

### 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, in Sahuarita, AZ. Hansen received his BA from Yale, singing in "The 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 pursuing his doctorate in Choral Conducting at the University of Arizona. Hansen has studied conducting with Bruce Chamberlain, Elizabeth Schauer, Leo Nestor, Jerry Blackstone, Mark Gibson, Earl Rivers, Fiora Contino, and Robert Sund. He was a Conducting Fellow at the Chorus America Conducting Symposium in 2010 and he founded and directed the Washington Collegium, in Washington, D.C., where he conducted Howell's Requiem and Poulenc's Exultate Deo. 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 set of spirituals for the World Choir Games in 2012.

### About the Assistant Director, Ryan Phillips


Ryan Phillips, an alumnus of Tucson Arizona Boys Chorus, is a 2013 graduate in Music Education & Choral Conducting from the University of Arizona. Ryan is music director at the Academy of Tucson High School and leads guitar, mixed choir, and Advanced Women's choir ensembles, and has been recognized by NAU's Jazz/Madrigal festival. He directs the Bell and Chancel choirs as Minister of Music at The Holy Way Presbyterian Church. Previously assistant director of the Tucson Masterworks Chorale, Ryan says he "is thrilled to currently be serving in the same position with The Helios Ensemble, who, with their high level musicianship, makes every rehearsal a joy."



THE HELIOS ENSEMBLE PRESENTS

# SHAKESPEARE SHANGRI-LA

FEATURING VAUGHAN WILLIAMS' THREE SHAKESPEARE SONGS,  
BACH'S LOBET DEN HERRN, BWV 230,  
& HOLST'S HYMNS FROM THE RIG-VEDA



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# Program

<b>Ave Maria</b>	<b>Anton Bruckner (1824 - 1896)</b>
<b>Die Himmel erzählen die Ehre Gottes</b>	<b>Heinrich Schütz (1585 - 1672)</b> Sara Tobe, Organ
<b>Entreat Me Not to Leave You</b> Ryan Phillips, Conductor	<b>Dan Forrest (1978 - )</b>
<b>Locus Iste</b> Korie Birkholz, Conductor	<b>Anton Bruckner (1824 - 1896)</b>
<b>Ascendit Deus</b>	<b>Peter Philips (1565 - 1635)</b>
<b>O sacrum convivium!</b>	<b>Olivier Messiaen (1908 - 1992)</b>
<b>Quatre petites prières de St François d'Assise</b> Mvt. 1: Salut, Dame Sainte Mvt. 3: Seigneur, je vous en prie	<b>Francis Poulenc (1899 - 1963)</b>
<b>Hymns from the Rig Veda, Selections from Group 3</b> Mvt. 1: Hymn to the Dawn Mvt. 2: Hymn to the Waters Mvt. 3: Hymn to Vena	<b>Gustav Holst (1874 - 1934)</b> Claire Thai, Harp
<b>Three Shakespeare Songs</b> Mvt. 1: Full Fathom Five Mvt. 2: The Cloud-Capp'd Towers Mvt. 3: Over Hill, Over Dale	<b>Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872 - 1958)</b>
<b>Lobet den herrn, alle Heiden</b>	<b>Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750)</b> Sara Tobe, Organ

## Special Thanks!

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## Mark Your Calendars for Saturday, June 25, 2016 and Sunday, June 26, 2016

The Helios Ensemble is excited to announce our summer concert *Sommarnatten!* Centered around Rautavvara's work of the same name, this concert will follow Nordic themes and composers on a rustic journey of summertime. The concert will also feature Poulenc's *Mass in G*, works by composer Ivo Antognini, and a selection of choral pieces from Disney's *Frozen*.

## 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 Helios creates heartfelt and professional level performances that leave our audiences inspired and uplifted. Recent concerts have included Brahms' *Fest-und Gedenskprüiche*, Barber's *Reincarnations*, *The King Shall Rejoice*, Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass*, and Eric Whitacre's *Go Lovely Rose* and *A Boy and a Girl*.

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## Do you have a business that would be interested in supporting the Helios Ensemble?

Please consider purchasing advertisement space in the program for our Summer 2016 concert entitled “*Sommarnatten*” on June 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. Featuring Nordic themes and composers as well as Poulenc’s *Mass in G* and a selection of choral pieces from Disney’s *Frozen*, this will truly be a unique and memorable choral experience. We will be accepting business card sized as well as quarter, half, and full page advertisements. Additional information will be released May 20<sup>th</sup> so please provide us with your contact information so you won’t miss out on this unique opportunity!

The surface of the Sun is always in motion and can visibly change even over the course of a day!

Like the Sun, the Helios Ensemble is always evolving and improving.

**Please sign up for our email list** after the concert so we can let you know how the Helios Ensemble continues to change!

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!**

## Program Notes

*Ave Maria* by Anton Bruckner (1824 - 1896)

Bruckner composed this seven-part setting of the Ave Maria, a supplication to the Virgin Mary, in 1861. It was his first major composition after five years of arduous study with the Viennese music-theorist, Simon Sechter. The first segment of Bruckner's setting contrasts the three-part women's choir and the four-part men's choir, which unite in the proclamation of the name of Jesus. The second segment is for all seven parts with a particularly effective diminuendo as the choir asks for intervention for us sinners.

*Die Himmel erzählen die Ehre Gottes* by Heinrich Schütz (1585 - 1672)

Schütz’s 1648 collection of antiphonal works, *Geistliches Chor Musik*, reflects the antiphonal influence of the works composed during his time in Venice at St. Mark’s Cathedral and was used for teaching counterpoint to German composers. *Die Himmel*, a sacred work of mixed textures in the prima pratica style, is a setting of Psalm 19: 1-6 and the Doxology. It proclaims the Glory of God being spread throughout the universe as the counterpoint reflects the spreading of the word from one soul to the next.

*Entreat Me Not to Leave You* by Dan Forrest (1978 - )

Premiered in 2012, this 8-part setting of Ruth’s plea to Naomi from the Book of Ruth uses luscious contemporary harmonies with a smooth yet vivacious legato line. The polyphonic vocal motion, which opens the piece, does not cease its forward momentum until over halfway through when all voices are allowed a breath as one. Each voice in the counterpoint provides an emotional outcry in the overall tapestry of sound.

*Locus Iste* by Anton Bruckner (1824 - 1896)

Written by Bruckner in 1869 for the dedication of a votive chapel at the New Cathedral in Linz, this 4-part motet, like the *Ave Maria*, is one of his sublime sacred works. The Latin text translates to "This place was made by God, a priceless sacrament, it is without reproach." The music reflects the solemnity of the holy space in its simple yet artful melody and homophonic texture.

*Ascendit Deus* by Peter Philips (1565 - 1635)

This five-part motet is a setting of text from Psalms 47 and 103: “God has gone up with a shout, and the Lord with the sound of the trumpet. Alleluia. The Lord hath prepared his seat in heaven. Alleluia.” The brilliant imitative counterpoint is introduced as the initial theme is sung by the first sopranos and passes through all the remaining parts. In the first Alleluia section, there is a brief moment of antiphony between men and women followed by another section of free counterpoint. The second Alleluia section is presented as a rousing, triple-meter conclusion.

*O sacrum convivium!* by Olivier Messiaen (1908 - 1992)

This haunting unaccompanied work by the devout Catholic and mystical French composer Olivier Messiaen showcases his rhythmic complexity and unique harmonies in the use of 4 ½ beat measures and strangely ethereal, unorthodox chords. As a synesthete who heard sounds reflected as specific colors, he developed his own tonal language, which in this piece perfectly illuminates the mystery of salvation through the Eucharist as described in the Latin text.



*Quatre petites prières de St François d'Assise, Movements 1 and 3* by Francis Poulenc (1899 - 1963)

Scored for unaccompanied men's choir (TTBB), the four prayers of St. Francis of Assisi were composed for and dedicated to the monastery choir at Champfleury (and in particular a certain monk there named Frere Jerome, the composer's great-nephew). With the use of archaic textures of plainchant and Poulenc's own harmonic colorings, these four pieces create a unique reverence and solemnity. The first movement with a text reminiscent of the *Ave Maria* begins with the tenors singing a chant-like melody over a drone of baritones. The texture becomes full as other voices enter to praise the grace that makes us faithful. The third movement is a simple prayer to the Lord to allow his love to pervade the soul.

*Hymns from the Rig Veda, Selections from Group 3* by Gustav Holst (1874 - 1934)

The Rig Veda, an ancient Indian collection of over 10,000 Sanskrit hymns, is one of the major canonical texts of Hinduism. In his mid-twenties, Holst developed an interest in the religion and literature of the East. The four groups of choral works based on the Rig Veda are settings of 14 of the hymns. Written in 1910, the third group is scored for women's chorus with harp accompaniment. In *Hymn to the Dawn*, the mysterious quiet prayer of the women's voices is set above the rippling and difficult arpeggios of the harp. In *Hymn to the Waters*, the harp reflects the continual motion of flowing water while the unusual rhythm in 21/8 provides a metric pulse of joy in the choral part. The final selection, *Hymn to Vena*, depicts the gentle, beautiful rising of the Sun through the mist.

*Three Shakespeare Songs* by Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872 - 1958)

Composed in 1951 for testing the technical abilities of choirs in the British Federation of Music Festivals, the songs pose challenges both rhythmically and harmonically. In the first song, *Full Fathom Five* from *The Tempest*, Vaughan Williams uses dissonant tone clusters, pentatonic scales, and odd rhythmic displacements to evoke the strange and otherworldly nature of the deep as Ariel provides the distraught Ferdinand with images of his supposedly drowned father. The second song, *The Cloud-Capp'd Towers*, is a setting of Prospero's lines in *The Tempest* as he dissolves the vision of classical myths he has conjured as an entertainment in anticipation of the wedding of Miranda and Ferdinand. Deep chords and dramatic shifts between major and minor remind us of both the grandeur and fragility of mortal life. The chromatic harmonies create a smooth and mysterious texture, reminiscent of Vaughan Williams' string writing. The third song *Over Hill, Over Dale*, sets lines of one of Titania's servant fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Her voice is represented in the soprano melodic line supported by an ostinato in the lower three voices that creates a mood both pastoral and energized. The opening begins with strange harmonies not unlike those in *Full Fathom Five* and then begins a rollicking 6/8 rhythm to evoke the spritely travelling of the fairies. To add to the mystery, the soprano line eventually incorporates an unexpected rocking duple meter. The coda finishes out the movement with material from the opening.

*Lobet den herrn, alle Heiden* by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750)

Although there is some doubt whether this piece was written by Bach, the complexity and artfulness of the counterpoint and structure are typical of Bach's motet writing. The text, Psalm 117: 1-2, is in praise of God for His great love for us. The opening section is an extended double fugue with one ascending arpeggio subject to the text, "Praise the Lord all ye nations," and a second undulating subject to "And extol Him all ye people." The texture becomes briefly simpler and more homophonic evoking God's love for us until a second fugal



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