

QUINCY SYMPHONY CHORUS
December 12, 2009

PROGRAM NOTES
Compiled by Dr. Lavern Wagner

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE GLORIA

Grove's Dictionary of Music, the standard twenty-volume reference on all aspects of music, speaks of the *Gloria* as used in the mass, and asserts, "the text itself suggests a close relationship to Christmas." The Quincy Symphony Chorus follows this suggestion by programming several contemporary choral settings, all dealing with the *Gloria* topic, and especially in the manner it relates to Christmas.

Psallite Gloria Deo is characterized by the composer as "an anthem of joy that celebrates the birth of Christ." The composer, Joyce Eilers, is well-known for her work with school choirs, but over half of her 400 compositions and editions use sacred lyrics. She has been a guest director and consultant at many sacred workshops, conferences, and festivals, and has conducted massed choirs. She received her undergraduate degree from Oklahoma City University and her Master's degree from the University of Oregon.

Gloria, Gloria, by James Hurd is based on three Christmas Carols. "Low, How A Rose" has a flowing accompaniment. "God, Rest You Merry, Gentlemen" utilizes this strong melody in a mirror image of itself. "Angels We Have Heard On High" introduces a fugue for the word "Gloria." David Hurd is Professor of Church Music and Organist at the General Theological Seminary, and also Director of Music at All Saints Episcopal Church, New York City. His principal music studies were at Julliard, Oberlin Conservatory, and North Carolina University, Chapel, Hill. He is a concert organist, noted for his skill in improvisation.

Gloria by John Rutter, uses the Latin text of the Gloria from the Roman Catholic mass. John Rutter is a well-known English choral conductor and composer. Born in London, he was educated at Claire College, Cambridge, where from 1975 through 1979 he was director of music. In 1981 he founded the Cambridge Singers and established Collegium Records, a label dedicated to their performances. In 1980 he was made an honorary fellow of Westminster Choir College, Princeton, New Jersey. In 1996 the Archbishop of Canterbury conferred a Lambeth Doctorate of Music on him in recognition of his contributions to church music.

Angels Sing Glory is subtitled "A Classic Christmas Celebration." This medley ingeniously weaves together choruses by Antonio Vivaldi and George F. Handel. Opening with the joyful proclamation of Vivaldi's *Gloria*, this musical pattern flows in and out of the traditional German carol, "How Great Our Joy," heralding the rejoicing shepherds. Now an angel choir descends from the heavens singing, "And Suddenly There was with the Angel," and

“Glory to God,” from Handel’s *Messiah*. Crowning the medley is the close of Handel’s *Hallelujah* chorus. Arranger Larry Shakley directs the music program at Columbia, SC. International University.

Glory Hallelu! by Don Besig has a light swing quality to its music. This may be heard as harking back to the style of spirituals. Besig currently directs the choir at Perinton Presbyterian Church in Fairport, NY. He taught public school music with great success for over 30 years in western New York state.

Gloria Deo, by James E. Clemens was commissioned for choirs of the Eastern Mennonite High School, Harrisonburg, VA. Clemens lives in the Shenandoah Valley of northwest Virginia. He is an eclectic musician with interests in folk song, jazz, Renaissance and Baroque periods, besides Beethoven and Brahms.

O Magnum Mysterium has a Latin text which may be translated: “O great mystery, and wondrous sacrament, that animals should see the new-born Lord, lying in their manger! Blessed is the Virgin whose womb was worthy to bear the Lord Jesus Christ! Alleluia!” Composer Morten Lauridsen is Professor of Composition at the University of Southern California, Thornton School of Music, and served as Composer in Residence for the Los Angeles Master Chorale from 1994 to 2001.

Hail Mary! set by William L. Dawson derives from the composer’s years at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. After graduating from Tuskegee, he studied further at the American Conservatory in Chicago, and at the Eastman School of Music, Rochester, New York. He became virtually the entire music department at Tuskegee from 1931 to 1956. Dawson’s *Hail Mary!*, rather than being a setting of this prayer, is a lullaby for the infant Jesus being sung by his mother, Mary. It has had several recordings, a notable one by the St. Olaf Choir in 1997.

Carol Him Sweetly is an original composition by Ruth Elaine Schramm which combines her own lovely music with the traditional carol, *Silent Night*. Ruth Schramm is a prolific composer of choral works for church and school choirs. Songs on four of her albums have been nominated for Dove awards. She resides in Birmingham, Alabama.

Heard About A Newborn King! establishes its rhythmic pulse immediately in the opening measures and this pattern remains throughout. David Lantz has had nearly 300 sacred and secular choral works published. He is currently a full-time choral director and music teacher in East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania. He also performs frequently as a professional bassist and vocalist.

Glorious Christmas Refrains is a marvelous tapestry of eleven of the most popular Christmas tunes of all time. These are seamlessly woven together in this arrangement, and listeners will immediately recognize their favorite Christmas melodies. Tom Fettke is a composer, arranger, and producer of music and recordings for church and school. He has served as senior editor for several hymnals. He has been a church choir director and minister of music for over thirty years, and is in demand as a guest conductor, clinician, and worship leader. Tom lives in Brentwood, Tennessee.