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UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

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NONCIRC CD #16,817 PRESENTS

DVD #16,819

BENJAMIN BRITTEN
A BOY WAS BORN

PERFORMED BY

THE UNIVERSITY CHAMBER SINGERS
GEOFFREY BOERS, *CONDUCTOR*

&

KARIN STEVENS DANCE
KARIN STEVENS, *DIRECTOR*

AND

RANDALL THOMPSON
THE PEACEABLE KINGDOM

PERFORMED BY

THE UNIVERSITY CHORALE
GISELLE WYERS, *CONDUCTOR*

&

SAPIENCE DANCE COLLECTIVE
SARAH SEDER, *CO-FOUNDER*

November 17, 2013

2:00 PM

Meany Theater

PROGRAM

CD#16818

UW CHAMBER SINGERS
Geoffrey Boers, conductor

- A BOY WAS BORN*, Op. 3 – Choral variations.....28:15..... BENJAMIN BRITTEN (1913-1976)
- 1 Theme: *A Boy was Born* (Anon. 16th century) 1:47
 - 2 Variation 1: *Lullay, Jesu*, (Anon. before 1536) 4:13
Lucy Horton, soprano
 - 3 Variation 3: *Jesu, as Thou art our Saviour*, (Anon. 15th Century) 2:43
Rebecca Herivel, Victoria Solenberger, Brianna Valencia, sopranos
 - 4 Variation 4: *The Three Kings* (Anon. 15th Century) 3:33
 - 5 Variation 5: *In the Bleak Mid-Winter*, (Christina Rossetti) 4:49
Lully, lulley, lully, lulley, (Anon. before 1536)
Yelena Bagdasarova, soprano
Amanda Huntleigh, mezzo soprano
 - 6 Variation 6: (*Finale*) *Noel! Welcome Yule* (Anon. 15th century) 9:20
and *Christmas* (Thomas Tusser, 1515-1580)
Rebecca Herivel, Victoria Solenberger, Brianna Valencia, sopranos

In early 1934, the day Edward Elgar died, over the crackle-ridden radio the BBC broadcast a virtuoso choral work by an unknown nineteen year old, Benjamin Britten. With this work, Britten's genius and craft was firmly in place, and made evident that England was meeting its next great composer.

The piece has been called the "north face of the Eiger for those who have to sing it" because of the vocal and musical challenges it presents. For all its relentless difficulty, at its core the piece is a simple theme and variations that spins its way through various ancient carols.

The theme of *A BOY WAS BORN* is presented in a straight forward hymn-like fashion, introducing a "theme" only in part a melody, in part a scale, and in part a harmonic progression. The next twenty minutes of music plays upon these elements, and as varied as the structures and sounds are, these initial elements are always at play. It is a puzzle for the listeners to challenge themselves to hear what Britten is thinking with each variation.

Variation 1 is set as a lullaby in 6/8, which depicts not merely the gentle rocking of a mother and child, but a subtle but alarming foreshadowing of a baby born to die. This performance will not include Variation 2, *Herod*, which tells of Herod's plot to kill all of the children of Israel. Variation 3 is another hymn with a solo group singing a simple refrain over the static prayer of the choir. Could we be listening to a piece from ancient times? Variation 4, *The Three Kings*, is a multi-layered vocal picture of the travelling Magi in search of the Child-King. The poem and story is layered amongst sounds and punctuations that describe their journey as they follow the star. Listen to hear the presentation of their gifts, Gold!, Frankincense!, and Myrrh!. Variation 5 weds Rossetti's beloved poem *In the Bleak Mid-Winter* with the anonymous *Corpus Christi Carol*. This chorus for women's voices contrasts the chorus that sings the Rossetti text in the most bleak and cold of settings, with a quizzical and impassioned recitation by the soloist. The ancient carol is built in the style of "This is the House that Jack Built" and leads us further and further on a journey (in stark contrast to the King's journey just finished) until all we find is a stone, with the words *Corpus Christi*, literally, here lies the Body of Christ. Snow on snow...

The final variation is one of the most challenging choral works in the repertoire. Nearly ten minutes long, Britten brings all of the strands of the variations together, and we journey through a series of carols: first with an enthusiastic carol where Noel! and Wassail! welcome in Sir Christēmas (the Christ-child); then a patter-song (think Modern Major General) carol which describes preparation of the house for the twelve days of Christmas; followed by an eerie, unison Glory to God—a medieval variation of the Song of the Angels from the Gospel of Luke—which brings home the opening theme, and finally the warm and winding Hosanna. No medley this, these carols are used to create an interwoven tapestry, a shimmering and brilliant conclusion to the variations.

A NOTE FROM KARIN STEVENS:

My husband, three daughters and I planted a small Beni Kawa Japanese Maple red-branched tree amidst the tangle of our yard in our first home. One dark, cold January day as I was feeling the weight of life I experienced an extraordinary moment of transcendent beauty that momentarily transported me away from the dark heaviness into a vast lightness and feeling of peace. I was witnessing the soft covering of snow, dappling the hard, cold winter ground, covering all that seeks to entangle and choke, illuminating the beauty of this small tree: Branches red and alive! Immediately my imagination took over and I was making connections between this tree and the Christ, this god-man story who births forth with life during the darkest barren season; illuminated by the magic—The Magi/King/Wise men—of light and air, these magical, wind-blown, star-led snowflakes, connecting East with West; our relationship to nature revealed as heaven on earth now, the elements of earth, air, water, fire essentially our nature.

Was it serendipity or divine intervention when the opportunity came about to work with Britten's A BOY WAS BORN? This dance is not a literal telling of a special boy that was born, but a personal journey of what this boy might possibly mean. The dance begins with Jesu; As Thou Art Our Savior and is inspired by the element of earth and the ideas found in the poetry of St. Hildegard of Bingen. She was ahead of her time with a creation-centered theōlogy as a poet-mystic and a sort of environmentalist who wrote about the life giving and greening-glory of 'viriditas': The Love that brings "Life to all life...root of all things." Led by light and movement of air, the Three Kings journey through a triangular labyrinth toward center, bringing together the fullness of the space. In The Bleak Mid-Winter, transformation, the element of water, and the 'Mother' who brings forth life and bears our destructive pain gives us a moment of reflective gravity. Noel!, a complicated and inspiring final movement, opens with the swirl of winter-blustery snowy air and the introduction of fire as 'Our King' comes forth; not a literal Christ figure, but the possibility of that great burning love and Kingly-Queenly magnificence in us all. The mother returns again making way for the preparation of celebration, but before this final glorious communal dance of life, a moment is given again to illuminate the possibility of divine life-giving love.

KARIN STEVENS began her training with Pacific Northwest Ballet, Spectrum Dance Theater, and The Seattle Children's Theater. She has a B.A. in Dance from the University of Washington. In 2003 Stevens was awarded a full scholarship and teaching assistantship to the Mills College MFA Dance Program. While dancing with the Mills Repertory Dance Company her performance in Molissa Fenley's *Water Courses* was recognized in the *Voice of Dance*. Stevens has danced for VOCL Dance, Double Vision, Omega West, Push Up Something Hidden Dance, Westwick Dolder Dance Theater, Molissa Fenley and Dancers, and Penny Hutchinson. The versatility of Stevens' choreographic ability has been seen on the stage with Taproot Theatre, Book-it Repertory Theatre and through a commission by Theatre Puget Sound. Her company, Karin Stevens Dance, collaborates with many local and regional artists, composers, and music ensembles.

KARIN STEVENS DANCE is a Seattle-based 501c3 non-profit performance company that presents and tours multiple performances around the northwest region. ksd's mission is to create dance to original new music and/or live musical accompaniment of new and old music, and to collaborate

with many local and regional organizations, musicians, composers, visual/theater/movement artists, and costume designers. ksd has worked with the Kalispel, MT-based Glacier Symphony and Chorale, the Missoula, MT-based String Orchestra of the Rockies, and Seattle's Northwest Symphony Orchestra, Simple Measures, Seattle Jazz Composers Ensemble, Taproot Theater, and Book-It Theater to name a few...ksd has received support from Seattle Mayor's Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs, 4-Culture and the Glenn H. Kawasaki Foundation. www.karinstevensdance.com

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UW CHAMBER SINGERS

Geoffrey Boers, *conductor*

Serena Chin, *accompanist*

SOPRANO

Yelena Bagdasarova, Twin Falls, ID
Claire Biringner, Appleton, WI
Jiannan Cheng, Beijing, China
Deyanira Gualdrón Ordóñez, Bucaramanga,
Colombia
Rebecca Herivel, Lynnwood, WA
Lucy Horton, Bellevue, WA
Debi Johanson, La Canada, CA
Victoria Jane Solenberger, Santa Cruz, CA
Brianna Valencia, Woodland, CA

TENOR

Daniel Berndt, Shelton, WA
Mason Cole, Anacortes, WA
Ryan Ellis, Seattle, WA
Anthony James, Malo, WA
Jamey Kelley, Hoover, AL
Ian J. Kim, Morristown, NJ
Brad Pierson, Champaign, IL
Stephen Bent, Bellevue, WA
Brian Winnie, New Milford, PA

ALTO

Margaret Boeckman, Saint Louis, MO
Jenni Campbell, Seattle, WA
Alice Carli, Los Altos, CA
Jessica Guseman, Marysville, WA
Amanda G. Huntleigh, Normal, IL
Emily Leopold, Anacortes, WA
Makaela Joy Mautz, Eatonville, WA
Brenda J Mohr, Glendale, CA
Christine Elise Oshiki, Olympia, WA
Becca Sherman, Yakima, WA

BASS

Philip C. Arbaugh, Olympia, WA
Matthew Blegen, Union, WA
Kassey Castro, Seattle, WA
Jacob Finkle, Albany, NY
Michael Kibbe, Houston, TX
Daehan Kim, Seoul, South Korea
Eric Mullen, Iowa City, IA
Luke Stromber, Happy Valley, OR
Johann J. Van Niekerk, Heidelberg,
South Africa
James Wilcox, Brentwood, TN

Choreography: Karin Stevens

Dancers:

Naphtali Beyleveld
Sarah Seder
Anna Waller
Amy Weaver
Belle Wolf

Costumes: Karin Stevens

— INTERMISSION —

7. remarks: Boers, Wyers

UW CHORALE
Giselle Wyers, conductor

THE PEACEABLE KINGDOM, 1936 22:46 RANDALL THOMPSON (1899-1984)

8 I. Say ye to the righteous (Isaiah III: 10, 11; LXV: 14) 5:02

Say ye to the righteous, it shall be well with him:
For they shall eat the fruit of their doings.
Woe unto the wicked! It shall be ill with him:
For the reward of his hands shall be given him.
Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart,
But ye shall cry for sorrow of heart and shall howl for vexation of spirit.

9 II. Woe unto them (Isaiah V: 8, 11, 12, 18, 20-22; XVII: 12) 2:00

Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope!
Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for
darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!
Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!
Woe unto them that art mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink!
Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow drink; that continue
till night, till wine inflame them! And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and
wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the
operations of his hands.
Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas!
Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that
they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth.

10 III. The noise of a multitude (Isaiah XIII: 4,5,7,8,15,16,18) 2:05

The noise of the multitude in the mountains, like as a great people; a tumultuous noise of
the kingdoms of nations gathered together; the Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the
battle. They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the Lord, and the
weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land. Their bows also shall dash the
young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall
not spare children. Every one that is found shall be thrust through; and every one that is
joined unto them shall fall by the sword. Their children also shall be dashed to pieces
before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished. Therefore shall all
hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt. They shall be afraid: pangs and sorrow
shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: thy shall be
amazed at one another; their faces shall be as flames.

11 IV. Howl Ye (Isaiah XIII: 6; XIV: 31) 1:52

Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand.
Howl, O gate; cry, O city; thou art dissolved.

12 V. The Paper Reeds by the Brooks (Isaiah XIX: 7) 2:32

The paper reeds by the brooks, by the mouth of the brooks, and everything sown by the
brooks, shall whither, be driven away, and be no more.

VI. *But these are they (Isaiah LXV: 11; LV 12) 2:58*

But these are they that forsake the Lord, that forget my holy mountain.

For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the fields shall clap their hands.

VII. *Have ye not known (Isaiah XL: 21) 3:34*

Have ye not known? Have ye not heard? Hath it not been told you from the beginning?

Have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?

VIII. *Ye shall have a song (XXX: 29) 4:14*

Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goes with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord.

The University of Washington Chorale is thrilled to have the opportunity to collaborate in a fully choreographed production of Randall Thompson's *A PEACEABLE KINGDOM* with Sapience Dance Collective and choreographer Sarah Seder. Sarah Seder sang this work in college and was deeply inspired by the visceral and ultimately triumphant ideas that resonate within Isaiah's timeless texts. When she approached Chorale with the idea of joining forces, the answer was a resounding "yes"!

Thompson's choral work provides a perfect example of how collaboration between art forms can uplift and further clarify a concept. While Chorale's interpretation has been deeply inspired by the dancers involved in the production, Thompson as composer found his original inspiration in a set of paintings with the same title by Puritan artist Edward Hicks.

Hicks created 61 versions of paintings that all explore concepts developed in Isaiah (a full text of the work can be found below in the program). The images include diverse animals lying down together (for instance, the lion with the lamb) as well as humans sitting close to animals. These images, while provocative at the time, were intended to highlight his ultimate hope—that of redemption for humanity from its darkest nature. All aspects of human nature are not shrugged away, but embraced and looked at closely.

Randall Thompson was inspired by Hicks's images, and his approach to illustrating some of the most visual, intense and honest aspects of Isaiah's texts. When Thompson was commissioned to compose a new work for the Harvard-Radcliffe choirs, he chose to develop Hicks' visual ideas into a musical work.

Chorale has enjoyed the challenges inherent in Thompson's work, which follows a journey from a warning to the "wicked," into movements that deeply explore aspects of warfare and human failings, and finally towards a proclamation of the new peace that has come upon the community. "Ye shall have a song" contains some of the most soulful and joyous singing in the choral canon, washing away the previous aggressive, almost primitive singing that is suggested in the earlier movements.

We encourage you to follow along in the program notes to fully appreciate the meaning of these potent texts.

A NOTE FROM SARAH SEDER:

When I sang THE PEACEABLE KINGDOM in 2006 I was very moved by the piece and was inspired to set a dance to the music. It has been a wonderful process working with UW Chorale, and I am thankful to Dr. Giselle Wyers for being so receptive to the idea.

In my choreographic process I have paid careful attention to the rhythms of each vocal line and the content of the text to tell a story about division and conflict and how forgiveness is the first step towards reconciliation and peace. As with all my work, I am interested in creating honest, authentic art that uplifts, and builds community.

SARAH SEDER is a co-founder of Sapience Dance Collective. She earned a degree from Bard College in NY where she studied dance and psychology. Sarah works as a choreographer, dancer, dance teacher, and GYROTONIC® instructor. She has performed and shown her work extensively in the Seattle area and throughout the country. She lives by the sea, climbs mountains and is passionate about helping people discover the joy of dance.

SAPIENCE DANCE COLLECTIVE is currently under the direction of Sarah Seder, Lilah Steece, and Amy Weaver. Since 2008, their mission has been to produce new dance work that inspires, builds community and addresses their highest artistic concerns.

UW CHORALE

Giselle Wyers, *conductor*

Matthew Melendez Blegen & Debi Johanson, *assistant conductors*

Serena Chin, *accompanist*

SOPRANO

Yoojeong Cho, Seoul, South Korea

Addie Francis, Seattle, WA

Danielle Goldenberg, Bothell, WA

Denna Good Mojab, Seattle, WA

Jessica Haagen, Pullman, WA

Hallie Hominda, Auburn, WA

Lucy Horton, Bellevue, WA, *Section Leader*

Claire Koerner, Seattle, WA, *President*

Ivana Lin, Bellevue, WA

Sydney Manning, Anchorage, AK

Tami McTaggart, Port Orchard, WA

Anna Mikkelborg, Fox Island, WA,

Section Leader

Jill Robinson, Clarkston, WA

Kristina Terwilliger, Suffern, NY

Erika van Horne, Mill Creek, WA,

Vice President

Erica Weisman, Austin, TX

ALTO

Shannon Abbott, Duvall, WA, *Publicity Chair*

Ada Beale, Camas, WA

Jocelyn Beausire, Niwot, CO

Morgan Black, Olympia, WA

Victoria Bravo, East Wenatchee, WA

Alice Carli, Los Altos, CA, *Section Leader*

Debi Johanson, La Canada, CA, *Section Leader*

Alison Johnson, Las Vegas, NV

Alex Kronz-Kaethler, Kirkland, WA

Meng-Yu Lee, Taipei, Taiwan

Amber Moore, Boise, ID

Christine Oshiki, Olympia, WA, *Publicity Chair*

Micaela Prince, Kirkland, WA

Esther Ranjbar, Eugene, OR

Alta Steward, Portland, OR, *Secretary*

Mariah Whiteman, Hardin, MT

Amanda Williams, Gig Harbor, WA

TENOR

Matthew Blegen, Union, WA

David Boeckh, Seattle, WA

Mason Cole, Anacortes, WA, *Social Chair,*
Section Leader

Jason Kinsfather, Woodinville, WA

Alex Melnik, Marysville, WA

Brian Ramaley, Bellevue, WA

Nicholas Reynolds, Mukilteo, WA,
Section Leader

Cameron Simons, Longview, WA

Ben Small, Gig Harbor, WA

Nick Tagab, Redmond, WA

Yenchih (Andrew) Tang, Palo Alto, CA

Luxun Xu, Chongqing, China

Jeff (Jiajun) Yuan, Camas, WA

BASS

Adam Brown, Kenmore, WA

Kassey Castro, Seattle, WA, *Historian/Blog,*
Section Leader

Loc Hua, Olympia, WA

Paul Johns, Free Soil, MI

Benjamin Johnson, Tacoma, WA

Daehan Kim, Seoul, South Korea,

Section Leader

Jonah Melchert, Puyallup, WA

Josh Petty, Boise, ID

Kevin Rawls, Seattle, WA

Greg Rose, Kennewick, WA, *Concert Chair*

Zack Sanders, Chester, CT, *Treasurer*

Evan Shelton, Puyallup, WA, *Concert Chair*

Christopher Steckler, Mill Creek, WA

Shawn Swanson, Poulsbo, WA

Nic Varela, Tucson, AZ, *Section Leader*

Byron Walker, Mangilao, Guam

Choreography: Sarah Seder

Dancers:

Naphtali Beyleveld, Emily German,
Jana Kincl Lilah Steece, Karin Stevens,
Amy Weaver, Eileen Wingfield

Costumes: Courtesy of Cornish College of the Arts

Special thanks to the dancers for their choreographic contributions to this piece.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- November 18, Concerto Competition. 7:00 PM, Meany Theater.
November 20, Jazz Innovations, Part I. 7:30 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.
November 21, Jazz Innovations, Part II. 7:30 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.
November 27, Modern Music Ensemble. 7:30 PM, Jones Playhouse.
November 25, Voice Division Recital. 7:30 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.
December 1, Circle of Friends. 4:30 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.
December 2, Studio Jazz Ensemble/Modern Band. 7:30 PM, Meany Studio Theater.
December 2, Gospel Choir. 7:30 PM, Meany Theater.
December 3, Percussion Ensemble. 7:30 PM, Meany Studio Theater.
December 3, Ethnomusicology Visiting Artist Concert: Kevin Burke, *Irish fiddle music*. 7:30 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.
December 4, CarolFest. 7:30 PM, Meany Theater.
December 5, BRECHEMIN PIANO SERIES. 7:30 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.
December 5, Combined Bands. 7:30 PM, Meany Theater
December 6, University Symphony. 7:30 PM, Meany Theater.
December 6, Opera Theater. 7:30 PM, Jones Playhouse.
December 8, Opera Theater. 2:00 PM, Jones Playhouse.
December 15, UW Double Bass Ensemble. 2:00 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.
January 11, Barry Lieberman & Friends Guest Artist Master Class: Michael Hovnanian, *double bass*. 2:00 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.
January 12, Barry Lieberman & Friends Guest Artist Recital: Michael Hovnanian, *double bass*. 2:00 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.
January 12, LITTLEFIELD ORGAN SERIES: Eunyoung Kim. 3:00 PM, Walker Ames Room.
January 12, Faculty Recital: Michael Partington, *guitar*. 7:30 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.
January 13, Faculty Recital. Melia Watras, *viola*: Karpen/Lim/Watras/White. 7:30 PM, Meany Theater.
January 18, Trio Andromeda. 7:30 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.
January 24, UW Chamber Orchestra. 7:30 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.
January 30, University Symphony with Stephen Stubbs/Pacific MusicWorks. 7:30 PM, Meany Theater.
January 31, Modern Music Ensemble. 7:30 PM, Meany Studio Theater.
January 31, Guitar Ensemble. 7:30 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.

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