

August, 2007

Dear friends:

It's going to be an exciting year!

First off is a concert with two pianos and percussion. The centerpiece of the program is Orff's *Carmina Burana*. As I'm sure most of you know, it's a romp -- intensely and propulsively rhythmic, with colorful accompaniments. It's fun to rehearse, and even more enjoyable to perform. I'm sure many of you have sung it before, so you know what a treat we're in for; and for those for whom the Orff is a new experience, buckle your seat belt and enjoy the ride!

Also on the program is Anton Bruckner's extraordinary *Te Deum*. I've never heard it performed without orchestra, but I discovered this past year that Bruckner conducted its premiere in a version for two pianos. The opening thundering octaves will sound marvelous on the piano!

We'll sing this concert twice: first at Clinton Presbyterian Church on Sunday, October 21st (where we sang the piano version of the Brahms *Requiem* last spring) and again at Drew University on Saturday, November 3rd. I am delighted that these two halls will be our home venues this year. I think they worked beautifully for us last year, and look forward to filling them with beautiful music again.

After the Orff festa we'll return to our annual Messiah-ing; two in Carnegie Hall on Saturday, December 22nd (2 and 8 pm), and one at Community Theatre in Morristown on the afternoon of Sunday, December 23rd. We have some exciting young soloists joining us who I think you'll enjoy (and who I'm sure you'll hear more of in the future). They include soprano Clara Rottsolk, mezzo Kathleen Flynn, tenor Christopher Cock and baritone Jeffrey Fields.

Our spring concert features a Requiem that will be familiar to most of you (at least in spots) -- although you probably don't know it. Michael Haydn (Joseph's younger brother) wrote his Requiem in B-flat for the cathedral in Salzburg. Leopold Mozart, who was working there at the time, told his son that if he ever composed a Requiem, he should consider the Haydn his model. If you listen closely, you'll hear where much of Mozart's later masterpiece in the Haydn comes from.

We'll pair the Haydn *Requiem* with a beloved work of Mozart's -- the *Solemn Vespers*. The Vespers service in Catholic usage (as opposed to the Rachmaninov) consists of a setting of the Magnificat plus five psalms, including "Laudate Dominum," one of the loveliest of all of Mozart's works (and that's saying a lot!). Our venue for this performance is again Drew University (on Sunday, April 27th); it should be a beautiful concert for a spring afternoon, full of elegant and expressive music.

I'm delighted, of course, to have the joy of continuing to work with our Associate Conductor, Tom Cunningham. He'll be taking over much of the leadership of the Masterwork Touring and Chamber

Choirs. Auditions for these groups will take place mid-September; information on what you'll be asked to sing and what the year looks like for the smaller choirs will be announced and distributed at our first rehearsal, which is, of course, the first Wednesday in September – the 5th.

Although it's been a great summer, I can't wait to see you all again and begin our work for the year. See you soon!

Andrew

P.S. Sopranos, don't forget that I'll be hearing you on Wednesday, August 29th. I'll have you vocalize and sight-read, and ask you to sing the "Amen" from the end of *Messiah* and the fugue from the end of the 3rd movement of the Brahms *Requiem* ("Der Geretchen . . .").

P.P.S. If you have friends who are wonderful singers and outstanding readers, please encourage them to consider auditioning to join Masterwork. Invite them to our first rehearsal; auditions will take place the following night, Thursday, September 6th. Becky A will be coordinating the audition times, as well as the soprano hearing times on August 29th (thanks, Becky!).