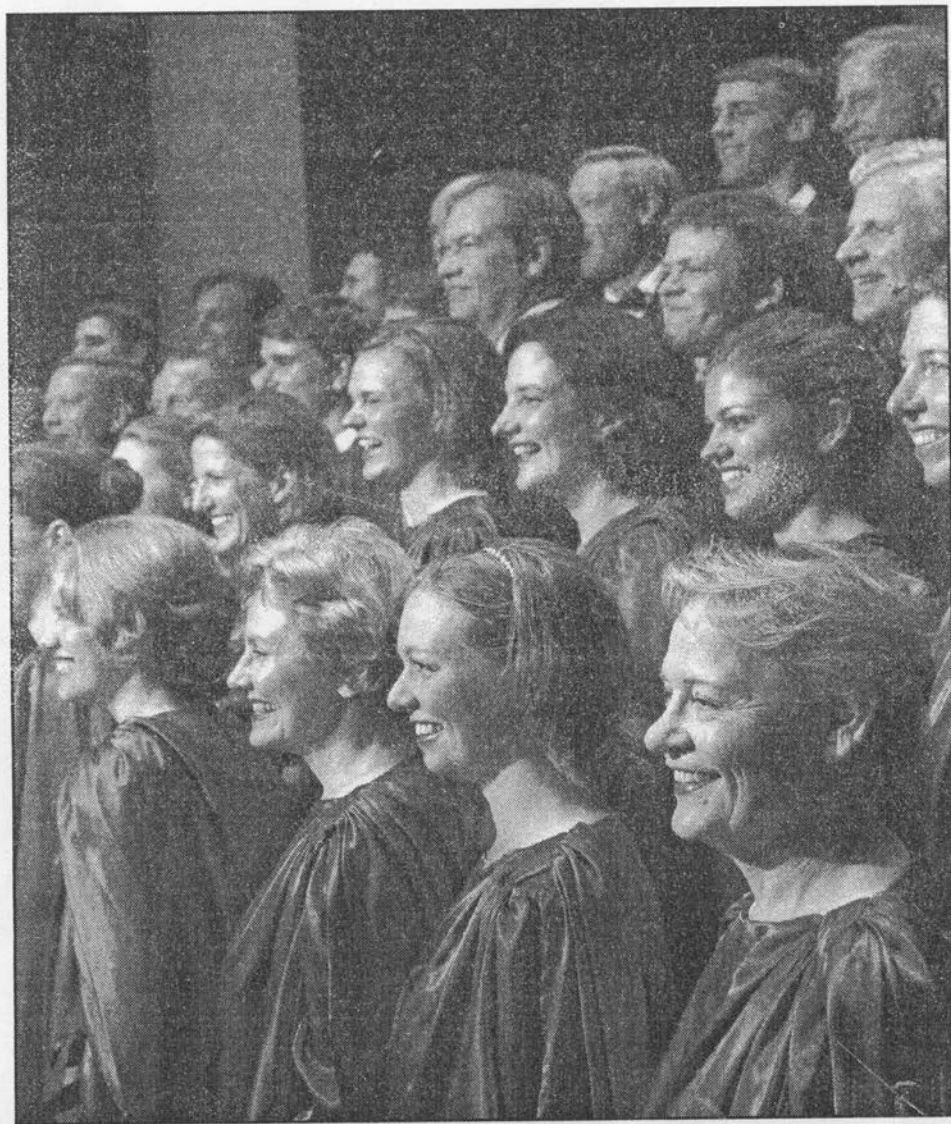


Experience ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

The Gloriam Dei Cantores choir and the Vox Caeli Sinfonia, all under the direction of conductor Richard K. Pugsley, delivered an inspiring performance at the Church of the Transfiguration in Orleans last weekend.



Happy 250th, Wolfgang!

Mozart concert hits high note in Orleans

Performers meet the Mozart challenge

By W. HENRY DUCKHAM
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

ORLEANS - With so many concerts celebrating Mozart's 250th birthday this year, a music director considering a program of the composer's music has the daunting task of producing a program both distinctive and reflective of the composer's extraordinary gifts.

Concert REVIEW

The directors of the Glorïae Dei Cantores (Singers to The Glory of God) and the companion orchestra Vox Caeli Sinfonia (Voice of Heaven Symphony) have met the challenge beautifully this week in performances which pair two Mozart choral works - a litany representing his early maturity with his very last work, the beloved Requiem.

Thursday evening's concert was held at The Church of the Transfiguration, a building of impressive expanse and generously encompassing acoustics. The forces of chorus, soloists and orchestra were brought together under the direction of Richard K. Pugsley in the opening work Litaniae de Venerabili Altaris Sacramento K. 243, written in Salzburg when the composer was 20. Litanies were composed for ceremonial and processional use in the Catholic Church and were written in a call and response

In Concert

- **What:** Glorïae Dei Cantores
- **When:** 8 tonight and tomorrow (lecture at 7 p.m.)
- **Where:** Church of the Transfiguration, Rock Harbor, Orleans
- **Tickets:** \$35 (\$30 for seniors and free for youths 18 and under)
- **Reservations:** 508-240-2400 or www.gdcchoir.org

form.

The litany, longer than many of Mozart's church works, and a work too seldom performed, includes virtuoso vocal writing, and imaginative, bold string and wind scoring. The soloists were a solid presence and soprano Christine Helfrich and tenor Nathaniel Reese ably negotiated the demanding, fast running lines with agility and ease.

From any standpoint the chorus is an exceptional ensemble. Scrupulous attention to diction, dynamics, balance, intonation and, most of all, the

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message of the music was conspicuous throughout the evening. The group's performance made clear why, under the direction of director Elizabeth Patterson and assistant conductor David Chalmers, the ensemble is world-renowned, singing in 18 languages and performing throughout this country and overseas with more than 30 recordings to its credit.

At the end of "Amadeus," the movie, we see Mozart on his deathbed dictating feverishly to his friend and pupil Susmayr the score of the Requiem. Mozart never finished it and the details of its completion by Susmayr has been the source of controversy for years. In the 1960s, Mozart scholar Richard Maunder completed a new edition, which was the text for Thursday night's performance, but also included two movements of Susmayr's

rejected in the new edition, providing a fuller presentation of the score than usual.

Although the exceptionally live acoustics often made it difficult to hear in detail the playing of the ensemble, the orchestra provided sympathetic support with some notable playing by the first trombone in the "Tuba Mirum" and fulsome support from the woodwinds.

Soprano Kathy Schuman, alto Helen Spatzeck-Olsen, tenor Richard Cragg and bass Paul Norman were the assured and impressive soloists, and in concert with chorus and orchestra created a rare performance of the Requiem, both inspired and deep.

Boston Pops hit all the right holiday notes

By ELAINE SCHMIDT

Special to the Journal Sentinel

There's a reason the Boston Pops has become an institution in American music: They are really good at what they do.

The Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra and conductor Keith Lockhart played the Milwaukee Theatre on Wednesday evening, proving that being institutions don't have to be hide-bound.

Joined by soprano Indra Thomas and the Massachusetts-based Gloriam Dei Cantores, Lockhart and the orchestra presented a fast-paced, well-programmed evening of holiday music that touched on Christian and Jewish traditions as well as some fun secular music of the season.

The evening's program opened with a spirited, tight performance of the Prologue from Vaughan Williams' "Hodie." The Prelude to Humperdinck's "Hansel and Gretel" followed in a reading so full of character, it was a little like listening to CliffsNotes of the opera.

Among the highlights of the evening were Thomas' exquisite take on "Rejoice greatly" from Handel's "Messiah." Truly a versatile singer, she gave an easy, soulful rendition of the spiritual "Sweet Little Jesus Child" and then sailed effortlessly through the fast coloratura passages of the Handel.

She also gave a soaring delivery of "O Holy Night" and a delicate, tender

handling of "I Wonder as I Wander."

Lockhart, the orchestra and chorus maintained a brisk tempo throughout Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus," handling the familiar piece with tremendous precision and passion.

Thomas gave a reading from the Gospel according to St. Luke, and Lockhart read "Thoughts on Chanukah, from Rabbi Avi Weiss."

A couple of medleys, a few instrumental selections, an audience sing-along and a few groaner jokes between Lockhart and a Santa in full regalia were all part of the evening.

Part of the recipe for this orchestra's continued success is fine, expressive playing and tasteful, balanced programming. But the pacing of the program is also part of the magic. Lockhart says little between selections, bringing the orchestra in on the next number before applause for the previous tune dies down. It translates to energy and momentum and keeps the audience in the palm of his hand.

A not-so-great sound system

There was a flaw to the evening's presentation, but it was out of the performers' hands. With microphones dotting the stage, the audience heard the gorgeous music through a sound system that didn't do it justice.

Lockhart, the orchestra, chorus and soloist answered enthusiastic applause with two encores. The last, "Let There Be Peace on Earth," brought the audience to its feet.

Music

Concert Review: Gloria Dei Cantores crisp, blessedly precise

Jennifer Roof Laster
Special to the Express-News

The battle of church and state may rage forever, but — thankfully for the respectably full sanctuary at Alamo Heights United Methodist Church Tuesday night— the marriage of church and music is as solid as ever.

Working with sacred pieces that spanned thousands of years, Gloria Dei Cantores, a 50-voice choral group that tours internationally and sings in 18 languages, offered seamless phrasing, nuanced interpretation, and — more often than not — the illusion of one perfectly blended voice.

The chorale, under the direction of Elizabeth Patterson, opened slowly but steadily, coming into their promise fully in the night's third-piece, cellist and composer Pablo Casals' "O vos omnes," a stirring and graceful cry that haunted.

Highlights of the first half of the program were two very different works set back to back: Carlos Chavez' "Tree of Sorrow," delivered with soaring vocals and perfectly graduated crescendos, and Ernani Aguiar's "Salmo 150," where the chorus let its collective hair down and

grooved. "Praise him with the psaltery and harp," they sang in Latin — and they meant it. An obvious crowd-pleaser, the work let the chorus show off its patent enjoyment of split-second phrasing and rapid-fire lines.

No sacred music concert would be complete without a work from Mozart, and the Gloria Dei Cantores did not disappoint, offering a spirited, dancing rendition of his "Venite Populi, K. 260" in the first half.

After intermission, the women's ensemble opened a strong second half with a sublime rendition of "Deus, qui fecit," a Gregorian chant. Three modern works followed, smoothly programmed and affectingly performed to make the most of the group's big, unified sound. "Gabriel V," a select group of instrumentalists, turned in a strong version of David Ashley White's "Triptych," before the evening's closing work: Jean Langlais' "Messe solennelle." This French composition from the middle of the 20th century was an excellent closer, offering the audience a powerful, densely layered paean that was both moving and impressive.

The venue was well utilized, and the church's organ was rich and resonant.

It was evident the chorus enjoyed its work, and that translated into an enjoyable show. And even on works in which the emotion was not as fully expressed as it might have been, the chorale was blessedly precise in the purity of its crystal-like tone and crisp pronunciations.

San Antonio Express-News publish date Sept. 15, 2006

TELEGRAM & GAZETTE

Pops dazzles DCU crowd

By Nancy Sheehan
TELEGRAM & GAZETTE STAFF

About 6,000 enjoy holiday show

It's beginning to sound a lot like Christmas — at least it did yesterday afternoon at the Boston Pops holiday concert.

With selections ranging from master chorale works to light-hearted carols, the spirited show sent the crowd of about 6,000 people home happy and humming.

The concert was held at the DCU Center, a venue which turns 25 this year. The Pops has performed there each holiday season since the arena opened. Over the past 12 years, the Pops performances have been under the direction of the ever-youthful, handsome and charismatic Keith Lockhart.

If a dozen years of waving a baton to tunes like "Winter Wonderland" and "Jingle Bells" has dimmed Lockhart's Christmas spirit, it isn't the least bit evident. He is as energetic and engaging as ever, bantering with the audience, bounding about the stage, even leaving it periodically to mingle with the adoring crowd. Yesterday, he singled out a little blond girl about 4 years old, got down on one knee and crooned a few carol lyrics to her. At first, the girl was a little shy with the microphone-wielding maestro, but soon she was applauding wildly, as was

everyone else in the audience.

The Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra shared the stage with internationally acclaimed soprano Indra Thomas and a full choir, *Gloriae Dei Cantores*, directed by Elizabeth C. Patterson.

The show was divided into a more serious first half, with pieces such as the rousing "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's "Messiah" on the program, and a lighter second half with family-friendly favorites such as "Sleigh Ride," "Santa Baby" and "Santa Claus is Coming to Town." Then, as if on cue, the red-suited man with the bag did come to town. A waving, white-bearded Santa worked his way through the crowd, then onto the stage to have a little chin wag with Lockhart.

Santa had a few jokes that really "sleighed" the crowd. He told Lockhart he had just finished making a movie, "Snakes on a Sleigh." If you missed the cast party, he said, you can catch the home video *Mrs. Santa* shot online, on "Yule Tube." Meanwhile, he keeps all the elves preparing presents by piping music into the workshop. "Dare I ask what kind of music?" Lockhart said. "Wrap music," Santa answered.

All was not just happy high-ho, however, in a season

If music is food for the soul, no one went away hungry.

when the needy need to be remembered. At the start of the concert, Lockhart lauded Digital Federal Credit Union, after which the DCU is named, for demonstrating holiday spirit by providing a block of tickets for the show to the Worcester County Food Bank.

If music is food for the soul, no one went away hungry yesterday. With the audience still buzzing at intermission about *Gloriae Dei Cantores'* resplendent first half, the second half got off to a galloping start with "Sleigh Ride," a tune written for the Boston Pops 60 years ago, by Leroy Anderson.

Thomas, renowned in opera circles for her interpretation of *Aida*, showed her soulful side in the second half. Her rendition of the Gospel classic "Children, Go Where I Tell Thee," to the stirring accompaniment of *Gloriae Dei Cantores*, shook the house — quite literally. The metal risers, upon which several rows of seats rested, reverberated with the tapping of many toes.

ENTERTAINMENT



T & G Staff/BETTY JENEWIN

Joining hands, members of Gloriam Dei Cantores (Singers to the Glory of God) choir move to the rhythm of a Hanukkah song with the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra yesterday at the DCU Center, Worcester. The choir tours internationally and sings regularly at the Church of the Transfiguration in Orleans.