One Equal Music

The Trinity Choir – 2013-2014

by David R. Sampson

“Bring us, O Lord God, at our last awakening
Into the house and gate of Heaven,
To enter into that gate and dwell in that house,
Where there shall be no darkness nor dazzling,
but one equal light;
No noise nor silence, but one equal music;
No fears nor hopes, but one equal possession;
No ends nor beginnings, but one equal eternity,
In the habitations of thy glory and dominion,
World without end.”
– John Donne

In July of 2013, the Ottawa Citizen published an article entitled: “Ask the Religion Experts: Why is it that in so many faiths, music plays an important role?” One respondent was Rev. Kevin Flynn, an Anglican priest and director of the Anglican Studies program at Saint Paul University in Ottawa. Rev. Flynn wrote in part:

“Human beings characteristically make music. All human speech, even that which is spoken or read, is extended through such musical qualities as rhythm, pitch, intensity and tone to shape a unique acoustical environment. Something happens to us in such an environment. There is a response that takes place at levels far deeper than the cognitive alone. The very cellular structure of our bodies vibrates in response to sound. If we sing together, we find that we are influencing one another through our singing. Our breathing and heartbeats enter into synchrony through the entraining pulse and pace of music. For people engaged in worship, these qualities of worship are valuable because of the sense of unity and corporate identity that music helps make possible.”

Likewise, Flynn drew another important connection between the ethereal nature of music and a central aspect of worship, which can be applied to nearly all faiths:

“Our experience tells us that music is powerful. Paradoxically, it is also impermanent and intangible. Sound waves move through the air, an intangible substance. Sound lasts only for the duration of the performance. Music is thus an apt symbol for the divine who is both present and hidden, elusive but recognizable. Music helps us to meet God without presuming to capture or contain God.” *

This elusive quality, combined with the richness of Anglican liturgical traditions, speaks to what John Donne perhaps meant in the excerpt from his sermon above: “no noise nor silence, but one equal music.” (Readers may recognize that passage as the text of a wonderful anthem by William Harris which our choir sang on All Saints Sunday this past year.)

Trinity Episcopal Church is blessed in countless respects, not the least of which are its location in the heart of a vibrant community and its close associations with Indiana University and the world renowned Jacobs School of Music. These connections which go back many years have provided numerous opportunities for music students and faculty to take part in the Trinity choir and music program, as well as the extended opportunity for others connected with the university and the community to join in. The proximity of Jacobs has enabled Trinity to
maintain a prominent choral scholars program, which enriches the worship life of the congregation immeasurably, as well as offering valuable experience and some scholarship help for exceptional graduate music students. In association with these, the working and retired members of the present Trinity choir represent a wonderful array of talents, age groups, and a deep attachment to the Anglican choral heritage.

Trinity Choral Scholars and Student Members – Present and recent past. . .

Director of Music Marilyn Keiser selects the members of the choral scholars group based on their interest, their vocal range and proficiency, as well as the need for a balance of voices in the group. Each is hired for the equivalent of an academic year, which may include an option for summer work for those remaining during the summer sessions. Each scholar agrees to attend the weekly rehearsals (Thursday evenings), and to perform at both Sunday services during all the weeks in which classes are in session. They may continue for another year, or several, depending on their program of study at Jacobs. Over the years some have had prior experience as Episcopal choristers, although many have not; and while such experiences may be helpful insofar as familiarity with Anglican hymnody and liturgical music, these can be learned in the opening weeks of the year. What counts most are the qualities of enthusiasm, commitment and dedication which these young people bring; and Dr. Keiser’s talents in recruiting, encouraging, and directing a succession of talented young musicians are legendary.

Trinity’s choral scholars and Jacobs / I.U. student members represent a wide range of interests and musical experiences, geographic diversity (10 states), high energy, and engaging personalities. Baritone Daniel Lentz, alto/mezzo-soprano Amber McKoy, and tenor Andrew LeVan are Trinity “veterans” with one, or several, years of experience here. They are joined this year by sopranos Claire Daniels, Lindsey McLennan Burdick, Elizabeth McConnaughey and alto Christa Ruiz, along with tenor-baritone Curtis Smith, baritone Andrew Richardson, and bass-baritone Julian Morris. Three (Amber, Claire, and Lindsey) became acquainted with Trinity as substitutes for previous choristers before signing on as “full timers” for this year. Trinity connections are further emphasized as Daniel, Christa, and Julian are students of Patricia Stiles, while Claire studies with Mary Ann Hart. Curtis Smith holds the distinction of being able to sing tenor, baritone or bass, while his area of concentration at I.U./Jacobs is piano, rather than voice. Andrew Richardson, Daniel Lentz, Andrew LeVan, Amber McKoy and Julian Morris have had roles in recent I.U. operas, while Claire Daniels and Lindsey Burdick are studying with the Early Music Institute and are involved with many of its programs. The Bloomington Bach Cantata Project has provided opportunities for Daniel, Lindsey and Julian in several of its recent performances, while the “Sounds of Indiana” (Bloomington’s local barbershop chorus) counts Daniel Lentz and several other Trinity people among its members.

Several others occupy high visibility roles in this ensemble – Three have considerable instrumental as well as vocal talents; the remaining two are primarily instrumentalists. All have served Trinity for more than one year. Martin Shedd (tenor) is a PhD candidate in Classical Studies and a gifted musician alongside his work in academia. His connection with Trinity came via two friends who were already here: Chris Lynch, and [former] choral scholar, Chris Leslie, a fellow undergraduate at St. Olaf College. Alto Megan Sweeney is a Masters degree candidate in flute whose talents have been on display from time to time in the beautiful solos she has played for Sunday anthems, as well as special events. Tenor Christopher (Chris) Lynch, our current Music Intern / Assistant Choir Director has won accolades from all for his warm personality, his extraordinary skills in choir directing and his enviable talent as an organist. He and Megan recently performed recitals, as they complete their academic work at Jacobs; while Martin combines his musical performance commitments with teaching Latin as he finishes his academic work in Classical Studies. Violinist Esther Kim and cellist Joseph Kaizer are graduate music students who have become deeply attached to our church community principally through their close connections with Director of Music, Marilyn Keiser. As any number of choir members and parishioners can attest, the quality of Esther and Joe’s musicianship is extraordinary, and the adjective “sublime” comes to mind as one which mostly closely fits their singular talents. Their devotion to Trinity is also expressed in their decision to become members of the church and to serve at communion. They perform regularly in church, often an instrumental prelude at the morning service, as well as in venues apart from Trinity
- for example, at the inaugural recital of the Alumni Hall Fisk organ earlier this year. In April of 2013, they traveled to New York and performed with Dr. Keiser at the American Guild of Organists Gala Concert, an event at which she was honored with an Outstanding Artist Award for Lifetime Achievement. Dr. Keiser played this concert at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine.

Quotes of note from this distinguished company of musicians . . .

“I love singing at Trinity! And I love singing from the 1982 Episcopal hymnal! The music comes from a very rich tradition, and Dr. Keiser plays hymns so beautifully.” Claire Daniels

“A highlight of my time here has been as a recurring member of “Roundabout Opera for Kids,” a local volunteer opera group geared towards introducing kids to opera. I’ve loved being a member of the Trinity choir. It has served as a safe place in difficult times.” Amber McKoy

“I LOVE the Pops concerts. It’s an opportunity to share hidden talents with people I’m comfortable around. I also love seeing others’ hidden talents.” Daniel Lentz

“I’ve really enjoyed the high level of musicianship from all the members of the choir, which makes it possible to have fast paced rehearsals, and perform interesting and challenging pieces on a regular basis. I also enjoy the humor of many choir members and I love it when Brady [Jones] visits rehearsals!” Christa Ruiz

“My love of choral music really started with the American Boychoir School which I attended from the ages of 9 to 13, and reached its maturity in the St. Olaf choir under the careful direction of Dr. Anton Armstrong.” Martin Shedd

“I am one of the few pianists who can say they sang in the opera chorus of Puccini’s “Turandot” with CCM in Cincinnati.” Curtis Smith

Summing it up - while diversity and variety represent appropriate descriptive terms for these talented individuals, a crucial factor that unites them is their long-standing interest and membership in church choirs in their early years. This, along with their dedicated pursuit of musical excellence as a career objective enables them to combine harmoniously to create “one equal music” for this most fortunate church!

Time moves inexorably forward, and choristers as well as graduate students in all fields move on to other places as they complete their studies and launch their careers. Readers may recall these recent members who are now in this process: Sopranos Arwen Myers, Christine Buras, Katie Polit, and Elizabeth Wakefield – now living in Portland (OR), London (UK), and [2 in] Chicago – respectively; also baritone & euphonium player, Chris Leslie, continuing his studies in Georgia, and bass Cody Medina who has relocated with his family to Houston, TX. We wish all of them well, and success in their continuing musical endeavors!

Trinity Choir and I.U./Jacobs School of Music – Ongoing Connections . . .

Ayana Smith (soprano) is an Associate Professor of Music (in Musicology), and Brent Gault (baritone) holds the same rank, serving as Chair of Music Education and Program Director of the I.U. Children’s Choir. They come from different regions of the country: Smith from Princeton, New Jersey; Gault from Texas, and both grew up taking part in church choirs from childhood on. Reflecting on her musical background, Smith writes: “I had studied piano, cello and organ, but it was really my early experience as a chorister that led me to what I do now. As my career as a professor of musicology became more demanding, . . .I had to find different ways of staying involved with singing. For me, singing at Trinity Bloomington has been the focus of that shift. What is incredible about this choir is that there is space for everyone, and we get to sing with such talented and dedicated students from the School of Music. I still learn from them.” Gault says of his experiences: “I have been part of church choirs my entire life, and have been part of I.U. for 13 years. I came to
Trinity in the Fall of 2001 during my first semester working at I.U. I was immediately struck by the high quality of the music and decided to join the choir at that time.

David Kazimir (baritone), also originally from New Jersey, is Curator of Organs & Carillons and Lecturer in Music at Jacobs School of Music. He describes himself as a “cradle Episcopalian,” who began as a chorister at the age of 6. He served as organist and director of music at several parishes in Ohio and Massachusetts before coming to Bloomington, and also worked for 10 years for the C. B. Fisk Organ company. In the latter position he worked on the crew which installed the new Auer Hall instrument in 2010, as well as the project which acquired and installed the Alumni Hall organ more recently.

Two other members, Luiz Lopes (tenor) and Kristen Strandberg (soprano) maintain connections with Jacobs. Lopes, originally from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, was a graduate assistant and Associate Instructor in Musicology; he also served as acting Assistant Director of the Latin American Music Center at I.U., and spent a year at Skidmore College as a visiting lecturer in 2004-05. Strandberg is a PhD candidate in Musicology and adjunct Instructor at Wabash College. She is originally from Fargo, ND, and has a bachelor’s degree in cello performance from the University of Minnesota.

Before concluding this section, three distinguished Trinity musicians must be saluted and thanked. All are Jacobs faculty members, and though not members of our choir, each performs here on special occasions (special services and Pops Concerts), and their combined influence on all of our musicians is profound. They are: Mary Ann Hart (mezzo soprano), Professor and Chair of the Department of Voice; Patricia Stiles (mezzo soprano), Professor of Voice; and Janette Fishell, Professor and Chair of the Organ Department. Trinity is blessed to count them as members, familiar to us all, and continually active on behalf of the church in its many dimensions apart from music. Likewise, the mentoring and support they provide for innumerable students and colleagues over many years is considerable and ongoing.

Trinity and the greater Indiana University community . . .

Two choir couples begin this section: Soprano Marie Shakespeare and her husband, Rob (bass); along with alto Ruth Stone and her husband, Verlon (bass). Both Shakespeares maintain careers in the field of lighting (design, teaching and consulting) in the I.U. Theater Department, and their dual work history has involved considerable travel experience, including sojourns in Hong Kong and Finland. Their “outside” areas of interest include viniculture (Rob), and catering and teaching yoga at the local YMCA (Marie). Both are long-standing members of Trinity, active in a number of church related activities. (As a side note, this writer can attest to Rob Shakespeare’s talents and energy as an I.U. instructor, having taken a summer course in Basic Stage Lighting with him all the way back in 1988!) Ruth and Verlon Stone share a common interest and involvement in the music and culture of Liberia, where Ruth lived for a time during childhood, and to which Verlon travels from time to time now as the head of I.U.’s Liberian Archive. Ruth currently serves as the Vice Provost for Research, as well as Professor in the Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology at I.U. Verlon, who describes his current status as an example of “failed retirement,” worked as a media specialist and presentation producer for Saudi Aramco for 14 years, and was part-owner of a bookstore prior to that. The Stones came from Lutheran and Evangelical backgrounds and began attending an Episcopal /Anglican church during their time in Saudi Arabia. Their attachment to the Anglican liturgy and traditions brought about their decision to join Trinity, and Trinity’s choir, after leaving the Middle East in 2001.

The I.U. Department of Classical Studies has been the academic home for Betty Rose Nagle (soprano), Professor Emerita, who recently retired after a distinguished 30+ year teaching career. She joined Trinity in the mid 1990’s, and the choir shortly thereafter, at which time the choir was directed by Robert (Bob) Rayfield - fondly remembered and cherished by numerous members of the parish. Nagle writes that she had no prior experience with singing until taking lessons at approximately age 40. Becoming involved with the Trinity choir then became a cornerstone in her life and continues into retirement.

The Kelley School of Business and the Office of the Vice Provost for Research represent the I.U. connections for (soprano) Brenda McNellen and (alto) Suzanne Lodato (the latter recently left Bloomington to take an administrative position at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville). McNellen is a Lecturer in communication, professional, and computer skills at Kelley; serving also as an Academic Advisor for undergraduate students. At Trinity, she has served on the Music Commission and is frequently called upon for her considerable talent in designing posters and fliers announcing our musical events. Lodato joined the Trinity choir upon moving to Bloomington in 2009. With a doctorate in music
from Columbia, she had a great deal of vocal music experience in churches in New York and Washington, DC, and her departure is a real loss to our choir, even as she looked forward to a new church association in her new location.

Sometimes the prominence of Trinity Bloomington in the Episcopal music scene attracts academic people who come for a specific time frame, as for example, a sabbatical year at I.U. Such is the case for soprano Catherine Arnott Smith, University Professor in the Department of Informatics at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Smith brings enthusiasm and a great deal of ecumenical musical experience with a variety of church choirs: “Episcopal from 1965 to 1997, Roman Catholic cantor and compline singer from 1997 to 2002, then Episcopal again from 2002 to 2007, Lutheran ever since.” Her husband is a professional church musician, and she became aware of Trinity through a friend in Fort Wayne whose choir director was a former student of Dr. Keiser’s. Smith’s academic career has covered a number of areas: legal publishing, the American history of medicine, work as a medical librarian, and medical informatics (“the academic side of medical computing”) in which she earned her doctorate.

Trinity and the wider Bloomington community...

Baritone bass David Dawson, alto Julia Byers, and tenor Steven Chambers represent Trinity connections in the wider community. Dawson is an I.U. graduate whose major field was swimming and competitive diving; a field which offered him the chance to travel and compete internationally. He subsequently became an acupuncturist and Chinese medical herbalist, settling in Bloomington some 6 years ago. Trinity figured prominently in this move, as he notes: “I’d attended Trinity with a friend in the last weeks of my undergrad degree here, and knew it was where I wanted to attend before moving back.” He keeps active at Trinity, serving on the Music and the Endowment Commissions. Byers is a psychologist with the Columbus school system. Long active as a member of Trinity and the Trinity choir, she also serves on the Music Commission and plays the handbells in services from time to time. Last April she traveled to New York to attend the American Guild of Organists’ Gala concert at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, the event at which Dr. Keiser was presented with an Outstanding Artist Award for Lifetime Achievement. (She played a recital for this event and was pleased to have some of the members of her own choir there for support.) Dawson also made the trip, and both he and Byers took a number of excellent pictures to commemorate the memorable occasion! Chambers also has long and deep associations with Trinity and Bloomington. He is currently employed at a local medical clinic which serves those who are in difficult circumstances, and one of his special interests is barbershop choral singing, serving as an officer in the “Sounds of Indiana,” Bloomington’s local chapter of the “S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A.” [Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America – quite a mouthful!] Chambers’ dedication and enthusiasm for singing – of both liturgical and barbershop varieties - along with his considerable knowledge and directing experience (for the Sounds of Indiana group) combine to make him a strong presence in both of these distinctive musical worlds!

Bloomingon and Trinity are fortunate to have in their midst another very special couple; partially-retired but impressively active! – (alto) Hilary and (baritone bass) Stanley Hamilton. Both are musicians more by avocation than profession: Hilary is a Registered Nurse in home health care, while Stan retired in 2003 from an academic career as Professor of French & Department Chair at Bridgewater State University (MA). Both are string players, and Hilary continues to perform as a violinist with a number of local ensembles as well as here at Trinity from time to time. She and Stan have served the church in numerous voluntary capacities and several commissions since they moved to Bloomington in 2003. Stan is the quintessential “natty dresser,” sporting an impressive array of bow ties and invoking his articulate clarity of speech and sharp sense of humor with choir colleagues – as Andrew LeVan, Brenda McNellen, and Brent Gault can amply attest! Reflecting on the dual track nature of her career, Hilary writes: “I have enjoyed being a nurse for 50 years! . . all kinds of nursing from camp nursing to psychiatric nursing, and teaching as Director of an LPN program in MA for 20 years . . . I started out as a music major in college: violin and viola . . . even studied at I.U. . . . and have kept playing for over 60 years! It has been a wonderful avocation.”

Variety in career directions might also be an appropriate term to describe the author of this article, (baritone bass) David (Dave) Sampson, who spent 44 years teaching at the Culver Academies in northern Indiana. He moved to Bloomington after retiring (in 2011) to join his wife Anne, who earned her PhD in Comparative Literature at I.U. and who taught at Ivy Tech. Sampson is also a musician by avocation, having studied clarinet, oboe and tenor sax during his school years and participated in church choir as a youngster in suburban Cleveland, OH; later (in his last few years of teaching) in a small Episcopal choir in Plymouth, IN. Being a Trinity choir member is a thrilling experience for him, as is helping to influence Trinity’s musical directions via membership in (and current chair of) the Music Commission. At the invitation of Steve Chambers he recently joined the “Sounds of Indiana” barbershop choir.
In completing this section, we must note the musical contributions of three additional Trinity parishioners who are connected with the choir and related musical events: (soprano) Mary Alice Crampton; (alto) Janet Brinkworth; and (mezzo-soprano) Danica D’Onofrio. Crampton and her husband Norman have lived in Bloomington for a number of years, and their association with Trinity dates from the time they moved here. Mary Alice joined the choir at that time, and she brings to it a keen sense of commitment and dedication, shared as well with other areas of the church community. Brinkworth exemplifies service “to the max” as Trinity’s Parish Administrator; in effect, the pole star around which most of the church’s administrative activities are centered! She plays handbells on special occasions and sings with the choir from time to time, most recently to help fill the vacancy left by Suzanne Lodato who moved to Tennessee. D’Onofrio served as Trinity’s Director of Programs for Children & Youth for several years, devoting extraordinary time and energy to a range of activities. She stepped down from this role last Spring, welcoming the opportunity to spend more time with her family and to sing with the choir on occasion. She also has performed in the annual Pops Concerts, an opportunity to exercise a wonderful sense of humor.

Closing out – The Pillars of Trinity – Music and just about Everything else . . . .

In the belief that “the last shall be first,” these four individuals represent the Alpha & Omega, so to speak, of Trinity music and beyond - considering the totality of what constitutes this church and its mission over the years. They are: Director of Music, (soprano) Dr. Marilyn Keiser; (alto) Anne Jones; (bass) Gates Agnew; and (tenor) Fr. Charles Dupree.

Marilyn Keiser – What can one say that will even begin to encompass her strengths and influence? Her extraordinary life and career as a church organist/choir director, Professor Emerita in the Jacobs School of Music where she specialized in hymnody and liturgical music, her contributions to the Episcopal Hymnal (fully revised in 1982), her encyclopedic knowledge of all things musical in the Episcopal tradition, her leadership in the American Guild of Organists through which she continues to travel and present workshops and recitals – the list will go on and on. Most of all, though, and I believe I can speak for the devoted members of her choir, it is her qualities of stellar musicianship, warmth of personality and keen sense of humor, exacting expectations and a unique style of persuading everyone to give her or his best: These are what stand out. Trinity’s renown in the larger world of the Episcopal Church is truly the work of Marilyn Keiser and the countless musicians she has directed and mentored over the decades.

Anne Jones – A lifelong Episcopalian, she moved to Bloomington 10 years ago, and is also known to many at Trinity in association with her late husband, The Rt. Rev. Edward W. (Ted) Jones, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis from 1977 to 1997, preceding Bishop Catherine Waynick. Along with raising a family, Anne recounted some of what she has done over the years: “I’ve worked as a volunteer in three church homeless shelters, as a serials librarian in a theological seminary, as a Hebrew tutor, spiritual director and retreat leader, as a hospital chaplain, and as a faculty member for Episcopal Church Pension group clergy conferences.” At Trinity, she does . . . just about everything, exemplifying all that is contained in the concept of servant leadership and mentoring. And at her side much of the time, her devoted companion, Brady, is equally well known to all in the choir and the Trinity community!

Gates Agnew – Of our current members, Gates has the longest period of service, having come to Bloomington from California in 1962 to teach English at Indiana University. Sixteen years later he made an important career change with a new Master’s in Social Work and employment at Bloomington’s South Central Mental Health Center, continuing there until he retired in the late 1990’s. He and his wife Pat joined Trinity at the time when Rev. William A. Eddy, his former college chaplain, was rector. In the mid-1970’s he joined the [then] new Trinity Men and Boys Choir, directed by Professor Robert Rayfield and intern, Margaret Co. Speaking of those years, Gates writes: “Music is at the heart of my spiritual life . . . and it is a delight to sing with and under first-class musicians who also appreciate participation in a warm community. Among Bob Rayfield’s personal and musical contributions to Trinity, together with his own organ and choir direction, was his patient commitment over several years to induce Marilyn Keiser to come to I.U. and Trinity in the mid-80’s. They shared duties at Trinity for fifteen years. ”

Fr. Charles Dupree – Though not a choir member, Fr. Charlie provides the crucial level of support for Trinity’s music ministry in all of its dimensions. He encouraged Chris Lynch to offer and lead several Evensong performances last year, and these became the nucleus for this year’s “Second Sundays” series, which was designed around a structure Fr. Charlie developed while serving at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Greenville, NC. He is an accomplished artist, musician and composer, and his work: liturgical pieces, Psalms, and similar musical responses, is frequently performed in our services. He regards music as central and essential in the worship life of the church, and he promotes this ideal to the fullest extent. Praise be to God!
Finally . . . Here is the full choir again – arranged by voice type as you normally hear them in services, making One Equal Music for all . . .

**Sopranos:** Claire Daniels, Lindsay McClennan Burdick, Elizabeth McConnaughey, Ayana Smith, Brenda McNellen, Kristen Strandberg, Marie Shakespeare, Catherine Smith, Betty Rose Nagle, Mary Alice Crampton.

**Altos:** Amber McKoy, Christa Ruiz, Hilary Hamilton, Anne Jones, Ruth Stone, Janet Brinkworth, Megan Sweeney.

**Tenors:** Andrew LeVan, Chris Lynch, Steven Chambers, Luiz Lopes, Martin Shedd, Curtis Smith.

**Baritone-basses:** Daniel Lentz, Julian Morris, Andrew Richardson, Brent Gault, David Dawson, David Kazimir, Stan Hamilton, Gates Agnew, Verlon Stone, Rob Shakespeare, David Sampson.

****************************

From the Lectionary (November 21st)

Prayer dedicated to three prominent composers in the Anglican Liturgical tradition:

“O God most glorious, whose praises are sung night and day by your saints and angels in heaven: We give you thanks for William Byrd, John Merbecke and Thomas Tallis, whose music has enriched the praise that your Church offers you here on earth.

Grant, we pray, to all who are touched by the power of music such glimpses of eternity that we may be made ready to join your saints in heaven and behold your glory unveiled for evermore; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen +

*Article: “Ask the Religion Experts”* *(Ottawa Citizen, July 10, 2013)*


+ (Sautucket) **Lectionary** *(November 21, 2013)*