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Lift Up Your Voice

December 2013

- On High Michelle Hynson
- O magnum mysterium Sally Herman
- Candlelight Carol John Rutter (b. 1945)
- Lauda per la Natività del Signore (Laud to the Nativity) Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936)

Vanessa Salaz – Soprano
Kirsten Cook – Mezzo-Soprano
Francisco Rentería – Tenor

Interval

- Magnificat in D Major BWV 243 Bach (1685-1750)

- I. Magnificat anima mea - Chorus
- II. Et exsultavit spiritus meus – Aria for Soprano II
- III. Quia respexit humilitatem – Aria for Soprano I
- IV. Omnes generationes – Chorus
- V. Quia fecit mihi magna – Aria for Bass
- VI. Et misericordia – Duet for Alto, Tenor
- VII. Fecit potentiam – Chorus
- VIII. Deposuit potentes – Aria for Tenor
- X. Suscepit Israel – Trio for Soprano I, Soprano II, Alto
- XI. Sicut locutus est – Chorus
- XII. Gloria patri – Chorus

Vanessa Salaz – Soprano
Mackenzie Romriell – Mezzo-Soprano
Francisco Rentería – Tenor
Juan Aguirre – Bass

Program Notes

- by Cathy Wolfson

On High – Since 1981, Michelle Hynson has enjoyed a noteworthy career in Milwaukee as a pianist, composer/arranger, soprano soloist, voice teacher, and conductor. She and her husband share the Minister of Music position at a United Methodist church in Milwaukee. Hynson also supports young and developing artists as the staff accompanist for the Homestead High School choral program. In *On High*, she sets the familiar carol “Ding Dong! Merrily on High” as a joyous ode to Christmas. This piece, written for more accomplished choral groups, features an array of vocal colors and textures. Listen for the peal of “bells” sung by the female voices in the middle section of this lively rendition.

O Magnum Mysterium – Sally Herman has spent most of her career as a music educator for students of all ages, composer, and also as a choral conductor of national honor choirs, frequent lecturer, and clinician at musical conventions across the United States. She taught graduate courses at universities, including the prestigious Eastman School of Music, and has received numerous awards from the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) for her outstanding contribution to the choral art. The text of *O Magnum Mysterium (O Great Mystery)* has been set to music by many composers through the centuries, including the often-performed version by Tomas Luis de Victoria. Herman’s contemporary setting uses simple, shimmering harmonic clusters to convey the mystery of Jesus’ birth. If you listen closely, you can also hear her homage to Randall Thompson’s *Alleluia*.

O Magnum Mysterium
Et admirabile sacramentum
Ut animalia viderent Dominum natum
Jacentem in praesepe.
O beata Virgo, cujus viscera meruerunt
Portare Dominum Jesum Christum.
Alleluia!

Oh Great Mystery
And wondrous sacrament
In order for the animals to see the Lord born
Lying in a cradle in a stable.
Oh blessed Virgin, whose uterus was deserving
To have carried the Lord Jesus Christ.
Alleluia!

Candlelight Carol – Although John Rutter (b. 1945) is an internationally acclaimed English composer and arranger of predominantly choral music, he is often invited to be the guest conductor for symphonies and choirs around the world. As the founder and conductor of the Cambridge Singers in 1981, he has produced many recordings under his own label, Collegium Records. Rutter’s repertoire includes a large number of Christmas choral works because, as he says, “With music, Christmas can be absolutely perfect.” He wrote both the music and the words for *Candlelight Carol*, which is a gentle, luminous piece celebrating Mary and the birth of Jesus. One can almost hear Mary singing a lullaby to her precious baby.

Lauda per la Natività del Signore (Laud to the Nativity) – Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936) was an Italian composer and conductor born in Bologna, Italy. He began his musical career in 1900 as principal violist with the Russian Imperial Theatre in St. Petersburg, where he studied with Rimsky-Korsakov – who was musically famous, among other things, for his treatise on orchestration. Respighi's most famous works include his orchestral tone poems: *Pines of Rome* and *Fountains of Rome*. He was also a devoted scholar of 16th, 17th, and 18th century Italian music and published editions of works by Monteverdi and Vivaldi. His seldom-heard *Laud to the Nativity*, for soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor soloists and mixed choir, is a pastoral cantata published in 1930 that reflects his affinity for early Italian music. Its simplistic charm utilizes Respighi's unique orchestral color and subtle harmonic nuance characteristic of early 20th century Italian music. The soaring musical lines celebrate Jesus' birth and Mary's infinite wonder as she beholds her Holy Child. *Laud to the Nativity* is exceptional for its complicated rhythms and vocal harmonies interspersed with simple medieval choral tableaux. ARS is singing the English translation of **Lauda per la Natività del Signore (Laud to the Nativity)** below, which is an interpretation of the original Italian text.

Angel – Fear not, you shepherds abiding yonder upon the hills, you shepherds of Judea. Raise your eyes and behold me: I am the angel of eternal glory. I am the messenger holy and I bring you good tidings of great joy. This day is born the little Jesus, the Son of God, that all may rejoice in salvation.

Chorus – And this Child, pure and holy, sent by the Lord against evil to battle, lies in a stable lowly within a manger among the sheep and the cattle. To shield Him from the breezes, Mary in bands of linen gently bound Him; His blanket, the hay around Him. Thus has He come down to earth, blessed Jesus.

Angel and Chorus – Fear not, you shepherds abiding yonder upon the hills, you shepherds of Judea. Raise your voice and be glad. Joy to mankind, I am the angel of hosts.

(Chorus) – And this Child, pure and holy, sent by the Father lies in a stable within a manger bed lowly...

The Shepherd – O Lord, Thou hast descended to earth from heaven, angels sang in chorus. Thou must be sore offended to lie thus in a stable rude here before us.

Mary – My child, sweet is your slumber. Though You must lie poor here in a manger, bright angels without number hover around you, guarding You from danger. My son, with what affection I gaze upon You! Filled with awe on Your birth I ponder! Beholding Your perfection, I forget thoughts of poverty and longing. My heart is filled with gladness. Great joy accompanies Your birth. Promise and hope for mankind come from You, Child of wonder!

Chorus – O fountain of joy eternal, lying upon the hay here we behold You, here we behold You.

Mary (with Chorus) – How blest am I who bore You! Alas, how poor the arms which now enfold You. As Lord we worship and adore You. You have descended from on high to save us. Though poorly we now receive Him, though naked He lies in the hay it will not grieve Him. Our belief in Him will then transport us all.

Chorus (with Mary) – Take our cloaks for the Baby. ... Blessed Mary, that sheltered thus He may be. Our flocks unguarded stand, we cannot tarry. Now no longer care we for the cold: we have beheld Him, the Infant Jesus

Chorus – Praise to You, honor unto You, Yours be glory, Father in heaven, God Almighty.

Chorus (Men) – O Savior, of God begotten and born of a Virgin in humiliation, give light to every nation, that by man Your birth may never be forgotten.

Chorus – Happy would we hasten back to our hillsides and our flocks, could we but touch Him; yet dare not ask this favor. Unclean shepherds, we are fearful that we might smutch Him. Contented would we hasten back to our hills and flocks, could we but touch Him.

Mary – That you may go rejoicing, men of the fields, draw nearer and kneel before Him. Touch Him and adore Him. Now blessed by Him, go forth, your praises singing.

Chorus – Glory, praise and honor and glory to God. Gloria ... glory, honor, and praise unto Thee, O Father almighty ... on high, etc. Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among all men of good will.

To save the world from evil You came in pity, to save the world from sin Thou cam'st in pity, for it was not Thy duty, O child of heav'nly beauty. Laud we Your name, extol You, Lord of all majesty, Father everlasting.

Chorus (with Angel and Mary) – Glory be unto God in heaven. Peace on earth, good will toward all men of good will. Amen.

Angel (with Chorus and Mary) – Glory be unto God in heaven. ... For born is the promised Messiah!

Mary (with Chorus and Angel) – Upon me God bestowed His favor, and I shall cease to laud and praise Him never. I bore to men a Savior Who shall be King of earth and heaven for ever. I bow in humble devotion o'er the child Who has come to save us from error. No rose was ever fairer His beauty fills my soul with pure emotion. My thoughts I cannot capture ... my spirit lifts in rapture ... it soars ever higher. Amen.

Interval

Magnificat in D Major – How does one concisely describe the life and musical genius of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750), a prolific and accomplished Baroque composer and certainly one of the greatest musicians of all time? His works are highly esteemed for their intellectual capacity, technical skill, and artistic splendor. Born into a musical family in Eisenach, Germany, Bach learned to play several instruments including the harpsichord, organ and other keyboard instruments. He was well schooled in music theory, and attended St. Michael's School in Lüneberg because of his singing ability. Upon graduation, he held several musical posts in Germany but never traveled beyond the borders of his homeland. As Director of Music for Prince Leopold, Bach was able to concentrate on instrumental composition. In 1723, he and his family moved to Leipzig, where he lived for the remainder of his life. Bach accepted the prestigious position as Music Director for the city's two churches, as well as Cantor of Thomasschule, where his professional responsibilities included composing music for Sunday services and other religious holidays. During this time period, Bach produced abundant quantities of choral and instrumental church music - including cantatas, concertos and oratorios - and became renowned as a virtuoso organist. The timeless and enduring legacy of J.S. Bach's contribution to musical literature is literally 'out of this world' - several of his works were included in the travels of the space probe, Voyager, and two asteroids have been named after him.

It was during the early days of Bach's career in Leipzig that he wrote *Magnificat in D Major*, which was originally composed in E-flat Major. In 1733 he adapted it to D Major to celebrate the Feast of the Visitation (of Mary with her cousin Elizabeth). The text is taken directly from the Gospel of Luke (Luke 1:46-55). This festive version of *Magnificat* is scored for five solo voices, two sopranos, alto, tenor, and bass, and five choral parts, sopranos I and II, alto, tenor, and bass. It is a joyful, yet reverent setting of Mary's response in faith to her cousin Elizabeth (Mother of John the Baptist) who affirms that Mary will be the Mother of the Messiah to fulfill God's promise. Bach uses driving rhythms and jubilant proclamations to underline Mary's exultant joy. This is one of Bach's greatest works - full of majesty and power.

*Magnificat anima mea Dominum,
Et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo Salvatore meo,*

Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae.

Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes,

Quia fecit mihi magna, qui potens est,

Et sanctum nomen eius,

Et misericordia eius in progenies et progenies

*My soul magnifies the Lord,
And my spirit has rejoiced in God my
Saviour,*

*Because He has regarded the humility of His
handmaid;*

*For behold, from henceforth all generations
will call me blessed.*

*Because He that is mighty has done great
things to me,*

And holy is His name,

*And His mercy is from generation unto
generations*

*Timentibus eum.
Fecit potentiam in brachio suo,
Dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.*

*Deposuit potentes de sede,
Et exaltavit humiles.
Esurientes implevit bonis;
Et divites dimisit inanes.
Suscepit Israel puerum suum,
Recordatus misericordia,
Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros,
Abraham et semini eius in saecula.
Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto,*

Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper,

et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

*To them that fear Him.
He has showed might in His arm,
He has scattered the proud in the conceit
of their heart.
He has put down the mighty from their seat,
And has exalted the humble.
He has filled the hungry with good things;
And the rich He has sent empty away.
He has received Israel His servant,
Being mindful of His mercy,
As He spoke to our fathers,
Abraham and His seed forever.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning, also now,
and always,
and to ages of ages. Amen.*

About the Soloists

Juan Aguirre, Bass – Originally from Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico, Juan obtained his Masters Degree in Vocal Performance from the University of Arizona where he performed leading roles in numerous operas and was the first prizewinner of two major Opera competitions. Juan made his professional opera debut with Arizona Opera Company in 1997 and has performed with them from time to time since then. In addition, he has sung professionally with Phoenix Metropolitan Opera, Southern Arizona Symphony Organization (SASO) and Wieck Chamber Singers and Orchestra and has worked with world-renowned directors/coaches/singers, Tito Capobianco, Richard Miller, and legendary bass, Jerome Hines.

Outside the United States, Juan sings regularly in recitals, concerts and operas throughout Mexico. He was a featured bass soloist with the Liszt Academy orchestra in Budapest, Hungary and was privileged to sing in the presence of President Maduro of Honduras and distinguished guests.

Equally at home in the realm of musical theatre, Juan is a regular on Arizona Stages in a variety of roles from dramatic to comedy. In addition to performing, Juan enjoys stage directing and most recently directed *Cinderella* and *Les Miserables* for Christian Youth Theater as well as *Esther* and *Amahl and the Night Visitors* for Wieck Chamber Singers and Orchestra.

Juan also teaches private voice students and works for TUSD's Opening Minds through the Arts (OMA). He can also be seen and heard on both local and national television and radio as a bilingual actor and voice-over artist.

Kirsten Cook, *Mezzo-Soprano* — This is Kirsten’s 22nd season as a member of the Arizona Repertory Singers (ARS). Kirsten is an active recitalist and a frequent soloist with ARS. She was the alto soloist in Tucson’s *Messiah* Sing-In for three years and has soloed with the Crested Butte Music Festival Orchestra in Colorado and sung in opera choruses there. Also an oboist, she has occasionally accompanied ARS in concert and was a member of the *Messiah* Sing-In orchestra for nine years. Kirsten holds degrees in Music Education and English from the University of Michigan and a Master of Arts degree in Counseling from the University of Arizona. The recently retired public school counselor enjoys hobbies that include nature and landscape photography, hiking and being a grandma. Kirsten’s vocal coach is Dr. Jeffrey Jahn.

Francisco Rentería, *Tenor* — Francisco Rentería was born in Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico. Rentería holds a Bachelor of Music and a Masters of Music degree in piano performance from the University of Arizona where he studied with Dr. Nohema Fernández. He has won several prizes and awards including first prize in the Green Valley Concert Association Piano Competition in 1999.

Mr. Rentería has always had a passion for singing. He participated with the U of A Opera Theater where he sang in several operas including *La Vida Breve*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, and *Student Prince*. Mr. Rentería developed his operatic technique when he began to study voice with Gail Dubinbaum in 2003. Since then he has been a soloist in Mozart’s *Coronation Mass*, Handel’s *Messiah*, and Bach’s *Saint John’s Passion*. Mr. Rentería has played several roles with Arizona Opera and Phoenix Opera productions including *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Rigoletto*, *Aida* and *La Traviata*. He also works for Opening Minds Through the Arts (OMA) where he is part of an opera trio that teaches classroom curriculum to first grade students in the Tucson Unified School District using the musical medium of opera.

Mackenzie Romriell, *Mezzo-Soprano* — Mackenzie Romriell is a Doctorate of Musical Arts candidate in vocal performance at the University of Arizona, where she also received her Master of Music degree in Voice. Mackenzie is originally from Pocatello, Idaho where she received her Bachelor of Music in Voice at Idaho State University. She and her husband have four beautiful children.

Mackenzie currently maintains a private voice studio and teaches opera to first graders at Dietz Elementary as a specialist in Arts Integration with the Arizona Opera Company. She volunteers her time as a choir director in her church, and is a chorus member for the Arizona Opera Company.

Recently, Mackenzie performed the role of Sesto in the University of Arizona’s portrayal of Mozart’s *La Clemenza di Tito*. She has been fortunate to perform major roles in other operas including *Suor Angelica*, *The Consul*, *Albert Herring*, *Così fan tutte*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *The Mikado*. During December 2013, Mackenzie is the mezzo-soprano soloist in Tucson’s *Messiah* Sing-In as well as a soloist in all four Arizona Repertory Singers performances of Bach’s *Magnificat in D Major*.

Vanessa Salaz, *Soprano* — Ms. Salaz is very happy to have recently returned to her hometown of Tucson, Arizona after a decade of living and studying in New York and performing opera around the world.

Ms. Salaz was the national first place winner of the prestigious National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) Artist Award, which led to her Carnegie Hall debut in 2001. She has been a multiple prizewinner in the Metropolitan Opera Auditions, including 2nd place in the Western Region. She has also participated in many international competitions and prestigious young artist programs, including Music Academy of the West, Opera Theater of St. Louis, International Institute of Vocal Arts in Chiari, Italy, and the International Vocal Arts Institute in Tel Aviv, Israel - allowing her to receive training from many of the music world’s top artists, including Marilyn Horne.

On the concert stage, Ms. Salaz performed as the soprano soloist in Schubert’s *Mass in G*. Other performances include solos in *Sheherazade*, *The Seasons*, *Christmas Oratorio*, *Elijah*, and *Messiah*. She was also the soprano soloist with the Tucson Symphony Orchestra and Boys Chorus in the Christmas Concert special, “Christmas at the Mission” which was nationally broadcast on PBS.

Recent operatic performances include Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* and Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*. Ms. Salaz holds a Master of Music degree and Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Arizona, where she studied with Professor Charles Roe, and a Professional Studies Certificate from Manhattan School of Music where she studied with Patricia McCaffrey and Warren Jones.

Orchestra

<i>Violin I</i>	<i>Flute</i>	<i>Trumpet</i>
Toru Tagawa	Philip Swanson	Carl Fetkenhour
Laura Tagawa	Jay Vosk	Michael Kiefer
		Betty Scott
<i>Violin II</i>	<i>Oboe</i>	<i>Timpani</i>
Sandra Lanz	Devin Gardner	Tina Walton
Deborah Bouchard	Sherry Jameson	
	<i>(and English Horn)</i>	
<i>Viola</i>		<i>Organ</i>
Christina Swanson	<i>Bassoon</i>	Gregg Reynolds
Tim Secomb	Brenda Buys	
	Cassandra Bendickson	
<i>Cello</i>		
Rebecca Bartelt		
Helena Pedersen		