

Mozart's Magnificent Melodies, November 1

Photo: Louis Burkot conducts the Dartmouth College Glee Club. Photo by Rob Strong.

HANOVER, NH, October 6, 2015—The [Dartmouth College Glee Club](#) presents [Monumental Mozart](#), a program of two works written by the German genius in the last year of his short life: excerpts from *The Magic Flute*, K. 620, his whimsical, lighter-than-air opera of enchanted creatures; and the entire *Requiem Mass in D minor*, K. 626, his beloved mass of mourning. The concert also features the premiere of *Dream*, an a cappella setting of a Langston Hughes poem by Glee Club member and Dartmouth senior Brian Chalif.



Joined by an orchestra, student soloists and guest soloists—[Alexandra Batsios](#), soprano, [Jesse Darden](#), tenor, [Kian Freitas](#), bass baritone, and [Emily Geller](#), mezzo-soprano—the 40-voice chorus performs the program on [Sunday, November 1, at 2 pm](#), in the Hop's Spaulding Auditorium.

All recent performers with Lebanon, NH-based [Opera North](#) (of which Burkot is the artistic director), the soloists are emerging young opera and concert artists. Batsios has also performed principal roles with Sarasota Opera and Palm Beach Opera, and is a member and

soloist with the prestigious Westminster Symphonic Choir. Darden, in his first year with the Boston University Opera Institute, has sung principal roles with Chautauqua Opera in New York City and was a 2015 regional finalist with the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. Freitas has sung major roles in classic and contemporary operas and concert works in venues including New York's Symphony Space and with such ensembles as New York's Metro Chamber Orchestra and the Central Jersey Symphony Orchestra. Geller has performed major operatic roles with numerous operas and summer festivals in Greater New York City as well as the Harvard-Radcliffe Gilbert & Sullivan Players, and Boston University's Tanglewood Vocal Program.

From its fiery *Confutatis* to the infinitely tender *Lacrimosa*, the *Requiem* remains one of Mozart's most treasured achievements—and most controversial. The dust-up began with the work's creation, due to two factors: mortality and money.

Mozart began the *Requiem* on a commission from Count Franz von Walsegg, an amateur chamber musician who routinely commissioned works by composers and passed them off as his own. Seeking a mass to memorialize his recently deceased wife, von Walsegg paid Mozart half the commission in advance with promise of the remainder upon delivery of the completed work.

In November 1791, midway through the *Requiem*, Mozart fell ill with what has since been judged to be rheumatic fever. He died on December 5, the mass unfinished. Only the opening movement (*Requiem aeternam*) was completed in all of the orchestral and vocal parts. Other movements had complete vocal parts but only partial orchestration, and some portions of the mass—which comprises a standard set of Latin prayers—were missing altogether.

Needing the remaining commission, Mozart's wife Constanze sought a composer to secretly complete the mass, first Joseph von Eybler, who worked on several movements before giving the manuscript back to Constanze. The task then went to Franz Xaver Süssmayr, who borrowed some of Eybler's work and added orchestrations of his own as well writing the missing movements, in part by adapting music from the opening two movements. One matter of controversy is whether, as Constanze claimed, Mozart left "little scraps of paper" containing explicit instructions for the *Requiem's* completion—a story some say she concocted when it became common knowledge that other composers had finished Mozart's work.

Despite the controversy over how much of the music is actually Mozart's, the commonly performed Süssmayr version has become widely accepted by the public—and has yet to be eclipsed by subsequent completions. It is beloved for its tender melodies, powerful choruses and exquisite arias, and compelling mixture of beauty, anguish, majesty and drama.

Only months before his death, Mozart had achieved a great success with *The Magic Flute*, which premiered in Vienna on September 30, 1791. Mozart wrote the work with a particular theater troupe and singers in mind, and the founder of the troupe, Emanuel Schikaneder, wrote the libretto—drawing heavily on an earlier musical work, *Oberon*, written for his troupe two years earlier by Karl Ludwig Giesecke. Schikaneder also sang the part of Papageno, and Mozart wrote in help for Schikaneder's uncertain musicianship, with the strings playing the vocal line before the singer comes in, to help him find his pitch. In contrast, no such concessions were made in the famously difficult role of the Queen of the Night, written for Mozart's sister-in-law Josepha Hofer, a brilliant *coloratura* soprano.

Audiences have loved *The Magic Flute* from the start, and within 14 months of its premiere it had already been performed 100 times. Since its premiere, *The Magic Flute* has always been one of the most beloved works in the operatic repertoire, and is presently the third most frequently performed opera worldwide. With its themes of enchantment and (strictly PG) love, its colorful characters and its memorable melodies, it appeals to all ages. The excerpts on the program include Pamina's aria *Ach, ich fuhls*, Papageno's "Suicide Aria" (note that the attempt is thwarted!) the famous Queen of the Night aria, plus the finale to Act 2.

The one work in the program not by Mozart is Dartmouth senior Brian Chalif's *Dream*, based on Langston Hughes' poem *Hold Fast to Dreams*. From Huntington, NY, Chalif played violin, guitar and piano and sang in high school—but didn't expect to continue music on that scale in college. His freshman trip leader convinced him to audition for a cappella groups, however, and that started a voyage into Dartmouth music-making that has included voice lessons, singing in the Glee Club, the Dartmouth College Gospel Choir and the Dartmouth Aires student-led a cappella group, and pursuing a double major in computing science and music. A composition class with music professor Spencer Topel his sophomore year ignited his interest in writing music, and Topel also arranged for Chalif to study with noted Estonian composer Toivo Tulev while Tulev was at Dartmouth the summer of 2014 on a Fulbright fellowship. Burkot decided to add *Dream* to the program last spring.

The **Dartmouth College Glee Club** is a group of 40+ serious choral singers, led by Burkot since 1981. Its ever increasing repertory spans four centuries, with a distinguished performance history including many of the masterworks of choral-orchestral literature, fully staged Gilbert and Sullivan operettas with all-student casts,

large and small *a cappella* works and the cherished songs of Dartmouth College. Performances have included the *Requiem* of Gabriel Fauré performed with orchestra, *Six Madrigali* of Morten Lauridsen, and a fully staged and choreographed performance of Purcell's masterpiece, *Dido and Aeneas* performed with the Arcadia Players, a baroque period instrument orchestra. In addition, the Glee Club regularly tours each spring break.

Louis Burkot has been the director of the Dartmouth Glee Club since 1981. He was the recipient of the Distinguished Lecturer award at Dartmouth in the spring of 2000 for his work in vocal instruction in the Department of Music. As an operatic conductor, Richard Dyer of the *Boston Globe* has praised his work as "first-rate, capable, and stylish" and *Opera News* has noted his conducting "sparkles with verve and sensitivity to the needs of singers." Under Burkot's tutelage many Dartmouth students have continued their musical studies at New England Conservatory, Boston University, Indiana University, Cincinnati Conservatory, and others. His conducting studies included the Yale School of Music, the Aspen Music Festival, and the Houston Grand Opera. In addition, he gives master classes in vocal repertoire at music schools and conservatories throughout the United States.

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CALENDAR LISTING:

Monumental Mozart, a concert by the Dartmouth College Glee Club

This 40-member chorus presents a program of two works written by the German genius in his last year of his short life: excerpts from *The Magic Flute*, K. 620, his whimsical, lighter-than-air opera of enchanted creatures; and the *Requiem Mass in D minor*, K. 626, his beloved burial mass. With orchestra and student and professional soloists.

Sunday, November 1, 2 pm

Spaulding Auditorium, Hopkins Center for the Arts, Hanover NH

\$10, Dartmouth students \$5

Information: hop.dartmouth.edu or 603.646.2422

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Founded in 1962, the Hopkins Center for the Arts is a multi-disciplinary academic, visual and performing arts center dedicated to uncovering insights, igniting passions, and nurturing talents to help Dartmouth and the surrounding Upper Valley community engage imaginatively and contribute creatively to our world. Each year the Hop presents more than 300 live events and films by visiting artists as well as Dartmouth students and the Dartmouth community, and reaches more than 22,000 Upper Valley residents and students with outreach and arts education programs. After a celebratory 50th-anniversary season in 2012-13, the Hop enters its second half-century with renewed passion for mentoring young artists, supporting the development of new work, and providing a laboratory for participation and experimentation in the arts.