



BARBARA AND WILLIAM KARATZ CHAMBER CONCERT SERIES
Twenty-fourth Anniversary Season

OPUS 3 ARTISTS PRESENTS

NEW YORK POLYPHONY

GEOFFREY WILLIAMS, COUNTERTENOR
STEVEN CALDICOTT WILSON, TENOR
CHRISTOPHER DYLAN HERBERT, BARITONE
CRAIG PHILLIPS, BASS

Faith and Reason

*Missa Charles Darwin**

Introitus: Tropus Ad Kyrie
Gloria: There is grandeur in this view of life
Alleluia: It is those who know little and not those who know much
Credo: All that we can do
Sanctus: As buds give rise
Agnus Dei / Ite missa est: Natural selection

Gregory Brown
(b. 1974)

Three American Folk Hymns

“Morning Trumpet”
“The Dying Californian”
“Sweet Hour of Prayer”

arr. Gregory Brown

INTERMISSION

*Kyrie Cunctipotens Genitor Deus**

Andrew Smith
(b. 1970)

Mass for Four Voices

Gloria in excelsis Deo
Credo in unum Deum
Sanctus and Benedictus
Agnus Dei

Thomas Tallis
(1505–1585)

*Ite missa est**

Gabriel Jackson
(b. 1962)

**Composed for New York Polyphony*

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2013, 7:30 PM
ATHENAEUM MUSIC & ARTS LIBRARY
JOAN & IRWIN JACOBS MUSIC ROOM

Please join us in the gallery for a reception with the artists following the performance. Financial support for most Athenaeum programs is provided in part by the City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture and the County of San Diego.

New York Polyphony

Praised for a “rich, natural sound that’s larger and more complex than the sum of its parts,” (National Public Radio) New York Polyphony is regarded as one of the finest vocal chamber ensembles in the world. The four men “sing with intelligence, subtlety and consummate artistry” (*Richmond Times-Dispatch*), applying a distinctly modern touch to repertoire that ranges from austere medieval melodies to cutting-edge contemporary compositions. Their dedication to innovative programming, as well as a focus on rare and rediscovered works, has not only earned New York Polyphony critical acclaim and a devoted following, but also helped to move early music into the classical mainstream.

Earlier this year, New York Polyphony released its fourth album, *Times Go by Turns*. The recording features masses by Thomas Tallis and William Byrd, as well as an enigmatic three-voice mass setting by medieval English composer John Plummer. Three new works written for New York Polyphony by composers Gabriel Jackson, Andrew Smith, and the late Sir Richard Rodney Bennett complete the sequence.

New York Polyphony released its third album, *endBeginning*, on BIS Records in early 2012. Featuring rare and never-before recorded works from the Franco-Flemish Renaissance, the album has amassed substantial critical acclaim. Hailed as a “gorgeous, reflective program” by National Public Radio, it was selected as one of the Top Ten Notable Classical Music Recordings of 2012 by *The New Yorker* and rated 10-out-of-10 by *Classics Today*.

“A stunning tour through chant, polyphony and renaissance harmonies” (*Minnesota Public Radio*), New York Polyphony’s second album, *Tudor City*, spent three weeks in the Top 10 of *Billboard’s* classical album chart. It has been featured on Danish Public Radio, American Public Radio and NPR’s *All Things Considered*.

New York Polyphony’s debut album, *I Sing the Birth*, was released in 2007. The disc—an intimate meditation on the Christmas season—garnered unanimous praise. *Gramophone* named it “one of the season’s best,” *BBC Music Magazine* selected it as Editor’s Christmas Choice, and *Classic FM Magazine* (UK) deemed it “a disc for all seasons.”

Since its founding in 2006, New York Polyphony has maintained an active performance schedule. The ensemble has toured extensively, participating in major concert series and festivals throughout North America and Europe. Highlights include Dallas Chamber Music Series; Miller Theatre at Columbia University Early Music Series; Ardee Baroque Festival (Ireland); Vendsyssel Festival (Denmark); Festival de Música de Morelia (Mexico); Elora Festival (Canada); and Choral at Cadogan Hall in London. They have been featured on *Performance Today* for American Public Media, *Footprints to Paradise: A Medieval Christmas* for Public Radio International, and BBC Radio 3’s *In Tune*. In December 2011, New York Polyphony made its national television debut on *The Martha Stewart Show*.

Recent engagements include residencies at Dartmouth College and Mount Royal University in Calgary, Alberta, a broadcast holiday event for Minnesota Public Radio, and the European premiere of the *Missa Charles Darwin*—a newly commissioned secular Mass setting based on texts of Charles Darwin by composer Gregory Brown—at the Museum für Naturkunde in Berlin, Germany. In April, New York Polyphony completed a two-week residency at Stanford University during which the ensemble participated in the world premiere of Jonathan Berger’s chamber opera cycle *Visitations* with soprano Heather Buck and the St. Lawrence String Quartet.

PROGRAM NOTES

Missa Charles Darwin

Gregory Brown (Born 1974)

Missa is simply the Latin form of the word *Mass* and refers to the texts and music of the Roman Catholic liturgy. This liturgy has an established structure and in general terms is associated with a public celebration of faith. Naturalist Charles Darwin’s name forms the latter part of the title due to the fact that the bulk of the texts used in this mass are taken from his writings of Charles Darwin, particularly the seminal *Origin of Species*. The musical and liturgical form of the Mass is distinct and canonic, with intrinsic proportions, structure, and drama. Casting Darwin’s texts into that form is a way of drawing parallels, and exploring contrasts between the two, as in the Kyrie. The central message of the Kyrie is one of supplication and mercy, while Darwin’s natural selection is inherently lacking in mercy. This format is also a way to venerate Darwin and his legacy in a form that is associated with the public celebration of belief.

The practice of substituting a different set of texts into the Mass is not a new one, and has been practiced in various forms throughout the centuries, though generally with other sacred texts substituting for the typical Mass texts. Perhaps the most notable example of something like this—again sacred—is *Ein deutsches Requiem* by Johannes Brahms, which uses the name *Requiem*, (a particular type of Mass for the dead) but substitutes Brahms’s own selections from scripture in place of the liturgy.