

The Muskegon Chamber Choir

David Wikman – Music Director and Conductor
Ann Rogalla Portenga - Accompanist

Shanna Averill
Bonnie Borgeson
Shelia Daniels
Candace Fox
Diane Goodman
Doris Helmus
Lucille Jager
Paula Johnson
Gail Kurdziel
Betty Kurtz

Carol Wilhelm

David Arnouts
John Benson
Kenneth Brown
Michael D'Oyly
David Epplett
G. Thomas Johnson
Kenneth Johnston
Brennen Kartes
Scott Lachniet
Erlund Larson

Roy Winegar

Ruth Ann Matthews
Linda Mysen
Ginevra Naill
Christine Neis
Denise Newell
Diane Nye
Penny Russick
Gail Smith
Janet Smith
Jennifer Smith

Jeffrey Leder
Jerry Lewallen
Roger Patton
David Peden
Kevin Prince
Eric Rettig
Daniel Spitters
Bradley Taylor
James Webb
Wesley Wiethoff

THE MUSKEGON CHAMBER CHOIR

David Wikman – Conductor

Ann Rogalla Portenga – Accompanist

presents

LOVESONGS



Saturday, February 7, 2004
Eight O'Clock P.M.
Central United Methodist Church

Program
I

- All People That on Earth Do Dwell arr. Gustav Holst
- Come Down, O Love Divine William H. Harris
- Deh viene, non tardar* W. A. Mozart
From *The Marriage of Figaro*
Paula Johnson
- Ach, Ich fühl's Mozart
from *The Magic Flute*
Jennifer Smith
- Evening Song to God Franz Josef Haydn
- The Prayer Carol Bayer Sager and David Foster
Shanna Averill
Brennen Kartes
- E lucevan le stelle* Giacomo Puccini
from *Tosca*
John Benson
- Greater Love Hath No Man John Ireland
- Festival Te Deum Benjamin Britten, Op. 32
Ginevra Naill – soprano

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Intermission – fifteen minutes

II

- What a Friend We Have in Jesus William Bolcom
from *3 Gospel Preludes for Organ*
Ann Rogalla Portenga
- Down by the Sally Gardens Irish, arr. John Vine
- Two Marionettes Edith Clark
Cynthia Bates Twining
- Ständchen Franz Schubert
Gail Smith – mezzo soprano
Denise Newell – conductor
- Speak to the Child of Love Allen Koepke
Bradley Taylor - conductor
- As Time Goes By Herman Hupfeld
Betty Kurtz
- With You Stephen Schwartz, arr. John Leavitt
from *Pippin*
- I Remember You Schertzing/Mercer
Diane Goodman and Eric Rettig
- Nelly Bly Stephen Foster

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Please complete your ballot for the **Audience Favorites** concert and deposit it in the box provided near the exits. We look forward to seeing you at that concert, Saturday, May 8 at 8:00 P.M. at First Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1206 Whitehall Road.

Audience gives ovation for choir performance

By Floyd Farmer
SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

"Love Songs" was the published theme of the Muskegon Chamber Choir concert Saturday evening, but the program was hardly what one might have expected for a pro-Valentine's Day concert. In fact, it was somewhat of a stretch to imagine how some of the compositions found their way into this program.

The first half was rather heavy on the side of church anthems. If one considers "Come Down, O Love Divine" and "Greater Love Hath No Man" as love songs, then I guess the programming makes some sense. But for this reviewer the entire concert seemed disjointed.

The Muskegon Chamber Choir, under the direction of David Wikman, has a distinctive sound. The choir is robust but frequently sends its sound into the red zone.

When that happens, intonation suffers greatly and the sopranos in particular become strident. That happened too often Saturday evening. Loud and beautiful do not have to be mutually exclusive terms. The choir would do well to sacrifice some of its volume for more musicality.

By way of example, Bradley Taylor conducted the women of the choir in "Speak To The Child Of Love" by Allen Koepke. This certainly wasn't the best composition on the program, but it clearly was the best singing.

The women sang with great intonation, voice placement was excellent, diction was clear, and there were complete musical lines, all because Taylor clearly communicated what he

MUSIC REVIEW

Muskegon
Chamber Choir

wanted and did not let the choristers sing beyond their physical limits.

The men of the choir were conducted by Denise Newell in a performance of "Standchen" by Franz Schubert, with mezzo-soprano Gail Smith as soloist. Although the singing was controlled and the rhythm fairly tight, there wasn't much musical interplay between soloist and choir. One sensed most of the choral effort was being spent on spitting out German text at the expense of musical line.

Interspersed with the choral works were a number of solos and duets by members of the choir. Though it is nice to encourage individual effort, some of the talent-show acts were not quite ready for prime time.

The choral works themselves would have provided a program of sufficient length. It wasn't necessary to add the little cameo appearances, which generally only detracted from the overall presentation by the choir.

Accompanist Ann Portenga played well, both at the piano and organ, for all of the works on the program. She also opened the second half with a gospel prelude titled "What A Friend We Have In Jesus" by William Bolcom. Portenga's creative registrations saved the piece from being interminably long.

Again the question is asked: How does this fit in with a love-song theme? Oh well. It must have been a good performance. Most of the audience gave it a standing ovation.