

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESENTS
ROCKEFELLER MEMORIAL CHAPEL

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16, 2014, 7:30 PM

SERAPHIC FIRE AND SPEKTRAL QUARTET

Seraphic Fire

Patrick Quigley, conductor

Soprano

Megan Chartrand

Estelí Gomez

Sara Guttenberg

Mela Dailey

Alto

Amanda Crider

Angela Smucker

Virginia Warnken

Tenor

Brad Diamond

Patrick Muehleise

Steven Soph

Bass

James Bass

John Buffett

Charles Evans

Spektral Quartet

Aurelien Fort Pederzoli, violin

Austin Wulliman, violin

Doyle Armbrust, viola

Russell Rolan, cello

HAYDN

*Die sieben letzten Worte unseres Erlösers am
Kreuze (The Seven Last Words of our Saviour on
the Cross)*

Introduzione: Maestoso ed Adagio

Largo

**Vater, vergib ihnen, denn sie wissen nicht,
was sie tun.**

(Father, forgive them, for they know not what
they do)

Grave e cantabile

Fürwahr, ich sag es dir: Heute wirst du bei mir im Paradiese sein.

(And I tell you: Today, you will be with me in paradise)

Grave

Frau, hier siehe deinen Sohn, und du, siehe deine Mutter!

(Woman, behold your son, and son, behold your mother)

Largo

Mein Gott, mein Gott, warum hast du mich verlassen?

(My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?)

Adagio

Jesus rufet: Ach, mich dürstet!

(Jesus cried out: I thirst!)

Lento

Es ist vollbracht!

(It is finished!)

Largo

Vater, in deine Hände empfehle ich meinen Geist.

(Into your hands, Father, I commend my spirit)

Il Terremoto: Presto e con tutta la forza

(The Earthquake)

This concert is supported by the Clinton Family Fund and is presented in partnership with Rockefeller Memorial Chapel.

Photography is prohibited.



SERAPHIC FIRE

Entering its second decade, Seraphic Fire is widely regarded as one of the most important vocal ensembles in the United States. Led by Founder and Artistic Director Patrick Dupré Quigley, Seraphic Fire brings the best ensemble singers from around the country to perform repertoire ranging from Gregorian chant to newly commissioned works. This past year, the ensemble's recordings *Brahms: Ein Deutsches Requiem* and *A Seraphic Fire Christmas* were nominated for two 2012 GRAMMY® awards. Seraphic Fire was the only choir in North or South America to be nominated, and the only classical ensemble in the world to be nominated for two separate projects.

In addition to a critically-acclaimed chamber choir, the organization has established Firebird Chamber Orchestra, which collaborates with Seraphic Fire on choral-orchestral masterworks as well as independent concerts of orchestral repertoire. The orchestra, like the chorus, is made up of top-tier performers from around the country.

Seraphic Fire's artistic accomplishments have translated to chart-topping album sales. In the summer of 2010, Seraphic Fire's recording of *Monteverdi's Vespers*

of the Blessed Virgin (1610) reached the number one position on the iTunes classical music charts. The ensemble's GRAMMY®-nominated recording of Brahms: *Ein Deutsches Requiem* debuted at #7 on Billboard Magazine's Classical charts, and Seraphic Fire's newest Christmas album, of which NPR's Morning Edition proclaims "the singing is just fabulous; this group has a really excellent blend," broke into the top ten on the iTunes Classical charts on day of its release.

Seraphic Fire recently signed a three-year partnership deal with Naxos of America to distribute Seraphic Fire Media. Seraphic Fire is represented worldwide by Columbia Artists Management, Inc.



PATRICK QUIGLEY

American conductor Patrick Dupré Quigley is at the vanguard of a new generation of young Baroque specialists: completely at ease at the helm of the modern symphony orchestra while still able to create the passionate, distinctive stylings of the Baroque sound. The Founder and Artistic Director of Seraphic Fire and the Firebird Chamber Orchestra, he has been described by

the *Miami Herald* as, “A musician with a constellation of qualities rarely found in a single conductor: an enthusiastic and audience-friendly personal style, a scholar’s instinct for rooting out obscure but worthy music, a scrupulous and historically informed approach to works that span a wide range of musical periods, an ability to bring out the best in his talented platoon . . . and a showman’s canny sense of how to appeal to audiences.”

Mr. Quigley was nominated for two 2012 GRAMMY® awards for his work with Seraphic Fire: Best Choral Performance for Brahms: *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, and Best Small Ensemble Performance for *A Seraphic Fire Christmas*. He was the only conductor in the world to be nominated for two separate projects. Under his direction, Seraphic Fire has released eleven recordings on the Seraphic Fire Media label, with two additional recordings forthcoming this year.

2012 saw Mr. Quigley making guest appearances with the San Francisco Symphony’s Community of Music Makers series, Cincinnati’s professional Vocal Arts Ensemble, and two separate appearances with the San Antonio Symphony. With Seraphic Fire, Patrick will conduct over 60 performances across the United States.

Quigley has been lauded as an adept arts entrepreneur and a savvy institution builder. In ten seasons, Quigley has grown Seraphic Fire & the Firebird Chamber Orchestra into a vibrant, cutting-edge arts organization — mounting acclaimed performances of Baroque mainstays, introducing new

work and exploring under-performed treasures with equal success.

Quigley is the recipient of the 2004 Robert Shaw Conducting Fellowship, given annually by the National Endowment for the Arts and Chorus America to one conductor between the ages of 25 and 40 who demonstrates the potential for a significant professional career. At 26, Mr. Quigley was the youngest person to receive this award. Most recently, Mr. Quigley was awarded Chorus America’s 2011 Louis Botto Award for Innovative Action and Entrepreneurial Zeal, recognizing his artistic and institution-building achievements with Seraphic Fire. Mr. Quigley has been a featured guest on National Public Radio’s *All Things Considered* and is a sought-after speaker and consultant regarding arts entrepreneurship. Patrick received his M.Mus. in conducting from the Yale School of Music, his B.A. in musicology from the University of Notre Dame, and is a graduate of the Indiana University Center on Philanthropy’s Fundraising School.

This is Seraphic Fire and Patrick Quigley’s first appearance with UChicago Presents.



SPEKTRAL QUARTET

Founded in 2010, the Spektral Quartet is widely regarded as one of Chicago's most magnetic and forward-thinking chamber ensembles. The group's inclusive approach to concert format, transforming the audience experience from a transactional one to a far more intimate phenomenon, has earned it a loyal following within and far beyond the city limits.

Since its inception, the Spektral Quartet has sought out the discourse between the masterworks of the traditional canon and those written this decade, this year, or this week. Rather than simply pairing Brian Ferneyhough with Josef Haydn or Thomas Adès with Béla Bartók, though, the group offers listeners an even more elastic and absorbing experience through its Sampler Pack concert format. For these performances, shorter works and single movements are curated in a set list containing a menagerie of musical styles, spanning centuries. The unexpected similarities and enticing contrasts between two or three composers becomes a conversation between twelve.

The 2013/14 season finds the group venturing into another bold endeavor at

the intersection of music and everyday life with Mobile Miniatures. For it, forty composers from across the US including David Lang, Augusta Read Thomas, Nico Muhly and Shulamit Ran were commissioned to write ringtone-length pieces for the Spektral Quartet to workshop, record and make available to the public for download to mobile devices.

Now in its fourth season, the Spektral Quartet serves as ensemble-in-residence at the University of Chicago and was invited in 2013 to join the Rush Hour Series's Back-of-the-Yards project, which will offer year-long music education and outreach in one of Chicago's most underserved neighborhoods.

This season also includes the launch of the Spektral Quartet's second album, a Latin jazz collaboration with bandoneon/accordion virtuoso Julien Labro, slated for release in the Spring of 2014 on Azica Records. In November of 2013, the Spektral Quartet traveled to Switzerland and France to perform and record Ernest Chausson's Concerto for violin, piano and string quartet, Op. 21 with violinist Rachel Kolly d'Alba and pianist Christian Chamorel for the Warner Classics label.

PROGRAM NOTES



The Seven Last Words of Our Saviour on the Cross

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN

b. March 31, 1732, Rohrau, Austria

d. May 31, 1809, Vienna, Austria

Haydn may have claimed that his thirty years as kapellmeister to the Esterhazy princes forced him to work in isolation, but from that quiet isolation his fame spread steadily across Europe. One of the clearest signs of this came in 1784 when Haydn received a handsome commission from Paris for six symphonies, and he worked on these “Paris” Symphonies (Nos. 82-87) during the years 1785-86. At exactly this same moment came an even more remarkable commission. A Spanish cleric wrote to Haydn to ask for music to accompany the reading — on Good Friday, 1787 — of the seven final statements of Christ on the cross.

Haydn rarely commented on his music, but in 1801 he recalled the circumstances of this work’s creation, and it is worth quoting him at length:

About fifteen years ago I was requested by a canon of Cadíz to compose instrumental music on the Seven Words of Jesus on the

Cross. It was the custom of the Cathedral of Cadíz to produce an oratorio every year during Lent, the effect of the performance being not a little enhanced by the following circumstances. The walls, windows, and pillars of the church were hung with black cloth, and only a large lamp, hanging from the center of the roof, broke the solemn obscurity. At midday, the doors were closed and the ceremony began. After an appropriate prelude, the bishop ascended the pulpit, pronounced one of the Seven Words and delivered a discourse thereon. This ended, he left the pulpit and knelt prostrate before the altar. This pause was filled with music. The bishop then in like manner pronounced the second word, then the third, and so on, the orchestra falling in at the conclusion of the discourse.

It should further be noted that the Good Friday observances in Cadiz took place not in the cathedral but in the Chapel of Santa Cueva, a cave carved in a hillside beneath the cathedral, so this music was first performed in a profound darkness.

Haydn wrote this set of musical meditations for large orchestra (one that included four horns and timpani), and it was performed in Cadíz on April 6, 1787. But it is a telling indication of the fame of the 55-year-old composer that it was performed almost simultaneously in both Vienna and Bonn; in fact, those two performances took place at the end of March and so preceded the Cadíz ceremony (and it is likely that one of the performers in the Bonn orchestra was a 16-year-old violist named Beethoven). Haydn regarded *The Seven Last*

Words of Christ as one of the greatest successes he ever had as a composer, and he conducted it at his last public performance, in 1803.

There is no question about Haydn's devout Catholic faith: he inscribed the words *Laus Deo* ("Praise God") at the end of the manuscripts of all of his symphonies. But while he welcomed this commission, he found it a challenge, noting that "it was not an easy matter to compose seven Adagios to last ten minutes each, and follow one after the other without fatiguing the listener . . ." Uncertain how to proceed, he consulted his friend, the Abbé Maximilian Stadler, who suggested building the main theme of each movement on the rhythm of its Latin text, and this proved a useful procedure.

Haydn said of *The Seven Last Words*: "Each [movement], or rather each setting of the text, is expressed only by instrumental music, but in such a way that it creates the most profound impression on even the most inexperienced listener." The challenge for him as a composer was to capture the spirit of these solemn words and to create music suitable for meditation on each of them, yet still to engage a listener's interest across the span of seven slow movements. He addressed the last of these in several ways: by making sharp contrasts between the character of the movements (some are lyric and lamenting, others dramatic), by varying keys effectively, and by contrasting sonorities — muting the strings for one movement, using pizzicato at other points. Haydn frames these seven slow movements with contrasted outer movements. He establishes

a suitably solemn atmosphere with an *Introduction* in D minor that he marks *Maestoso ed Adagio*, and he concludes with a musical depiction of the earthquake that rocked Calvary after the crucifixion. At last we have a fast movement — it is marked *Presto e con tutta la forza* — and it brings *The Seven Last Words* to a conclusion that is satisfying both emotionally and musically.

Alert to the commercial possibilities of *The Seven Last Words*, Haydn made several arrangements of it. He prepared a version for string quartet (and the music is often heard in this form), and he oversaw its transcription for solo piano. And then he encountered a performance that pushed him to completely re-imagine the work. In January 1794, on his way to London for his second visit to England, Haydn stopped in Passau, where he heard a version of *The Seven Last Words* for chorus and orchestra by the local kapellmeister, Joseph Frieibert. Frieibert had created an entirely new text that "told" the story of the crucifixion rather than simply offering Christ's last words. Intrigued by this version, Haydn took a copy with him, and after he returned to Vienna in 1795 he asked his friend Baron Gottfried van Swieten (who would later write the texts for *The Creation and The Seasons*) to reshape Frieibert's text. In London Haydn had been amazed by Handel's oratorios, and now he transformed *The Seven Last Words* into a kind of oratorio: he added soloists, expanded the orchestra, and composed some new music to accommodate the new text and to make the work more dramatic. This "final" version was successfully premiered in Vienna on March 26, 1796.

Haydn's setting of *The Seven Last Words* is heard at this concert in an unusual arrangement: the thirteen-voice Seraphic Fire joins the Spektral Quartet in a version that presents Haydn's "oratorio" version with the accompaniment of a string quartet rather than a symphony orchestra. This has involved some editing and arranging of Haydn's version for string quartet, a task that has been accomplished by Joe Clark. Haydn's *Seven Last Words of Christ* has been heard in many versions, and this unique performance combines the grandeur of the Friebert-Swieten oratorio version with the clarity and concision of Haydn's string quartet arrangement. Haydn was receptive to the many ways *The Seven Last Words of Christ* could be performed. Doubtless he would have enjoyed the version performed on this evening's concert.

—Program notes by Eric Bromberger © 2014