



‘Where the biggies leave off...’

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Lumina, Mirandola Ensemble perform Lenten concerts at St. Mark's on February 24 and March 10

By Michael Wilson

The mystery, beauty, and hope of Lent suffuse the programs of two of the area's finest small choral groups, Lumina and the Mirandola Ensemble, in concerts sponsored by the St. Mark's Music Series on February 24 and March 10.

The Twin Cities have been blessed over the past two decades with a remarkable profusion of new choral, chamber, theater, and dance groups, propelled by a surging creative community and sustained by audiences always eager for more. New performance spaces have emerged as a result and now include restaurants such as Icehouse, event venues such as Aria, and lounges such as Crooners.

Amid all the newness, one of the area's finest performance spaces is one of its oldest, and right on our Hill and Lake doorstep: St. Mark's Cathedral.

For over a century, since 1910, with its soaring stone vaults, beautiful stained glass, and excellent acoustic, St. Mark's has been synonymous with the finest in choral, orchestral, and organ music. Since 1971 the St. Mark's Music Series has brought audiences an ever-widening array of performers, fulfilling its mission of "Sacred Music in a Sacred Space."

Lumina on Saturday, February 24.

Lumina is a professional women's ensemble, drawing for their concerts from a rich well of musical sources including Medieval chants, Renaissance motets, folk song traditions, and works by living and local composers. In the tradition of the ground-breaking group Anonymous 4, the women of Lumina perform without accompaniment. Group members include Linda Kachelmeier, Angela Grunstad, Clara Osowski, and Kim Sueoka.

Lumina artistic director Kachelmeier tells Hill & Lake Press that their St. Mark's concert will explore Lent through the eyes of Mary. "The Lenten narrative focuses on the journey of the Son of God towards his Passion, death, and resurrection," Kachelmeier says. "As women we're struck by the knowledge that this period was agonizing as well for Mary as the mother of God. We've brought together an exciting variety of

music ranging from the soaring melodies of Hildegard von Bingen to a world premiere."

Southern harmony and the music of American singer-songwriter Patty Griffin will feature in the Lumina concert, as well as the first performance of a "Magnificat" — the "song of Mary" — and "Nunc Dimittis" composed by Kachelmeier.

Mirandola Ensemble on Saturday, March 4.

The Mirandola Ensemble's March 4 program "Parce Domine" is a candlelit concert of choral music centered around Gesualdo's stunning "Tenebrae Responsories for Holy Saturday. The program will also feature Lenten chants and motets, including Robert White's "Christe qui lux es et dies" and Thomas Weelkes' "Hosanna to the Son of David." Performing will be Andrew Kane (bass), Matthew Culloton (tenor), Nicholas Chalmers (alto/tenor), Angela Grunstad (soprano), and Hannah Armstrong Stanke (soprano).

"I am always thinking about audiences when I build a program," Mirandola artistic director Chalmers tells Hill & Lake Press. "For the March 10 concert I was very cognizant of creating a program that would fit the liturgical mood of Lent, one of contemplation, anticipation, and certainly one of beauty. Our concert will be candlelit and performed with limited applause to help foster this ambience. Gesualdo's "Tenebrae Responsories," which forms the core of the program, is some of the most 'out there' writing one encounters in

the entire Renaissance. Athletic vocal lines conjoin contrapuntally to envelop the listener in colorful, sometimes even jarring harmonic shifts. The work combines the expressivity of the greatest Renaissance madrigal with the piety and prayerfulness of a Renaissance motet."

Chalmers says that the March 4 concert's repertoire is an especially good fit for the acoustic of St. Mark's. Soaring vocal lines of both Renaissance polyphony and medieval chants will permeate the entire show, echoing throughout the church. "What makes Saint Mark's unique in my experience," Chalmers says, "is that there is also an intimacy that can be created at St. Mark's between the performer and the listener. The space has the warmth and blend of a Cathedral combined with the clarity of a smaller church. This creates a great balance between beauty and intelligibility of individual vocal lines and text."

St. Mark's Canon Musician Raymond Johnston (that's Episcopalian for music director) says of the Mirandola Ensemble that "they sing with impeccable balance and blend, performing works of great beauty and profound spirituality. Come and enjoy the richness of their sound in the warm acoustic of St. Mark's Cathedral."

Both concerts begin at 7:30 pm. Tickets (\$10) can be purchased at the door or at the Cathedral Book Shop.

2017-2018 Season

Music for a Sacred Space

Saturday, February 24, 7:30pm Lumina: The Veil and the Thorn

Presenting a program of music to mark the mystery, beauty and hope of Lent. Tickets: \$10 available at the Cathedral Book Shop or at the door.




Saturday, March 10, 7:30pm
The Mirandola Ensemble
Nicholas Chalmers, director

An MPR Class Notes Artist-in-Residence dedicated to promoting the aesthetics of the Renaissance. Tickets: \$10 available at the Cathedral Book Shop or at the door.

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