

## THE MUSKEGON CHAMBER CHOIR

David Wikman - Music Director and Conductor

Ellen Cutting - Accompanist/Musical Assistant

Bonnie Borgeson  
Sheila Daniels  
Ardythe Dezelsky  
Diane Goodman  
Doris Helmus  
Lucille Jager  
Brenda Jeisy  
Gail Kurdziel  
Margaret Lanning  
Jacquelyne Martin  
Ruthanne Matthews

Michael Akhurst  
Kenneth L. Brown  
James Crago  
David Epplett  
Michael Johnson  
Scott Lachniet  
Jerry Lewallen  
Kenneth Michnay

Linda Mysen  
Ginevra Naill  
Christine Neis  
Diane Nye  
Gail Smith  
Janet L. Smith  
Leona Spoelman  
Suzanne VanPelt  
Diane VanWesep  
Carol Wilhelm

David Peden  
Eric Rettig  
William Saunders  
David Stegink  
Bradley Taylor  
Richard Veltman  
James Webb  
Roy Winegar

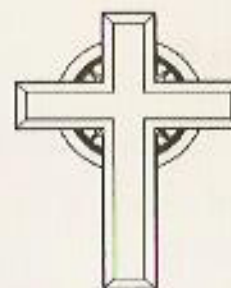
## THE MUSKEGON CHAMBER CHOIR

David Wikman - Conductor

Ellen Cutting - Organist

presents

## AN ENGLISH REFORMATION



Sunday, October 15, 1995  
3 O'Clock P.M.  
St. Paul's Episcopal Church

PROGRAM

I

Give Almes of Thy Goods Christopher Tye

*Libera nos, salva nos* (deliver us, save us) John Sheppard

O Lord, How Do My Woes Increase Orlando Gibbons

Almighty and Everlasting God Orlando Gibbons

Hear My Prayer, O Lord Henry Purcell

Rejoice in the Lord Alway Henry Purcell  
Doris Helmus - alto  
Kenneth Michnay - tenor  
David Epplett - bass

INTERMISSION

fifteen minutes

II

O Clap Your Hands Ralph Vaughn Williams

Come Down, O Love Divine William H. Harris

I Was Glad When They Said Unto Me C. Hubert H. Parry

Come, My Way, My Truth, My Life George Herbert

I Will Sing to The Lord Leddington Wright

God be merciful unto us and Bless us Andrew Carter  
Margaret Lanning - soprano

Festival Te Deum Benjamin Britten  
Ginevra Naill - soprano

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# Skillful Chamber choir brings music to life

By KAY WELLS

Chronicle special writer

St. Paul's Episcopal Church was the ideal setting for the Muskegon Chamber Choir's Sunday afternoon concert, "An English Celebration." The program consisted of English anthems and service music drawn from the sixteenth century to the present. From the first anthem, William Byrd's "Haec Dies," to the final Benjamin Britten "Rejoice In The Lamb," the ensemble displayed almost impeccable musicianship.

The first half of the program was devoted to the anthems and service music of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These a cappella selections with their seamless polyphony and melodies which lie so naturally for the voice, project a restrained reverence which serves to intensify the power of the texts. The very nature of this music belies the tem-

## REVIEW

per of the times in which it was written. The use of Latin and English is one indication of the troubled times of the church when political and religious upheavals had composers first writing for the Catholic church and then for the Protestant church. In spite of this, the music transcended the turbulence of the day and remains vibrant today. The first anthem was followed by "O nata lux" and the well known "If Ye Love Me" by Thomas Tallis. Other selections of this era were the moving "When David Heard" by Thomas Weelkes, "Surgens Jesu" by Peter Philips, "O Lord, Increase My Faith" by Henry Loosemore and finally, a "Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis" by Orlando Gibbons. While Byrd and Tallis wrote more or less equally for the Roman Catholic and Anglican traditions, Gibbons is

often considered the father of Anglican church music. The superb blend of the choirs and the clear delineation of the interweaving vocal lines, enhanced by the appropriately restrained flow of dynamics, brought this exquisite music to life.

The final part of the program featured works by John Goss, Charles Villiers Stanford and William H. Harris. While these were written in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, they still retained the polyphonic flow and essential nature of the English anthem as they employed richer harmonies and more dynamic contrast and dramatic content. The choir adjusted to the demands of these styles with seeming effortlessness.

The final selection on the program was Benjamin Britten's "Rejoice In The Lamb" which stood in total contrast to the preceding

numbers. Beginning with quiet unison melody, it soon develops into a dramatic work centered with solos. Genevra Naill, alto; Gail Smith, soprano; Brad Taylor, tenor; and David Epplett, bass; performed the solos most effectively. The choir re-enters and the work ends with a quiet "alleluia." An essential segment of the successful performance of "Rejoice In The Lamb" is the organ accompaniment which was beautifully executed by Ellen Cutting.

As a most well-deserved accolade, Director David Wikman acknowledged the contributions of Cutting, the choir's accompanist and musician assistant, with his encore selection of "O Come Let Us Sing Unto the Lord" by Anthony Piccolo which features an intricate organ accompaniment. This gesture by Wikman and the choir brought the satisfying afternoon's program to a graceful close.