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"COUNTRY" MUSIC

Dr. Will Kesling, Conductor

Gainesville Master Chorale
& Chamber Orchestra

October 23, 2022 4:00PM

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A CONCERT OF “COUNTRY” MUSIC

Frostiana: Seven Country Songs
by Robert Frost

Randall Thompson (1899–1984)

1. The Road Not Taken
2. The Pasture
3. Come In
4. The Telephone
5. A Girl's Garden
6. Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening
7. Choose Something Like a Star

Corn Puddin' (from *Schmigadoon!*)

Cinco Paul

Home on the Range

arr. Mark Hayes

A Hoopla (from *The Settling Years*)

Libby Larsen

Make Our Garden Grow (from *Candide*)

Leonard Bernstein

Randall Thompson (1899–1984) is probably the most frequently performed choral composer of the 20th century America. With a wonderful gift for melody and harmonic structure, and a keen sensitivity to the flow and sense of the text, he produced choral works of exquisite beauty.

Frostiana, subtitled 'Seven Country Songs,' was commissioned in 1958 for the 200th anniversary of the incorporation of the town of Amherst, Massachusetts. Thompson selected seven poems of Robert Frost, who had lived for a time in Amherst. These included not only some of Frost's best-known poems, like *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* and *The Road Not Taken*, but some less-known ones as well, like *A Girl's Garden* and *The Telephone*. Taken together, they provide a somewhat nostalgic glimpse of rural New England life. The suite has an interesting arch-like structure: the two outer movements are scored for mixed chorus; movements 2 and 6 are for men's chorus, movements 3 and 5 for women's chorus, and the central movement

is actually a dialog between the men's and women's choruses. This was Thompson's deft solution to a logistical problem – the men and women of the amateur festival chorus rehearsed separately! Thompson originally composed a rather challenging piano accompaniment, orchestrating the work in 1965.

Frostiana was premiered on October 18, 1959 with the composer conducting and Frost in attendance. The pairing of Frost and Thompson was an inspired one. There is a deceptive simplicity in Frost's poetry, with its straightforward language and rhyming schemes. Frost finds magic and wonder in even the most commonplace occurrences of life. Thompson responded in kind, providing seven exquisitely crafted movements that perfectly catch the meaning and cadence of the poetry.

Frost was 85 years old at the time of *Frostiana's* premier, having gained great recognition and won many awards. His greatest honor was still to come as he was the first poet to perform at a Presidential inauguration, thus starting a tradition that has continued on until now.

Schmigadoon! is an American musical comedy television series created by Cinco Paul and Ken Daurio, with all songs written by Paul. The series airs on Apple TV+ and premiered on July 16, 2021. Season 1 of *Schmigadoon!* was a parody of and paid homage to the Golden Age musicals of the 1940s and 1950s. In season 2, filmed in 2022, Josh and Melissa find themselves in Schmicago, a world parodying 1960s and 1970s musicals.

"Home on the Range" is a classic cowboy song, sometimes called the "unofficial anthem" of the American West. Dr. Brewster M. Higley of Smith County, Kansas wrote the lyrics as the poem "My Western Home" in 1872 or so. On June 30, 1947, "Home on the Range" became the Kansas state song. In 2010, members of the western Writers of America chose it as one of the Top 100 western songs of all time.

Bernstein's *Candide* is technically an operetta that is based upon classic literature, namely Voltaire's work of the same name. **"Make Our Garden Grow"** is the closing number from the operetta. After a journey that has brought young lovers Candide and Cunegonde from Westphalian idyll to disaster at sea, to a Spanish bordello, through the ravages of war, and back again, the cast unites at a simple farm to start anew.

MASTER CHORALE

Dr. Will Kesling, Conductor

Tané DeKrey, Accompanist

SOPRANO

Chloe Barbee
Sylvie F. Beukelman
Sydney Edwards
Susan Gillespie
Cynthia Hendelman
Lee Hyun-Jeong
Elaine Jacobson
Fran Jaume
Peggy Jensen
Breanna Johnson
Esther Kim
Mary Kladde
Christine Marino
Erin Nadel
Hannah Norton
Cindy Rawson
Caroline Sachse
Noelle Silk
Casey Walsh
Sharon Yang

ALTOS

Patricia Abely
Meghan Berryman
Kat Bui
Haydee Ciurella
Nancy Dickson
Zayda Ehlers
Elena Ellis
Aimee Fluriach
Sydnee Howard
Kim Kazimour
Abigail Kneal
Joanna Long
Nancy Macaulay
Tara Mace
Jaya Malekis
Barbara Martin
Zerrin Martin
Kathy Miller
Sheryl Moffat
Daryl Mullee
Melissa Rigaud
Bess Son
Chris Vivian

TENOR

Thomas Beukelman
Thor Blevins
John-Peter Ford
Andrew Francis
Larry Hartley
Andy Huang
Daemyung Hyun
Austin Jacobs
James Keesling
Derek Nirenberg
Argelis Nivar
Don Suther
Brian Taylor

BASS

Lafe Arens
John Bevis
Dan Bolin
Tom Bullock
Peter S. Bushnell
Jonathan Christopher
Andres Cortes
Doug Engh
Charles Fulton
Gabriel Johnston
Bill Lovett
Andy Olivenbaum
Jacob C Price
Richard Sadove
Lenny Terry
Peter VanRysdam
Kenrick Watkins
Jay Whitehead
Daniel Williams
Mike Woodruff

INSTRUMENTALISTS

Flute - Christine Allcot

Violin 1 - Marina Tucker

Oboe - Zoe Struk

Violin 2 - Aaron Colverson

Clarinet - Dalton Ringey

Viola - Stephen Fine

Bassoon - Alnold Irchai

Cello - Mattia Imponenti

Horn - Margaret Dixon

Bass - Nolan Koskela-Staples



Dr. Will Kesling, Conductor

A *Washington Post* review sums his abilities in two words, *clear professionalism*.

For the past seventeen years Dr. Kesling has served as the Director of Choral Activities at the University of Florida as well as the Director of the Gainesville Master Chorale and Orchestra. Over the past forty-two years, his college choirs have received international attention.

L'ARENA, Verona, Italy – Kesling baton perfect for Brahms. You rarely have the opportunity to perceive in a maestro a clear vision of the work that is evident by the gestures, at the same time expressive with great precision.

New York Daily News – Definitively Dvořák ... Will Kesling's conducting was truly inspired and impeccably paced; the orchestra played superbly;

the massed choruses from Florida, Texas, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, New Jersey, and Utah produced stirring sounds.

In recognition of his achievements, Dr. Kesling has received **The Congressional Order of Merit** by the Congress of the United States of America in September 2003 and the **Ronald Reagan Gold Medal** in November 2004.

In March 2006, Professor Kesling received the **Congressional Medal of Distinction** for his contributions to the cultural life of the citizenry. On October 12, 2013, Dr. Kesling received the **Distinguished Alumni Award** from his undergraduate university and International Educator of the Year for the College of the Arts at the University of Florida.

Dr. Kesling has conducted hundreds of choral ensembles and 46 professional symphony orchestras throughout the world. His talents for weaving together text and music, chorus and orchestra have garnered him international respect. Kesling has conducted a number of engagements in Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, as well as in major concert halls internationally.

In September Centaur Records, America's largest independent record producer, released a significant recording of the rarely performed *REQUIEM MASS*, Op. 89 by Antonin Dvořák conducted by Dr. Kesling. The performing forces are the Coru Academic „G. Musicesscu” al Philharmoniciei „Moldava” Iași and Orchestra Filarmoniciei „Mihail Jora” Bacău of Romania with four soloists from the Rouse State Opera Sophia, Bulgaria.

Bio Highlights 2018-2019

*The Beijing Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs of the Peoples Republic of China has certified Dr. Kesling to be a **High Level Talent** and selected him to join the **Program for the Introduction of Renowned Overseas Professors** by awarding him a ten year High Talents R Visa. (Conformation Letter for High Level Foreign Talents Issue No: 051110019480102012)*

In June 2019, I was **Visiting Distinguished Professor** at the School of Music, **Sichuan International Studies University** in Chongqing where he lectured on choral rehearsal techniques and coached graduate and undergraduate conducting students, selected high school and professional conductors. He worked with the Chongqing Philharmonic Choir and the Sichuan International Studies University Teachers' Chorus (Professors). The capstone event of the two weeks was with a choir of 225 undergraduate Vocal Music Education students of SISU and the 60 student SISU Orchestra in concert performing an American composer's work.

Appointed **Distinguished Expert** by the **Beijing Foreign Studies University**, He taught humanities courses for their Summer Term in both July 2018 & 2019. Called the "Harvard of China", BFSU is renowned for its language and cross-cultural studies programs.

As **Honorary Distinguished Professor**, he coached and lectured to graduate conducting students in the **College of Music, Gannan Normal University** in Ganzhou in June 2018. I worked with the Lao Biao Song Choir (Professional), an elementary school choir, and a large church choir.

Israel

I was an **Israeli Faculty Fellow** (December 26, 2018 – January 8, 2019). This is a competitive academic program where the central goal is to link scholars from diverse disciplines with their Israeli counterparts for the purpose of initiating cross-cultural and international exchanges and fostering relationships and collaborations. Sponsored by the Jewish National Fund.

Ecuador

In May, Kesling conducted a concert of Baroque music with the Chamber Orchestra of the **Universidad de las Artes** in Guayaquil.

Colombia

July 7, 2019 Dr. Kesling was appointed **President of Festival Coral Internacional de Medellín** (an international choral festival). For the past six years, he has conduct the combined special invited choirs for the final portion of the festival's closing concert in Teatro Metropolitano on Colombian National Television.



The Master Chorale

The Master Chorale is the premiere ensemble of the Gainesville Civic Chorus, whose performances frequently feature world class soloists' and orchestral musicians performing choral masterworks. The Master Chorale also collaborates with other performing organizations including members of the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra, The University of Florida Symphony Orchestra, and Dance Alive National Ballet.

The Gainesville Civic Chorus began its existence under the direction of Elwood Keister in 1976 as the Bicentennial Choir, and played a major role in the community's celebration of the anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. So gratifying were its musical efforts and so congenial were its activities that its members re-formed as the Gainesville Civic Chorus the following year. The permanent name selection deliberately underscores the Chorus' commitment to the cultural enrichment of the Gainesville community, a commitment which was quickly recognized. In 1978, the Chorus received the Gainesville Cultural Commission's award as the community's "best organization involved in the performing arts." It has also gained recognition by both the City Commission and the Alachua County Commission as the community's official chorus. Among the members are retired citizens, business persons, university professors, professional musicians and others from many walks of life.

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We Can't do this without your help.

The Master Chorale is the premiere ensemble of the Gainesville Civic Chorus, whose performances frequently feature guest soloists and orchestral musicians performing major choral masterworks. The Master Chorale also collaborates with other performing organizations such as members of the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra, The University of Florida Symphony Orchestra, and Dance Alive National Ballet.

Gainesville Master Chorale performances are generally free to the public so everyone can enjoy the music. However, we do incur significant expenses for the purchase of musical scores, advertising, salaries for our conductor and rehearsal accompanists, and the hiring of instrumentalists for our performance. The minimal cost for a concert is \$8,000, and costs associated with a large orchestra and soloists can be more than \$12,000.

To cover these costs, the GCC is supported by dues from our members, arts grants, advertisements placed in our concert brochures, and donations from community members and friends of the arts such as yourself. Donations of any size are gratefully accepted either in person, by mail, or through several other avenues. As a 501(c)(3) organization, your donation also may be eligible for a federal income tax donation.

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