

St. John's Cathedral to present Fior Angelico in Spanish program

by Daniel Hathaway



The Helen D. Schubert Concert Series at St. John's Cathedral in downtown Cleveland has presented a number of fine European chamber choirs over the years, but this fall, music director Gregory Heislman is bringing in talent closer to home.

On Friday evening, November 10 at 7:30 pm, the Columbus-based Fior Angelico Chamber Chorus will present "Spanish Music for Lamentation and Rejoicing" under the direction of its founder, Matthew Bester.

"It's more of a Good Friday program in the first half, with Tomás Luis de Victoria's *O vos omnes*, *Animam meam dilectam* and *Lamentations of Jeremiah*," Bester said in a recent telephone conversation. "Then the second half moves to rejoicing with Francisco Guerrero's wonderful Easter motet *Maria Magdalene et altera Maria*, and Alonso Lobo's *Missa Maria Magdalene*, an exuberant six-voice parody mass that takes all the motifs from the Guerrero and spins them out in wonderful ways. It's a lot of fun to traverse these two different emotions."

Bester, a native of Minneapolis, founded Fior Angelico a decade ago after undergraduate studies at Harvard and graduate studies in Musicology and Medieval and Renaissance Studies at The Ohio State University. He also serves as music director of St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Columbus and associate director of the professional Lancaster Chorale.

"The chorus has been a one-concert summer operation during the last ten years, then we began to be invited to do some projects outside that summertime window," he said. "Many of the singers who are involved in it are also very active in church choirs, the Columbus Symphony Chorus, and the Lancaster Chorale, so it's very hard sometimes to really be able to dedicate the time. But summer is when a lot of

people are free and looking to do some singing.”

This year, Fior Angelico was invited to perform on the Columbus Early Music Concert Series for the second time in a row, which inspired multiple performances of the Spanish program. “We learned the music over the summer,” Bester said, “performed it in Lancaster, and put it away for a couple of months. Now we’re touching everything up for performances in Cleveland and at the Catholic Cathedral in Columbus a week later.”

Bester’s previous programs have featured music by Venetian composers of the High Renaissance, masters of the English Reformation, and concerts featuring the music of single composers like Palestrina, Orlande de Lassus, and William Byrd. What does the director have in mind for the future? “I’ve thought about a program by Heinrich Schütz, a composer I’ve always loved. It would be great to perform his *Musikalische Exequien*.”

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