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SACRED IN OPERA PANELIST PROFILES

ALLEN HENDERSON, SACRED IN OPERA PANEL, is the Executive Director of NATS, Professor of Music at Georgia Southern University, and Director of Music at First Presbyterian Church in Statesboro, GA. He holds degrees from Carson-Newman College, The University of Tennessee, and CCM. In his academic and numerous church positions he has premiered new sacred operas and has also performed and directed staged oratorio. An award-winning singer, he has performed with opera companies and symphonies, and in recital throughout the country. As Executive Director of NATS, he leads the work of the world's largest association of voice teachers with over 7,300 members.

PHILIP HAGEMANN, SACRED IN OPERA PANEL, is a native of Indiana with degrees in music from Northwestern University and Columbia University. He is the long-time conductor of the Rockland County (New York) Choral Society. As a composer he has published around 75 choral compositions and has written 10 one-act chamber operas and two full-length operas, including the sacred opera, *Ruth*. Two of his short operas have won national competitions sponsored by NOA. He is a Vice-President of Opera Index, a New York organization that sponsors an annual vocal competition, which gives around \$40,000 in prizes.

BRUCE TRINKLEY, SACRED IN OPERA PANEL, is Professor Emeritus of Music at Penn State University where he taught composition, orchestration and opera literature and conducted the Penn State Glee Club for thirty-five years. His concert works include *Santa Rosalia*, a cantata filmed for PBS; *Mountain Laurels*, a choral symphony written for the centenary of State College, Pennsylvania with texts by central Pennsylvania poets; and *Cold Mountain*, a piano trio commissioned by the Castalia Trio for their concert tour of China. *Eve's Odds*, a comic chamber opera based on Genesis, won the NOA 1999 Chamber Opera Competition. *Cleo* won the Competition in 2001. *York: the Voice of Freedom*, a full-length opera about the life of the only African American on the Lewis and Clark Expedition, was filmed by WPSX for broadcast on PBS. He and librettist Jason Charnesky have also written two operas for young people, *The Prairie Dog That Met the President* and *Chicken Little*. *St. Thomas the Carpenter* received its world premiere at the 2010 NOA convention in San Antonio.

MOZELLE (CLARK) SHERMAN, SACRED IN OPERA PANEL, is an award-winning stage director, lyricist, actress, author, and voice teacher with distinguished experience in civic, university, professional, church and regional theatre of the United States and abroad. Her 60-year career has labeled her a female pioneer dedicated to the building of a dynamic relationship between progressive, original Sacred Music Drama theatre, its artists of all ethnic and societal backgrounds, and its entire community. Noted for one-woman dramatic presentations of over 80 biblical woman, as well as workshops and seminars in community-based usage of drama, music, the fine arts, and a combination of the three, Dr. Sherman recently retired from teaching at Southern Seminary, Louisville, KY. Since she is dedicated to providing avenues of expression for talented community artists, especially those of talent, color, advanced age, and those who otherwise would not have a path for training and use of their talents, she and composer, Theoderos Sflotsos (Ted Nichols), have written a new sacred opera, *Rendezvous with Destiny*, which will premiere in Louisville, April 13-14, 2012. NOA heard a taste of two of its first-written arias when singers Maggie Garrett and Douglas Crawley presented them for the 2005 convention.

THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

(Our discussion of *The Pilgrim's Progress* is continued from the July 2011 issue of the SIO newsletter.)

Recent Performances

Alexander Campbell - *The Classical Source*

London's Philharmonia Orchestra, June 20 & 27, 2008

Sadler Well's Theater
Richard Hickox, Conductor
David Edwards, Stage Director
(semi-staged production)

The critic Alexander Campbell, in his June 20, 2008, review of that performance in *The Classical Source*, said, "There may be many reasons for the opera's current neglect. One is surely that John Bunyan's allegorical story and the added passages of verse (by Ursula Wood, who became Vaughan Williams's second wife) were probably better known by the public at large than they are by audiences today. Recognition of familiar chunks of text may have helped audiences understand what the morality and message was. Yet, it may also have helped gain the piece a reputation as being a religious work, perhaps to its detriment, particularly since it may have been regarded as similar to Elgar's similarly-cast oratorios."

He continues: "Much of *The Pilgrim's Progress* is more oratorio or musical-mystery-play than opera, but the Vanity Fair episode stands as a conventionally operatically-structured episode that sits right at the centre of the work and provides a striking contrast to the more meditative rest. There are moments that now strike one as being rather Wagnerian in their construction and even orchestration – such as the Apollyon episode which today sounds startlingly akin to the Siegfried-Fafner encounter in Act Two of *Siegfried*.

The Philharmonia Orchestra's presentation was blessed with some fabulous young and largely British singers at the centre of which was Roderick Williams's superb performance as The Pilgrim. Not only did he sing the role's many monologues with a beautiful, long-breathed and mellow baritone, but he also evinced an inner charisma coupled with an earnest but understated stage-presence that accords perfectly with the character and the work. Every word he sang could be heard, without reference to the supplied libretto.

Whilst it was welcome to have a staging of a sort rather than a straightforward concert performance, the semi-staging by David Edwards was perhaps a little too literal. We did not need to see The Pilgrim with his heavy rucksack in the early scenes – its removal early on left the visual impression that the journey was almost over before it had started. The simulated waves of the deep near the opera's close should also have been dispensed with. The production also tried too hard to be multi-faith in terms of costuming – rather predictably so. Vanity Fair came off well, as did all the moments where the singers were left to sing naturally without additional business – such as the soliloquies and *The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains*.

Richard Hickox, a devotee of Vaughan Williams's music, and the Philharmonia Orchestra brought out all the colour of the score and made a strong argument for an enterprising company to give the work a full staging somewhere. The interludes were all atmospheric and distinguished by some fantastic playing from the woodwind soloists. The percussive glister of 'Vanity Fair' was exhilarating and the dancing figures that accompany Mister and Madam By-Ends had a humorous lilt (even if Richard Coxon overdid his 'camp' approach). Overall, the performance made one marvel afresh at this underrated music (and return to Hickox's own Chandos recording as well as the EMI one under Sir Adrian Boult) – and that surely is what the Philharmonia's commemoration of Ralph Vaughan Williams is all about."

THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

Other Insights

More interesting insight into this 2008 performance by the Philharmonia Orchestra are found in the following conversations transcribed from a May 26, 2008 interview which is available on YouTube:

David Edwards – Stage Director

Stephen Connock – Chairman of The Ralph Vaughan Williams Society

Reverend Christopher Damp – Bunyan Meeting Free Church.

Stephen Connock: “It’s a very large scale opera, twenty solo parts. It’s not easy to put on. It’s a demanding piece and I congratulate the Philharmonia for finding the resources and the will and the belief in this work to put it on.”

David Edwards: “I got a phone call back in January from the Philharmonia Orchestra, saying they were going to put on this large and very important festival, and doing a semi-staged production of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* and wondered if I would like to be involved. I leapt at the opportunity because it’s not an opera I’m familiar with and I think very few people are. This is a huge opportunity for me and I think for the public to explore a piece that has been unjustly neglected. This piece is in a sense a survey of his entire output and I think that’s fascinating. It’s as if he were feeding his ideas backwards and forwards throughout his compositional life.”

Reverend Christopher Damp: “*The Pilgrim’s Progress* is an allegory of a journey, a spiritual journey, and I suppose in many ways it reflects Bunyan’s own spiritual journey. I think he was quite a troubled young man; he was convinced that God would punish him. *Pilgrim’s Progress* itself reflects Bunyan’s own spiritual journey from non-belief to belief in Christ.”

Stephen Connock: “Bunyan was the inspiration here. Vaughan Williams was inspired by Whitman and Whitman saw God in every blade of grass. Bunyan has this sense of the salvation of the soul. Christian, Pilgrim as Vaughan Williams renamed him, has got this burden on his back. And how is he going to get rid of this burden? Of course, the burden is removed by the discovery and realization of the salvation through God, and the Celestial City beckons.”

David Edwards: “I try to look at every piece on its own merit. Where does it fit in a tradition? I suppose in a tradition of spiritual opera it’s somewhere between *Par-sifal* and *Satyagraha*. It’s like a long spiritual meditation and that makes it very particular in the whole operatic genre.”

Stephen Connock: “Any one who fought in the First World War related to Bunyan because you have the Valley of the Shadow of Death. All of these images that Bunyan created from the 17th C. were so relevant to the soldiers fighting in the war in the battlefields of the song. Vaughan Williams carried Bunyan’s *Pilgrims Progress* with him when he was on Vimy Ridge in 1916. So it had this personal relevance as well as this spiritual relevance.”

David Edwards: “Vaughan Williams loved the book and he read it and adapted the text himself for the opera. He digested it very carefully over a very long period. This piece as you know was in gestation for over forty years. And it was clearly a labor of love for Vaughan Williams. It clearly represented his own pilgrimage in some sense through the first fifty years of the 20th Century.”

Stephen Connock: “With all the struggles that people have---we all have our burdens on our backs, symbolically. I think for people today the spirituality and the sense of desire for answers and a solution to the burdens that we face is as relevant today as when Bunyan wrote it in Bedford Gaol and when Vaughan Williams set it in the 1940s.”

THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

Listening:

There are two recordings currently of the complete *Pilgrim's Progress* available:

1971, Sir Adrian Boult, Conductor
EMI Records

With John Shirley Quirk, Jean Temperly, Ian Partridge

1998, Richard Hickox, Conductor
Chandos Records

The Royal Opera House Covent Garden Chorus and Orchestra
With Gerald Finley, Roderick Williams, Peter Coleman-Wright

Related Sources:

The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams, Michael Kennedy, Oxford University Press, New York, 1964

Vaughan Williams and the Vision of Albion, Wilfrid Mellers, Barrie & Jenkins, London, 1989

Sacred Music Drama, The Producer's Guide, Second Edition, Carl Gerbrandt, AuthorHouse, 2006

The Penguin Opera Guide, Edited by Amanda Holden, Penguin Books, London, 1994

Ruth Dobson, Chair of the Sacred in Opera Initiative, received the Governor's Arts Award from the state of Oregon in 2007 for her distinguished work in the field of opera and opera education. She joined the voice faculty at the University of Oregon in 2005, after retiring as Professor of Music at Portland State University, where she taught voice, opera workshop, and song literature for 28 years. Ms. Dobson was the director of the PSU Opera Theater program, a program that she began in 1977. PSU Opera Theater's productions of *Le Nozze di Figaro* in 2000 and *Don Giovanni* in 2003 were awarded first place in the opera production competition of the National Opera Association. She was Co-Founder of the Astoria Music Festival and currently Artistic Director of Portland SummerFest's Opera in the Park. She was for ten years Founder and Artistic Director of Bel Canto Northwest Vocal Institute. She holds a Master's Degree in Vocal Performance from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, where she held a graduate fellowship as an opera coach/accompanist. She was invited to return to the University of Cincinnati to present master classes in vocal chamber music for the Grandin Festival. Many of her current and former voice students are singing professionally throughout the United States and Europe. As soprano soloist, she has appeared with the Oregon Symphony Orchestra, Portland Opera, the Peter Britt Festival, the Seattle New Music Festival, with the Audubon Quartet and many other organizations. She is a on the Board of Directors of the National Opera Association, is a long-time member of the National Association of Teachers of Singing, and a member of the honorary Phi Kappa Phi. In 2010 she was a guest artist and clinician with the University of Alaska Fairbanks, where she was soprano soloist in Poulenc's *Gloria* with the Choir of the North, and a 2011 guest recitalist and clinician at Idaho State University.

THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains (1921)

An Operatic Scene for Six Soloists, Women's Chorus and Orchestra

(Act IV, Scene II of *The Pilgrim's Progress*)

From a Director's Perspective, by Carl Gerbrandt

The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains, a delightful Pastoral Opera, was premiered in 1922 in London. The libretto was written by the composer but based on an episode in Bunyan's allegory, *Pilgrim's Progress*. It would be nearly fifty years, on April 26, 1951, before Vaughan Williams final version of the entire Morality Opera would be premiered at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, under the title, *The Pilgrim's Progress*. *The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains* was incorporated by the composer as Act IV, Scene II of the larger work, but may still be performed separately.

While Vaughan Williams *The Pilgrim's Progress* is powerful theatre, it is difficult to mount due to the numerous and technically involved scene changes. The cast is large but by doubling, can be handled by eleven soloists.

The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains is between 16 and 35 minutes in length depending on what portions of Act IV are selected for performance. Minimal technical support is required in this work.

Setting: A field at the foot of the Delectable Mountains

Soloists: Pilgrim (bar); First Shepherd (bar); Second Shepherd (ten); Third Shepherd (bass); A Celestial Messenger (ten); Voice of A Bird (sop), offstage.

Orchestration: 2 fl, ob, Eng horn, 2 trp, harp, bells, strings. Piano alone can be used though Vaughan Williams employs colorful accompaniment in the orchestra. A Flute can nicely supplement the piano accompaniment.

Chorus: Women's voices offstage, though this can be cut with minimal adjustments.

Synopsis:

Pilgrim, seeking the Celestial City, encounters Three Shepherds who invite him to rest with them. A Celestial Messenger arrives to

take him to the Master. He ceremonially pierces the heart of Pilgrim with an arrow sharpened by love and encourages him to cross the treacherous River of Death. The Shepherds anoint him and pray for his crossing. A heavenly choir welcomes Pilgrim, and the Shepherds rejoice as he successfully reaches the Celestial City.

In working with the entire score of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, it should be noted that all of Act IV can easily be performed by the addition of Scenes I and III, which surround *The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains*. These additional scenes can be played in the same space with slight adjustments if desired. Scene I adds a boy soprano, a tenor, and a contralto. Scene III adds a double Chorus. In performances I have directed, I have always chosen to present all of Act IV. Doing so requires a strong final double chorus of both on and offstage voices. The result is definitely worth the effort.

continued on page 6

The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains (1921) *continued from page 5*

The *Entr'acte* after Scene I can be cut or used to set the stage for Scene II by having the Shepherds gather wood (both on and off stage) and build a small camp fire with which to warm them selves. A rustic tent can also be set up on either side of the stage. In the background are the Celestial Mountains, which can be created by either painted flats or projections.

The Scene opens with the Shepherds reading from a manuscript or reciting scripture from memory while warming themselves around the fire. Pilgrim enters, and if desired, may enter through the auditorium to create the idea of a long journey. In addition to offering Pilgrim warmth, food can also be offered.

As the Voice offstage sings Psalm 23, Pilgrim is at first surprised if not a bit frightened, but the Shepherds put him at ease.

The Messenger's entrance should be from the direction of the Celestial City beyond the river. This could be managed by having a ramp going offstage to represent the direction of the river and the Celestial City. This also gives the Messenger some height advantage as he addresses Pilgrim and the Shepherds at his entrance.

During the *Allegretto tranquillo* interlude, the "river" could enter from the ramp offstage, slowly coming into the stage. I used a dozen supers completely covered with ample dark charcoal gossamer fabric, which the supers waved and swirled, representing the movement of the river. They enter in a double row. When Pilgrim is led through the river, he and Messenger walk between the two rows gradually being engulfed by the swirling and waving fabric. The effect works well as Pilgrim, Messenger and finally the "river" make their exit.

The offstage chorus can be cut with some notes from the chorus added to the Shepherds' lines, and a cut in the section where only the chorus sings. The scene can end here, or a quick black out while the tent and campfire are struck during a brief pause at rehearsal No. 28.

If one uses Scene III, the onstage chorus led by Pilgrim and Messenger could make their entrance at the Alto Solo's first line. It can be effective if the aisle of the auditorium is used for this "entrance into the Celestial City." The chorus could also kneel during the Soprano Solo section while both choruses take their places either on stage or throughout the auditorium or both. The final Alleluia chorus can be a powerful ending for the audience if they are surrounded by the chorus and resulting sound.

Listening:

There is a ten-minute excerpt easily accessed on YouTube of excerpts from *The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains* featuring the Corydon Singers and the City of London Sinfonia, Matthew Best, Conductor

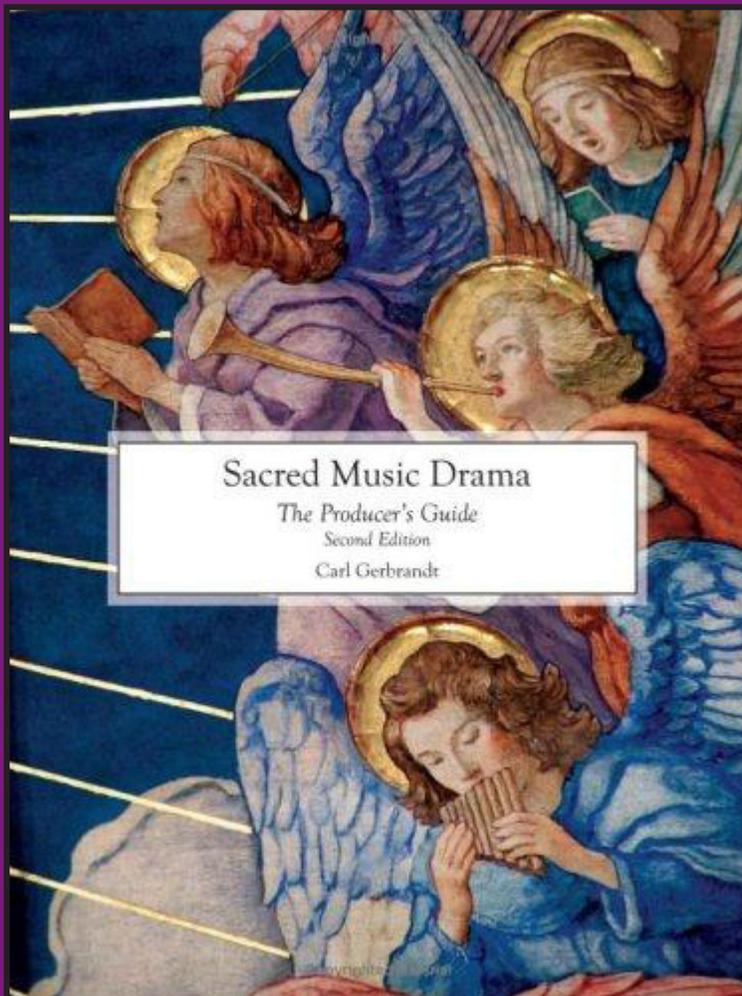
Pilgrim: Bryn Terfel
1st Shepherd: Alan Opie
2nd Shepherd: Adrian Thompson
3rd Shepherd: Jonathan Best
Celestial Messenger: John Mark Ainsley
Voice of a Bird: Linda Kitchen

Materials:

Materials available from Oxford University Press.

Carl Gerbrandt is Professor Emeritus of Voice and Director of Opera Theatre at the University of Northern Colorado. He was the 2010 recipient of the NOA Sacred in Opera Lifetime Achievement Award. While he made his mark in the field of operatic performance, Dr. Gerbrandt has also presented many recitals nationwide, master classes, and choral workshops. Of his over seventy opera and oratorio roles, four have been American premieres. He has appeared as bass soloist in two professional filmings of Handel's *Messiah*. Dr. Gerbrandt made his professional directing debut at Washington D.C.'s Kennedy Center in Mozart's *The Abduction From the Seraglio*. Additionally, his staged production of Mendelssohn's *Elijah* was filmed by PBS-TV with subsequent broadcasts. He has staged over 40 operas, served on a distinguished panel of international artists, and given a presentation on the "Opera/Music Theatre Cross-over Singer" before a national audience. Prior to his work at UNC, Dr. Gerbrandt was opera director for Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University, Southern Baptist Seminary where he began their Sacred Music Drama Program, and Tabor College. In 1990, Dr. Gerbrandt held a Visiting Scholar position at Cambridge University, England, where he completed his book, *Sacred Music Drama: the Producer's Guide*. He has also edited *The Songs of Louis Cheslock*, a collection of the complete songs of the late American composer. In 2004, he was again invited to Cambridge University, this time as a Visiting Fellow researching

Zarzuela. Conductor of the heralded Greeley Chorale from 1987-present, Dr. Gerbrandt directed the auditioned 90-voice choir on six International concert tours and presented 10 world premieres. In Summer, 1996, he became the first guest conductor of the Oxford Academy Orchestra in Oxford, England, leading the orchestra and the Chorale in Mozart's *Requiem* to a near capacity audience in the world renowned Sheldonian Theatre. In 2005, he took the Chorale to Italy. Most noteworthy was a performance before the Pope in Rome, a High Mass in St. Peter's, and a performance of Mozart's *Requiem* with the Mozart Sinfonietta of Rome before a standing room only audience in the Pope's church, Chiesa di St. Ignazio. He holds conducting and performance degrees from Tabor College and Wichita State University, and a doctoral degree in Voice Performance from Peabody Conservatory of Music of Johns Hopkins University. Post-doctoral studies in voice and opera were taken at Nordwestdeutsche Musikakademie in Detmold, Germany.



Sacred Music Drama

The Producer's Guide

Second Edition

Carl Gerbrandt

"LORD, PLANT MY FEET ON HIGHER GROUND"

UNFINISHED SERMONS

A PARABLE FOR CHURCH PERFORMANCE – CHRISTIAN CONFLICT, TENSION, AND RESOLUTION

BY MAURICE SAYLOR

Unfinished Sermons: a Parable for Church Performance is a one-act opera with music by Maurice Saylor and a libretto by Phillip Grace. The 75-minute work represents a narrative that is being worked out in countless congregations across the country. It is the story of two people – one grounded in tradition, the other excited by new conceptions of faith. The work is non-specific in its issues and denomination. The tension of this parable – like the real tension felt by many today – is over who truly holds the legitimate interpretation of the faith.

There is also a third voice, the chorus. Through the use of hymn tunes, it represents the spirit and wisdom of the everyday faithful, who are often caught between the contentions of these two polarities – yet through their steadfast and simple devotion hold possible clues to a resolution. On another level, the chorus also represents the ageless voice of wisdom, reminding us that there is a greater ground of faith which holds us all together in this grand tension while affirming timeless truths.

The opera is written for forces within the means and technical abilities of many church music programs, requiring the hiring of only the percussionist and perhaps the major soloists. The work requires three soloists (baritone, tenor, soprano), SATB choir, organ (with pedals), and percussion (one player). In support of the work's theme, the score blends new musical ideas with traditional sounds. The choir functions as members of the congregation, as a Greek chorus, and as part of the orchestra.

The opera is currently being offered royalty free.



The cover art from the program of *Unfinished Sermons*

UNFINISHED SERMONS

Synopsis

Scene 1: *The Nativity*

Daniel (tenor) introduces himself as the narrator, telling the story in hindsight, a tale that spans twenty-five years. We see Dr. Fitzgerald (baritone) as he first comes to lead his congregation. His first sermon is broad in its appeal, and the congregation enthusiastically welcomes their new preacher. A year passes, and as Fitzgerald becomes more comfortable, his sermons begin to challenge his flock—Daniel in particular—in ways that are new and strange. A dark sermon on Christmas Day leaves Daniel wondering if he has misunderstood the meaning in Fitzgerald’s sermon and if there is something questionable about the doctor’s spirituality which the congregation at first overlooked.



Scene 2: *A Difficult Teaching*

It is Valentine’s Day, and Fitzgerald gives a traditional and moving sermon on love. After the service, a mother, Mrs. Simpson (soprano), comes to Fitzgerald for advice on her daughter’s wedding plans but is startled by his shockingly non-traditional position on marriage ceremonies. Given this new revelation, Mrs. Simpson and Daniel are dismayed.

Scene 3: *The Crucifixion*

The congregation is found grousing among themselves and comparing notes on the progressively outrageous things Fitzgerald has said. Since Daniel has been taking notes on the sermons that have riled him most, he decides to take his complaints to an elder. After a passionate appeal, he is told that problems must be taken to Fitzgerald. Rather than take his problem to the source of the problem, Daniel decides to stop taking

notes and become a shell, one who attends church in physical presence only.



Scene 4: *Resurrection*

The day has come when Fitzgerald announces his retirement and Daniel decides it is time for a confrontation. Here, the voice of tradition and the voice of new ideas clash. The argument rages back and forth: Did the pastor do Daniel a service or a disservice by challenging him with new ideas? Did Daniel do the pastor a disservice or a service by harboring anger and resentment and clinging to his entrenched position? The opera resolves as the congregation lifts a hymnodic prayer:

May we be lifted in spirit to a higher plane, from which we can see as God sees and one day know the answers to questions which at present lie beyond our understanding.



UNFINISHED SERMONS

Extra Materials

Unfinished Sermons: a Parable for Church Performance

Music by Maurice Saylor
Libretto by Phillip Grace

Premiere production: November 13-14, 2009, at Walker Chapel United Methodist Church in Arlington, VA.

Cast

Jerett Gieseler.....Dr. Fitzgerald
Adam Hall.....Daniel
Rachel Evangeline Barham.....Mrs. Simpson/Angelic Voice

Directors

Jay D. Brock.....Stage Director
Dan Walshaw.....Music Director

Ensemble

Andrew Earle Simpson.....Organ
Donald Spinelli.....Percussion

Second production: September 17-19, 2010, at Church of the Ascension Episcopal Church in Denver, CO.
Interviews and excerpts were recorded in the KVOB Performance Studio on September 9, 2010, and broadcast on **Colorado Spotlight** on Sept 15-17, 2010, over Colorado Public Radio.

Cast

Jerett Gieseler.....Dr. Fitzgerald
Nicholas Filzen.....Daniel
Donata Cucinotta.....Mrs. Simpson/Angelic Voice

Directors

Phillip Grace.....Stage Director
Steven Aguiló-Arbues.....Music Director

VIDEO OF HIGHLIGHTS AND FULL
PERFORMANCE:

<http://mauricesaylor.net/videos.php>

AUDIO HIGHLIGHTS:

<http://mauricesaylor.net/listen.php>

Maurice Saylor (composer), praised by *The Washington Post* for his “evocative, powerful, communicative music,” is a composer and performer based in Washington, D.C., with special affinities for vocal, chamber, and silent film music. His tuneful and quirky scores often showcase an interest in unusual combinations of instruments and blur the boundaries of style and genre.

In 2005, Mr. Saylor, Andrew Earle Simpson, and Phil Carluzzo founded the Snark Ensemble (SnarkEnsemble.org) to present live performances of the composer/performers’ new scores for vintage silent films. Their music is featured on two four-DVD sets on All Day Entertainment: *Lost and Found: The Harry Langdon Collection* (2007) and *Becoming Charley Chase* (2009).

Mr. Saylor served as Composer-in-Residence for Cantate Chamber Singers twice, creating two major works: *The Concerto in A for Cello and Vocal Orchestra* (2008), and his magnum opus *The Hunting of the Snark: an Agony in Eight Fits* (2004), which was lauded at its second performance (2008) by *The Washington Post* thus: “It was irresistible from start to finish—clever, deeply engaging, and performed with enthusiasm and evident delight by everyone involved.” A recording of *The Hunting of the Snark* and three Snark Ensemble silent film scores is available on Naxos Records. See www.MauriceSaylor.net for more information.

Phillip Grace (librettist) is an artist, poet, and playwright. His *Heartstrings: A Valentine Fable* had staged readings at Maryland’s Collington Community Theatre, Washington’s Studio Theatre, and by Alliance Française at the French Embassy. It was the winner of Columbia, Md.’s Festival of the Arts summer play competition from RepStage (1997) and was in full production for opening the 1998 season of Theaterworks in Memphis, Tenn. Later productions included the Thalian Hall theater company in Wilmington, N.C. (July 1998), and a revival for the Theaterworks 2005 - 2006 season in Memphis, as well as the Black Box Theater, Twin Beach Players, Chesapeake Beach, Md. (2008). In 1998 - 99, it was the semifinalist winner of the Do Gooder New Playwright Awards in New York City.

While Grace began life with aspirations of being a concert pianist, Providence eventually led him into politics as Special Assistant to the U.S. Commissioner of Education and eventually professorships at Georgetown University, American University, Trinity College, and Southern Methodist University. Interests in the visual arts surfaced in mid-life, and his portraits are featured in museums and private collections across the country, including the Smithsonian. Grace has four books to his credit, the latest being a poetry tribute to his grandchildren, *The Lizard of Cupcake Lake*.

The Sacred in Opera

Committee Members:

Ruth Dobson (Chair)

John Pfautz

Carl Gerbrandt

Kurt-Alexander Zeller

Linda Snyder

The Sacred in Opera is a project of the
National Opera Association.

For more information, please visit us online at
http://www.noa.org/initiatives/sio_home.html

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