

Spring 4-2018

Holy Cross Choirs Newsletter (Spring 2018)

Choir, College of the Holy Cross

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Holy Cross Choirs

Volume 3, Spring
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March Concert Overview

Samantha Sweet '21

As a first year student from a public school choir I was not very accustomed to singing psalms before coming to Holy Cross. But that all changed in preparation for our most recent choir concert, Songs of Inspiration, Hope, and Praise, where we sang a collection of epic psalm settings inside the St.

Joseph Memorial Chapel. These beautifully powerful pieces were only accentuated by performing in such a grand setting with the Holy Cross orchestra and it was an experience that helped to grow me as a musician.

The Holy Cross choir has been instrumental in my growth as not only a singer but as a member of the Holy Cross community. The College Choir was the first group of people I was introduced to on campus, during Choir Week, and I am so grateful for the way they shaped my first few days on campus.

Despite being very apprehensive about leaving home even sooner than planned, I decided to come to Choir Week at Holy Cross. The experience not only set the bar for the standards I would be held to for the rest of my time at Holy Cross, but also allowed me to meet a fantastic group of people, all of whom love singing as much as I do. That first week we learned over eight songs, went on a scavenger hunt around Worcester, went to the Worcester Art Museum, had a board game night and then ran around campus taking photos of some of the best things about the Holy Cross campus. As I look back at our most recent concert I am proud of how much I have learned, and am so grateful for the College Choir, and the fantastic friends I have made because of it.

Trivia Time!

Can you guess the answers to these trivia questions relating to our spring repertoire?

In what famous holiday movie was "Blue Skies" performed?

In what type of unique performance style was "Sleep" by Eric Whitacre performed?

And from our last concert: What is one of Gustav Holst's most famous works (incidentally, an orchestra score)?

Answers: White Christmas, a virtual choir, *The Planets*

Chamber Singers Concert Preview

Elizabeth Driver '19

Preparing for the upcoming Chamber Singers concert has undoubtedly been a challenge for most of the members, including me! This month, we are performing a program almost entirely in French. One of the most prominent challenges is learning how the language works, before we can begin to tackle the musical aspects of the program. A significant portion of our rehearsals have been dedicated to diction coaching and speaking the songs aloud, thanks to help from Professor Martin and Professor Schilt from the French department.

Apart from French, we are also singing in English and Latin. My favorite piece of the program is definitely *Tantum ergo*, by Maurice Duruflé. Drawing text from the thirteenth century, this piece largely moves in stepwise motion, encouraging a beautiful blend of ebbs and flows between the voice parts. It is truly a beautiful piece. One of the lines in the song, "Praestet fides supplementum sensuum defectui," roughly translates to "May faith supply a substitute for the failure of the senses." It is at this moment in the song that the music crescendos, little by little to show the power of faith, and then decrescendoing to a softer dynamic, encompassing the latter part of the phrase. The concert selections are varied in time periods, languages, and expressions, but one thing's for sure: this is a concert you won't want to miss.

**Professor Allegra Martin
previews our final concert
of the year!**

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The College Choir's final concert of the year features music that takes us up and out of this world. We have music about the sky, stars, and the moon, as well as sleep and dreams. There are also songs about the glory of God and the joy of going to heaven. We are enjoying a variety of styles in this concert, including folk, gospel, jazz, and classical. A few of the pieces we are performing include Irving Berlin's "Blue Skies"; a folk tune called "Bright Morning Stars" that we are learning by ear; and a setting of a traditional spiritual called "Ain'a That Good News!" by William Dawson. We will also be performing "Sleep" by Eric Whitacre; he is one of the most well-known choral composers working today, and this piece is one of his most famous. We'll be sharing a work by Fanny Mendelssohn-Hensel, Felix's talented sister, all about clouds and singing to the heavens. And our student conductor, Michael Shun '18, will be conducting a work that was performed a decade ago and written by a composer who was a big fan of the choral program at Holy Cross, Dorothy VanAndel Frisch. The Chamber Singers, who are presenting an all-French program in mid-April, will perform a set. And we'll end with an uplifting setting of Paul Laurence Dunbar poetry by one of the most talented young composers working today, Rollo Dilworth. We hope you can join us for this program that is all about looking up, out, and beyond!