

ENSEMBLE

THE VOICE OF THE CHORAL ART FORM IN SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

Volume 1, Issue 31
January 2017


Happy New Year !!!

Abigail Allison
Accompanist
Symphonic
Chorale of South-
west Florida



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Spirit of the Gulf - the “wow” factor



From a 30-voice all female chorus named Fever back in the 90's to an internationally renowned 115-voice show chorus today now called Spirit of the Gulf based in Fort Myers, it took more than luck....these girls are really good. When they're on stage you better buckle up and hold on to your seats, it's gonna be a wild ride. Their's is the type of chorus unfamiliar to the typical classical chorus. Everything they do is designed to entertain...costumes, choreography, facial expression, enthusiasm. Oh, and no music scores to distract them...all music is memorized and acapella.

If you're inflicted with inhibitions, this is no place for you. Sound like fun? It is, but be prepared to work. Don't know your part? Forgeddaboutit. The level at which this chorus competes and performs is no place for the slacker. Their hallmark is dedication to their art form under the banner of Sweet



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Adelines International (SAI), the worlds largest women's singing organization now numbering 24,000.

Under the direction of Artistic Director Mike Slamka, himself a member of an award winning international

champion quartet, Spirit of the Gulf draws women from around the state of Florida who trek to Fort Myers each week for rehearsals where they learn more about the art of acapella singing. Vocal instruction is a regular part of rehearsals, and a very important component

of the chorus experience. Several times a year, they will receive coaching from a visiting master in the art of barbershop, where they learn many of the fabulous tricks of the Barbershop style.

Continued Page 4, See Spirit

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Gloria Musicae

**B
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Beyond the Lullaby

Presenting two works by Brahms

Liebeslieder Walzer and Zigeunerlieder

The serious side of Johannes Brahms is upended in these lilting waltzes of love and the vibrant gypsy songs; bonbons from the pen of the symphonic master. The Romantic palette included soundscapes of majestic proportion as well as delightful miniatures such as these.

The concert features Gloria Musicae Singers in two separate groups and Luis González makes his Gloria Musicae debut as conductor for the Liebeslieder

Sunday, January 22, 4:00PM

Faith Lutheran Church, Sarasota



Joseph Holt
Artistic Director



15th Anniversary: The Best of Seraphic Fire



“Majestic God, our Muse inspire, and fill us with Seraphic Fire!”
These stalwart strophes by William Billings were sung 15 years ago by an enterprising professional chorus and its young founder. Now a decade and a half later, Patrick Dupré Quigley and Seraphic Fire celebrate the music that transformed the group into a nationally-recognized ensemble and perform new pieces that will propel it into the next decade.

Thursday, January 19, 7:00pm, Bower Chapel, Naples

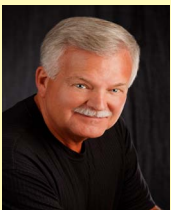
Tickets: www.seraphicfire.org

Voices of Naples

With a Voice of Singing

Sunday, January 29, 2017, 4:00 pm
First Presbyterian Church of Naples

No ticket necessary: freewill offering



Douglas Renfroe
Artistic Director

SPOTLIGHT

Stephen Parker

Assistant Conductor/Chorus Director
Naples Orchestra and Chorus



Stephen J. Parker comes to Naples Orchestra and Chorus with a long history of choral conducting and vocal coaching in secular and sacred settings. Presently, he is in his 17th year as Director of Music and Worship at First United Methodist Church, Naples' first and oldest congregation which is celebrating its 125th anniversary in 2016. FUMC's all-volunteer Chancel choir and music ministry is known for its quality vocal and instrumental presentations for generations of Naples' longtime families.

Prior to his tenure with FUMC, Parker served for 10 years as Director of Music at North Naples United Methodist, where his family were charter members and he spent his youth in some of his first musical experiences. Under his musical direction, the NNUMC music ministry grew from two choirs to fourteen multi-generational vocal and instrumental ensembles.

Parker is also a charter member of the Naples Philharmonic Chorus, performing with the ensemble for several seasons.

In addition to his local vocal directing and coaching experience, Parker is a 25-year per service member of the Naples Philharmonic as a saxophonist and woodwindist, and performs frequently with the Southwest Florida Symphony and the Charlotte Symphony. He is in high demand as an orchestral member for annual touring Broadway shows around the state of Florida, and has performed in recent months sharing the stage with artists Renee Fleming, Bernadette Peters, Johnny Mathis, Aretha Franklin, Idina Menzel, Bebe Neuwirth, Chita Rivera, Rita Moreno, Michael Feinstein, The Temptations, and The Four Tops. His mentors and instructors have included Margaret Hillis of the Chicago Lyric Opera Chorus, Frederic Hemke, John Paynter, and Jerome Edwards.

Spirit of the Gulf spawns championship quartets

Spirit, continued from page 1

Spirit of the Gulf chorus holds many honors. Beginning in 2002, these honors include: 11 Florida State SAI Chorus Champion medals, six top-ten medals at Sweet Adelines International competition, most recently earning a 10th place SAI International medal in Baltimore 2014.



Director Slamka joined the group in January 2013, coming from a lifetime of barbershop experience. He grew up in a barbershop family and first sang with a chorus when he was ten years old. Besides directing the world class chorus he now sings with Crossroads, the 2009 Barbershop Harmony Society International Champions. The men came together from four separate champion quartets and originally four different states. They have become a much sought after quartet, performing in Germany, France, Finland, the U.K., Spain, Japan, and across the United States.

“This chorus is more than music,” according to Slamka, “it’s all about changing the lives of those for whom and with whom we sing”.

That comment personifies the dedication instilled in Spirit of the Gulf that has earned the chorus the title of Most Entertaining Chorus at three International competitions in Las Vegas, Hawaii, and Denver. In November, 2014 they competed in Baltimore and finished in tenth place overall, a level most choruses do not reach in the competition.

Most barbershop choruses have a number of members who form their own vocal quartets in addition to singing with the chorus and here again the group has excelled. Spirit of the Gulf is home to a



The Buzz



Bling



Attitude



Sassy



It’s not only music, it’s showmanship

number of quartets. Currently nine quartets are active, including two International and two regional Champions. (See sidebar) Quartets are outside the activity of the main chorus so a major time commitment is required, which is second nature to these dedicated women who come from all walks of life.

What is so different about

barbershop music? Barbershop singing is one of the trickiest yet most rewarding accomplishments of a vocal ensemble. Imagine this — you’re singing a song with three other harmonizing ladies, each hitting the perfect pitch when bam — you hear it. An overtone vibration, a resonant ring, a different sound than any one tone being sung by any one

singer! This overtone produces a visceral experience and is unique only to four-part barbershop harmonies! There you have the reason that draws almost 100,000 men and women around the world to the barbershop style of singing and it was born right here in the good old U.S.A. almost 80 years ago in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Accompanists - The unsung hero's of the chorus



Abigail Brooke Allison
Symphonic Chorale of Southwest Florida

Abigail Brooke Allison graduated from Ithaca College (Ithaca, NY): with a B.M., cum laude, in Piano Performance and String Music Education. She also attended Chicago School for Piano Technology (Chicago, IL) where she received a Certificate in Piano Tuning and Technology.

Abbey has been a freelance pianist in Ithaca, NY; Chicago, IL; Boothbay Harbor, ME; Fort Myers and Sanibel, FL. She has accompanied both student and professional instrumentalists, vocalists, and new music ensembles Tabula Rasa (Ithaca, NY) and the University of Chicago New Music Ensemble; as well as serving as pianist for churches and synagogues.



Nancy Yost Olson,
Key Chorale,

Nancy Olson spent more than 32 years as a choral conductor, church organist, and organ recitalist in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Minnesota. She is a graduate of Westminster Choir College where she majored in Organ Performance and sang in their Symphonic Choir. She has done advanced studies in choral conducting and is a former finalist in the AGO National Organ Competition.

She has accompanied Gloria Musicae, Belle Canto and others. Nancy also serves on Key Chorale's Board of Directors and is a former singing member and Soprano Section Leader of the organization.



Jonathan Spivey
Belle Canto and Sarasota Choral Society

Jonathan Spivey society earned a Doctor of Musical Arts Degree in Piano Performance from the State University of New York at Stony Brook. A national finalist in the Music Teacher's National Association auditions, his concert appearances include Long Island; Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall; Melbourne (Florida); Trondheim, Norway; Stockholm, Sweden; and Seoul, Korea.

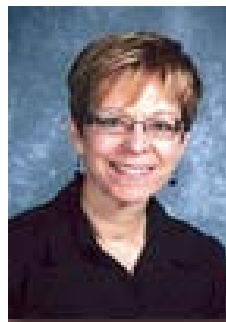
Dr. Spivey, Principal Keyboard for the Sarasota Orchestra, has been the pianist of the New Artists Piano Quartet of the Florida West Coast Symphony since 1991. He is a founding member of the Arioso Trio in Tampa. He serves as Organist at Pine Shores Presbyterian Church in Sarasota.



Virginia Bray
Musica Sacra Cantorum

Viignia Puckett Bray has been accompanist for Music Sacra Cantorum since 2013, having first accompanied the Chorus in its program titled 'Gloria!' and featuring settings of the text by Antonio Vivaldi and Francis Poulenc. She now supports both choral ensembles as rehearsal accompanist as well as performance accompanist.

Virginia is on the faculty of New College - Florida, teaching all aspects of piano performance at the college since 1985. She is currently the music director of Saint Martha's Catholic Church in Sarasota and was for many years the rehearsal and performance accompanist on piano and organ for Key Chorale, as well as the rehearsal and performance accompanist and a vocalist for Gloria Musicae, both well-respected Sarasota musical organizations.



Janet Carter has been accompanist for the Mastersingers since its inception. Ms. Carter is currently a music educator in the Lee County School System.

She majored in music education and received her degree from the University of Illinois. While teaching in the Illinois school system she received her Masters degree in piano from Northern Illinois University, subsequently teaching privately and then serving as school band director in Northbrook, Illinois.



Sybil Broh was born and bred in the Chicago area. She received both her Bachelors and Masters of Music from Northwestern University majoring in Piano and Vocal Music. As Music Coordinator in the Illinois Public School System, she taught vocal music, directed the Symphonic Choir and produced a yearly staged musical. Upon moving to Sarasota in 1999, Sybil became an accompanist for the Sarastoa Jewish Chorale and a member of their soprano section. Among her other activities, she plays with the exclusive Suncoast Duo

Pianists, a group of musicians who perform locally in two-piano concerts.

Priscilla Shore has accompanied the Sarasota Jewish Chorale since its debut season, having moved from Connecticut to Venice, Florida in 1997. She has a Bachelors of Music degree from Boston University and has taught vocal and instrument-music in public schools in addition to giving private piano lessons. Priscilla sings in the tenor section and with the choir of the Jewish Center Venice.



LaVon Mattson, Voices of Naples is the organist at East Naples United Methodist Church. She was a voice and piano major at Bethel College, St. Paul, Min-

nesota, and Viterbo College in La-Crosse, Wisconsin. Prior to moving to Florida, LaVon was the administrative assistant to the president of the Interlochen Center for the Arts in Interlochen, Michigan. A native of Kulm, North Dakota, she also teaches piano.



MUSICA SACRA CANTORUM

Maurice Duruflé *Francis Poulenc*

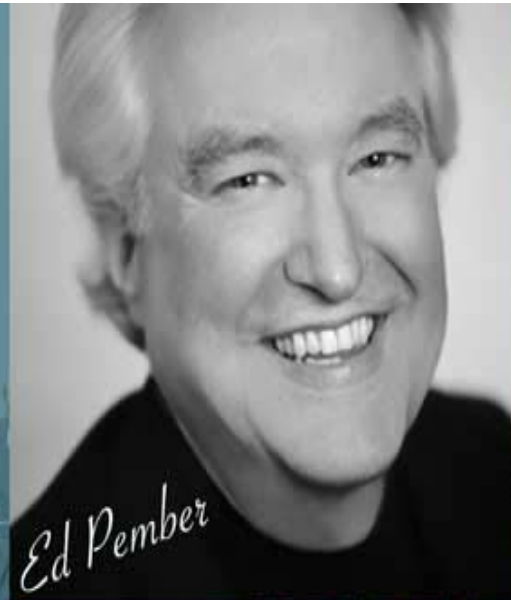
FRENCH FLAIR

MAURICE DURUFLÉ
REQUIEM, OP. 9
FRANCIS POULENC
CONCERTO FOR ORGAN, STRINGS AND TIMPANI IN G MINOR
ANN STEPHENSON-MOE, ORGANIST

JANUARY 23, 2017
7:30 PM - CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER, SARASOTA
WWW.MSCCHORUS.ORG
941.405.7322



*Where there is love,
there is Music*



Saturday, January 28, 2017 at 6 PM - 10 PM

Tickets: www.symphonicchorale.org

Landings Yacht Club, Fort Myers