

THE DENVER POST

Voice of the Rocky Mountain Empire

Final Edition
35 cents in Designator

October 2, 1993

OVERNIGHT IN DENVER

Gloriae Dei Cantores fills nave with beautiful songs

World premiere of suite at St. John's truly lovely

By Jeff Bradley

Denver Post Critic-at-Large

If you know anyone moving to Cape Cod, advise them to head for the town of Orleans where they will find a remarkable mixed choir, the Gloriae Dei Cantores (Singers to the Glory of God).

Now on a fall tour across the West, the 40-member group sang a two-hour recital at St. John's Cathedral last night and filled the nave with a rich tapestry of Gregorian chant, Russian Orthodox mysticism and Christmas carols.

The highlight was the world premiere of "Cum Novo Cantico (With a New Song)," written by Gerald Near, composer-in-residence at St. John's.

Truly lovely suite

This truly lovely 20-minute suite tells the Christ story by combining Gregorian chant with chromatic, contemporary treatments of old carols such as "Lo how a Rose e'er blooming" and "Lully, Lullay."

In the first antiphonal part, the women sang in Latin, the men answered in English. The "Noel" second section glistened with counterpoint, while the falling refrain "Cum novo cantico" was brightly repeated with great power in the joyful conclusion.

The whole thing was accompa-

REVIEW

nied beautifully by a now ethereal, now angry organ. If word gets out, "Cum Novo Cantico" could begin to rival Britten's "Ceremony of Carols" as quality Christmas music for the 20th century.

Gloriae Dei Cantores, conducted with feeling and precision by Elizabeth Patterson, is an ecumenical group dedicated to spreading the message of peace and harmony throughout the world.

Its repertoire includes Gregorian chant, including the heavenly Introit "Ad Te levavi" performed by seven women last night, and Rachmaninoff's Vespers. The "Nunc dimittis" from that work was sung beautifully by the choir with tenor soloist Peter Logan.

A rare ability

At times during the concert, intonation strayed from perfection and I would have liked to hear more consonants — especially in the Rachmaninoff.

But the choir has a rare ability to sing both robustly and in a smooth English choir style, and Patterson blends the voices quite beautifully. The program included Near's "Resurrexi" and his colorful fanfare "Banners," neatly performed by members of the Gloriae Dei Brass Ensemble.

Adept Cape Cod Chorus Sings at St. James

Gloriae Dei Cantores, 37-strong and conducted by Elizabeth Patterson, visited Los Angeles on Wednesday night as part of a "North American Gateway Concert Tour."

Performing in St. James Episcopal Church in the mid-Wilshire area, the professional a cappella chorus from Cape Cod sang a program of Gregorian chant and works by Palestrina, Josef Rheinberger, Rachmaninoff and Gerald Near with seamless ensemble, seductive phrasing and surprising dynamic range.

Although they sounded hard and nasal in three Palestrina motets and four Gregorian chants, the singers soon adjusted to the church's acoustics; by the Rheinberger Mass, Opus 109, that followed, they were producing a sound of great physical beauty limited only by slight difficulties in their highest and lowest registers.

And if their certain sameness of sound was appropriate for most of the program—particularly Gerald Near's pleasant if anonymous 12-minute "Resurrexi," composed in 1989 on a commission from the chorus, those familiar with Russian performances of Rachmaninoff's dark and brooding "Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom" and his Vespers, Opus 37, might find Gloriae Dei Cantores' performance of excerpts from the two works well-meaning but lacking in weight and an authentically Slavic sound.

To cleanse the palate, like cheese at a wine-tasting, a brass ensemble from the chorus, positioned at opposite ends of the church, made a remarkable and wonderful noise with music by Giovanni Gabrieli before the Rheinberger and after the Rachmaninoff. —LAURENCE VITTES

ENTERTAINMENT

Orleans choir performs in film 'Lorenzo's Oil'

ORLEANS — The religious choir of the Orleans-based Community of Jesus has performed its music all over the world, but until the release of a new Hollywood movie, the group had never made it on the big screen.

All that has changed, thanks to the Australian production of "Lorenzo's Oil," starring Nick Nolte and Susan Sarandon, whose performance in the film has netted her an Oscar nomination for Best Actress.

In several scenes, the Gloriam Dei Cantores choir is featured on the sound track, singing two of three choruses from Russian composer Georgy Sviridov's work, "Tsar Feodor Ioannovich." The pieces are entitled "Rejoice O Vir-

gin" and "Sacred Love."

The selections are part of a studio compact-disc recording entitled "Holy Radiant Light: The Sacred Song of Russia," made by the choir.

In the movie, based on a true story, Augusto and Michaela Odone struggle to find for a cure for their son's rare disease, despite warnings from the medical community that their efforts will be in vain.

"The director intends to use the beauty of the music to enhance the poignancy of these scenes, but also to hint at the guidance of God in the Odones' search for a cure," the film's music coordinator, Christine Woodruff, wrote in a letter requesting permission to use portions of the recording.

The music begins during a scene when the son, Lorenzo, has been injured in a fall, and his parents discuss with doctors his worsening physical problems and the need for extensive tests. The music also plays during a scene in a Pittsburgh church where the parents are praying.

Page 2 The Cape Codder Friday, March 5, 1993

SAID AND DONE

In the recently released movie "Lorenzo's Oil," part of the soundtrack is taken from the Gloriam Dei Cantores compact disc "Holy Radiant Light: The Sacred Song of Russia."

The music by the Community of Jesus' choir, renowned for its Gregorian chanting and world traveling, was chosen for its "beauty...to enhance the poignancy of these scenes...(and)...to hint at the guidance of God in the Odones' search for a cure" for their son Lorenzo's disease, according to Christine Woodruff, the film's music coordinator.

CCB