

# The Washington Post

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## PERFORMING ARTS

### Gloriae Dei Cantores

The program notes for the "Music of the Americas" concert Friday at the Library of Congress described the works as a sampling of 500 years of music "rich in diversity and influence." The musical heritage of the Americas is, indeed, rich and diverse, but the program offered by Gloriae Dei Cantores at this concert was anything but.

Most of the music was by American composers who did their best work in the middle part of the last century, and even the compositions from the wonderful shape-note hymnals were offered in latter-day arrangements that polished off their sharp corners and "corrected" their original, sometimes awkward, harmonic progressions.

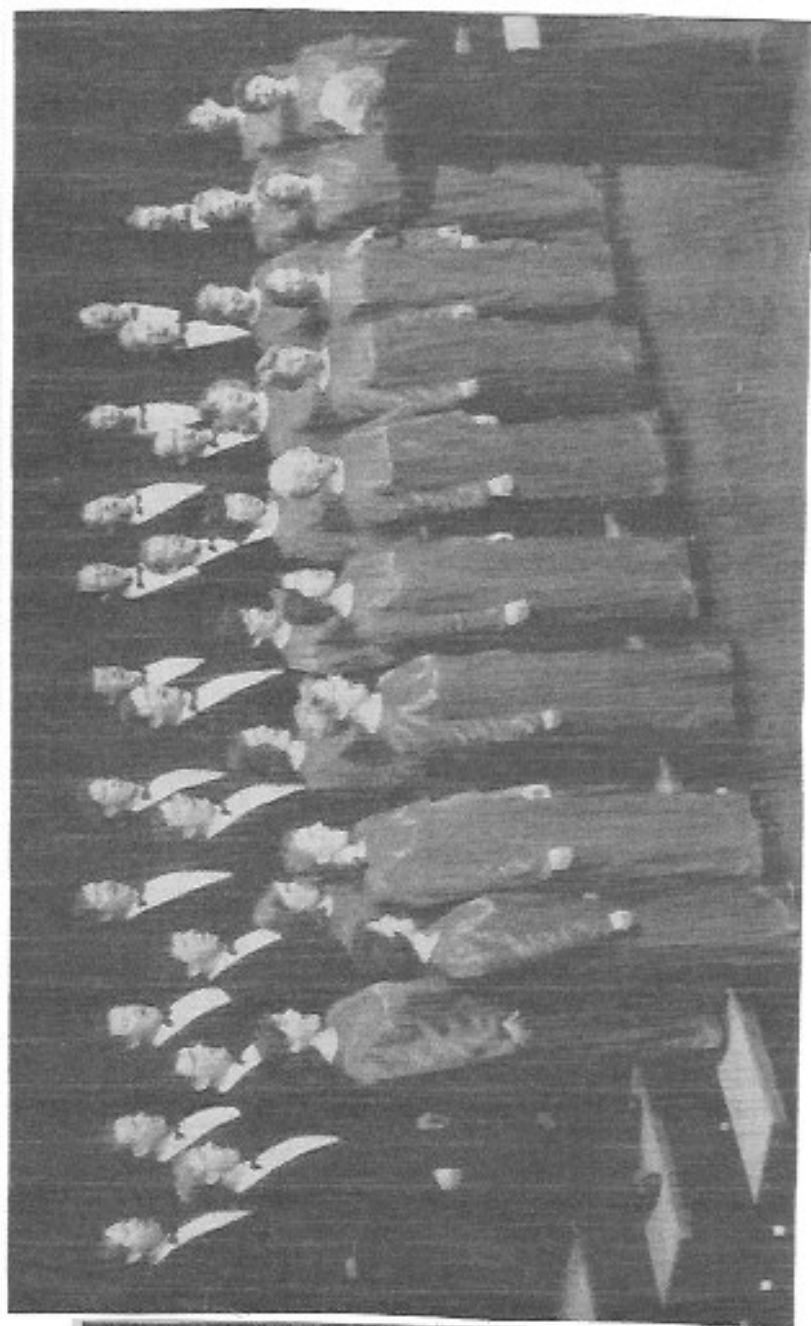
There were pieces by Horatio Parker, Leo Sowerby, Daniel Pinkham and Dominick Argento, Psalm settings by Robert Starer, Samuel Adler, Ned Rorem and Jean Berger and arrangements by Randall Thompson and Alice Parker, all of which sounded sweet and uplifting. And there were two truly powerful works, Charles Ives's knotty "Psalm 100" and Alberto Ginastera's fine setting of three verses of the "Lamentations of Jeremiah."

The concert opened with a pair of Gregorian chants—included because Columbus had his sailors observe religious services on the trip over—but they, and the "Miserere" by Francisco Sainza (a European-trained Mexican cleric of the 18th century) sounded like part of a different program.

The Gloriae Dei Cantores, a choir from Massachusetts, sang all this beautifully. Given Elizabeth C. Patterson's subtle conducting, they sounded lovely through a wide dynamic range, were always well balanced (for this performance, Patterson wisely had more men than women in the group) and sang with evident conviction. Only the Ginastera, which could have been handled more roughly, was not quite convincing.

It would be good to hear what this group could do with a program that really was diverse.

—Joan Reintaler



Elizabeth C. Patterson conducted Gloriae Dei Cantores, right, Friday at the Library of Congress.