

Ouachita Baptist University

Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita

Guest Artist Concert Performances, Programs,
and Posters

Division of Music

10-30-1978

The Gregg Smith Singers in a Guest Artist Recital

Gregg Smith Singers

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/guest_music



Part of the [Music Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Gregg Smith Singers, "The Gregg Smith Singers in a Guest Artist Recital" (1978). *Guest Artist Concert Performances, Programs, and Posters*. 160.

https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/guest_music/160

This Program is brought to you for free and open access by the Division of Music at Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita. It has been accepted for inclusion in Guest Artist Concert Performances, Programs, and Posters by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita. For more information, please contact mortensona@obu.edu.

TRIAD

Presents

THE GREGG SMITH SINGERS

Gregg Smith, Conductor

Paul Suits, Accompanist

**OCTOBER 30, 1978, 8:00 P.M.
Mitchell Hall Auditorium**

Solos Sung By:

Sopranos: Samantha Genton, Rosalind Rees, Marlene Schussler, Diana Sooy

Altos: Elsa Larson, Mary Runyan, Kim Wheeler

Tenors: Thomas Bogdan, Mokund Marathe, Dennis Williams

Basses: Walter Richardson, Roger Roloff, Michael Willson

Piano: Paul Suits

Guitar: Michael Willson

Stage Manager: Walter Richardson

Gowns courtesy of Gunne Saxe - San Francisco, California

Acoustical Shell courtesy of the Wenger Corp. - Owatonna, Minnesota

Tour Bookings and Management: Walter Gould

866 Third Avenue

New York, NY 10022

The GREGG SMITH SINGERS have recorded for:

A& M, Columbia, CRI, Desto, Everest, Grenadilla, MGM, Orion, Turnabout and Vox labels.

Three albums for Columbia:

Charles Ives: Music for Chorus, New Music of Charles Ives, and The Glory of Gabrieli. Vol. I are Grammy Award Winners.

The historical "America Sings" series, a bicentennial project, is a Vox Production.

Program

I.

AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN CONTRASTS

The 18th Century	
Psalm 100 New	John Tufts (cir. 1715)
R. Rees, R. Roloff	
Gloria from Chamber Mass	Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1743)
E. Larson, T. Bogdan	
The 19th Century	
Shaker Medley	Anonymous (cir. 1820-30)
R. Rees, M. Runyan,	
Der Gondelfahrer	Franz Schubert (1797-1828)
The 20th Century	
Pre-World War I	
Psalm 67	Charles Ives (1874-1954)
Yver, vous n'estes qu'un villain	Claude Debussy (1862-1918)
S. Genton, K. Wheeler, T. Bogdan, M. Willson	
Post-World War II	
The Hour Glass	Richard Rodney Bennett (1936-)
O Know to End as to Begin	Irving Fine (1914-1962)

II.

MUSIC IN MULTIDIMENSIONAL SOUND

Hellig	Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)
Excerpts from the Vespers of 1610	Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)
The Art of the Round: Rounds and Canons	Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951)
	Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
	Leo Smit (1921-)
We Are Thieves	William Vollinger (1945-)
Sound Canticle no. 4 on "Psalm 100 New"	Gregg Smith (1931-)
R. Rees, R. Roloff	

INTERMISSION

III.

CHORAL THEATRE

The Fable of Chicken Little: A Modern Madrigal Opera	Gregg Smith (1931-)
	Alicia Carpenter (1930-)
Chicken Little: Samantha Genton	
Henney Penney: Rosalind Rees	
Goosy Lucy: Kim Wheeler	
Turkey Lurkey: Mokund Marathe	
Gander Lander: Michael Willson	
Foxy Loxy: Walter Richardson	

IV.

AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN CONTRASTS: THE FOLK SONG

European Folk Song Arrangements	
The Wanderer (Hungarian)	Bela Bartok
T. Bogdan, R. Rees	
Ovsen (Russian)	Igor Stravinsky
La Belle Si Nous Etions (French)	Francis Poulenc
Schein uns, du liebe Sonne (German)	Arnold Schoenberg
The Blacksmith (English)	Gustav Holst
R. Roloff	
American Folk Song Arrangements	
Long Time Ago (19th Century Ballad)	Aaron Copland
M. Schussler, K. Wheeler, W. Richardson	
I Bought Me A Cat (Children's Song)	Aaron Copland
M. Marathe, M. Runyan	
The Railroad Corral (Western)	Gregg Smith
D. Williams	
In The Mornin' (Spiritual)	Charles Ives
R. Rees	
The Drunken Sailor (Sea Chantey)	Gregg Smith
M. Willson	

PROGRAM NOTES

About the GREGG SMITH SINGERS

1978 marks the 16th straight year of National Touring for the GREGG SMITH SINGERS. Throughout this remarkable history, their programs have not only been noted for the high professional performance standards, but also for their innovative and creative aspects: for composer Gregg Smith, each program is an act of composition; one designed to educate as well as entertain.

Because education is a vital element to Mr. Smith, his career contains numerous achievements which include 7 European tours, 1 Far East Tour, over 50 recordings including 3 Grammy Award Winning albums, a long personal association with Igor Stravinsky and a dedication to contemporary American composers that resulted in his receiving in 1978, the Ditson Award given to conductors with proven service to contemporary American music over many years - thus joining such illustrious company as Leonard Bernstein, Eugene Ormandy and Leopold Stokowski.

Gregg Smith's own musical career is as devoted to composition as it is to conducting. He has his own series with G. Schirmer's of New York; five recordings of his own music, and this summer had a Jazz Mass of his performed at the Helsinki Festival in Finland. He is married to soprano soloist Rosalind Rees and they live in the heart of Manhattan.

I.

The concept of AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN CONTRASTS grew out of a conviction that our dedication to American music should not stop with the bicentennial year of 1976. Isolated as our country was from European cultural developments, our own music, especially in the northeast, maintained strong renaissance characteristics well into the 19th century when a new wave of European immigration began to make it's own cultural impact. By the end of the 19th century, American composers began to search more and more for a true national identity. The new wave of post World War I Americans were the first to establish a truly "American School." The selections presented here in Part I, cover about 250 years and certainly they show, albeit with incredible differences, that we could, in our own way, create a vigorous and deeply expressive art equal to European achievement.

PSALM 100 NEW

John Tufts

"Psalm 100 New" is considered by many scholars to be the first published composition by a native American. It appeared in one of the earliest hymnals printed in our country, Rev. John Tufts' "A Very Plain and Easy Introduction to the Singing of Psalm Tunes." All of the other Psalm Tunes in the collection have known European antecedents, but this vigorous tune, already so strongly "American" has none. It is possible that Rev. Tufts himself wrote the piece.

GLORIA from CHAMBER MASS

Antonio Vivaldi

1978 is the 300th birthday of Italian Baroque composer, Antonio Vivaldi. This "Gloria" is part of a Chamber Mass (Missa Brevis) which contains only the Kyrie and the Gloria; the latter divided into several sections of which this movement is the first. Considered primarily today as an instrumental composer, Vivaldi, as a church musician in Venice, wrote numerous sacred works. This "Gloria", nevertheless, has some of the predominant characteristics of his instrumental works - repetition of certain motives and forceful rhythmic pulsation.

DER GONDELFAHRER

Franz Schubert

1978 is also the 250th commemoration of the death of the great Viennese romantic, Franz Schubert. Schubert's choral output includes several masses and cantatas and quite a few works for Male Chorus, evidently a popular medium in his day. Typical of Schubert in it's seemingly effortless substance, the music beautifully captures the gentle rolling motion of the Venetian gondola.

SHAKER MEDLEY

Anonymous

The American Shakers are one of the many religious sects that dotted the 19th century American landscape. Each had not only it's own religious style, but very often, it's own music. The Shaker worship of Dance is well known and these beautiful tunes are for movement as well as singing. The anonymous tunes in this medley are all taken from hand copied books of Shaker music found in the Library of Congress.

PSALM 67

Charles Ives

Although the differences between American and European music of the 20th century are less obvious, the four selections in this group show unique points of view. Ives' "Psalm 67" is written in two keys, the four part men in G minor, and the four part women in C Major. Written in 1896 when only twenty-two years of age, it is a tour de force of choral sonority; a powerful expression of the great Psalm text "God be merciful unto us....."

YVER, VOUS N'ESTES QU'UN VILLAIN

Claude Debussy

Both Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel wrote Three Chansons in the early 1900's as a result of renewed interest in renaissance music and the French Chanson. As with his renaissance predecessors, we see in Debussy's Chanson, scrupulous attention given to choral textures especially through word color and dynamics.

THE HOUR GLASS

Richard Rodney Bennett

O KNOW TO END AS TO BEGIN

Irving Fine

The last two pieces in this group are settings of a great Renaissance-Elizabethan poet, Ben Johnson. Richard Rodney Bennett, a leading contemporary composer in England today captures with very careful means the beautiful melancholy of the "Hour Glass" text, while Irving Fine, a far too neglected American writer, uses Jazz-like rhythms to enhance the satire of O KNOW TO END AS TO BEGIN - a moment lost in love is sin!

II.

MUSIC IN MULTIDIMENSIONAL SOUND

One of the most popular features of all GREGG SMITH SINGERS' national touring has been their Multidimensional Sound presentation. Taken from an article of Charles Ives (Music in the Future - 1931), the singers position themselves throughout an auditorium, literally surrounding the audience in sound. Key to the presentation is Ives' concept of not only creating new music in space, but placing sound forces about according to the structures found in older music. Thus, this presentation contains older masterworks seen in a new light as well as new creative pieces written especially for the tour.

HEILIG

Felix Mendelssohn

This piece is written for two four-part choruses and is primarily antiphonal in style. However, a unique facet of the work is the opening in which each part of the two choirs enters one by one, unfolding a harmonic texture of sublime richness.

Excerpts from THE VESPERS OF 1610

Claudio Monteverdi

One of the greatest of all choral masterworks is Claudio Monteverdi's "Vespers of 1610", a collection of solos, duets, trios, motets, hymns, a magnificat, a mass and an orchestral sinfonia. Common to almost all of the pieces is the use of traditional Gregorian Chants as the underlying structures of the works. In the selections (to be announced), the chant will be isolated from the other parts creating remarkable textures and structural clarities.

THE ART OF THE ROUND

ROUNDS AND CANONS by Arnold Schoenberg,
Johannes Brahms and Leo Smit

Last year's Multidimensional Presentation was devoted entirely to rounds and canons - "The Art of the Round." Its success has prompted inclusion of a small group in this year's program. Each canon has a different structure: "Tonal Oder Atonal" by Arnold Schoenberg is a four-part round that has a major chord opening ("Tonal"), followed by a twelve tone row ("oder Atonal"); Brahms' "Einformig Ist" is a double canon with a four-part women's chorus canon accompanied by a two-part men's chorus canon; "Lenten Is Come" by Buffalo composer Leo Smit is performed by two four-part groups and has the additional complication of a circular travel of sound to the word "away" even as the canon itself is being sung.

WE ARE THIEVES

William Vollinger

William Vollinger is a New Jersey composer who studied at the Manhattan School of Music with Mario Davidowsky and David Diamond. His music seems very simple (deceptively so), while at the same time, highly theatrical. "We Are Thieves" uses a single row of 16 singers grouped in four quartets. The sound travels up and down the row and the piece itself deals with the crucifixion where one of the thieves implores Jesus to remember him.

SOUND CANTICLE no. 4 on "Psalm 100 New"

Gregg Smith

"Sound Canticle No. 4" is part of an ongoing series of works by Gregg Smith that utilize early American Psalm Tunes in modern spacial treatment. Here the first piece on the program is treated in a variety of ways - echos, moving voices, circular sound patterns; to create a fascinating mixture of historical and contemporary sound.

III.

CHORAL THEATRE

Probably no word describes a GREGG SMITH SINGERS' Tour Program better than the word "variety." It is Mr. Smith's strong conviction that as the times and the audiences change, so must the programming change also. Vocal ensembles offer wide possibilities of repertoire not the least of which is musical theater. In the past few years their programs have included short chamber operas as integral parts of the performances.

THE FABLE OF CHICKEN LITTLE

Libretto by Alicia Carpenter

Music by Gregg Smith

"The Fable of Chicken Little" is presented as a madrigal opera with six soloists and a madrigal choir. The soloists play the parts of the various animals while the choir comments on the action even to the point of warning the five victims-to-be of impending danger with the "villain", Foxy Loxy. The ending has a moral and is in the form of a chorale (Choral Moral): "How cruel that toothsome end; betrayed by Foe in guise of friend. Thus foolishness doth folly bring; when feat outweigheth reasoning. On such sad fools we beg you heed, the clever fox doth ever feed. How blessed we of nobler creed! Fa la la la!"

IV.

AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN CONTRASTS: THE FOLK SONG

The program this evening ends as it began, with American and European contrasts - this time with folk song literature. If any kind of music can be said to bridge popular and classical, it most probably is the Folk Song. Not only has the Folk Song traditionally been a primary form of musical expression for the broad populace, but it has also attracted almost every major composer especially in our own century. The five European settings represent a "Who's Who" of 20th century music - Bartok, Stravinsky, Poulenc, Schoenberg and Holst. And, in addition to Mr. Smith's arrangements, the American group includes its two greatest composers, Charles Ives and Aaron Copland.

In all of these Folk Song settings, the so-called arrangements are not an "east matter" of a few harmonies and some kind of simple accompaniment, but rather, a challenging form of composition. Each work creates a direct listening accessibility but also has the personal stamp and style of its composer from the spare neo-classic textures of Stravinsky, Poulenc and Copland to the rich harmonic tapestries of Bartok, Ives and Schoenberg. Finally, to end the program, there is a multidimensional sound setting of the famous Sea Chanty, "Drunken Sailor" that employs two soloists and two choirs in a final sound exploration.