to supervising student teachers. Widely known for his work with choral groups, Mr. Dennis currently directs two regional groups of note: the Mount Horeb Chorale and the Platteville Chorale; the former under his leadership for the past 27 years.

Mr. Dennis has directed, produced, and/or acted in over 50 plays, musical shows and operas. He has directed honors and festival choirs and has been an active clinician and adjudicator in Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, and Wisconsin. His professional activities are extensive, including 11 years with the Wisconsin Honors Project and state boards of directors of the Wisconsin Choral Directors Association, the Wisconsin Music Educators Association, and the Michigan School Vocal Association. He is also a life member of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, the International Thespian Society, and Tri-M Music Honor Society. He was recently honored with the coveted “Orpheus” Award by Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia for meritorious service as a professional music educator.

Mr. Dennis holds a bachelor’s of science degree in Choral and General Music Education from the University of Wisconsin-Platteville and a master’s of music degree in Choral Music Education from the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor. In his spare time, Mr. Dennis enjoys model railroading.

Soprano **Christina Kay** is an avid performer and teacher in the Madison area. Recent past and upcoming performances include appearances with the Madison Choral Project, Present Music’s Hearing Voices, and Eliza’s Toyes. On the opera stage, Christina has been seen as Dalinda in Handel’s *Ariodante*, and as the Second Woman and First Witch in Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas*. She has also been a featured soloist with the UW Concert Choir (St. John Passion), the Madison Summer Choir, the UW Early Music Ensemble, and the Madison Early Music Festival.

Alto **Katie Butitta** is a Madison resident, having moved from northern Wisconsin in 2005 to begin a program in voice at the University of Wisconsin. Since completing her master’s degree in 2007, Katie has enjoyed a varied musical experience in the Madison area. She has worked with Madison Choral Project, the Cecilia Singers, the Madison Savoyards, and with Voces Aestatis in their debut concert this past summer. She performs regularly with Madison Opera in their chorus, and has toured with Opera for the Young as a teaching artist in their