

ABOUT THE HELIOS ENSEMBLE

The Helios Ensemble is a 45-person auditioned mixed choral ensemble based in Tucson, Arizona, founded in 2014 and directed by Benjamin J. Hansen, DMA candidate at the University of Arizona. The mission of The Helios Ensemble is to create fantastic sound through innovative group vocal pedagogy, to use the drama inherent in the music to improve blend and color, and to empower amateur choristers to sing difficult music. Helios also trains young conductors through The Helios Young Conductor's Initiative by offering conducting pedagogy and rehearsal and concert podium time. Tonight Sam Feldman and Kimberly Waigwa will be conducting under these auspices.

ABOUT THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, BENJAMIN HANSEN

Benjamin Hansen is the founder and artistic director of The Helios Ensemble and the director of music at the United Church of Christ, Good Shepherd. Hansen received his BA from Yale, singing in The Yale Whiffenpoofs, his MM in voice from The Catholic University of America, his MM in conducting from The College-Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati, and is currently a doctoral candidate in choral conducting at the University of Arizona. Hansen has conducted such works as Beethoven's Mass in C, Bach's Lobet den Herrn, Mozart's Requiem, Howell's Requiem, Haydn's Lord Nelson Mass, Poulenc's Mass in G, and Vaughan Williams' Three Shakespeare Songs. Hansen has studied conducting with Bruce Chamberlain, Elizabeth Schauer, Leo Nestor, Jerry Blackstone, Mark Gibson, Earl Rivers, Fiora Contino, and Robert Sund. Hansen was the director of choral activities at Cincinnati State College, directing the Cincinnati State Chorale's performance of Whitacre's *Lux Aurumque*, the national anthem at a Cincinnati Reds Game, and a set of spirituals for the World Choir Games in 2012. He was a Conducting Fellow at the Chorus America Conducting Symposium in 2010, Houston, TX, and he founded and directed the Washington Collegium, in Washington, D.C. from 2007 to 2009.



THE HELIOS ENSEMBLE
BENJAMIN HANSEN, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
PRESENT

Brahms and Beer

A HEARTY CELEBRATION OF HIS
LOVE WALTZES AND REQUIEM

BEER FROM DRAGON

SATURDAY, JUNE 17TH 7:00PM
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, GOOD SHEPHERD
17750 S LA CANADA DR, SAHUJARITA AZ

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GRACE ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
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PROGRAM

Melancholie Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

Tina Wang, piano

From Sept Chansons Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)
Marie

From Figure Humaine Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)
Toi Ma Patience

Benjamin Hansen, conductor

From Trois Chansons Claude Debussy (1862-1918)
Dieu, Qui la fait

Samantha Feldman, conductor

From Ein deutsches Requiem Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
Mvt. 4 Wie Lieblich

From Liebeslieder Waltzer, Op. 52 Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
Mvts. 2, 3a, 11, 14, 15, 18

From Neue Liebeslieder Waltzer, Op. 65 Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
Mvts. 7, 13, 15

Shantell Petty, Chia-Chun Ko, piano

There is no Rose Alan L Smith (1955-)

Kimberly Waigwa, conductor

Canticum Novum Ivo Antognini (1963 -)

Pilgrim's Hymn Steven Paulus (1949 - 2014)

Alleluia Jake Runestad (1981-)

Alan Smith's setting of the 15th century English Carol **There is no rose** is a stunning musical moment celebrating the Holy Trinity, God in persons three. Through the use of close harmonies and many dissonances, Smith engenders the warmth and richness of a traditional hymn while simultaneously evoking a sense of awe and glory.

Canticum Novum, composed in 2013 by Ivo Antognini, features an irregular ostinato rhythm (3+2+2+2) of added 2nd chords and 7th chords that repeat seven times. Antognini describes these as representing "the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, knowledge, fortitude, piety, and fear of the Lord." Antognini sets these repetitions with multiple shifts of meter, creating a riveting buoyancy. The work is further energized by the additionally unexpected variations of motive, and shifts in harmonic rhythm.

Jake Runestad composed his **Alleluia** in 2013 for the Western Division ACDA convention in Santa Barbara, CA. A dazzling cluster filled whole tone scale begins and ends this piece. The internal sections feature angular modulations and an almost tribal aesthetic through dissonances that resolve to open 5ths. This primordial frenzy comes to a moment of repose in the center of the work in which long-phrased dissonances flourish, abate, and morph into a restart of the mixed-meter modal severity that began the piece. The final climax, complete with clapping, is the perfect evocation of the exhilaration behind Alleluia!

Don't miss our next concerts Saturday, Oct. 21st at 7:00 p.m. (at Grace St Paul's) AND Sunday Oct. 22nd at 3:00 (at Christ the King Episcopal Church) featuring Duruflé's ethereal Requiem and a dazzling new piece, Karimatanu Kuicha, by Japanese composer Ko Mastushita.

SELECTED PROGRAM NOTES

Marie, from Poulenc's *Sept Chansons*, is an exquisite movement about the pain and pleasure of love, ephemeral and profound, musically influenced by sources ranging from the Renaissance to the 20th century. The "las" heard immediately function as an accompaniment akin to works of the French renaissance, while the 7th and 9th chords point to the jazz era, creating a 20th century picture of bliss and pain in scattered romance.

Dieu, qui la fait is from Debussy's 1908 *Trois Chansons*, and like the other two movements, connect the styles of the past with the harmonic techniques of the time. The texts are by Charles d'Orléans, prince and poet, who was imprisoned in England after the Battle of Agincourt in 1415. This first movement regales us with assertions of passion and love for an astoundingly beautiful woman with lines like "Who could tire of her? Her beauty constantly renews itself."

The romantic lilt, buoyancy and charm of Brahms is on full display in his **Love Songs and New Love Songs Waltzes, op. 52 and 65**. Brahms sets the words of romantic poet Georg Friedrich Daumer, who compares love to nature: love is "as strong as waves crashing against the rocks," or "as disturbed as a bush shaken by a bird," or is "like a downpour of rain, ushering in one hundred thousand kisses." Lilted triple meter, leaping melodic lines, rich harmonies and modulations enhance these metaphors, giving us angst and the passion of love, yet tempered to a lighter dimension. The music about the torrents of love, for example, sounds jolly as if it is coming from a beer hall. And this is no accident, for Brahms modeled these waltzes after Schubert's Ländler, which were to be performed in informal settings, and easily so, as Brahms marks "ad libitum" in the score, allowing the ensemble size to range from a quartet to a chorus.

ROSTER

SOPRANOS

Hailey Butler
Allie Esposito
Nora Evans-Reitz
Trish Marji
Naja McKenzie
Stephanie Pond
Ann Stephens
Amy Beth Willis

TENORS

Neil Bauer
Laura Coachman
Gavin Ehly
Dan Marino
William Pascoe
Mike Shen
Gavin Tidaback
Bryce Tomlin

ALTOS

Dana Douglas
Melanie De Sa
Alisha Escoto
Sam Feldman
Angela Hoover
Mindy Jones
Janet Rowe
Renee Summers
Kimberly Waigwa
Stephanie Watson
Olivia Watters

BASSES

Gary Anderson
Jared Aragon
James Birkholz
Bill Coachman
Sean Finn
Tyler Gastelum
Hayden Eric Godfrey
Michael Koellner
Paul Kreuzer
Kevin Nienhouse
Chris Newsom



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ABOUT KIMBERLY WAIGWA

Kimberly Waigwa recently received her BM in Choral Music Education from the University of Arizona. Kimberly has directed church ensembles as Interim Director of the St. Nicholas and After School Music Program Choirs as well as a community ensemble as assistant director of the LGBTQA chorus Desert Voices. Kimberly was selected as one of eight undergraduates to participate in the Inaugural Undergraduate Masterclass at the 2017 American Choral Directors Association's National Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota working with Ann Howard Jones and the Luther College Collegiate Chorale. Kimberly is looking forward to making her conducting debut with the Helios Ensemble, returning as a conductor with Audivi Vocem Conductor's Choir, and starting as the new choir director at Salpointe Catholic High School.

ABOUT SAM SIERRA-FELDMAN

Sam Feldman is a senior studying Voice and Creative Writing at the University of Arizona. She recently published her first children's book, "Sam the Ant," and co-produced a children's album, "Kaleidoscope." In addition to the Helios Ensemble, Sam also sings and conducts with local ensemble Audivi Vocem and currently serves as President of Enharmonics A Cappella.

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