



GLORIÆ DEI CANTORES

BASED IN ORLEANS, MASSACHUSETTS, GLORIÆ DEI CANTORES (GDC) PERFORMS BEAUTIFUL CHORAL MUSIC TO TOUCH THE HEART. DISTRIBUTED GLOBALLY BY NAXOS, THEIR REPERTOIRE TRAVELS THE RICH HISTORY OF SACRED CHORAL MUSIC FROM GREGORIAN CHANT THROUGH TO TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY COMPOSITIONS. THE GROUP WAS FOUNDED IN 1988 AND IS CURRENTLY UNDER THE DIRECTION OF RICHARD K. PUGSLEY. THEIR NEW ALBUM *STABAT MATER: CHORAL WORKS BY ARVO PÄRT* WAS RELEASED IN MAY THIS YEAR.

GDC had been scheduled to tour Italy and the UK this summer but has postponed the tour until 2021. **IAM** speaks to Kirsti Pfeiffer, Gloriæ Dei Cantores' publicist and member of Gloriæ Dei Cantores.

IAM: WHAT IS THE ETHOS OF GDC AND HOW DOES THIS TRANSLATE TO THE MODERN DAY?

Kirsti Pfeiffer: Since its beginning, Gloriæ Dei Cantores has been dedicated to the pursuit of truth, beauty, and authenticity, in the music we undertake. We try to capture the vision of each composer and strive to preserve sacred choral works for future generations. We have found it a very humbling experience to delve into the sung prayers of so many nations and through them, to be able to connect with their rich heritages.

IAM: GDC IS PART OF A RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY, BUT HOW DO YOU GO ABOUT REACHING PEOPLE OF ALL FAITHS AND BACKGROUNDS?

KP: Arvo Pärt's music does indeed cross all boundaries to affect all who listen to it. Whether you're searching for refreshment, finding yourself in an impossible situation, or aching in a deep place beyond what words can express, the music of Pärt can bring you peace in these troubled times. Pärt summed it up best when he said, "Music is my friend, ever-understanding. Compassionate. Forgiving, it's a comforter, the handkerchief for drying my tears of sadness, the source of my tears of joy. My liberation and flight. But also, a painful thorn in my flesh and soul, that makes me sober and teaches humility."

Richard K. Pugsley



IAM: HOW CAN SACRED MUSIC HELP US DURING TIMES OF CRISIS?

KP: As Saint Augustine says, "To sing is to pray twice." I find that listening to sacred music can speak directly to my heart, and often helps me gain a renewed perspective that brings peace and balance to my day. It also seems like a great opportunity to connect with the musical settings of composers throughout time – it crosses races, cultures, countries, and centuries.

IAM: HOW ARE YOU BRINGING YOUR MUSIC TO AUDIENCES DURING THE LOCKDOWN?

KP: During the current situation, we are offering a couple of free music downloads each week. This is something that we rarely do, but it is very important to share with listeners during this time. We hope these will bring joy and hope to all who hear them – they are accessible to anyone around the world with an internet connection!

IAM: WHAT HAVE BEEN THE MOST NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS FOR THE CHOIR?

KP: It's a privilege as a younger member of the choir to be a part of an ensemble that has travelled to 23 countries, singing sacred choral music for the past 35 years. To be honest, the most notable achievements of the choir have been the personal relationships – the people we've met and friendships made, being able to learn about their life experiences, and about their cultures and history that has informed their faith.

INTERNATIONAL ARTS MANAGER

Of course, there are also other notable achievements: the choir singing at the opening of the 900th Anniversary of St. Mark's Basilica in Venice; taking three invitational tours to Russia – one before the fall of the iron curtain, and twice after; singing at the Rockefeller Center's Christmas tree-lighting ceremony; and most recently, our newest album release of the music of Arvo Pärt, *Stabat Mater*, which is currently #5 on the Billboard charts for Traditional Classical Music!

Other perhaps less "seen" things the choir has done have included singing at Russian composer Georgy Sviridov's graveside; singing a memorial concert to honor those who died during the 9/11 attack in New York City; singing at the Oklahoma City Memorial; singing *Otche Nache* in memory of Patriarch Alexy II's death; visiting and singing at various orphanages, prisons, and schools in numerous countries such as Albania, Bermuda, England, and Hungary.

IAM: CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY YOU WENT THROUGH WHEN MAKING THE NEW ALBUM?

KP: Since Gloriæ Dei Cantores' founding, we have always been striving to not only share our music, but also to learn and ingest the music, history, and culture of the nations we visit and of the music we sing. With that in mind, Pärt life's journey has married the eastern and western faiths. As a Benedictine-based community of faith who, through our travels, have immersed ourselves in the culture and music of the Orthodox faith, we have great experiences from which to draw to engage and learn this music.

Pärt's new musical voice of tintinnabuli draws on the western musical origins of Gregorian chant – something we as a community sing four times a day in our offices of the Liturgy of the Hours. This gives us a unique platform from which to work. Through Arvo Pärt's new expression, we have gained much life and education through studying his works – a win, win!

We are praying for all who are directly helping those in need and who are working to keep us all safe, as well as for those suffering from our current situation. We hope you can enjoy our free downloads by joining our mailing list on our websites or following us on our Facebook page.



Stabat Mater: Choral Works by Arvo Pärt was released in May. Follow the Spotify link below to hear it now.