

DO YOU KNOW WHO WILL BE LOOKING AT YOUR DOCTORAL THESIS 500 YEARS FROM NOW????

SUMMARY: Musica Spei - comprised of University of Rochester faculty, alumni, former students and employees and others members of the community - will celebrate its 15th anniversary over the next two weekends by performing an excerpt from the much admired and much discussed but almost never performed doctoral thesis of the great English Renaissance composer Robert Fayrfax (1464-1521). Fayrfax' monumental mass setting, *Missa O quam glorifica*, earned him a Doctorate in Music at Cambridge or Oxford University in 1504.

"MUSIC OF HOPE: A CELEBRATION OF SACRED CHORAL MUSIC OF THE BRITISH RENAISSANCE" WILL CONTINUE MUSICA SPEI'S 15 year tradition of introducing Rochester audiences to little known and rarely performed sacred choral masterworks of the Renaissance. The concerts will take place on **Friday, May 14th at 8:00p.m. at Saint Anne Church (1600 Mount Hope Avenue) **in Rochester** (near the University and Medical Center), on **Friday, May 7th at 7:30p.m. at Saint Mary's Roman Catholic Church** (15 Clark Street) **in Auburn**, and on **Saturday, May 8th at 7:30p.m. at Saint Peter's Memorial Church** (Clara Barton Street) **in Dansville**. Admission is by Free Will Offering (Suggested Donation, \$10); for further information, please call 585-442-4681 or visit www.musicaspei.org.**

Many singers in the 15-member ensemble are associated with the University of Rochester, including Musica Spei's current leader, Eric Lobenstine, PhD, '82, analyst/programmer in the Department of Chemistry; Jeanne Beddoe, MD, '80, (residency '89), Jeffrey Harp, MD (Medical School '83, residency '87, fellowship '89), MD and Joseph Finetti, MD, (residency '91) all currently faculty members in the Department of Family Medicine; William Hawkins, PhD, Assistant Professor of Economics; Mary Cowden, MBA, '79, an occasional invited lecturer at - and graduate of - the Simon School; Lynette Blake, former Director of Research Accounting; Jim Blake, former analyst/programmer; and graduates Alexandra Bermel, '83, and Christopher Gold, '96. Bermel and Beddoe previously sang with the University's ensemble Vocal Point, and the two Blakes and Lobenstine previously sang with the UR Chapel Choir. Steve Marcus, MS, Research Assistant in the Department of Family Medicine, is a co-founder and currently Artistic Guide Emeritus. A number of the singers have been with the group since its inception in 1995. Other community members also comprise the group.

Although rarely performed today, Robert Fayrfax has been called "the most admired composer of his generation," and played an important role in the Golden Age of the English Renaissance. His Mass, which was composed in 1504 by "Dr. Ffeyrfax for his forme in proceadinge to bee Doctor" at either Cambridge or Oxford, was, like today's doctoral dissertations, intended to be a formal and showy demonstration of technical skill and knowledge, and, even now, is considered to be one of the Renaissance's most rhythmically complex and technically difficult works to perform; in fact, it rarely, if ever, is performed. Like many works of the Renaissance, it is believed by some analysts to have a carefully planned out mathematical structure based on number symbolism; specifically, in this work, the ways in which the movements are unified by recurring patterns of numbers. One hypothesis is that the structure of *O quam glorifica* is constructed around the number 27, which is $3 \times 3 \times 3$ (three groups of three, three traditionally being the most symbolic of all numbers) and therefore a 'perfect' number.

However, in the hands of this brilliant but almost unknown and underappreciated composer, the final work transcends its structure and its original purpose as a thesis, and results in a monumental masterpiece of surpassing power and beauty, evoking the soaring cathedrals for which his music was composed and in which it was performed. The music was found, as is much of the music the group performs, in the **Eastman School's Sibley Music Library** and was arranged for this performance by Jim Blake from a published edition by Edwin B. Warren and an unpublished edition by Richard Taruskin.

Musica Spei will also perform two other major, and mostly unknown, works by Fayrfax,

Musica Spei, Concerts for May, 2010

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including one deeply moving motet that portrays, through a combination of texts from different gospels, the crucifixion of Jesus. Fayrfax' rarely heard compositions will be surrounded by more music of England's Golden Age, composed by some of the better known and greatest English Renaissance composers of the generations that followed him, including William Byrd, John Taverner, and Thomas Tomkins, among others. The concert will also include a performance of the great *Ave Maria* of Robert Parsons, who was a major influence on – and possibly a teacher of – William Byrd, and who drowned in his thirties when he fell into the swollen River Trent. The theme of teacher and student is a thread throughout this concert, as Tomkins was a student of Byrd.

Celebrating 15 years of music-making in 2010, **Musica Spei** (Music of Hope) explores the vast repertoire of rarely-performed, sacred choral masterworks of the Medieval and Renaissance periods, sharing these unknown and often unperformed riches with audiences throughout central and western New York. Much of this music would be unobtainable without access to the **Eastman School's Sibley Music Library's** treasure trove of resources. Rehearsing and performing unaccompanied and without a conductor, the group develops its interpretations in a collaborative fashion, communicating and interacting as though members of a jazz or chamber music ensemble. Musica Spei's recent accomplishments include a live performance on WXXI's Backstage Pass radio show, coordination of the 9th Rochester Early Music Festival (which the group first organized in 2001), and yet another of many performances at the **Memorial Art Gallery** exhibition preview parties. For its 10th anniversary concert, Musica Spei commissioned Patrick Macey, Professor and Chair of Musicology at the **Eastman School**, to create an edition of music by Heinrich Isaac (c. 1450-1517) for performance by the group.

Concert Listing – Rochester

Date: Friday, May 14, 2010

Time: 8:00 p.m.

Location: Saint Anne Church
1600 Mount Hope Avenue
Rochester

Title of Concert: Music of Hope: A Celebration of Sacred Choral Music
of the British Renaissance

Performing Groups: Musica Spei (Music of Hope)

Contents of Concert: Sacred choral music of the British Renaissance,
featuring works of Fayrfax, Byrd, Taverner and
Tomkins

Admission: Free Will Offering (Suggested Donation, \$10)

For concert information: 585-442-4681 or www.musicaspei.org

THANK YOU!

Concert Listing – Auburn

Date: Friday, May 7, 2010

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Location: Saint Mary's Roman Catholic Church
15 Clark Street
Auburn

Title of Concert: Music of Hope: A Celebration of Sacred Choral Music
of the British Renaissance

Performing Groups: Musica Spei (Music of Hope)

Contents of Concert: Sacred choral music of the British Renaissance,
featuring works of Fayrfax, Byrd, Taverner and
Tomkins

Admission: Free Will Offering (Suggested Donation, \$10)

For concert information: 585-442-4681 or www.musicaspei.org

THANKS!

Concert Listing – Dansville

Date: Saturday, May 8, 2010

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Location: Saint Peter's Memorial Church
Clara Barton Street
Dansville

Title of Concert: Music of Hope: A Celebration of Sacred Choral Music
of the British Renaissance

Performing Groups: Musica Spei (Music of Hope)

Contents of Concert: Sacred choral music of the British Renaissance,
featuring works of Fayrfax, Byrd, Taverner and
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THANKS!