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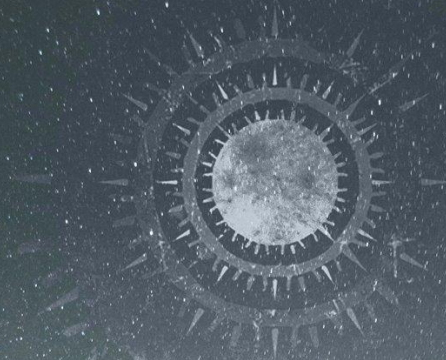
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The Helios Ensemble presents:
Sommarnatten



*Music of the Summer Night, Scandinavia,
and Poulenc's Mass in G*

Saturday, June 25th - 7:00pm
Good Shepherd United Church of Christ
17750 S La Cañada Dr, Sahuarita

Sunday, June 26th - 7:00pm
Grace St Paul's Episcopal Church
2331 E Adams St, Tucson

Program

Mass in G <i>Kyrie</i> <i>Sanctus</i> <i>Benedictus</i> <i>Angus Dei</i>	Francis Poulenc (1899 - 1963)
Frozen Choral Suite Korie Birkholz, Conductor <i>Vuelie</i> <i>Heimr Árnadalr</i>	arr. Roger Emerson <i>Frode Fjellheim (b. 1959)</i> <i>Christophe Beck (b. 1968)</i>
Sommarnatten	Einojuhani Rautavaara (b. 1928)
Sommarpsalm	Carl David af Wirsén (1842-1912)
September	Wilhelm Stenhammar (1871-1927)
Rest Samantha Feldman, Conductor	Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)
O Gloriosa Domina	Ivo Antognini (b. 1963)
Canticum Novum	Ivo Antognini (b. 1963)

Special Thanks!

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About The Helios Ensemble

The Helios Ensemble is a 40-person auditioned mixed choral ensemble based in Tucson, Arizona founded and directed by Benjamin J. Hansen, DMA Candidate at the University of Arizona. It is Hansen's belief that there is a great singer inside of all of us and through creative vocal group technique, private instruction, and exceptional conducting, members of the Helios Ensemble create heartfelt and professional level music that leave our audiences inspired and uplifted. The Helios Ensemble's mission to empower choristers to perform difficult music extends to the podium through the Helios Young Conductor's Initiative where Hansen has given rising conductors the opportunity to conduct new and exciting music. We are pleased to extend this opportunity to Korie Birkholz and Sam Feldman.

About the Artistic Director, Benjamin J. Hansen

Benjamin Hansen is the founder and artistic director of The Helios Ensemble, the artistic director of the Faculty/Staff choir at the University of Arizona, and the director of music at the United Church of Christ, Good Shepherd. Hansen received his BA from Yale, singing in The Yale Whiffenpoofs, his MM in voice from The Catholic University of America, his MM in conducting from The College-Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati, and is currently a doctoral candidate in choral conducting at the University of Arizona. Hansen has conducted such works as Bach's Lobet den Herrn, Mozart's Requiem, Howell's Requiem, Haydn's Lord Nelson Mass, Poulenc's Mass in G, and Vaughan Williams' Three Shakespeare Songs. Hansen has studied conducting with Bruce Chamberlain, Elizabeth Schauer, Leo Nestor, Jerry Blackstone, Mark Gibson, Earl Rivers, Fiora Contino, and Robert Sund. Hansen was the director of choral activities at Cincinnati State College, directing the Cincinnati State Chorale's performance of Whitacre's Lux Aurumque, the national anthem at a Cincinnati Reds Game, and a set of spirituals for the World Choir Games in 2012. He was a Conducting Fellow at the Chorus America Conducting Symposium in 2010, Houston, TX, and he founded and directed the Washington Collegium, in Washington, D.C. from 2007 to 2009.

About the Assistant Director, Korie Birkholz

Korie Birkholz is a Tucson native and a recent graduate of the University of Arizona School of Music. She holds a bachelor's degree in Choral Music Education and spends her time singing with the University of Arizona Community Chorus as well and The Helios Ensemble. Korie is a member of the board of directors in both choirs, serving as Assistant Director and Vice President for the Helios Ensemble. Having sung for most of her life, Korie is an avid supporter of arts in the community. Korie looks forward to continuing to serve the community and participating in choral singing for many years to come.

About Sam Feldman

Sam Feldman is a senior studying Voice and Creative Writing at the University of Arizona. She recently published her first children's book, "Sam the Ant," and co-produced a children's album, "Kaleidoscope." In addition to the Helios Ensemble, Sam also sings and conducts with local ensemble Audivi Vocem and currently serves as President of Enharmonics a Cappella.

Benjamin Hansen, Artistic Director
Korie Birkholz, Assistant Director
Woan Ching-Lim, Accompanist

Sopranos:

Korie Birkholz
Hailey Butler
Angela Hoover
Naja McKenzie
Emma Pertersen
Deb Ryan
Ina Shivack
Ann Stephens
Emma Wahlstrom

Altos:

Lisa Brown
Debbie Culter
Melanie De Sa
Dana Douglas
Alisha Escoto
Sam Feldman
Linda Horowitz
Megan Howell
Karissa Noonan
Angela Potosky
Becky Samdahl
Cecelia Siruno
Renee Summers
Sara Tobe
Stephanie Watson

Helios Essential Collaborators:

Alisha Escoto – Graphic Designer
Daniel Janes – Venue Set-up
Gary Anderson – Venue Set-up

Tenors:

James Austin
Isaiah Barker
Joshua Birkholz
Rick Brown
Sean Gellenbeck
Bryce Tomlin
Guillermo Reyes Keymolent

Basses:

Gary Anderson
Jared Aragon
James Birkholz
Ryan Fabry
Sean Finn
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Helios Board of Directors:

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Watch for The Helios Ensemble this coming Fall!

The Helios Ensemble is excited to work with Ivo Antongnini once more this coming fall! Featuring selections from his newest body of work, The Helios Ensemble looks forward to pairing them with the sounds of Bach, Ravel, and jazz all wrapped into one amazing concert! Mark your calendars for November 5th at Grace St. Paul Episcopal Church!

Program Notes

***Mass in G* by Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)**

In 1936 Poulenc began studying with Nadia Boulanger to combat criticism that his music was flippant. That, coupled with his return to Catholicism after the death of a close friend, set the stage for his *Mass in G* in 1937. The *Kyrie* begins the work with a seriousness that Poulenc described as “rough and savage.” The movement continues with parallel fourths and fifths, dotted rhythms, and wide melodic leaps which contribute to this unusually austere setting of the Greek text. However, in keeping with tradition, Poulenc does provide some lyricism for the movement, ending it with ethereal and transcendent chords, providing comfort and resolution from the previous cacophony.

The *Sanctus* of the work is in stark contrast to the *Kyrie*. Marked “Très allant et doucement joyeux” meaning “very buoyant and gently joyful,” the movement is perhaps reverting to the lightness for which Poulenc was previously criticized. However, the mixed meter homophony of added 6ths and 7ths that he himself called a “carillon of voices,” builds to the most profound explorations of joy and overcoming; the final rich, eight-part “Hosanna” is one of the most spectacular moments for unaccompanied vocal music in the 20th century.

At first, the *Benedictus* is neither rough nor buoyant, but highly lyrical in triple meter. However, the initial dulcet tones reflecting the “blessed,” quickly morph into a serpentine journey of uncertainty through a startling display of chromaticism. Yet, the “Hosanna” returns, now evoking an even greater sense of triumph, with added accents for emphasis.

The *Agnus Dei* begins with an opening soprano solo in high register pointing the listener to the heavens as Poulenc describes, reflecting the “confidence” and serenity of the promise of eternal life after death. The chorus enters singing in octaves and then breaking into characteristically harsh harmonies that resolve into lush chords on “Dona nobis pacem,” or “grant us peace.”

Frozen Choral Suite - *Heimr Árnadalr* by Christophe Beck (b. 1968), *Vuelie* by Frode Fjellheim (b. 1959)

This medley of two works from the Disney animated feature Frozen is an adaptation of Christophe Beck’s “Heimr Árnadalr” and Frode Fjellheim’s “Vuelie.” This first work features lush choral writing reflecting the influence of Norwegian composers Egil Hovland and Knut Nystedt and effectively sets text in the Old Norse language about the coronation of a queen. The second is an example of “yoiking,” a repeated, accented chant with a tune taken from traditional Saami and Norwegian cultures about the thaw of the ice.

Sommarnatten by Einojuhani Rautavaara (b. 1928)

Composed in 1975 by Finnish composer Einojuhani Rautavaara, Sommarnatten (Summer Night) evokes the warm, light, and memorable summer nights of Scandinavia. Finnish poet Ernst Viktor Knapé’s text describes couples dancing on a bridge in the warm summer air. The two soprano soloists soar over the ostinato and the harmonically rich accompaniment that emphasizes the major 3rd and the major 7th, creating a pastoral aesthetic with flute like melody characteristic of Rautavaara.

Sommarpsalm by Carl David af Wirsén (1842-1912)

Sommarpsalm or ("Summer Hymn") is an 1889 Swedish summer hymn by Carl David af Wirsén and is one of Sweden's best loved summer hymns. The lyrics provide beautiful images of the glories of summer, but remind the listener that all things fade and pass away except for the eternal God. It became more popular when Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden chose the hymn for her wedding to Daniel Westling in 2010.

September or Alle de voksende skygger by Wilhelm Stenhammar (1871-1927)

Composed in 1890 by Wilhelm Stenhammar as part of the three movement set “Three Choral Ballads to Poems by J. P. Jacobsen”, September reflects on how summer comes to an end in September. The lyrics suggest how the “growing shadows” all come together and how a single pure and bright star shines in the dark September sky. Utilizing lush, late-romantic homophonic choral writing techniques Swedish composer Stenhammar sets this Danish text in a manner reflecting the influence of Bruckner, Nielsen, and Sibelius.

Rest by Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Vaughan Williams' setting of Christina Rossetti's sonnet "Rest" is a gorgeously woven prayer about death crafted without ever using the word "death". Instead, Rossetti imagines a long sleep, a final rest after the toils and pains of earthly life. She regards death not with sadness but with a serene assurance that lost loved ones are resting, untroubled, in eternal beauty.

O Gloriosa Domina by Ivo Antognini (b. 1963)

Jazz pianist, film score composer, and up and coming Swiss choral composer Ivo Antognini has been on the rise in the choral world since he began writing for the children’s choir Coro Calicantus in 2006. Antognini has been influenced by such diverse people as J.S. Bach, Ravel, and Al Jarreau and continues to compose choral works for every level of singer. In 2012 he set O Gloriosa Domina, a text about rejuvenation through the glorious Virgin Mary, to legato homophonic choral lines that build with intensity through evocative, jazz-inflected harmonic progressions. This three-section work features a rhythmic, triple-meter internal section with an apparent Latin flair. Rhythmic variety, careful voicing, and wide-ranging variations between highly spaced and tightly constructed harmonies create a highly effective and unusual choral language.

Canticum Novum by Ivo Antognini (b. 1963)

Canticum Novum, composed in 2013, features an irregular rhythm, and a series of chords repeated seven times that Antognini indicates as describing “the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, knowledge, fortitude, piety, and fear of the Lord.” Full of buoyancy and unexpected turns, this challenging work requires the choir to shift between several very complex meters.

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Stay tuned to The Helios Ensemble in Fall 2016! Our Board of Directors have been working diligently over the last several months and will be launching many new projects to increase our internet presence and bring this ensemble into the 21st century!



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Please consider purchasing advertisement space in the program for our Fall 2016 concert in early November. We will be accepting business card sized as well as quarter, half, and full page advertisements. Additional information will be available in early September so please provide us with your contact information on the included feedback form so you won’t miss out on this unique opportunity!

All the members of the Helios Ensemble would again like extend our warmest thanks to our supporters! Your patronage, is greatly appreciated and will ensure that we can continue to bring you high quality music at ever increasing levels of professionalism.

Thank you!