

THE LINCOLN HOME SCHOOL JUNIOR AND SENIOR STRING
ORCHESTRAS

Christmas Concert

Junior Orchestra directed by Anne Ghormley
Senior Orchestra directed by Martin Gaskell
Violin soloist - Breanna Thornton

3:00 p.m., Sunday December 9, 2007

Faith Bible Church, Lincoln, Nebraska

PROGRAM

National Anthem (combined orchestras)

Junior Orchestra:

Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott
Angels we have heard on high
Amazing Grace (New Britain)
Masters in this Hall

Martin Luther (1483 - 1546)
French trad. arr. Edward S. Barnes (1887-1958) and Anne Ghormley
American traditional. Arranged by Fabrizio Ferrari.
French traditional. Arranged by Anne Ghormley

Senior Orchestra:

Brook Green Suite
Reflections for Strings

Gustav Holst (1874 – 1934)
Aaron Kessler (conducted by the composer)
(Breanna Thornton, violin solo)

Waltz from Serenade in C major for Strings, Op. 48
Concerto in g minor, Op. 8, No. 6 (Concerto a

Pyotr Illyich Tchaikovsky (1840 – 1893)

Quattro in forma di Pastorale, per il Santa Natale)

Giuseppe Torelli (1658 – 1708)

Audience and Senior Orchestra:

“Hallelujah” Chorus from *Messiah*

George Frideric Handel (1685 – 1759)

Please join us for refreshments at the back after the concert!

PROGRAM NOTES

Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott - Canon – Martin Luther (1483 - 1546)

Hymn singing as we now know it began with the reformation of the church in the 1520s. The great reformer Dr. Martin Luther was active in music throughout his life. He sang, played the lute and flute, and composed music. In 1524, three years after he produced the first translation of the New Testament into German, Luther commissioned the first German hymnbook, the *Geystliche Gesangbuchlein*. Martin Luther probably composed his most famous hymn of all, *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott* (“A Mighty Fortress is Our God”) a few years later. It appeared in a hymnbook of Andrew Rauscher in 1531, and apparently was also in two earlier Lutheran hymn books published in 1528 and 1529 (both now lost). Since Luther’s hymns were published soon after they were written, the hymn probably dates back to 1527-1528. The original title was *Der xxxvi. Psalm. Deus noster refugium et virtus*, since the hymn is based on (Psalm 46 – “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in our trouble.”) The great Bible translator Myles Coverdale (c. 1488 –

1568), who printed the first complete English translation of the Bible in 1535, also printed the first English translation of *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott* in 1539. The most widely known modern English words, however, are the 1853 translation by Frederick H. Hedge, "A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing". Contrary to what is sometimes said, the tune is *not* the tune of a German drinking song, but was composed by Martin Luther himself. The Junior Orchestra is playing an adaption by Anne Ghormley of the modern isorhythmic version of the tune. Martin Luther's original version had very strongly syncopated rhythms which can still be found in some Lutheran hymnals.

Angels we have heard on high – French trad. arr. Edward S. Barnes (1887-1958) and Anne Ghormley

The tune sung in the USA to the words "Angels we have heard on high" and in England to the words "Angels from the realms of glory" was arranged from a traditional French carol, *Les anges dans nos campagnes*, by American organist and composer Edward S. Barnes. It is one of Anne's favorite Christmas carols and in her arrangement all of the sections of the Junior Orchestra have interesting rhythms and melodic lines during the chorus, *Gloria in excelsis Deo*.

Amazing Grace (New Britain) – American traditional. Arranged by Fabrizio Ferrari.

I have been a lifelong fan of the great English Christian abolitionist William Wilberforce (1759 – 1833) so I have been delighted by the attention he has received this year through the release of the movie "Amazing Grace". I was born in Hull, the same town in England where Wilberforce had been born, and for which he served as an independent Tory member of parliament. As a small boy I was taken to the little Wilberforce museum in Hull. It was the first museum I ever went to. Even though I was probably only about 6 at the time, I still remember vividly to this day a large black leather slave whip on the wall, because it was the first tangible sign of the horror of man's inhumanity to man that I had seen. After Wilberforce's conversion in 1784, one of the evangelical Christians in England who encouraged him to stay in parliament to fight slavery was John Newton (1725-1807), a former slave ship captain. John Newton published the words to his famous hymn "Amazing Grace! (how sweet the sound) that saved a wretch like me!" which serves as the title song of the Wilberforce movie, in *Olney Hymns* in 1779. In 1835 the words were set to an American Folk tune by William Walker in his shape-note tunebook *Southern Harmony*. Variants of the tune had appeared in earlier American shape-note songbooks over the previous six years. The tune has features in common with Scottish music, and it did originate from an area of the USA with many Scottish settlers, but the tune was unknown in Scotland at the time. Remarkably, "Amazing Grace" remained almost totally unknown in John Newton's homeland until it made the top of the pop charts in 1971. The Junior Orchestra plays a challenging arrangement of by contemporary Italian violinist and composer Fabrizio Ferrari. In it the melody is passed from section to section in the orchestra, the second violins divide into two parts, and the viola plays a few double-stops (two strings simultaneously).

Masters in this Hall – French trad., Arr. Anne Ghormley

The tune sung to "Masters in this Hall" was a late 17th century French contradance tune that made its way over to England. In 1703 Raoul-Augur Feuillet included it in *Recueil de contredanse* as the tune to a proper contradance he had written. In 1710 John Essex published an English translation, *For the Further Improvement of Dancing*, in which he called the dance the 'The Female Saylor'. William Morris set his carol "Masters in this Hall" to the tune in 1860. Gustav Holst, from whom we shall hear more from the Senior Orchestra, made an arrangement of it for the 1928 *Oxford Book of Carols* edited by Percy Dearmer, Ralf Vaughan Williams, and Martin Shaw. The tune is upbeat and vibrant; it is not as well-known as many other Christmas carols, but it is a fun one to play and listen to. All three sections of our Junior Orchestra have the opportunity to play the melody, and Anne has purposefully contoured the harmony parts to offer interesting lines to the players.

Brook Green Suite – Gustav Holst (1874 – 1934)

English composer Gustav Holst is best known by far for his gigantic orchestral suite, *The Planets*, (inspired not by an interest not in astronomy, but by what he called his "vice" of astrology), but for most of his career Gustav Holst taught music at the St Paul's School for Girls in Hammersmith, London, and it was for the girls of St Paul's that Holst composed his two suites for string orchestra. The first was the *St Paul's Suite*, composed in 1913 on the occasion of the completion of the new music wing of the school, and the second, which we are performing today, was the *Brook Green Suite*, composed 20 years later. The *Brook Green Suite* (named after nearby Brook Green, where Holst and his wife got married in 1901) was not written under favorable circumstances. Holst had never been in good health, and in 1923 he suffered a concussion when he fell backwards from a conductor's podium while conducting a student orchestra in Reading. The *Brook Green Suite*, Holst's last completed composition, was written in hospital in 1933. It was first performed at an informal concert at St Paul's school, and this was to be the last concert Holst attended. The suite shows signs of the difficult circumstances under which it was written and since Holst died shortly after the first performance he did not have a chance to edit and revise it. The suite originally had a fourth movement, a *Gavotte*, but Holst decided this was not good enough to keep in the suite. The first of the surviving movements is a *Prelude* based on English bell ringing. Holst was a big fan of the great English Baroque composer Henry Purcell (1659-1695), so it is probably no accident that an almost identical allusion to bell ringing is found in the string prelude to Purcell's famous "Bell Anthem" (*Rejoice in the Lord alway*). Holst's second movement, *Air*, has melodies that sound like English folk tunes, but show complex chromatic counterpoint, which makes the movement harder to play than it seems. The opening tune of the final movement, *Dance*, sounds like an English jig, but was actually an Italian tune Holst heard at a puppet show on holiday in Sicily. The last movement of the earlier *St Paul's Suite* had been an amazing setting of the famous English country dance, the Dargason, which followed the form of the dance perfectly, but the last movement of the *Brook Green Suite*, although called *Dance*, is undanceable because of the irregular and inconsistent phrase lengths.

Reflections for Strings – Aaron Kessler

Musical talent in the homeschool community in Nebraska goes far beyond musical performance. This year I have asked a couple of local homeschool composers I knew of if they could provide some new music for the Senior Orchestra to play, and they both happily obliged. In our last concert we premiered Evan Winter's beautiful *Evening Twilight*, and today we are premiering the evocative

and ethereal *Reflections for Strings* by Aaron Kessler. Aaron began *Reflections* in July of this year. It is for strings and solo violin. When I asked Aaron about the significance of the title and the source of inspiration behind *Reflections* he said “I think the title fits the piece... you might think of *Reflections* as walking or driving home from an unusual day at school, work, or any other event.”

Waltz from Serenade in C major for Strings, Op. 48 – Pyotr Illyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

In 1880 Russian composer Pyotr Illyich Tchaikovsky (Пётр Ильич Чайковский.) felt dissatisfied with the music he had hitherto composed and was determined to stop composing for a while so that he could correct his earlier music. However, he was soon composing new music again. The resulting works included the *1812 Overture* and his *Serenade for Strings in C major*. The first premiere of the *Serenade* was a big success and the audience demanded that the *Waltz*, which we are playing today, be repeated.

Concerto in g minor, Op. 8, No. 6 (Concerto a Quattro in forma di Pastorale, per il Santa Natale) – Giuseppe Torelli (1658-1708)

A year ago the Senior Orchestra played the *Christmas Concerto* in g minor of Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713). This year we continue what has the potential for becoming an annual cycle of Italian Baroque Christmas concerti with another g minor Christmas concerto, that of Giuseppe Torelli. In case you didn't read last year's program notes about Christmas concerti, I will repeat most of them here.

Every age has its own standardized instrumental groupings. Just consider, for example, the typical modern instrumental backup of guitar, piano, drums, and bass guitar for a contemporary “worship team” in an American church. In the 17th and early 18th centuries the standard group was that of the “trio sonata” which consists of two violins playing in close harmony, and a *basso continuo* consisting of one or more instruments chosen from a harpsichord, ‘cello, organ, or some kind of lute. The “continuo” player(s) provided the bass and the harmony. Thousands of pieces of music were written across Europe from about 1600 to 1770 for this standard combination. The same combination was used for church services and in a wide variety of secular settings. The instrumental backup for a contemporary Christian worship team again offers a parallel to this: the same combination of instruments often used in church to accompany a “worship team” would not be out of place accompanying secular songs in a bar or accompanying dancing. The music would just be slightly different depending on the situation (one would not normally expect dance music in church, for example), and so it was in the late 17th century. There were two flavors of trio sonata – the *sonata da chiesa* (“church sonata”) and the *sonata da camera* (“chamber sonata”). The former had abstract music; the later had more dance music. However, back then, as today, the lines between secular and sacred music frequently got blurred.

If you were a well-to-do late 17th century nobleman you probably had the “trio” sonata group on your payroll. These three or four players provided your basic music. For larger performances, more string instruments (probably freelance musicians you hired as needed) were added to your basic core trio sonata group. This produced what became known as the *concerto grosso* – a term that is perhaps best translated as “big band”. The core trio sonata group was called the *concertino* (Italian for “little concert”) and the extra musicians were called the *ripieno*, which means “full”. If you listen to and watch our performance of Giuseppe Torelli's *Christmas Concerto* you can notice the contrast between the small *concertino* trio sonata group of two violins, harpsichord, and ‘cello who play all the time, and the *ripieno* sections when the whole orchestra joins in. (In our case we actually use different players in each movement.)

Giuseppe Torelli was a contemporary of Arcangelo Corelli, and both were influential pioneers of the *concerto grosso*. Just as a trio sonata was sometimes designated as a *sonata da chiesa* or a *sonata da camera* to indicate its intended use, so concerti were divided up into *concerti da chiesa* and *concerti da camera*. Torelli's *Christmas Concerto*, which we are performing today, is a *sonata da chiesa* – a “church concerto”. What made the Corelli concerto which we played last year especially Christmassy was the optional last movement – a *Pastorale*. Torelli is quite explicit about his Christmas concerto. He refers to it as “a concerto in the form of a *Pastorale* for Christmas”. The word “pastorale” refers to shepherds (a “pastor” of a church shepherds the church). Different places have different Christmas traditions, and there was a tradition in Italy, which continued down to my lifetime, of having shepherds come into church on Christmas Eve with their pipes to play a lilting tune in thirds over a bagpipe drone. The second section of Torelli's concerto depicts this with the violins. As well as Corelli and Torelli, the Italian composers Mandredini, and Locatelli have *pastorali* in their Christmas concerti (maybe the orchestra had better do one of the remaining two next December!), and there are similar passages in Handel's *Messiah* and J. S. Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*.

Torelli's concerto begins with a quiet mysterious introduction of sustained string chords. Something is going to happen! Then the violins, depicting the joyful shepherds, gently come in with the lilting *Pastorale* rhythm over an imitation bagpipe drone played by the ‘cellos and double bass. The middle section of the concerto deserves special comment. In the 17th century a lot of attention was paid to the spatial dimension of music. One effective device was to have a one soloist reply to another from a different part of the church. The extended solo passages of the middle movement with punctuating loud tutti chords call out for just such treatment. After this drama the final movement of the concerto is a joyful jig.

Torelli's *Christmas Concerto* is entirely in the minor mode (as are most other Italian Baroque Christmas concerti) and this might not fit in with our modern cozy ideas of Christmas. To understand the mood of much of the concerto (especially the opening movement) we have to remember that Christmas is really about God's redemption of the fallen world from sin through the sending of His Son Jesus who was later to be sacrificed on the cross.

“Hallelujah” Chorus from Messiah – George Frideric Handel (1685 – 1759)

Handel wrote his most famous oratorio, *Messiah*, in the late summer of 1741 when he was 56 years old. The triumphant “Hallelujah” chorus which concludes Part II of the oratorio was finished on Sunday September 6, and the rest of the oratorio was finished the following Saturday! The text of the “Hallelujah” chorus is taken from the book of Revelation. You are invited to stand and sing the chorus with the orchestra.

Hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!

[Revelation 19:6]

*The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ
and He shall reign for ever and ever,*

[Revelation 11:15b]

King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

[Revelation 19:16]

M.G.

JUNIOR ORCHESTRA

First Violins

Ceirra Austin
Allison Ediger
Kalista Trotter
Paxton Wenz

Second Violins

Charles Dowd
Rachel Hollenbeck
Chloe Pinkman
Kristen Unterseher

Viola

Mary Dowd

SENIOR ORCHESTRA

First Violins

Catherine Dowd
Emily Ediger
Daniel Gaskell
Dylan Hoover
Aaron Kessler
Amy Petersen
Breanna Thornton*

Violas

Leah Bernhardson
Taylor Birdwell
Lauren Bydalek
Jane Dowd
Lynnette Hendrickson
Samantha Moser
Max Oehlertz

Contrabass

Lily Ealey

Harpsichord Continuo

Carlene Schrag

Trumpets

Ryan Birdwell
Michael Smith

Second Violins

Helen Dowd
Barbara Gaskell
Laura Gaskell
Angelica Hoover
Sam Pelton
Bethany Thornton

Violoncellos

Natalie Anderson
Hana Bernhardson
Lesley Hoover
Kaitlyn Hurdle

Timpani

Lois Bernhardson

**concert mistress*

Anne Ghormley, our Junior Orchestra conductor, graduated from UNL in 2005 with a degree in music education. She studied voice with Professor Donna Harler-Smith, and viola with Professor Clark Potter. After graduating, she taught vocal music to 6th through 12th grades in Auburn, Nebraska. Anne is currently living in Lincoln and teaching private violin, viola, and piano lessons at Harris Music Studio.

Martin Gaskell, spent 15 years as an astronomer at the University of Nebraska teaching about the glories of God's creation, but he has also long been active as a composer, arranger, and performer of music. This semester he joined the astronomy department of the University of Texas in Austin, but the rest of the Gaskell family is remaining in Lincoln until the end of the school year. This semester Martin has continued to conduct the Senior Orchestra while commuting from Austin to Lincoln. He points out that having a conductor fly in from out of state to conduct is an important status symbol for an orchestra! The main composition he is working on right now is a piano concerto for Texas pianist Charlotte Mueller and the Baytown Symphony Orchestra. He has also been writing a book on composing music.

Aaron Kessler is a homeschooled high school sophomore. The Kessler family live near Beaver Crossing. Aaron is a very active and prolific composer. As well as playing with the first violins of our orchestra, Aaron also plays violin in Lincoln Civic Orchestra.

Breanna Thornton, concertmistress of the Senior Orchestra, and soloist in Aaron Kessler's "Reflections", is a 14-year-old home schooler. She started taking violin lessons in Michigan when she was 4 and is currently being taught in Lincoln by Tammy Osborne Petersen.

In addition to the performers listed above we would like to thank Barbara Gaskell, Lynnette Hendrickson and Breanna Thornton for helping run sectional rehearsals, Timothy Gaskell for being our recording engineer, Jane Dowd and Amy Hoover for serving as orchestra treasurers, Barbara Gaskell for being orchestra secretary, Cathy Hurdle for serving as facilities liason, and the other many parents who help keep things running. We are grateful to UNL music professors David Neely, Clark Potter, and Tyler White for ongoing advice and encouragement, to Robin Gould and Leonardo Lebas for guest conducting, and to the Sacred Arts Council of Lincoln for providing administrative support. Finally, we must express our deep gratitude to Faith Bible Church for kindly allowing us to use their facilities for rehearsals and concerts.

We are always looking for more string players! Spring orchestra rehearsals start on Monday January 14 here at Faith Bible Church. The Senior Orchestra rehearses from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. and the Junior Orchestra from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. Since we are family oriented, we encourage string-playing parents and older siblings who can play the music and attend rehearsals to play too. Families interested in either orchestra should contact Barbara Gaskell (464-9664 or gaskell@inetnebr.com). Orchestra information (including sample music) can be found on the web at: http://incolor.inebraska.com/gaskell/homeschool_senior_string_orchestra.html