4-22-2006

Graduate Recital: Michael R. Lippert, graduate conductor

Ithaca College Choir

Michael R. Lippert

Janet Galván

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GRADUATE RECITAL

ITHACA COLLEGE CHOIR

Michael R. Lippert, graduate conductor
Janet Galván, conductor

Ford Hall
Saturday, April 22, 2006
8:15 p.m.
ITHACA COLLEGE CHOIR

Michael R. Lippert, graduate conductor
Jonathan Riss, accompanist

Great Spirit:
Love, Joy, Beauty, Awe

My Spirit Sang All Day
Gerald Finzi
(1901–1956)

Duo Seraphim
Jacob Handl
(1550–1591)

Os justi meditabitur
Anton Bruckner
(1824–1896)

Laudate Dominum
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
from Vesperae solennes de confessore, K. 339
(1756–1791)

Melissa Sanfilippo, soprano;
Jeff Abbott, Danice Desir, Brenna Gillette,
Chris Jones, Ian Salmon, Laura Sciavolino, violins;
Jennifer Chieffalo, Diana Geiger, cellos; Jillian Bushnell, bassoon;
Ben Reynolds, bass; Jonathan Riss, organ

The Crow Country
Clyde Thompson
(b. 1947)

Amy Thiemann, flute; Whitney Dorman, oboe;
Kelly Bochynski, clarinet;
Daniel Carter, French horn, Jillian Bushnell, bassoon;
Jason Hunt, Greg Sutliff, percussion

A Red, Red, Rose
James Mulholland

O Sifuni Mungu
Marty McCall, David Maddux, Mmunga
Mwenebulongo, and Asululu 'Yunu Mukalay
Arr. David Maddux

Jali Jobateh, djembe guest artist
J. Thomas Morris, Lara Supan,
Laura Betinis, Andy McCullough, soloists

Graduate Recital presented in partial fulfillment for the degree
Masters of Music in Conducting.

Michael R. Lippert is from the studios of Janet Galván
and Lawrence Doebler.
ITHACA COLLEGE CHOIR
Janet Galván, conductor
Jonathan Riss, accompanist

Sure On This Shining Night
Morten Lauridsen
(b. 1943)

Véñiki
Russian Folk Song
arr. F. Rubtsov
(1904–1986)
Tonight’s musical selections resolve around a central idea of a great spirit, human, natural, and divine, that describes the beauty, joy, love, and awe that creates and defines our world. Today is Earth Day, and it seems uniquely appropriate to offer this collection of songs and texts that explores the human connections with the earth. Some are cosmic and religious in their viewpoint; others are intensely personal and private. All however, are united by their collective praise of the beauty of our experience.

### My Spirit Sang All Day

My spirit sang all day  
O my joy.  
Nothing my tongue could say,  
Only My Joy.  
My heart an echo caught—  
O my joy  
And spake. Tell me thy thought,  
Hide not thy joy.

She also came and heard;  
O my joy,  
What, said she, is this word:  
What is thy joy?  
And I replied. O see,  
O my joy,  
‘Tis thee, I cried, ‘tis thee:  
Thou art my joy.


Robert Bridges (1844–1930) was an English poet and medical doctor, educated at Eton and Corpus Christi colleges and St. Bartholomew’s Hospital. He intended to work as a doctor, but lung disease forced his early retirement in 1873, after which he devoted his work to writing and literary research. Bridges was a Milton scholar and a technical master of prosody. He also published the *Yattendon Hymnal* in 1899. While not commercially successful, this work represents a crucial bridge between Victorian and modern hymnody in England. Bridges was named England’s Poet Laureate in 1913.

Gerald Finzi (1901–1956) was privately educated and studied music with Ernest Farrar and Edward Bairstow. An introspective individual, Finzi did most of his work in isolation of larger English society, preferring instead to find solace in literature and music study. He was an expert in the history and aesthetics of English song, and lectured frequently in later life about these subjects. He felt that no words were too fine or too familiar to be rendered unfit for music, as long as the composer understood them. Diagnosed with Hodgkin’s Disease in 1951, he retired to the countryside of his compatriots Elgar and Vaughan Williams, dying five years later of complications from chickenpox. His songs and choral works are recognized for their clearly set texts that preserve the finesse and imagery of the English language.

### Duo Seraphim

*Duo Seraphim clamabant,*  
*alter ad alterum:*  
*Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus,*  
*Dominus Deus Sabaoth,*  
*Plena est omnis terra gloria ejus.*

Two Seraphim cried out,  
one to the other:  
Holy, holy holy,  
Lord God of Hosts.  
The whole earth is full of his glory.

—Isaiah 6: 2–3

This piece is a double choir setting of the office antiphon for Trinity Sunday. It recounts Isaiah’s vocational vision of the Seraphim, the highest and fiercest order of the angels with six wings—two to cover the face, two to cover the feet, and two with which to fly. Only two in number, the Seraphim (from the Hebrew word to burn, or purify) continually cry the Trisagion (Holy, holy, holy) to one another in praise in the court of heaven.

Jacob Handl (1550–1591), also known by his Latinized name Jacobus Gallus (Jacob the Rooster), was a Slovenian composer working in Austria, Moravia, and Bohemia. Strongly influenced by the Netherlands style, he was one of the most skillful contrapunctalists of his time, and exploited the polyphonic idiom as thoroughly and deftly as any Venetian composer, employing unusual sonorities, modal twists, and word-painting, while retaining clarity of text. His monumental work *Opus Musicum*, published in...
four volumes, contains 374 motets for the liturgical year written for four to twenty-four voices.

**Os justi meditabitur**

Os justi meditabitur sapientiam,  
et lingua ejus lauetur judicium.  
Lex Dei in corde ipsius,  
et non supplantatuntur gressus ejus.

The mouths of the righteous utter wisdom,  
And their tongues speak justice.  
The law of their God is in their hearts;  
Their steps do not slide.

—Psalm 37: 30-31

This Gradual setting was written in July 1879 for the choir of St. Florian, the monastery near Linz where Bruckner grew up and received much of his early education. The work is dedicated to his teacher and choirmaster Ignaz Treumihler, a leader in the Cecilian reform movement that sought to return music of the Catholic liturgy to its idealized roots in chant and the polyphony of Palestrina. Hoping to please Treumihler, Bruckner took care to make sure the piece was entirely absent of chromaticism, in keeping with the strict rules of Cecilian compositional aesthetic. Composed in Lydian mode, the raised fourth scale degree deprives the composition of the strong pull of the dominant seventh chord, giving the entire piece a sense of tonal stability and stasis unfamiliar to late 19th century ears more accustomed to Wagner, Liszt, and Brahms. The outer sections of the piece provide static sonic pillars representative of the word of God, each building to an achingly beautiful extended series of suspensions. The center imitative section is equally descriptive of the “tongues” of sound that resonate between the outer sections. In this short motet, Bruckner accomplished what many other composers of the Cecilian movement failed to do—a piece that fuses the old and the new musical worlds to create something uniquely solid and timeless.

**Laudate Dominum**

Laudate Dominum omnes gentes;  
laudate eum, omnes populi.  
Quoniam confirmata est  
super nos misericordia ejus,  
et veritas Domini  
manet in aeternum.

Gloria patri et filio et spiritui sancto,  
sicut erat in principio  
et nunc et semper  
et in saecula saeculorum.

Praise the Lord, all nations;  
praise him, all peoples.  
For his loving kindness has been  
bestowed upon us,  
and the truth of the Lord  
endures for eternity.

—Psalm 117

**Laudate Dominum** is one of the five Lucernals psalms associated with the ancient office of Vespers, derived from the Mass for Holy Saturday, a solemn and celebratory vigil offering praise to God for the fulfillment of the promise of Easter. This brief psalm also is frequently used as a Communion song, Propagation of the Faith, Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, and as a general antiphon of praise. Some scholars have concluded that this psalm was composed in 583 B.C.E., the date of the rebirth of the Jewish nation, the occasion for which the psalm originally gives praise and thanks.

Mozart wrote the *Vesperae solennes de confessore* in 1780, probably composed for performance in the cathedral in Salzburg. Freed from the thematic and key unity required for masses, the set as a whole demonstrates the dexterous variety of Mozart’s choral and vocal styles. The *Laudate Dominum* setting features a serene, melodious aria for solo soprano supported by tranquil strings that would seem equally at home on the opera stage as it does in liturgical settings, concluding with a hushed organ-like entry of the chorus.

**The Crow Country**

The Crow country is a good country. The Great Spirit put it exactly in the right place. When you are in it you fare well, and when you leave it you fare worse. It has snowy mountains and sunny plains, and good things for every season. When the summer heat scorches the prairies you can draw up under the mountains where the air is sweet and cool, the grasses fresh, and the bright streams come tumbling out of the snowbanks. In the autumn when your horses are fat and strong you can go into the prairies and hunt the buffalo. And when winter comes on you can take shelter in the woody bottoms along the river. There is no place like Crow country. Everything good is to be found there. The Great Spirit put it exactly in the right place.

—Crow Indian
In the late summer of 1833, a Crow chief named Arapooish spoke this text in eulogy of his beloved country to Robert Campbell of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company. The Crow dynasty at that time extended from the Black Hills to the Rocky Mountains, including nearly all of present-day Montana. The Crow Country is part of an hour-long cantata, with texts from Native American sources. According to the composer, “the text for Crow Country struck me as a beautiful testament of how the Indians viewed their homeland. It makes all the poignant the loss that they experienced, not only in losing their homes, but seeing their entire culture dissolve. Musically, the rhythmic quality of the piece, and the clarity and transparency of the melodic lines helps, I think, to make the piece be like story-telling, in simple and joyful language.”

Clyde Thompson (b. 1947) has pursued a multi-faceted career as a teacher, performer, director, and composer. For eighteen years he served on music faculties of colleges in West Virginia, Illinois, and Oregon. Thompson holds degrees in composition and choral directing from the University of Minnesota, Eastman School of Music, and the University of Missouri–Kansas City. He has studied composition with, among others, Dominick Argento and Samuel Adler. He has recently retired from full-time teaching to devote time to other professional goals in composition and performance. Thompson is founder and director of the new Central Oregon Mastersingers, a 45 voice auditioned choir based in Bend, Oregon. He plays French horn in the Central Oregon Symphony and is a member of the Obsidian Opera Company.

A Red, Red, Rose

O, my luve's like a red, red, rose,  
That's newly sprung in June.  
O my luve's like the melodie  
That's sweetly played in tune.  
As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,  
So deep in luve am I,  
I will luve thee still, my dear,  
Till a' the seas gang dry.  

I will luve thee still, my dear,  
While the sands of life shall run.  
Till the seas gang dry, my dear,  
And rocks melt with the sun!  
As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,  
So deep in luve am I.  
I will come again, my luve,  
Tho' it were ten thousand mile!  
—Robert Burns

Robert Burns (1759–1796) is considered Scotland's preeminent literary figure, known throughout the Scottish diaspora as “The Bard.” The eldest son of a poor tenant farmer, he was the principal worker on his father's farm by age 15 and began writing poetry in attempt to find “some kind of counterpoise for his circumstances.” His poems, mostly in Scottish dialect with a smattering in English and “light” Scottish, eventually provided him with the means to escape poverty, although his fame never brought him true financial stability. A collector and adapter of Scottish song as well, Burns died young of heart disease exacerbated by his life of hard labor. “A Red, Red, Rose” (presented here in mostly modernized English) is among his most famous works, which also include the poems “The Lea Rig,” “Tam O'Shanter,” and the song “Auld Lang Syne.”

James Mulholland is professor of composition, music theory, and music history at Butler University in Indianapolis, Indiana. His compositions have appeared as required repertoire on over forty states' high school choral lists and are performed regularly by universities and choral associations throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe. Mulholland has written commissioned works for many choirs throughout the world, including the Los Angeles Children's Choir, the International Children's Choir Festival, and for the American Choral Directors Association. A native of Laurel, Mississippi, he completed bachelor’s and master's music degrees at Louisiana State University. His D.M.A. in Performance and Literature is from Indiana University.

O Sifuni Mungu

Viumble yote vya Mungu wetu na Mfal me wetu  
All creatures of our God and King  
Pazeni sauti elisane mwinbe  
Lift up your voices and sing with us  
Waatu wote, viumble yote, awaye yote, sifu Mungu  
All men, all creatures, everybody praise God.  
Imbeni  
Sing!  

—Swahili, freely adapted from St. Francis of Assisi

This cross-cultural praise song, a fusion of Swahili vocal styles and American contemporary praise, incorporates the call and response structure typical of both forms. Recorded by the group First Call in 1985, it has since become a favorite of choral ensembles. The Swahili text is freely adapted from St. Francis' familiar “Canticle of the
Sun," which exhorts all creatures of the earth to give thanks for all things great and small. St. Francis of Assisi (c. 1181–1226), founder of the Franciscan Order and patron saint of animals and the environment, has been described as the shining example of the "joyous singer of nature" and the mysteries it holds.

Sure On This Shining Night

Sure on this shining night
Of starmade shadows round,
Kindness must watch for me
This side the ground.
The late year lies down the north.
All is healed, all is health.
High summer holds the earth.
Hearts are whole.

—James Agee, copyright © 1968, The James Agee Trust

James Agee (1909–1955) was an American novelist, screenwriter, journalist, poet, and film critic. In the 1940s he was one of the most influential film critics in the United States. His autobiographical novel A Death In the Family (1955) posthumously won him the Pulitzer Prize, and his journalistic collaboration with photographer Walker Evans (1903–1975) Let Us Now Praise Famous Men (1941) has been described by Lionel Trilling as "the most realistic and most important moral effort of our American generation." It is considered among the greatest literary works of the 20th Century. Agee led an unorthodox, hard-driving life, and perhaps is one of the last people in modernity to succeed to know and experience nearly all of what the world has to offer. He was also a pilot, and reportedly one of the first to fly alone at night. "Sure On This Shining Night" is excerpted from his early collection of poems Permit Me Voyage (1934) and reflects the awe that one might have seeing the earth from above in the evening.

Morten Lauridsen (b. 1943), composer-in-residence of the Los Angeles Master Chorale from 1994–2001 and Professor of Composition at the University of Southern California for more than thirty years, occupies a permanent place in the standard vocal repertoire of the 20th Century. His works are regularly featured in concert by distinguished ensembles throughout the world, and has recently eclipsed Randall Thompson as the most frequently performed American choral composer. His most recent commissions have been from Harvard University and the San Francisco Bay Brass. This composition is from a set of three pieces entitled Nocturnes, the Raymond Bock Memorial Commission for the American Choral Directors Association’s 2005 national convention.

Véñiki

This folk song is a Russian tongue-twister, the text of which is essentially meaningless. For the intellectually curious, the exact translation is:

Véñiki, véniki, da véniki-pomélki,
da po pečhi valializia,
da s pečhi oborvalisia,
Kum Gavrila, kum Gavrila,
y a Gavrile govorila.

Brooms, brooms, yes broom sweepers
yes on the hearth laid about,
yes from the hearth were torn off.
Godfather Gabriel, godfather Gabriel,
I to Gabriel was saying.

Véñiki are the brooms (usually made from branches with some leaves still on them) that Russian bathers traditionally beat their backs with after taking a hot sauna. This is often followed by a roll in the snow.

—notes by MRL
ITHACA COLLEGE CHOIR  
Janet Galván, conductor  
Michael R. Lippert, graduate conductor

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