

UNIVERSITY of VIRGINIA

MCINTIRE DEPARTMENT of

music

presents

A Distinguished Major Recital

Miles Jackson

Conducting

Saturday, April 29, 2023

8:00 pm

Old Cabell Hall

University of Virginia

*This recital is supported by the
Charles S. Roberts Scholarship Fund.*

Established in 2004 by the generosity of Mr. Alan Y. Roberts ('64)
and Mrs. Sally G. Roberts, the Charles S. Roberts Scholarship Fund
underwrites the private lessons and recital costs for undergraduate music
majors giving a recital in their fourth year as part of a
Distinguished Major Program in music.

Recital Program

Miles Jackson, *conducting*

Kyrie

(Unabridged)

Hildegard von Bingen (1100s)

Medieval German Latin

Greta Marle, *soloist*

From *Mass No. 2 in G major* (D 167)

Franz Schubert (1815)

Ecclesiastical Latin

Kathryn Geoffroy, *soloist*

From *Messe en l'honneur du Saint-Sacrement* (Op.130) Joseph Jongen (1945)

Ecclesiastical Latin

Ave Verum Corpus

William Byrd (1605)

Renaissance English Latin

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1791)

Standard German Latin

Franz Liszt (1871)

Standard German Latin

Francis Poulenc (1952)

Standard French Latin

Lyric for Strings

George Walker (1946)

O Magnum Mysterium

Tomás Luis de Victoria (1572)

Renaissance Spanish Latin

Morten Lauridsen (1994)

Ecclesiastical Latin

Javier Busto (1998)

Ecclesiastical Latin

About the Performers



Though music has always been a part of his life, **Miles Jackson** officially began his musical career as a trombone player in fourth grade, which he played consistently until his graduation. Having to choose either choir or band for the majority of grade school, he joined his first choir as a high school sophomore. Miles quickly fell in love with singing, and performed in his district and state choirs frequently throughout high school. Since coming to the University of Virginia, Miles has served as a tenor section leader for the University Singers and the First Presbyterian Church, and has been a student manager for Chamber Singers for the past two years.

Miles started vocal directing in his second year for the First Year Players, a student-led musical theater organization on Grounds, and has since vocal directed for two other FYP productions. Miles' formal conducting training began last year in a two-semester choral conducting course with Director of Choral Music Michael Slon, and continued in a single-semester seminar with Professor Ben Rous, Director of the Charlottesville Symphony. Miles is double majoring in Music and Cognitive Science with a concentration in Linguistics, and is minoring in French.



Jeremy Thompson was born in Dipper Harbour, a small fishing village in New Brunswick, Canada. He furthered his organ studies while he was in Montreal, studying piano with Marina Mdivani, who was herself a student of Emil Gilels. He began his organ studies while he was in Montreal, among the many incredible instruments of that city. He was fortunate to have the opportunity to continue his studies with Dr. John Grew.

In 2005, he earned a Doctorate of Music in performance from McGill,

where he held two of Canada's most prestigious doctoral fellowships. He has appeared frequently with orchestras, including the Saint Petersburg State Academic Orchestra, the Saratov Philharmonic Orchestra, the Georgian National Orchestra, the Charlottesville Symphony, the North Carolina Symphony, and the McGill Symphony Orchestra. He has performed extensively throughout North America in both solo and chamber music settings, and has also completed three tours to the former Soviet Union.

Thompson enjoys performing music from all eras, yet specializes in highly virtuosic repertoire. He has focused recently on several recording projects, including a 2 CD set of the organ music of Karl Höller on the Raven CD label. He recently released a recording of the piano music of Vasily Kalafati on the Toccata Classics label. Previous recordings include an album of the piano music of Scriabin on the MSRCD label, and a recording of contemporary piano music from Quebec on the McGill label.

Ensembles

Miles Jackson, Director
Jeremy Thompson, Accompanist

Choir

Soprano

Kathryn Geoffroy
Amanda Hellwig
Reese Lepre
Greta Marle
Andrea Tache Lopez

Tenor

Zubin Kaul
Jack Kehoe
Patrick Kilgannon
Lewis Kothmann
Noah McIntire
Brendan Shea

Alto

Audrey Blanchard
Sophia Briscoombe
Meggie Ferguson
Cate Mangione
Maddy Martin
Mags Worden

Bass

Andrew Alexis
Anthony Asuncion
Kevin Duan
Andy Heil
Louis Wilson

Orchestra

Violin

Claire Lagarde
Kailash Patel
Melody Su
Gaby Vargas

Cello

Ashley Kim
Maggie Weber

Viola

Jesper Braley
Ryan Lee

Bass

Andrea Tache Lopez

Texts & Translations

Kyrie

(excerpted from the Mass ordinary)

Kyrie eleison.

Lord have mercy.

Christe eleison.

Christ have mercy.

Kyrie eleison.

Lord have mercy.

Ave Verum Corpus

Ave verum Corpus Christi, natum de Maria Virgine:

Vere passum, immolatum in cruce pro homine:

Cujus latus perforatum, unda fluxit [et] sanguine:

Esto nobis prægustatum in mortis examine.

O Jesu dulcis, O Jesu pie,

O Jesu Fili Mariae, miserere mei. Amen.

Hail true Body, born of the Virgin Mary,

Who has truly suffered, was sacrificed on the cross for humankind,

Whose side was pierced, whence flowed water with blood:

Be for us a foretaste (of the heavenly banquet) during our final examining.

O sweet Jesus, O holy Jesus,

O Jesus Son of Mary, have mercy on me. Amen.

O Magnum Mysterium

O magnum mysterium,

et admirabile sacramentum,

ut animalia viderent Dominum natum,

iacentem in praesepio!

O great mystery,

and wondrous sacrament,

that animals should see the Lord born,

lying in (their) manger!

O beata virgo,

cuius viscera meruerunt portare

Dominum Iesum Christum.

Alleluia!

O blessed is the Virgin

whose womb was worthy to bear the

Lord Jesus Christ.

Alleluia!

Program Notes

A Note on Latin Diction

You may notice throughout this concert some unconventional and inconsistent pronunciations of the texts. This, of course, is very intentional and takes into careful consideration both the time and place in which a given piece was composed. For example, during the musical Renaissance, the custom was to pronounce Latin texts more or less as if they were in one's mother tongue. Historically accurate Latin diction for choral repertoire is akin to performing with gut strings and period instruments for early music instrumentalists and helps to approximate both what the composer originally had in mind for a piece and what they likely heard at its premiere. As a linguistics enthusiast, I would be remiss if I neglected these details, and it was with great scrutiny that I conducted my research to ensure we would be as accurate as practical for each choral piece on the program. (See the Recital Program page for piece-specific dialect information.)

Hildegard von Bingen (“of” Bingen) was a German Benedictine abbess and a respectable polymath: a prolific poet, author, and composer, a philosopher, an herbalist, and a pioneer in the study of natural history. Her music is categorized as plainsong, or monophonic chant, which employs a sacred Latin text. She was an innovative composer. In the 12th century, chants were typically written for monks to sing, but Hildegard composed exclusively for the nuns of her monastery. Though her music was usually set to her own poetry, her *Kyrie* comes from the first text of the Mass ordinary. The melodic complexity was quite exceptional at the time; phrases in it often span over an octave, at most spanning an octave and a fifth. Hildegard seemed to have a particular fondness for this tune as well, as it was more or less repurposed from an earlier chant of hers, “O lucidissima.”

Unlike Hildegard's unusual *Kyrie*, which was written as a stand-alone work, **Franz Schubert's** is excerpted for this concert from his well-known *Mass No. 2 in G major*. Schubert was barely 18 at the time of the *Mass's* completion, and he finished it in just 6 days. Within the past thirty years, another manuscript in Schubert's hand was rediscovered, providing, among other things, the figured bass for the organ accompaniment. For this performance, we will

be using sheet music that considers multiple original autographed sources, including the rediscovered manuscript. Notice, with an accompaniment in this setting, the vocal phrases can more naturally become shorter with instrumental interjections between them.

Joseph Jongen is moderately known for his organ repertoire, but unfortunately, most other works of his remain in total obscurity. In contrast to Schubert's rendition, the interjections are as long as the choir sections, if not longer, and strikingly, the organ often stops playing during the choral moments. As an organ player himself, perhaps Jongen preferred that the organ function less like an accompaniment to the voices and more like a voice on its own, with contributions equally as valuable as those of the choir. Though Jongen infrequently wrote for voices, his compositional expertise did lie in harmony, counterpoint, and fugue, which explains his ability to flaunt melodious voice leading in each part despite the cascade of key centers. For his final examinations at the Conservatory Royal De Liège, Jongen was tasked with briefly improvising on a given theme. Instead, as his brother Léon recalled, "My brother chose...the three themes in question, and for more than half an hour an astonished jury,...enthralled, let him continue..."

The majority of **William Byrd's** "Ave Verum Corpus," despite the popularity of polyphonic writing at the turn of the 17th century, is homophonic, where one voice part retains the melody while the rest of the choir provides harmonic context, singing the text at (roughly) the same time. There is one key moment when this texture is supplanted. About midway through the text is the phrase "Esto *nobis* praegustatum..." ("Be for *us* a foretaste..."), but at the end of the prayer is a much more personal request: "miserere *mei*" ("have mercy on *me*"). It is at this latter point in the piece where each voice part becomes isolated from the group, and this, to me, is Byrd drawing our ear toward this difference: between the unspecified *us*, presumably involving all of humankind, and *me*, wholly singular, direct, and intimate.

Potentially the best-known work of the concert, **W.A. Mozart's** "Ave Verum Corpus" stands out from the rest of his oeuvre for its unassuming simplicity. In fact, the only direction he gave in his manuscript, other than which notes to sing/play when, was a *sotto voce* ("in an undertone") marking at the beginning of the piece; not anywhere does he even explicitly express a dynamic. This subtlety is distinct in comparison to his earlier, often playful

and capricious, works. Even with the modest ranges of each of the voices (most do not extend beyond an octave), Mozart is able to accomplish quite a bit harmonically and melodically in this fleeting motet.

I first discovered **Franz Liszt's** setting in high school, when I heard a poignant recording of it by the Stuttgart Südfunk-Chor conducted by Rupert Huber on YouTube. Until today, about seven years later, I had yet to hear it performed live. Liszt is almost exclusively celebrated for his contributions to piano repertoire. While it is likely that this “Ave Verum Corpus” will be an introduction for many to his choral works, he wrote nearly a hundred sacred and secular pieces for choir. Analogous to Mozart’s unique voice found in his own rendition of the text, Liszt somehow finds a measured disquietude in this work drastically unlike his notoriously virtuosic works for piano.

Francis Poulenc was a devout Catholic and had a particular interest in reviving old sacred music forms, such as the motet in the case of his “Ave Verum Corpus,” while unabashedly refreshing them with his unique harmonic palette. The beginning and recurring melody in “Ave Verum Corpus” is chant-like, and many of the sections end with open fifths, which are reminiscent of the Renaissance; even so, the harmonic developments swiftly give away its age (and potentially even give away the composer to an attuned ear). Note that, in spite of each individual phrase’s remarkable brevity, he manages to harmonically or melodically connect them to keep the piece cohesive.

The late **George Walker** wrote his first string quartet shortly after becoming the first African American graduate of the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music. The second movement of the quartet was later reimaged as a free-standing piece for string orchestra. This instrumental work may seem like a dubious fit within the textual theme of the concert until considering its title, *Lyric for Strings*. The link between the lyre—from which the word “lyric” arises—and expressive language is practically as old as the instrument itself. The lyre was typically an accompanying instrument for lyric poetry in Ancient Greece. This link is still quite present today: a “lyric” when used as a noun, typically refers to a lyric poem, indicating the words are musically evocative or may more aptly be sung than read. Thus, with or without words, a piece of music cannot be referred to as a “Lyric” without implications of language and the voice.

In my first year of choir in my sophomore year of high school, my choir director asked each of us to find a piece of choral music from a particular musical period. Then for each period, the choir voted on which piece they liked the best. I was assigned the Renaissance, and after listening to many pieces, I decided to pick **Tomás Luis de Victoria's** "O Magnum Mysterium." I enjoyed most how adeptly Victoria aligns all the voices to emphasize certain moments in the text. The choir ended up voting for it, and we performed it for our concert. My long-standing fondness for this piece, as well as for Liszt's "Ave Verum Corpus," helped plant the seed for this concert.

A recent, but beloved addition to the choral canon, **Morten Lauridsen's** "O Magnum Mysterium" is now likely among the best-known settings of this text. Lauridsen's music is often wonderfully lush and serene, but in my opinion, his characteristic sound is most vivid in his "O Magnum Mysterium." Lauridsen himself, though, describes his work best: "[The text's] affirmation of God's grace to the meek and the adoration of the Blessed Virgin are celebrated in my setting through a quiet song of profound inner joy."

Written just before the turn of the 21st century, **Javier Busto's** "O Magnum Mysterium" was composed in Hondarribia, his birthplace in the Basque Country of Spain, where he had simultaneously begun his careers in medicine and music. The contrast between his piece and Lauridsen's is quite stark, and yet they were written within five years of each other. Though the theme of this concert has been to demonstrate the power and utility of a text in music over the past millennium, it is also important to recognize that these composers are more than products of their respective times: they are each composers unto themselves. Busto's rendition, unlike Lauridsen's, experiments with texture and juxtaposes contemporary extended harmonies with modal sonorities that harken back to the text's medieval origins.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank all of my wonderful volunteer vocalists and instrumentalists for graciously dedicating so much of their time to this project and for making such beautiful music with me. The rehearsals this semester have consistently been my weekly highlights, and I am honored that each one of you was willing to tackle this concert along with me.

I cannot thank enough my two advisors, Professors Michael Slon and Benjamin Rous, for their continued support and sage advice throughout this past year. I have learned endlessly from the two of you not only about what it means to be a conductor, but also what it means to be a passionate and dedicated musician. I remember all of our meetings vividly and fondly, and I hope you are able to see today how much of what you say and do I take to heart.

To Jeremy Thompson, my brilliant accompanist; David Sariti, who tuned the portative organ for tonight's performance; and Barbara Moore, who I can only accurately describe as the Old Cabell Organ whisperer: thank you so much for all you have done to help the organs sound as glorious as possible.

Thank you to Khuyen Dinh for your excellent photography and graphic design skills—the poster looks amazing! Thank you to Aldi Argante, for your tireless support from the keyboard in rehearsals, and for your putting up with my shenanigans in and out of rehearsal.

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A huge thank you to the more-than-generous donors of this event, the Charles S. Roberts Scholarship Fund, the Student Council Arts Agency, UVA Arts, the Office of the Provost, and the Vice Provost for the Arts. This amazing project was a serious financial undertaking, and required funding for purchasing music, tuning the organ, designing and printing these programs, publicizing the event, and renting this magnificent hall. These donors made my dream a reality.

Thank you most of all for the unwavering support from my mom, my dad, my siblings big and small, my grandparents, and the rest of my enormous family.

