

THE MUSKEGON CHAMBER CHOIR

Forty Years and Counting

The Muskegon Chamber Choir was formed by its present Music Director as a sixteen-voice ensemble in the fall of 1963. Its first concert was presented in April of 1964.

Its members come from all walks of life. There are teachers, accountants, doctors, nurses, salespeople, and service providers singing side by side. At one time a member of the United States Coast Guard sang next to a heavy equipment operator. All of these singers share one common love, that of singing great choral music together. Membership is by audition only with regular re-auditions.

Two hundred forty seven singers have sung with the choir since its founding. Each has brought to it a tender, patient devotion to the choral art. We are proud to number Richard Versalle, Gwenneth Bean, and Robert Lehner among our past members. Our greatest source of pride, however, can be found in the personnel lists of forty years' worth of programs - those singers who have brought their love of choral music to rehearsals and concerts year in and year out. Some appear on only one program. Others are almost fixtures on the page.

Over the years the choir has performed a number of choral/orchestral works. Among them are the *Mass in b minor* and *Magnificat* of J.S. Bach, *Messiah* and the *Dettingen Te Deum* of Handel, *The Creation* by Haydn, Mozart's *Requiem* and smaller masses, *Elijah* of Mendelssohn, and numerous cantatas of Bach. The biennial *Wreath of Carols* has become a community musical tradition, as has the annual *Love Songs* concert in February.

The press has called the choir "...a valuable community resource," and one critic said, "...hearing it was like being hit with a diamond-studded steam roller."



MESSIAH

Muskegon Chamber Choir and Orchestra

David Wikman, Conductor

Cynthia Eaton Teasing, Soprano

Steven Rickards, Countertenor

William Watson, Tenor

Robert Lehner, Bass

Saturday, December 13, 2003, 8:00 p.m.

Presential Center
for The Performing Arts

Cynthia Bates Twining, a Muskegon native, has been performing on West Michigan stages for over 30 years.

A graduate of Muskegon Community and Hope Colleges, she received her Bachelor's degree in vocal music education with postgraduate work at Western Michigan University.

Perhaps best known for her musical theater work, she has just completed her tenth season with Cherry County Playhouse. Last year she appeared in Muskegon Civic Theater's *Quilters*, was soloist with the West Shore Symphony Orchestra's *Peer Gynt*, and was soprano soloist in Artfam's production of Haydn's *The Creation*. Her very first classical solo role was in *Messiah* in 1975, where she met her husband, Clark.

Cynthia fills her "spare" time teaching privately, judging Michigan School Vocal Music Association festivals, serving on the Mona Shores High School Choir Board, traveling with the Mona Shores choir, and enjoying her children and grandchildren.

Mrs. Twining's appearance is underwritten by Kenneth and Shirley Brown.

Steven Rickards has received international acclaim as one of America's finest countertenors. He is the first countertenor to receive a Master of Music degree in vocal performance from Indiana University. He has studied in England on a Fulbright-Hayes Scholarship.

Mr. Rickards' schedule of performances has included appearances with Chicago's Music of the Baroque and Basically Bach, the Los Angeles Master Chorale, His Majesty's Clerkes, Toronto's Tafelmusik, Chanticleer, London's Gabrieli Consort, and the Symphony Orchestras of St. Louis, Indianapolis, Pittsburgh, and Virginia. In addition to London, he has appeared as soloist in Dresden, Oslo, Frankfurt, Wroclaw, and Copenhagen. He performed the Bach *St. John Passion* in Regensburg, Munich, and Brixen in 1977. He has also appeared with Boston's Handel & Haydn Society singing *Messiah*.

He made his Mostly Mozart Festival debut in Bach's *Mass in B minor*. He has performed *Messiah* in many major American cities as well as at St. Martin-in-the-Field in London. He made his Australian debut in Brisbane with New York's Ensemble for Early Music in *Daniel and the Lions* to sell-out crowds and rave reviews.

Steven Rickards' discography includes: Bach's Cantatas 8, 106, 131, 156, *St. John Passion*, and *Mass in B minor*, Handel's *Siroe* and *Messiah*, and a collection of cantatas for The Buxtehude project.

William Watson holds a Bachelor of Music degree from Carthage College, with additional study at the American Conservatory of Music and the American Institute of Musical Studies in Graz, Austria.

He has performed with Lyric Opera of Chicago, most recently creating the role of President Van Buren in the world premiere of *Amistad* by Anthony Davis. He has performed with Cleveland Opera, Chicago Opera Theater, Palm Beach Opera, Texas Opera Theater, Pennsylvania Opera Theater, and Central City Opera. In Europe, he sang for two seasons at the Aachen Stadttheater in Germany. He has also been heard at the San Sebastian Festival in Spain, the Europera Festival in France, and in Klagenfurt, Austria.

He has been guest soloist with major symphony orchestras throughout the USA and Canada, including those in Chicago, St. Louis, Montreal, Milwaukee, Cincinnati, and Rochester with such conductors as Sir Georg Solti, Leonard Slatkin, Jesus Lopez-Cobos, Hugh Wolf, Lukas Foss, Mark Elder, and Charles Dutoit.

Watson continues to develop his reputation as one of America's finest Bach Evangelists. *St. Matthew* performances include the Alabama Symphony, Buffalo Philharmonic, Winter Park Bach Festival, Albany Pro Musica, The Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony in Ontario and his Netherlands debut with the Noord Nederlands Orkest.

Watson can be heard on the London Records *St. Matthew Passion* with the Chicago Symphony conducted by Sir Georg Solti. He also appears on *Where've You Walk* (English Händel Arias) and on a recent release of Vorisek's *Mass in B flat* with the Czech National Symphony.

Robert Lehner is a native of Muskegon and an *alumnus* of the Chamber Choir. He is very happy to return to Muskegon to perform with his many friends from the choir.

Since moving to Chicago to study with Thomas Wikman, Mr. Lehner has performed with the Lyric Opera Chorus, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Chorus, and Music of the Baroque.

As a soloist, Robert has performed with Music of the Baroque, the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, the West Shore Symphony Orchestra, the University of Chicago Chorale, and in a very special performance of *To Hope*, with the Milwaukee Symphony and Dave Brubeck, the composer.

Recently, in a departure from the classical music field, Rob released a CD entitled *My Old Home*, a recording of songs he wrote and performed. The music is described as Urban Folk Style.

MESSIAH

Sinfonia

Accompagnato - Comfort ye my people
Mr. Watson

Aria - Ev'ry valley shall be exalted
Mr. Watson

Chorus - And the glory of the Lord

Recitative - Thus saith the Lord
Mr. Lehner

Aria - But who may abide the day of His coming?
Mr. Rickards

Chorus - And He shall purify

Recitative - Behold a virgin shall conceive
Mr. Rickards

Aria and Chorus - O Thou that tellest good tidings to Zion
Mr. Rickards

Accompagnato - For behold, darkness shall cover the earth
Mr. Lehner

Aria - The people that walked in darkness
Mr. Lehner

Chorus - For unto us a Child is born

PIFA (Pastoral Symphony)

Recitative - There were shepherds abiding in the field
Mrs. Twining

Recitative - And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them
Mrs. Twining

Recitative - And the angel said unto them
Mrs. Twining and Ginevra Nail

Recitative - And suddenly there was with the angel
Mrs. Twining

Chorus - Glory to God

Aria - Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion
Mrs. Twining

Recitative - Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened
Mr. Rickards

Duet - He shall feed His flock like a shepherd
Mrs. Twining and Mr. Rickards

Chorus - His yoke is easy

INTERMISSION

Chorus - Surely He hath borne our griefs

Chorus - And with His stripes

Aria - He was despised and rejected
Mr. Rickards

Recitative - Thy rebuke hath broken His heart
Mr. Watson

Aria - Behold, and see if there be any sorrow
Mr. Watson

Recitative - He was cut off out of the land of the living
Mr. Watson

Aria - But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell
Mr. Watson

Recitative - Unto which of the angels said He at any time
Mr. Watson

Chorus - Let all the angels of God worship Him

Aria - Thou art gone up on high
Mr. Rickards

Aria - How beautiful are the feet of them
Mrs. Twining

Chorus - Their sound is gone out

Aria - Why do the nations so furiously rage together?
Mr. Lehner

Chorus - Let us break their bonds asunder

Recitative - He that dwelleth in heaven
Mr. Watson

Aria - Thou shalt break them
Mr. Watson

Chorus - Hallelujah

Aria - I know that my Redeemer liveth
Mrs. Twining

Chorus - Since by man came death

Recitative - Behold, I tell you a mystery
Mr. Lehner

Aria - The trumpet shall sound
Mr. Lehner

Recitative - Then shall be brought to pass
Mr. Rickards

Duet - O Death where is thy sting
Mr. Rickards and Mr. Watson

Chorus - But thanks be to God

Chorus - Worthy is the Lamb that was slain

AMEN

THE MUSKEGON CHAMBER CHOIR and ORCHESTRA

David Wikman - Music Director and Conductor

Ann Rogalla Portenga - Accompanist

Shanna Averill	Paula Johnson	Christine Neis
Bonnie Borgeson	Gail Kurdziel	Denise Newell
Ardythe Bulthouse	Betty Kurtz	Diane Nye
Sheila Daniels	Molly Lawton	Penny Russick
Cardace Fox	Jacquelyne Martin	Gail Smith
Diane Goodman	Ruth Ann Matthews	Janet Smith
Doris Helmus	Linda Mysen	Jennifer Smith
Lucille Jager	Ginevra Naill	Diane VanWesep
David Arnouts	Brennen Kartes	Kevin Prince
John Benson	Scott Lachniel	Eric Rettig
Kenneth Brown	Erlund Larson	Daniel Spitters
Michael D'Oyly	Jeffrey Leder	Bradley Taylor
David Epplert	Jerry Lewallen	James Webb
G. Thomas Johnson	Roger Patton	Wesley Wiethoff
Kenneth Johnstson	David Peden	Roy Winegar

Violin

Lori Hedlund
Jennifer Alman
Amy Piersma
Beth Soelberg
Nancy Viraldo
Karen-Jane Henry
Janice Bares-White
Roger White

Viola

Bruce Harwood
Peggy Smith

Harpichord

Ann Rogalla Portenga

Violoncello

Jackson Brooks
Barbara Happel

Contrabass

Sue Stuit

Oboe

Suzanne Burel
Stephanie Zimmer

Bassoon

Cynthia Goudzwaard

Trumpet

Todd Holmberg
Donald Wamaar

Tympani

Marc Palma

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West Shore Symphony Orchestra

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