

## Choral Activities at MSU

### 2017-2018

Dear MSU Choral Conducting Alumni,

Welcome to our annual choral music newsletter. This has been another great year for MSU alumni, and we are pleased to share news of the successes of our MSU choral music family.

### Introducing New Students

This year, we welcome three talented individuals to the Spartan family in our year-long program. Alison Geesey, MM student, received her bachelor's degree in music education from Pennsylvania State University and taught in Pennsylvania for several years. Xiaosha Lin, comes to us from Westminster Choir College where she recently completed a master's degree. She is a graduate of Xinghai Conservatory of Music and Hong Kong Baptist University and also taught at Yip's Children's Choir in Hong Kong. Brennan Michaels holds a BM in music education from Concordia College and taught high school in Minnesota before completing an MM from Baylor University.

We would also like to introduce four students who started our summer MM degree in 2017. David Baxter received his undergraduate degree from Luther College and now teaches at Pleasant Valley High School in Iowa. Matthew Begale is an MSU alum now teaching at Loyola Academy in Chicago. Francis Vu did undergraduate work at Baylor University and currently serves as choral director at Centennial High School in the Dallas area and as director of the Turtle Creek Chorale Chamber Chorus. Brett Yzquierdo holds an undergraduate degree from Alma College and recently took a position as director of choirs at Tecumseh (Michigan) High School.

### Performance Highlights

On Friday, November 10, the MSU choirs shared the stage with the Lansing Symphony Orchestra under the baton of David Rayl for performances of Bach Brandenburg Concerto No. 1, Vivaldi Gloria, and Handel Foundling Hospital Anthem.

On Saturday, December 9, the combined choirs and student soloists performed Messiah with the MSU Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Sandra Snow.

On Saturday, April 28, those same ensembles will perform Mendelssohn's Elijah led by David Rayl. The performance will include faculty soloists Mark Rucker, as Elijah, soprano Melanie Helton, mezzo soprano Jane Bunnell, and tenor Richard Fracker.

### Spartans at 2018 ACDA Division Conferences

Our alumni will play prominent roles in the upcoming ACDA regional conferences.

Central/North Central Division featured performance: Lynda Hasseler, DMA '90, Capital University Chapel Choir. Honor choir conductor: Ryan Beeken. Interest session presenters: Zach Durlam, DMA '10, Thomas Blue, MM '07, music education, Elizabeth Fisher, DMA '16, with her spouse, Colleen Fisher, and current DMA student Jennifer Sengin.

Eastern Region featured performances: Ryan Beeken, MM '09, DMA '12, Indiana University of Pennsylvania Chorale and Ben Murray, MM '17, Fox Chapel Area High School Vulpes Cantantes (women's choir). Interest session presenters: Jeffrey Buettner, DMA '05, Marci Major, MM '07, Bridget Sweet, PhD '08, Brandon Williams, DMA '16.

Southwestern Region honor choir conductors: Sandra Snow and Derrick Fox, DMA '13. Interest session presenters: Michael Hanawalt, MM '09, with his spouse, Justine Sasanfar, MM '09, piano pedagogy and collaborative piano.

Northwestern Region interest session presenter: Andrea VanDeusen, PhD '17.

Southern Region featured performance: Paul Hondorp, DMA '03, Western Kentucky University Chorale. Interest sessions: Andrea Ramsey, PhD '13, and Josh Palkki, PhD '16.

### Spartans at the 2017 NCCO Conference

MSU was also well represented at the NCCO conference in Baton Rouge earlier this fall. The Brigham Young University Singers led by Andy Crane, DMA '05, and the Webster University Chamber Choir led by Trent Patterson, DMA '10, were two of the featured choirs. Andrew Minear,

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DMA '16, presented a poster session based on his doctoral document, "Graduate Choral Literature Curricula and Pedagogy," and Ryan Person, MM '13 and current DMA student at Texas Tech, co-presented with Rick Bjella on "The Art of Successful Programming: Study, Selection, and Synthesis." Current doctoral student Jennifer Sengin was selected as a graduate conducting fellow for the conference and participated in a master class led by Ann Howard Jones.

### Edward D. Anderson Scholarship

This past year, Don Anderson funded a scholarship for choral graduate students in memory of his late father, Edward D. Anderson, who passed away in July 2014, just two weeks shy of his 96th birthday. Dr. Anderson received his master's degree from Michigan State University and was the longtime director of choral activities at Colorado State University. This year's recipient is master's student David Mann. We are grateful to Don Anderson for his generosity and honored to help celebrate the musical legacy of his father.

### Helen Bartlett Fellowship in Choral Music

Dr. Dale Bartlett, retired College of Music faculty member, MSU alum (BM'55; MM'56), and current conductor of the Lansing Arts Chorale, has endowed a fellowship in memory of his late wife, Helen, who was a longtime member of the Choral Union. This year's recipient is master's student Chelsea Berner. Thank you, Dale, for your generous contribution!

### Robert Harris Fellowship

Dr. Robert Harris, retired director of choral organizations at Northwestern University, an MSU alumnus (PhD'71), and former MSU director of choral activities, continues to fund the Robert A. Harris Award for Choral Excellence in Choral Performance to be given annually to outstanding choral musicians. This year's recipients are master's students Lydia Lane Stout and Chelsea Berner.

### Smith Fellowship Recipient

The Charles K. Smith Endowed Fellowship in Choral Conducting, created upon Smith's retirement in 2002 by members of the MSU Choral Society, provides important

financial help to graduate students in choral conducting. This year's recipient is master's student Chelsea Berner. Thank you to the many donors who have contributed to this endowment over the years!

### Choral Society Scholarships

Through dues and fundraising efforts, the Choral Society has provided scholarship support to over forty graduate students in choral conducting over thirty years. In 2017-18, the Choral Society provides funding assistance to master's students Chelsea Berner, Lydia Lane Stout, and David Mann.

### Guest Clinician

Karen Kenaston-French served as our guest at the MSU Choral Invitational on October 30 where she worked with eight high school choirs from around the state of Michigan. In addition, she was a most engaging guest lecturer in our graduate choral literature class and our DMA seminar. She also led a master class with some of our graduate conducting students.

Kenaston-French serves as Director of Choral Activities at the University of Texas at Arlington. She was previously on the faculty at Austin Peay University in Tennessee. She received her DMA in choral conducting at The University of North Texas, master's degrees in choral conducting and church music from Southern Methodist University, and her BM in Voice Performance from West Virginia Wesleyan.

### Keeping Up with MSU Alumni

This section of the newsletter is intended to help you keep up with the careers of our MSU choral alumni. Each year, the list of accomplishments becomes more impressive and demonstrates that our graduates are leaders in our profession. The list is obviously incomplete, so please contact me if you have recently changed jobs or want to share some aspect of your professional life with our alums. We particularly welcome information from those of who you received your degrees under the mentorship of Dr. Smith.

- **Patrick Baker**, MM '06, is pursuing an EdD in School Executive Leadership through the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He continues as the Fine Arts Coordinator for Joliet (Illinois) PSD 86 where he institutes a new Elementary General Music and Visual Art program this year. For the first time



in over 40 years, all K-5 students have music, and for the first time in the history of the district, all K-5 students have both music and visual art.

- **Kenton Barnes**, MM '04, is the head of the Sprachpraxis (Practical Languages) Department of the Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik and the Technische Universität Braunschweig. He recently published his dissertation entitled: Intertextuality, Intermediality and Mediality in Benjamin Britten's Nocturne, Op. 60. He is also a member of the Kammerchor Michaelstein, conducted by Sebastian Göring.
- **Ryan Beeken**, MM '09, DMA '12, has been granted tenure and promoted to associate professor at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. In the past year he made conference presentations at the NAFME National In-Service Conferences, the Hawaii International Conference on Arts and Humanities, and at state conferences of the Pennsylvania and Florida Music Educators Associations.
- **Richard Bell**, DMA '98, is in his 14th year at Ritenour High School in St. Louis where he directs the choirs and the annual Broadway musical production. He sings with the Bach Society of St. Louis and is the founding director of the Ritenour Community Chorus. He and Shelly are first-time grandparents to George Garrison Quinley.
- **Ross Bernhardt**, DMA '97, has been promoted to full professor at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, where he serves as Director of Choral Activities. In March, he conducted choral and solo vocal workshops with university students in Quéretaro, Mexico.
- **Randi Bolding**, DMA '15, published an article on music and the at-risk student in Southwestern Musician and presented at conferences of the Indiana and Nebraska Music Educators Associations and at the New Directions in Music Education conference, held on the MSU campus. She was guest conductor/clinician for several events in Kentucky and was named KMEA District 12 University Teacher of the Year.
- **Meredith Bowen**, MM '06, DMA '16, is in her second year as the Director of Choral Activities at Radford University in Virginia. Recent activities include guest conducting and clinics in Virginia, Michigan, and Wisconsin and conference presentations in Connecticut, Michigan, North Carolina, Virginia, and Florida. Her research on music written by 17th-century Italian nuns (the subject of her DMA document) has resulted in an article in the Choral Journal and the publication by Boosey & Hawkes of two restored editions of this repertoire. She is exploring how to address social justice issues through the lens of choral music and was recently interviewed for "Yale Climate Connections" after her multi-media, collaborative climate change concert in Radford. She is on the faculty of the Choral Music Experience and Virginia Governor's School for the Visual and Performing Arts and Humanities.
- **Meghan Boyd**, MM '12, DMA '16, is the newly appointed Associate Artistic Director, Young Professionals Choral Collective of Cincinnati.
- **Ted Brimeyer**, MM '10, continues as Director of Choirs at Urbandale High School in suburban Des Moines. Under his direction, the Urbandale Singers appeared at last spring's inaugural Iowa Choral Showcase sponsored by the Iowa Choral Directors Association.
- **Matthew Callaghan**, MM '16, serves as vocal music director at Hastings High School, director of traditional music at First Presbyterian Church of Hastings, and as Region B and State SATB Coordinator for the MSVMA High School Honor Choir Program.
- **Kim Evans Carson**, MM '15, continues to lead the choral program at Truman High School in Independence, MO. At the invitation of MidAmerica Productions, her choirs performed a solo concert and sang with a massed choir at Carnegie Hall in May 2017. They also performed with Grammy award winner Charles Bruffy and the Kansas City Chorale for their annual Christmas event.
- **Zack Coles** received his MM degree in May 2017 and is teaching at Aurora Hills Middle School in the Denver metropolitan area.
- **Alyssa Cossey** completed her DMA this past summer and has accepted a position as assistant professor of choral music and music education at the University of Arizona. In the past year she presented

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## Keeping Up with MSU Alumni (continued)

interest sessions at the Michigan Music Conference and conferences of Northwest NAFME, California All-State Music Educators Association, and North Carolina Music Educators Association. She was also guest lecturer at the University of California, Los Angeles.

- **Andrew Crane**, DMA '05, led the Brigham Young University Singers in performances at the Utah Music Educators Association Conference, with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir on a “Music and the Spoken Word” broadcast, and with the British vocal ensemble Tenebrae. He appeared as headliner at the annual University of Central Missouri Conducting Symposium and performed as a vocalist with Seraphic Fire and the Santa Fe Desert Chorale.
- **Jerry Custer**, DMA '12, continues to lead the music program at Farmington First Presbyterian Church and to teach theory and composition at Wayne State University. During the past year he had seven original works and arrangements published by Heritage Music Press and Sacred Music Press. His activities over the past year have included a weekend residency at Westminster Choir College, a two-week seminar for church musicians at Wayne State, and clinics on Long Island and in Michigan.
- **Zach Durlam**, DMA '10, presented at the ACDA North Central Division conference in Sioux Falls in 2016. In the past year, the UW Milwaukee Concert Chorale performed at the conferences of the Wisconsin Music Educators Association and the Wisconsin Choral Directors Association. He guest conducted festivals in Wisconsin, Illinois, and Oregon and presented at the Wisconsin Choral Directors Association.
- **Meghan Eldred**, MM '11, received the Greg Reuter Award for Excellence in Musical Theatre Education at the 2017 Sutton Foster Ovation Awards sponsored by MSU's Wharton Center. She continues her work as vocal music director at DeWitt High School.
- **Brett Epperson** completed his MM in choral conducting this past summer. He continues as vocal music director at Lincoln East High School. Under his direction, East Singers performed at the Nebraska Music Educators Association conference in November 2016, where he also presented a session on developing tone in the high school choral setting at the conference. He serves as artistic director and conductor of the Lincoln Lutheran Choir and recently completed his tenure as Interim Assistant Minister of Music at First-Plymouth Congregational Church in Lincoln, where he assisted with the recording of a new CD by the Plymouth Choir and Plymouth Brass, “Hymns from First-Plymouth.” He performed at the National ACDA conference in Minneapolis this past March, singing with the First-Plymouth Cantorei in a Compline service and with the professional choir, sounding light.
- **Derrick Fox**, DMA '13, served as guest conductor of Polifonia, the professional state chamber choir of Lithuania, and of all-state choirs in Louisiana, Colorado, Arkansas, Kansas, and Texas in addition to festival choirs in Nebraska, New York, Alaska and Mississippi. He also led professional development sessions in Hawaii, Texas, and Nebraska. His arrangement of My Spirit Looks to God Alone was published by Hal Leonard. He performed as a vocal soloist for a September 11 memorial recital for the American ambassador to Latvia and at the 7th International Big Band Festival in Siauliai, Lithuania. He serves on the ACDA National Diversity Committee and as Nebraska ACDA Collegiate coordinator and Student Activities chair.
- **Julie Hagen**, PhD '11, has taken a new position as associate professor of choral music education at the University of Hartford's Hartt School.
- **Tom Hales** received his master's degree in choral conducting in summer '17 and continues as director of choirs at Sioux City East High School in Iowa.
- **Michael Hanawalt**, MM '09, received the College of Fine Arts Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching at Wichita State University, where he is director of choral activities. The WSU Concert Chorale received honorable mention for the 2017 American Prize in Choral Performance—College and University Choirs.
- **Zeb Highben**, DMA '12, was awarded tenure and promotion to associate professor at Muskingum University. During the past year he led the



Muskingum choirs in performances for the 2017 conference of the Ohio Music Educators Association and the December 2016 national memorial service for Senator John H. Glenn, Jr. He compiled and edited the newly published Augsburg Chorale Book and contributed repertoire guides to Volume 4 of Teaching Music Through Performance in Choir, published by GIA.

- **Stuart Chapman Hill**, PhD '15, conducted the North Carolina Middle School All-State Treble Choir and presented at North Carolina Music Educators Association Professional Development Conference, the Michigan Music Conference, and the California All-State Music Education Conference (with Josh Palkki). He had an article published in the North Carolina Music Educator, and his octavo "The Wind" was released by Hinshaw Music in Spring 2017 as the first piece in the Stuart Chapman Hill Series.
- **David Howard**, DMA '08, served as chorus master and soloist at the 42nd Classical Music Festival in Eisenstadt, Austria in August. He has just released "Consecration," a solo vocal album of sacred music for voice, piano, and harp on the Blue Griffin label (distributed by Albany).
- **Trey Jacobs** has been appointed Director of Choirs at Nashville (Tennessee) School of the Arts. For the past several summers he has served on the conducting staff at Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp.
- **Ryan Kelly**, DMA '12, was granted tenure and promotion to associate professor at West Chester University of Pennsylvania. His book "Handel's 'Messiah': Warm-Ups for Successful Performance," co-authored with Jason Paulk, was published by Hal Leonard. He presented interest sessions at the ACDA national conference in Minneapolis and the Nebraska Music Educators Association and Pennsylvania ACDA state conferences. His CD recording of Honegger's King David was a semi-finalist for The American Prize and five of his compositions and editions were published by Boosey & Hawkes, G. Schirmer, and Augsburg Fortress Publishers. He also serves as director of music and organist at Proclamation Presbyterian Church, Bryn Mawr.
- **Jeff Knutson** received his master's degree in choral conducting this past summer and has accepted a new position as head choir director at Waukee High School in suburban Des Moines.
- **Connor Koppin** completed his master's degree in choral conducting in summer '17 and continues as director of choirs at West Des Moines High School. He also enjoys an active career as a composer. Upcoming commissions include a new piece for the 'Shrine of Ages' Choir at Northern Arizona University and a collective commission for Dr. Joseph Ohrt and the Men's Choir of Central Bucks West High School Choir. In the past year his compositions were performed at the Southwest Division conference of ACDA and by the Texas Music Educators Association's Men's All-State Choir.
- **Marcia Wieland Kuhlman**, MM '10, has taken a new position as choral & drama director at Roaring Fork High School in Carbondale, Colorado. She also serves as music director at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Grand Valley in Grand Junction, Colorado and has an active private studio called Mountain View Music Academy.
- **Elizabeth McFarland**, MM '09, has accepted a position as assistant professor of choral music education at Southeast Missouri State University. She serves as ACDA's Southwest Division Chair for Student Activities.
- **Kelly Miller**, DMA '10, led the University of Central Florida Women's Chorus in a performance at the Florida ACDA Conference. Her arrangement of "Two International Folk Songs" was published by Hal Leonard.
- **Andrew Minear**, DMA '16, is director of choral activities at the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa. His guest conducting engagements this past year included the Alabama All-State High School SSA Choir, the Kentucky All-State Children's Choir, the Louisiana ACDA All-State Youth Mixed Choir and honor choirs in Virginia, Florida, and Alabama. He also presented interest sessions and professional development workshops for the Alabama Vocal Association, the Chorus America national conference, the

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## Keeping Up with MSU Alumni (continued)

Florida Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts and the School District of Palm Beach County. He currently serves as College and University Repertoire and Resources Coordinator for Alabama ACDA.

- **Ben Murray** received his master's degree this past summer. Last spring he led the Madrigal Singers from Fox Chapel Area High School in a performance at the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association annual conference.
- **Joel Navarro**, DMA '05, is professor and lecturer at the School of Church Music at Singapore Bible College, where he conducts several choirs. He also conducts Psalmi Deo Chorale, an all-Filipino community choir. During the past year he made presentations for the Philippine Choral Directors Association, the Choral Directors Association of Singapore, Selah Choir Conductors' Retreat, Manila, Worship Symposium, Trinity Theological College Singapore, and Calvin College's Worship Symposium and served on a panel of international adjudicators for the Singapore Youth Festival.
- **Matthew Olson**, MM '09, has accepted a position as visiting director of choirs at Carleton College in Northfield, MN. He is also artistic director of Oratory Bach Ensemble and serves on the music faculty at North Hennepin Community College. For the 2017-18 season, he has been appointed as guest conductor for both The Singers-Minnesota Choral Artists and Magnum Chorum, two Twin Cities-based choral ensembles. The past year also saw the premiere of his choral-orchestra work, *Sola Fide: A Justice Cantata*, and a presentation for the Minnesota ACDA conference.
- **Jonathan Palant**, DMA '07, was named a 2016 Innovator of the Year by Musical America Worldwide for his work with the Dallas Street Choir. This past June the ensemble performed history-making concerts at Carnegie Hall and at Washington's National Cathedral.
- **Josh Palkki**, PhD '16, presented at the American Choral Directors Association National Conference in Minneapolis, the NAFME National In-Service Conference, the California All-State Music Education Conference and the Illinois Music Educators Association Conference and appeared on a panel at the Chorus America National Conference. In the past year his research has appeared in the Choral Journal and Proceedings of the 5th International Workshop on Musical Metacreation.
- **Holly Lewis Pemberton**, MM '16, presented "Passionate Preparation: Effective Warm-Ups in the Choral Classroom" at the Michigan Music Conference in January. She is in her second year as choral director at Worthington Kilbourne High School in Columbus, Ohio, where she teaches four concert choirs and AP Music Theory.
- **Sarah Price** received her master's degree in choral conducting this past summer and continues to serve as director of choirs at Saline (MI) High School. Her choir will perform at the Michigan Music Conference in January.
- **Nate Raabe** completed his master's degree in summer 2017 and has accepted a new position as vocal music instructor at Hutchinson High School in Hutchinson, MN.
- **Courtney Rowley**, MM '11, was named the 2017 Outstanding Music Educator by the Elliott Bay Music Educators Association and will be honored at the Washington State Music conference early next year. She is in her 11th year as Director of Choirs at Ballard High School in Seattle.
- **Eric Rubinstein**, MM '12, continues doctoral work in choral conducting at Louisiana State University. He has served on the Artistic Faculty at the New York State Summer School of the Arts for five years. He was a featured soloist, sharing the title role, in a performance of Craig Hella Johnson's *Considering Matthew Shepard* at the NCCO conference in November.
- **Daniel Singer**, MM '11, has been named interim assistant director of the Cleveland Orchestra Choruses and interim director of the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Chorus. Last spring he prepared the Contemporary Youth Orchestra Chorus to perform with Melissa Etheridge and the Contemporary Youth Orchestra at Severance Hall. He is in his 7th year as the director of music at the University School in Cleveland and a member of Quire Cleveland and Apollo's Fire.



- **Bonnie Sneed**, DMA '90, is director of choirs at McLennan Community College in Waco, TX. She was recently appointed chair of the standing committee on two-year colleges for NCCO. This past year she conducted the Region VIII 9-10 choir in Waco.
- **Wes Stoner**, MM '10, has begun doctoral studies in choral conducting at the University of Miami.
- **Bryce Thompson**, MM '16, continues as director of choirs at Lake Orion High School. Last year his choirs performed at Michigan ACDA's fall conference and for the Michigan Youth Arts Festival.
- **Katie Wolfe Tiefel**, MM '08, recently relocated to New London, WI, where she teaches at Emanuel Lutheran School and maintains a private voice studio at Fox Valley Lutheran High School in Appleton. In June she was guest conductor at the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod's National Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts, where she directed the premier of two commissions written for a historical reconstruction of the Deutsche Messe in commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation. She also presented a session entitled, "Serving in Song: The Lutheran Choir's Role and Repertoire."
- **Brandon Ulrich**, DMA '13, continues as director of choirs at Stoney Creek High School in suburban Detroit. Two of his choirs performed at last January's Michigan Music Conference. He was recently appointed artistic director of the Madrigal Chorale of Detroit.
- **Frank Watkins**, DMA '16, guest conducted honor choirs in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Maryland, and gave guest presentations at the University of Colorado-Boulder and SongFest Summer Music Camp in Vancouver. He has developed and received significant grant funding for intercultural programs that immerse students in the culture of Senegal and in the Somali community in Minneapolis.
- **Brent Wells**, DMA '07, was awarded tenure and promotion to associate professor at the College of Idaho. He presented "Masses to Masterworks: Programming, Preparing, and Rehearsing Choral-Orchestral Works" at the Northwest NAFME conference and had three of his choral arrangements recorded on the recent Brigham Young University Singers CD *Come and Sing Unto the Lord*. His arrangement of "Sing Praise to God" was accepted for publication by Walton Music. He sang with the Santa Fe Desert Chorale for their 2016 winter season and continues as musical director of Treasure Valley Millennial Choirs and Orchestra and led them on a performance tour to Salt Lake City, where they presented six sold out performances in the historic tabernacle on Temple Square.
- **Robert Williams**, MM '16, has been named the first choral director at the newly opened Liberty High School in the Iowa City, Iowa school district.
- **Jane Wright**, MM '89, is in her 15th year as Director of Fine Art Ministries at Kalamazoo's Westwood United Methodist Church, where she leads a program that includes children's choirs, adult choirs, handbell ensembles, a liturgical dance team, a praise team, and a ukulele choir! She serves as Secretary/Treasurer of the West Michigan Chapter of the Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts, and serves as a clinician for that organization and the Handbell Musicians of America. She still plays clarinet as a soloist and with the Kalamazoo Valley Concert Band.
- **Kyle Zeuch**, MM '13, completed his DMA this past summer. He was recently named choir director at Olivet College and continues to serve as artistic director of the Children and Youth Choirs of the MSU Community Music School. The MSU Youth Chorale performed at the ACDA Michigan Conference last October and the MSU Children's Choir performed at the Michigan Music Conference in January. In April he conducted Ola Gjeilo's *Sunrise Mass* at Carnegie Hall for MidAmerica Productions.

