

THE ST. OLAF CHOIR  
*and*  
MAGNUM CHORUM  
*present*

*Pietà*

AN ORATORIO BY JOHN MUEHLEISEN



SATURDAY, APRIL 30 • 7:30 P.M.

ST. ANDREW'S LUTHERAN CHURCH  
MAHTOMEDI, MINNESOTA



SUNDAY, MAY 1 • 3:30 P.M.

BOE MEMORIAL CHAPEL, ST. OLAF COLLEGE  
NORTHFIELD, MINNESOTA

# PROGRAM

## 1. Prologue

### 1.1 – Processional

*Percussion, Chanters*

### 1.2 – Exhortation and Questions: “Do not let your hearts be troubled”

*Choir, Soprano, Tenor, Instruments*

## 2. Scene One (The Son)

### 2.1 – PASSION INTERLUDE I (The Son)

“Today the Master of Creation stands before Pilate”

*Chanters a cappella*

### 2.2 – Jack Kipling’s Final Letter: “Just a hurried line...”

*Tenor solo, Instruments, Choir, Chanters*

### 2.3 – Song: “Just before the battle, Mother”

*Tenor solo*

### 2.4 – Chorale 1: *Soldier’s Dream* (“I dreamed kind Jesus fouled the big-gun gears”)

*Choir a cappella*

## 3. Scene Two (The Mother)

### 3.1 – PASSION INTERLUDE II (The Mother): “Today the blameless Virgin saw Thee suspended upon the Cross”

*Chanters a cappella*

### 3.2 – *My Boy Jack*

*Soprano, Choir, Instruments*

### 3.3 – Chorale 2: *At a Calvary Near the Ancre* (“One ever hangs where shelled roads part”)

*Choir a cappella*

#### **4. Scene Three (Calvary)**

**4.1 – PASSION INTERLUDE III (The Crucifixion):** “Today He who hung the earth upon the waters is hung upon the cross”

*Chanters a cappella*

**4.2 – The Passion of the Son**

*Choir, Treble Choir, Instruments*

**4.3 – Lament**

*Soprano, Percussion*

**4.4 – The Passion of the Mother**

*Choir, Soprano, Instruments*

**4.5 – Chorale 3: On Another’s Sorrow** (“Can I see another’s woe?”)

*Choir a cappella*

#### **5. Scene Four (Pietà)**

**5.1 – PASSION INTERLUDE IV (The Descent from the Cross)**

**5.1a** – “Give me this Stranger”

*Chanters a cappella*

**5.1b** – “...in her waiting arms”

*Choir a cappella*

**5.2 – Lullaby (Mary’s Song)**

*Soprano, Instruments*

**5.3 – Duet:** “Do not lament me, O Mother”

*Tenor, Soprano, Choir, Instruments*

**5.4 – PASSION INTERLUDE V (Burial):** “The Noble Joseph”

*Chanters a cappella*

**5.5 – Resurrection:** “Show us Thy Glorious Resurrection”

*Choir, Treble Choir a cappella*

**5.6 – Chorale 4:** “Let me arise and open the gate”

*Choir, Instruments*

#### **6. Epilogue**

**6.1 – Answers and Exhortations**

*Choir, Soprano, Tenor, Instruments*

**6.2 – Alleluia**

*Choir, Chanters, Treble Choir, Soprano, Tenor, Instruments, Organ*

**6.3 – Closing Hymn:** “God of Love, King of Peace”

*All Choirs, Soloists, Congregation, Organ*

# LIBRETTO

*Compiled by John Muehleisen*

## 1. Prologue

### 1.1 – Processional

### 1.2 – Exhortation and Questions: “Do not let your hearts be troubled”

**Choir**

Do not let your hearts be troubled.

*John 14:1*

**Soprano solo**

How can we not let our hearts be troubled?

**Choir**

Do not let your hearts be troubled.

**Tenor solo**

How can we not be filled with despair?

**Soprano and Tenor**

How can we not cry out against this?

**Choir, Soprano and Tenor**

This is not the way it is supposed to be.

A son has died. A brother has been lost. A child has been broken, torn, abandoned.

We are lost in a turbulent stream of emotions.

Grief. Anger. Guilt. Fear. Shame. Outrage. Bewilderment. Loss.

Our hearts are deeply troubled.

They cry out, No. No. No.

Not now. Not this way.

*excerpts from the Homily given by the Rev. Anne E. Kitch at the Requiem Eucharist  
and Celebration of Life for Matthew Shepard*

## 2. Scene One – The Son

### 2.1 – PASSION INTERLUDE I (The Son)

“Today the Master of Creation stands before Pilate”

**Chanters**

Today the Master of Creation stands before Pilate.

Today the Creator of All is condemned to die on the Cross

Of His own will, He is led as a Lamb to the slaughter.

He who fed his people with manna in the desert is transfixed with nails.

His Side is pierced, and a sponge of vinegar touches His lips.

The Redeemer of the World is slapped on the face.

The Maker of all is mocked by His own servants.

How great is the Master’s love for mankind!

For those who crucified Him, He prayed to His Father, saying:

“Forgive them this sin, for they know not what they do.”

*Stichera (Tone 6) for “Lord, I Call” verses from Orthodox Holy Friday Vespers*

## 2.2 – Jack Kipling’s Final Letter: “Just a hurried line…”

### Choir

*From Jack Kipling on September 25, 1915, at the Battle of Loos*

### Tenor (Jack Kipling)

Just a hurried line as we start off tonight. The front line trenches are nine miles off from here so it won’t be a very long march. This is the GREAT effort to break through & end the war.

The guns have been going deafeningly all day, without a single stop. We have to push through at all costs so we won’t have much time in the trenches, which is great luck.

Funny to think one will be in the thick of it tomorrow. One’s first experience of shell fire not in the trenches but in the open.

This is one of the advantages of a Flying Division; you have to keep moving.

We marched 18 miles last night in the pouring wet. It came down in sheets steadily.

They are staking a tremendous lot on this great advancing movement as if it succeeds the war won’t go on for long. You have no idea what enormous issues depend on the next few days.

This will be my last letter most likely for some time as we won’t get any time for writing this next week, but I will try & send Field post cards.

Well so long dears. Dear love John.

### Choir

*He was killed two days later when his unit went into action in what became known as the battle of Loos. His body was never identified.*

### Choir Men and Tenor (*representing the Dead*)

*If any question why we died,  
Tell them, because our fathers lied.*

*from Epitaphs of the War (1914–1918) by Rudyard Kipling*

## 2.3 – Song: “Just Before the Battle, Mother”

### Tenor

Just before the battle, mother,  
I am thinking most of you,  
While upon the field we’re watching  
With the enemy in view.

Comrades brave are ’round me lying,  
Filled with thoughts of home and God  
For well they know that on the morrow,  
Some will sleep beneath the sod.

*CHORUS. Farewell, mother, you may never  
Press me to your heart again,  
But, oh, you’ll not forget me, mother,  
If I’m numbered with the slain.*

Oh, I long to see you, mother,  
And the loving ones at home,  
But I’ll never leave our banner,  
Till in honor I can come.

Tell the traitors all around you  
That their cruel words we know,  
In every battle kill our soldiers  
By the help they give the foe.

*CHORUS. Farewell, mother, you may never  
Press me to your heart again,  
But, oh, you’ll not forget me, mother,  
If I’m numbered with the slain.*

Hark! I hear the bugles sounding,  
'Tis the signal for the fight,  
Now, may God protect us, mother,  
As He ever does the right.

Hear the “Battle-Cry of Freedom,”  
How it swells upon the air,  
Oh, yes, we’ll rally-round the standard,  
Or we’ll perish nobly there.

*CHORUS. Farewell, mother, you may never  
Press me to your heart again,  
But, oh, you’ll not forget me, mother,  
If I’m numbered with the slain.*

*traditional Civil War song  
(words and music by George F. Root)*

## 2.4 – Chorale 1: “I dreamed kind Jesus fouled the big-gun gears”

### Choir

I dreamed kind Jesus fouled the big-gun gears;  
And caused a permanent stoppage in all bolts;  
And buckled with a smile Mausers and Colts;  
And rusted every bayonet with His tears.

And there were no more bombs, of ours or Theirs,  
Not even an old flint-lock, nor even pikel.  
But God was vexed, and gave all power to Michael;  
And when I woke he'd seen to our repairs.

*Soldier's Dream (Wilfred Owen)*

*sung to “Wie wunderbarlich” #46 from Bach St. Matthew Passion*

## 3. Scene Two – The Mother

### 3.1 – PASSION INTERLUDE II (The Mother)

“Today the blameless Virgin saw Thee suspended upon the Cross”

### Chanters

Today the blameless Virgin [Mary] saw Thee suspended upon the cross, O Word.  
She mourned within herself and was sorely pierced in her heart.  
She groaned in agony from the depth of her soul.

Exhausted from tearing her hair and cheeks and beating her breast,  
She cried out lamenting:

“Woe is me, O my divine child!

Woe is me, O light of the world!

Why hast Thou departed from my eyes, O Lamb of God?”

Then the bodiless hosts were seized with trembling and cried:

“O Incomprehensible Lord, glory to Thee!”

*Stichera (Tone 2) for “Lord, I Call” verses from Orthodox Holy Friday Vespers*

### 3.2 – *My Boy Jack*

**Soprano** (Carrie Kipling)

‘Have you news of my boy Jack?’

**Choir**

*Not this tide.*

**Soprano** (Carrie Kipling)

‘When d’you think that he’ll come back?’

**Choir**

*Not with this wind blowing, and this tide.*

**Soprano** (Carrie Kipling)

‘Has any one else had word of him?’

**Choir**

*Not this tide.*

*For what is sunk will hardly swim,*

*Not with this wind blowing, and this tide.*

**Soprano** (Carrie Kipling)

‘Oh, dear, what comfort can I find?’

**Choir**

*None this tide,*

*Nor any tide,*

*Except he did not shame his kind –*

*Not even with that wind blowing, and that tide.*

*Then hold your head up all the more,*

*This tide,*

*And every tide;*

*Because he was the son you bore,*

*And gave to that wind blowing and that tide!*

*Rudyard Kipling*

### 3.3 – **Chorale 2:** “One ever hangs where shelled roads part”

**Choir**

One ever hangs where shelled roads part.

In this war He too lost a limb,

But His disciples hide apart;

And now the Soldiers bear with Him.

Near Golgotha strolls many a priest,

And in their faces there is pride

That they were flesh-marked by the Beast

By whom the gentle Christ’s denied.

The scribes on all the people shove

And bawl allegiance to the state,

But they who love the greater love

Lay down their life; they do not hate.

*At a Calvary Near the Ancre (Wilfred Owen)*

*sung to “O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden” #54 from Bach St. Matthew Passion*

## 4. Scene Three – Calvary

### 4.1 – PASSION INTERLUDE III (The Crucifixion)

“Today He who hung the earth upon the waters”

#### **Chanters**

Today He who hung the earth upon the waters is hung upon the tree.  
Today He who hung the earth upon the waters is hung upon the tree.  
Today He who hung the earth upon the waters is hung upon the tree.  
The King of the angels is decked with a crown of thorns.  
He who wraps the heav’ns with clouds is wrapped in the purple of mockery.  
He who freed Adam in the Jordan is slapped on the face.  
The Bridegroom of the Church is affixed to the cross with nails.  
The Son of the Virgin is pierced by a spear.

We worship Thy Passion, O Christ.  
We worship Thy Passion, O Christ.  
We worship Thy Passion, O Christ.

Show us also Thy glorious Resurrection.

*from Antiphon XV from the Orthodox Christian Matins of Holy Friday\**

\* “The Fifteenth Antiphon at the Matins of Holy Friday... is a highly dramatic moment in the [Orthodox] liturgical tradition. The lights in the church are extinguished (‘It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. ...’ Luke 23:44) as the clergy process carrying an icon of Christ’s body, which they then proceed to nail physically upon the cross in the middle of the church. The first time [I] witnessed this liturgical ritual as practiced in the Antiochian tradition, it was incredibly powerful, and continues to be so, year after year.”  
– Vladimir Morosan

### 4.2 – The Passion of the Son

#### **Treble Choir** (The Divine)

Glory...Glory...Glory...Glory...Glory...Glory...Glory...Glory....

#### **Choir** (The Human)

Today He who hung the earth upon the waters is hung upon the cross.  
Today He who hung the earth upon the waters is hung upon the cross.  
Today He who hung the earth upon the waters is hung upon the cross.

#### **Treble Choir, Choir, Soprano**

He who is King of the angels... is arrayed in a crown of thorns.  
He who wraps the heaven in clouds... is wrapped in the purple of mockery.  
He who in Jordan set Adam free... receives blows upon His face.  
The Bridegroom of the Church... is transfixed with nails.  
The Son of the Virgin... is pierced with a spear.

*from Antiphon XV from the Orthodox Christian Matins of Holy Friday*

### 4.3 – Lament (Soprano Vocalise and Percussion)

## 4.4 – The Passion of the Mother

### Choir

Stabat mater dolorosa  
juxta Crucem lacrimosa,  
dum pendebat Filius.

*The sorrowful Mother  
stood weeping beside the Cross  
upon which hung her Son.*

### Soprano (Mary)

I stood in deep sorrow,  
weeping by the cross  
on which they'd hung my Son,  
the nails piercing His hands and feet.

### Choir

Cujus animam gementem,  
contristatam et dolentem,  
pertransivit gladius.

*Whose lamenting soul,  
suffering and grieving,  
a sword had pierced.*

### Soprano (Mary)

As I suffered and grieved,  
a sword of sorrow  
pierced my lamenting soul!

### Choir

O quam tristis et afflicta  
fuit illa benedicta  
Mater Unigeniti!

*O how sad and afflicted  
was that blessed  
Mother of the Only-begotten!*

Quae moerebat et dolebat,  
Pia Mater dum videbat  
Nati poenas incliti.

*Who was grieving and suffering,  
Loving Mother, as she beheld  
the torments of her noble Son.*

### Soprano (Mary)

O how sad, how afflicted I was.  
How painful was my mourning  
as I watched the torments of my Son.

### Choir

Quis est homo qui non fleret,  
Matrem Christi si videret  
in tanto supplicio?

*Who would not weep,  
seeing the Mother of Christ  
in such distress?*

Quis non posset contristari,  
Christi Matrem contemplari  
dolentem cum Filio?

*Who could not be saddened  
to behold Christ's Mother  
Suffering with her Son?*

### Soprano (Mary)

Who would not weep to see me  
in such agony?

Who could not be saddened  
contemplating the depth of my  
grieving over my Son?

### Choir

Pro peccatis suae gentis  
vidit Jesum in tormentis  
et flagellis subditum.

*For the sins of His people  
She saw Jesus in torment  
and subjected to the whip.*

**Soprano** (Mary)

For the sins of our own people  
I saw my Son in torment,  
and subjected to the lash.

I saw my own sweet Child  
deserted and dying  
as He breathed His last.

**Choir**

Vidit suum dulcem natum  
moriendo desolatum,  
dum emisit spiritum.

*She saw her sweet begotten son  
dying forsaken,  
as He gave up the spirit.*

*Latin text from the "Stabat Mater" sequence of the Roman Catholic Church*

*English translation compiled by John Muehleisen*

*English paraphrase for soprano solo by John Muehleisen*

**4.5 – Chorale 3: "Can I see another's woe?"**

**Choir**

Can I see another's woe,  
And not be in sorrow too?  
Can I see another's grief,  
And not seek for kind relief?

Can I see a falling tear,  
And not feel my sorrow's share?  
Can a father see his child  
Weep, nor be with sorrow fill'd?

Can a mother sit and hear  
An infant groan an infant fear?  
No, no! never can it be!  
Never, never can it be!

And can he who smiles on all  
Hear the wren with sorrows small,  
Hear the small bird's grief & care,  
Hear the woes that infants bear,

And not sit beside the nest,  
Pouring pity in their breast;  
And not sit the cradle near,  
Weeping tear on infant's tear;

And not sit both night & day,  
Wiping all our tears away?  
O, no! never can it be!  
Never, never can it be!

He doth give his joy to all;  
He becomes an infant small;  
He becomes a man of woe;  
He doth feel the sorrow too.

Think not thou canst sigh a sigh  
And thy maker is not by;  
Think not thou canst weep a tear  
And thy maker is not near.

O! he gives to us his joy  
That our grief he may destroy;  
Till our grief is fled & gone  
He doth sit by us and moan.

*On Another's Sorrow (William Blake)*

*sung to "Jesus meine Freude" from Bach Motet, BWV 227*

## 5. Scene Four (Pietà)

### 5.1 – PASSION INTERLUDE IV (The Descent from the Cross)

#### 5.1a – “Give me this Stranger”

##### Chanters

Come, let us bless Joseph of eternal memory,  
Who came by night to Pilate  
and begged for the Life of all:

“Give me this Stranger,  
Who has no place to lay His head:  
Give me this Stranger  
Whom an evil disciple betrayed to death.

“Give me this Stranger,  
Whom His Mother saw hanging upon the cross,  
and with a mother’s sorrow cried, weeping:

    “Woe is me, O my Child,  
    Light of mine eyes and Beloved of my bosom,  
    for what Simeon foretold in the temple now has  
    come to pass:  
    a sword has pierced my heart:  
but change my grief to gladness by Thy resurrection.”  
    *from Orthodox Christian Vespers of Holy Friday*

#### 5.1b – “...in her waiting arms”

##### Choir

The noble Joseph,  
when he had taken down Your most pure Body from the tree,  
with compassion gently placed You in her waiting arms.

*John Muehleisen, adapted from the hymn “The Noble Joseph”  
from the Orthodox Christian Vespers of Holy Friday*

### 5.2 – Lullaby (Mary’s Song)

##### Soprano (Mary)

Lullay, lullay, little One,  
Such a gift as God’s own Son:  
    Come to Earth  
    Our hope to be,  
Sleeping soft upon my knee.

Heu!, heu! martyred One,  
Such a gift as God’s own Son:  
    Come to Earth  
    To broken be,  
Hung so cruel upon a tree.

Ave!, ave! Holy One,  
Such a gift as God’s own Son:  
    Lying still  
    Upon my knee,  
In my arms, forever free.

*Robert Bode*

### 5.3 – Duet: “Do not lament me, O Mother”

#### **Soprano and Tenor**

(Vocalise)

#### **Tenor** (Jesus)

Do not lament me, O mother,  
lying lifeless in your arms,

#### **Soprano** (Mary)

Woe is me, O my Child,  
O my sweet springtime, O my sweetest Savior, where has Thy beauty gone, O my Son?

#### **Tenor** (Jesus)

the Son conceived in the womb without seed.

#### **Soprano** (Mary)

Light of my eyes and Beloved of my bosom  
for what Simeon foretold in the temple now has  
come to pass:  
a sword has pierced my heart:

#### **Tenor** (Jesus)

Do not lament me, O mother,  
For I shall rise and be glorified with eternal glory as God,

#### **Soprano** (Mary)

but change my grief to gladness by Thy resurrection.

*from Orthodox Lamentations for Holy Friday*

#### **Choir**

Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace,  
According to Thy word;  
For mine (her) eyes have seen Thy salvation,  
Which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people.  
A light to lighten the Gentiles,  
And the glory of Thy people, Israel.

*Luke 2:29–32*

#### **Soprano** (Mary)

Father, into Thy hands  
I commit the spirit of my dear Son.  
It is finished, my work now done.

Father, unclasp my hands,  
I now open my arms to release the Sun,  
To Rise again, His work well done.

*Poetic paraphrase of #6–7 of the Seven Last Words (John Muehleisen)*

### 5.4 – PASSION INTERLUDE V (Burial)

#### “The Noble Joseph”

#### **Chanters**

The noble Joseph,  
when he had taken down Thy most pure Body from the tree,  
wrapped it in fine linen,  
and anointed it with spices,  
and placed it in a new tomb.

*from Orthodox Christian Vespers of Holy Friday*

## 5.5 – Resurrection: “Show us Thy Glorious Resurrection”

### Choir and Treble Choir

Show us Thy Glorious Resurrection.  
Glory! Glory! Glory!

He who is King of the angels,  
Show us Thy Glorious Resurrection.  
He who wraps the heaven in clouds,  
Show us Thy Glorious Resurrection.  
He who in Jordan set Adam free,  
Show us Thy Glorious Resurrection.  
The Bridegroom of the Church,  
We venerate Thy Passion.  
The Son of the Virgin,  
We venerate Thy Passion, O Christ!

Show us Thy Glorious Resurrection.  
Glory! Glory! Glory!  
Today, He who hung the earth upon the waters is hung upon the Cross.  
Glory! Glory! Glory!

*adapted from Antiphon XV from the Orthodox Christian Matins of Holy Friday*

## 5.6 – Chorale 4: “Let me arise and open the gate”

### Choir

Let me arise and open the gate,  
to breathe the wild warm air of the heath,  
And to let in Love, and to let out Hate,  
And anger at living and scorn of Fate,  
To let in Life, and to let out Death.

*from A Reverie by Mary M. Singleton (Violet Fane ) (1843–1905)*

## 6. Epilogue

### 6.1 – Answers and Exhortations: “Today we cry out, ‘How?’”

#### Choir

Today we cry out, “How?”

“How can we know the way out of the abyss?”

“How can we love?”

“How can we live?”

And the answer is there.

Believe in a love that conquers all—even death.

Love, which is more powerful than any voice of hate.

That is God’s love.

*excerpts from the Homily given by the Rev. Anne E. Kitch at the Requiem Eucharist and Celebration of Life for Matthew Shepard*

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, show kindness to the lowly

Do not be conceited.

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Do what is right in the eyes of everyone.

To the extent that it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Do not take revenge, my friends...

On the contrary:

“If your enemy is hungry, feed him;

if your enemy is thirsty, then give him drink.

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

*Romans 12:9–10, 12–19a, 20–21*

### 6.2 – Alleluia

**Soprano + Tenor, Choir, Treble Choir, Chanters**

Alleluia!

### 6.3 – Closing Hymn: “O God of Love, O King of Peace”

All + Audience

The musical score is written for Soprano/Alto and Tenor/Bass voices. It consists of four systems of music, each with a vocal line and a bass line. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are as follows:

1. O God of love, O King of peace,  
2. Re - mem - ber, Lord, Thy works of old,  
3. Whom shall we trust but Thee, O Lord?  
4. Where saints and an - gels dwell a - bove

5  
S  
A  
Make wars through - out the world to cease;  
The won - ders that our fa - thers told;  
Where rest but on Thy faith - ful word?  
All hearts are knit in ho - ly love;

9  
S  
A  
The wrath of sin - ful man re - strain;  
Re - mem - ber not our sin's dark stain;  
None ev - er called on Thee in vain;  
O bind us in that heav' - nly chain;

13  
S  
A  
Give peace, O God, — give peace a - gain.  
Give peace, O God, — give peace a - gain.  
Give peace, O God, — give peace a - gain.  
Give peace, O God, — give peace a - gain.

T  
B

*Words: Henry W. Baker, 1861*  
*Tune: Hesperus, LM*  
*Henry Baker, 1854*

# MUSIC, MEANING, AND MESSAGE IN JOHN MUEHLEISEN'S *PIETÀ*:

## *An Introduction and Overview*

The word “*pieta*”—in addition to its association with the Michelangelo statue—is frequently translated as “pity.” The modern use of that word has sadly acquired a negative meaning; consequently, in this oratorio I have focused on its more profound connotations of “compassion” and “mercy.” The word “compassion” literally means to “suffer with” others in an empathetic way by supporting them in humility and love. It might be considered the opposite of “abandonment.” This mutual love and compassion is the life to which *Pietà* calls us.

The oratorio presents various aspects of compassion and mercy in a way that provokes listeners to consider how we manifest those qualities in our lives, lives filled with both joy *and* suffering. We embrace joy, but struggle with suffering. Ultimately, *Pietà* offers answers to suffering and loss, and a path to healing. My hope is that *Pietà* will be both a collective and a personal journey that provides a musical experience of emotional and spiritual intensity that transforms hearts and minds.

*Pietà* was commissioned by conductor Robert Bode and Choral Arts in Seattle, WA and premiered in March 2012. I'm deeply indebted to them for choosing to partner with me in bringing to life *Pietà's* message of hope and healing, which is so desperately needed in our world today. I'm also extremely grateful to Craig Hella Johnson and to Conspirare for including *Pietà* and its timely message in this comPASSION festival.

*Pietà* uses the central image of the relationship between mothers and sons as a metaphor for exploring the ways in which the virtues of compassion, mercy, and love can lead to healing our brokenness. Rather than playing out a single thread, the work exists simultaneously on multiple levels, cutting between them using musical transitions akin to cinematic techniques such as sudden cuts and gradual fades.

*Pietà* unfolds across three different timelines:

- **The Present** (Prologue and Epilogue)
- **World War I** (Scenes One and Two)
- **Biblical Times:** The end of the life of Jesus: His passion, burial, and resurrection (the Passion Interludes and Scenes Three and Four)

In parallel with these three timelines, *Pietà* plays out the notion of mutual compassion and love in three concentric circles, radiating out from the center.

1. The outer circle (**Prologue** and **Epilogue**) is where we enter and exit the work. After stating John 14:1 (“Do not let your hearts be troubled”), we are immediately confronted with difficult questions about why our hearts should NOT be troubled. In the Epilogue those questions are answered, and we are given a message of compassion and hope that balances the despair of the Prologue. These two sections allow listeners to enter into the message of *Pietà* on a personal level.
2. The middle circle (**Scenes One** and **Two**) concerns the relationship between Jack Kipling and his mother Carrie by way of Jack's death during WWI and the loss felt by Carrie. By extension it concerns the mutual love of all mothers and sons, which naturally extends to all parents and their children.
3. In the center circle, the relationship between Mary and Jesus is played out in **Scenes Three** and **Four**, which occur during Biblical times, encompassing Jesus' time in Pilate's custody through His crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. In Chorale 4 “Let me arise...” Jesus' resurrection is mirrored in our personal rebirth, which transitions into the more universal message of the Epilogue.

The form of *Pietà* is based on the Passion oratorio, borrowing from Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* and *St. John Passion*. The plaintive oboe and English horn passages in several of the movements of *Pietà* (1.2, 3.2, 5.2, and 6.1) are variations on the opening music from the *St. John Passion*. Even Mary's textless soprano solo and subsequent duet with Jesus (the tenor) in Scene 4 is based on that music; its mournful, dirge-like quality perfectly suited to expressing the pathos and sense of compassion in the scenes in which it is used. In addition, the first three chorales in *Pietà* draw on chorales from the *St. Matthew Passion*, but with texts by World War I poet Wilfred Owen in the first two and by William Blake in the third.

One other unique feature of *Pietà* is the use of the Passion Interludes—Byzantine and Russian Orthodox hymns—which wrench us back to Biblical times, reminding us of the Passion oratorio roots of *Pietà*. The stark juxtapositions of the Passion Interludes with the other two timelines weave the thread of compassion throughout history, both blurring the historical distinctions and unifying them so that the passions of Jesus and Mary and of Jack Kipling and his mother symbolize our own lives—*our* “passions,” *our* sufferings—making the message of compassion and hope in *Pietà* all the more universal and applicable to all people at all times in all places.

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

## About the Composer



Composer **John Muehleisen**'s music has been described as "imaginatively harmonized...beautifully realized...and brilliantly crafted." He has served as Opus 7 Vocal Ensemble's Composer-in-Residence almost continuously since 1996, for the Dale Warland Singers (2003–04), and for Choral Arts (2011–12). He has received commissions from Conspirare, The Esoterics, Harvard Glee Club, Northwest Girlchoir, Seattle Girl's Choir, Seattle Pro Musica, South Bend Chamber Singers, and Volti. More than 40 of his choral works have been recorded commercially, and his works have been performed in the U.S., Canada, Europe, and Asia. Awards include the Louisville Orchestra's 1988 Composition Competition, Third Place in the 2013 American Prize in Professional Choral Composition,

and the coveted Dale Warland Singers Commissioning Award for 2014, which he shares with Dolce Canto, conducted by Peter Park.

## About the Soloists

### **Sonja Tengblad** '06, *soprano*

Recent solo highlights for soprano Sonja DuToit Tengblad include Vivaldi's *Juditha Triumphans* (Abra and Ozias), and Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* (First Lady) with Boston Baroque, Bach's *St. John Passion* with the Handel and Haydn Society, Knussen's *Symphony No. 2* with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, and her Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center debuts. She was awarded 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the 2014 American Prize competition's art song and oratorio division, and curated an all-Emily Dickinson recital with tenor Eric Neuville for Conspirare's 2015-16 season opener, chosen by the Austin Chronicle as the #3 arts event in Austin last year.

Ms. Tengblad's ensemble appearances include the Grammy-winning ensemble Conspirare in Austin, Texas; Blue Heron, and the Lorelei Ensemble, invited to perform with the Boston Symphony Orchestra next season.

### **Eric Neuville** '06, *tenor*

Seattle-based tenor Eric Neuville is a regular on operatic and concert stages throughout the country. Highlights of his 2015-16 season included performances of Scaramuccio in *Ariadne auf Naxos* with Seattle Opera, Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* with the Seattle Symphony conducted by Matthew Halls, *Carmina Burana* with the Austin Symphony, Handel's *Messiah* with Stephen Stubb's Pacific Musicworks, Ulysses in Fauré's *Pénélope* with Vespertine Opera, and *The Poet Sings: Emily Dickinson*—a recital performed and curated with soprano Sonja Tengblad to open Conspirare's performance season.

Highlights of his 2016-17 season began with a debut at Madison Opera as Laurie in Adamo's *Little Women*, Mozart's *Requiem* with the Seattle Symphony conducted by Itzhak Perlman, the world premiere of John Muehleisen's *Kipling Passion* with Choral Arts Seattle, *Le Comte Ory*, *La Traviata*, and *Die Zauberflöte* with Seattle Opera and multiple appearances with the Grammy-winning ensemble Conspirare. Dr. Neuville is a graduate of St. Olaf College, The University of Texas at Austin, and The University of Washington.

### **Dana Maeda** '92, *oboe*

Dana Maeda graduated from St. Olaf College with a B.M. degree in oboe performance, vocal music education, and instrumental music education, and earned a M.A. in education from St. Mary's University. Her primary oboe teachers include Julie Madura and Rhadames Angelucci.

Dana regularly performs with the Rochester Orchestra and is a founding member of WindWorks Woodwind Quintet. She is active as a freelance performer and recording artist in the Twin Cities area. Some of her most memorable engagements were with the Bach Society of Minnesota, Minneapolis Pops Orchestra, Dolce Wind Quintet, and Moody Blues. During the past 30 years in music education, Dana has worked with young musicians in many venues. These opportunities have included St. Olaf Festival of Bands guest lecturer and soloist, St. Olaf Summer Music Camp band conductor, high school master classes on the art of chamber music, judge of regional solo/ensemble competitions, and coach for the Minnesota All-State Orchestra & Band programs. In addition to working with the St. Olaf oboe studio, she also coaches chamber ensembles, supervises instrumental student teachers, teaches woodwind methods, and directs the Collegium Musicum wind band and recorder ensembles.

### **Sarah Carmack**, *oboe*

Sarah Carmack is an active freelance oboist in the Twin Cities and performs regularly with the Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra, the Minnesota Sinfonia, VocalEssence, and other local ensembles. She completed graduate studies at the University of Minnesota after receiving her undergraduate degree from the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. In addition to teaching private studio oboe at home and on faculty at the University of St. Thomas, Sarah gives master classes in performance, reed making, and knife sharpening at high schools and colleges throughout the state. She processes and sells oboe reeds and cane to order, repairs oboe gouging machines, and greatly enjoys teaching other oboists about the art and science of cane, machines, and reed knives. Sarah lives in St. Paul with her husband and two sons.

**David Hagedorn, percussion**

David Hagedorn is an Artist in Residence at St. Olaf College, where he teaches percussion, jazz studies, and world music. In June of 2011, *Downbeat* magazine deemed St. Olaf Jazz I to be the “Best Undergraduate Large Jazz Ensemble” in the 34<sup>th</sup> annual student music awards. This group had a very successful cultural exchange tour in Cuba in March of 2016.

He holds degrees from the Eastman School of Music, New England Conservatory, and the University of Minnesota. Hagedorn has an album, *Solid/Liquid* on the artega label in SACD format released in October of 2003, and a duo album with pianist Dan Cavanagh, *Horizon*, released in December of 2010. Recently released in April 2014 is a recording with the Chris Bates Good Vibes Trio. He has recorded with the George Russell Living Time Orchestra on Blue Note Recordings (nominated for a Grammy Award), jazz singer Debbie Duncan on Igmod Recordings, Brian Setzer Big Band, Pete Whitman X-tet, Phil Hey Quartet, the Out to Lunch Quintet, and also with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra on Teldec Recordings. Hagedorn regularly performs in the Twin Cities with groups such as the Phil Hey Quartet, JazzMn, and Chris Bates Good Vibes Trio. On the classical side of music, he also has performed with the Minnesota Orchestra, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Minnesota Opera, VocalEssence, Cantus, The Mormon Tabernacle Choir, and the Grand Teton Festival Orchestra.

**Erik Barsness, percussion**

Erik Barsness received his bachelor’s degree in percussion performance from the University of Minnesota in 2001. A Fulbright Scholar, Erik studied in Stockholm, Sweden from 2002 until June 2005 at the Royal College of Music in Sweden, where he received his master’s degree. Erik has performed throughout the world as a soloist and a member of various ensembles including the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, VocalEssence, Zeitegeist, Ensemble 61, and The Minnesota Percussion Trio. He recently performed with the percussion group CRASH in Havana, Cuba as part of the Havana International Theater Festival. In addition to his active performing schedule, Erik maintains an active teaching studio of 40 students in the Twin Cities of Minnesota.

**Timothy Strand, organ**

Timothy Strand serves as Director of Music and Organist at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in St. Paul, Minnesota. Timothy is a graduate of Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota, with a bachelor of arts degree in church music and business administration, and of Indiana University School of Music in Bloomington, Indiana, with a master of music degree in church music and organ performance.

He has extensive experience in Lutheran Church music ministry as an organist and director of adult, children, and handbell choirs. In addition to his work in church music ministry, Tim is the accompanist for Magnum Chorum, an accompanist for Morningstar Music Publishers, an accompanist for the Mounds Park Academy High School Choir, a member of the Twin Cities Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, and is an active organ recitalist.

**About the St. Olaf Choir**

The St. Olaf Choir, with 75 mixed voices, is the premier *a cappella* choir in the United States. For over a century, the choir has set a standard of choral excellence and remained at the forefront of choral artistry. Conducted since 1990 by Anton Armstrong, the St. Olaf Choir continues to develop the tradition that originated with its founder, F. Melius Christiansen.

Since its founding in 1912, the St. Olaf Choir has set a standard in the choral arts, serving as a model for choirs of all levels. The ensemble’s annual tour brings its artistry and message to thousands of people across the nation and around the world. The St. Olaf Choir has taken 14 international tours and performed for capacity audiences in the major concert halls of Norway, France, South Korea, New Zealand, Australia, New York City, Washington D.C., Chicago, Los Angeles, Dallas, and the Twin Cities.

In addition to being an artistic force, the St. Olaf Choir has a full calendar of events and a growing library of recordings. The choir’s mission is to provide music of the highest quality that lifts people’s hearts and spirits, incorporating a diversity of voices and cultural traditions into the chorus of the Christian faith. Many people experience this message through the annual St. Olaf Christmas Festival. But perhaps nowhere is the essence more clearly proclaimed than in the work that has become the choir’s signature piece, *Beautiful Savior*. In the fall of 2014, the St. Olaf Choir received two Regional Emmy® Awards for the PBS television program *Christmas in Norway with the St. Olaf Choir*.

**About Anton Armstrong ’78, conductor**

Anton Armstrong, Tosdal Professor of Music at St. Olaf College, became the fourth conductor of the St. Olaf Choir in 1990. He is a graduate of St. Olaf College and earned advanced degrees at the University of Illinois and Michigan State University. He is editor of a multicultural choral series for Earthsongs Publications and co-editor (with John Ferguson) of the revised St. Olaf Choral Series for Augsburg Fortress Publishers. In June 1998, he began his tenure as founding conductor of the Oregon Bach Festival Stangeland Family Youth Choral Academy.

During 2015-16 season, Dr. Armstrong has served as the only non-Japanese juror for the 68th Japan Choral Association National Choral Festival. He also guest conducted two of the finest professional choruses in the United States: The Houston Chamber Choir and The Vocal Arts Ensemble of Cincinnati. In the summer of 2016, international lecturing appearances will take him to Hamar, Norway for the Norwegian Summer Choral School and the America Cantat 8 in the Bahamas.

In January 2006, Baylor University selected Anton Armstrong from a field of 118 distinguished nominees to receive the Robert Foster Cherry Award for Great Teaching. He spent February–June 2007 in residency at Baylor University as a visiting professor. In March 2007, Anton Armstrong was the first recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award from the American Boychoir School, and in October 2009 he received The Distinguished Alumni Award from Michigan State University. In June 2013, Dr. Armstrong received the Saltzman Award from the Oregon Bach Festival. The festival’s highest honor, the Saltzman Award is bestowed upon individuals who have provided exceptional levels of leadership to the organization.

**About Magnum Chorum**

Recognized for expressive singing and inspired programs, Magnum Chorum brings artistry and spirit to a cappella choral music. The 60+ voice choir presents colorful concerts, commissions and premieres new sacred works, and provides music for worship. Founded in the choral tradition of St. Olaf College, the choir welcomes singers of all backgrounds devoted to musical excellence in sacred choral music. Now offering its 25th season, Magnum Chorum also serves as Ensemble in Residence at Colonial Church in Edina, Minnesota.

Magnum Chorum has been led by prominent Artistic Directors including Christopher Aspaas, David Dickau and Founding Director Jin Kim. The choir has performed with distinguished guest conductors including Dr. Anton Armstrong, Kenneth Jennings, Craig Arnold, Allen Hightower, Dale Warland, Weston Noble, René Clausen, Philip Brunelle, Craig Hella Johnson, and Osmo Vänskä, and collaborated with celebrated composers such as Stephen Paulus, Frank Ferko, Libby Larsen, Kenneth Jennings, Ralph Johnson and composers-in-residence Stanford Scriven and Benjamin Simmons. This season Paul John Rudoj is serving as composer-in-residence.

The ensemble has been featured at regional and national conferences of the American Choral Director's Association, Chorus America, American Guild of Organists, American Hymn Society and College Music Society. The choir's recordings are broadcast in the U.S. and Canada on public radio and classical music stations. Our name, Magnum Chorum, is intended to convey the importance of the choir in expressing the divine and the infinite through voice, music, and text.

**About Mark Stover '01, artistic director**

In addition to being the artistic director of Magnum Chorum, Mark Stover is the Conductor of the Viking Chorus and Chapel Choir at St. Olaf College. He is also the Minister of Worship, Music and Arts at Colonial Church in Edina, Minnesota, where he has served on staff since 2007. Mark received his bachelor's degree from St. Olaf College and his M.S.M. with an emphasis in choral conducting from Luther Seminary under the mentorship of Dr. Anton Armstrong and Dr. Paul Westermeyer. Mark has designed contemporary *a cappella* shows for high school and college ensembles and regularly works as a clinician, workshop host, and guest conductor for ensembles in both the church and academy. He has served as the ACDA-MN R&S Chair for Music and Worship and on the planning committee as faculty and worship leader for the St. Olaf Conference on Worship, Theology, and the Arts in 2010 and 2012. Mark, his wife Julie, and their son Jack live in Minneapolis.

# ST. OLAF CHOIR

## ANTON ARMSTRONG, *CONDUCTOR*

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### SOPRANO 1:

- ◇ Elysa Bond, *Reading, Mass.*
- Amy Erlandson, *Maplewood, Minn.*
- Katherine Knutson, *Lakeville, Minn.*
- Myrtle Lemon, *Grand Haven, Mich.*
- Karice Myers-Busch, *Richfield, Minn.*
- Samantha Noonan, *Lincoln, Neb.*
- Kayleigh Shaffer, *Tacoma, Wash.*
- Emily Simmons, *Beaverton, Ore.*
- Kate Wellenstein, *Madison, Wis.*

### SOPRANO 2:

- Meredith Arevalo, *Brookfield, Wis.*
- Kellie Asher, *Minneapolis, Minn.*
- Laina Bennett, *Palm Harbor, Fla.*
- Natalie Boehnlein, *Atlanta, Ga.*
- Annelise Coffey, *Boone, N.C.*
- Lauren Hahn, *Rochester, N.Y.*
- Erica Hoops, *Buffalo, Minn.*
- Siri Keller, *Minneapolis, Minn.*
- Grace Nelson, *Manchester, Conn.*
- Jayne Purchase, *North Richland Hills, Texas*

### ALTO 1:

- Ingrid Elzey, *Menasha, Wis.*
- Emma Haupt, *Davidson, N.C.*
- Katherine Jardon, *Red Oak, Iowa*
- Danielle Long, *O'Fallon, Ill.*
- Sophia Magro, *Champaign, Ill.*
- Mary Kate Maney, *Western Springs, Ill.*
- ◇• Alexandra Mauney, *Greenville, S.C.*
- Emily Nyberg, *Shoreview, Minn.*
- Kirsten Overdahl, *Fort Wayne, Ind.*
- Christa Schmidt, *Farmers Branch, Texas*

### ALTO 2:

- Kjerstin Anderson, *Oak Park, Ill.*
- Eva Carlson, *Pendleton, Ore.*
- Katie Jonza, *Ishpeming, Mich.*
- Hayden King, *Palo Alto, Calif.*
- Wenie Lado, *Milwaukee, Wis.*
- Vanessa López, *Moorpark, Calif.*
- Emily Nelson, *Portland, Ore.*
- Naomi Porter, *Lake Oswego, Ore.*
- Leah Suffern, *New Haven, Conn.*
- Amy Turner, *Plymouth, Minn.*

- ◇ Denotes section leader
- Officers and management

### TENOR 1:

- Josiah Beretta, *Melrose, Minn.*
- Matthew Bock, *Bemidji, Minn.*
- Carl Graefe, *Bemidji, Minn.*
- JW Keckley, *Carl Junction, Mo.*
- Charlie Platt, *St. Paul, Minn.*
- Logan Sardzinski, *Robins, Iowa*
- Jacob Sorrells, *Weaverville, N.C.*

### TENOR 2:

- Charlie Baird, *New Canaan, Conn.*
- Benjamin Dyleuth, *Fort Montgomery, N.Y.*
- ◇ Aaron Kohrs, *Northbrook, Ill.*
- Miller LaMotte, *Anoka, Minn.*
- Abraham Rusch, *Davisburg, Mich.*
- Dang-Dhoa (DK) Tong, *Maple Grove, Minn.*
- Jocque Warner, *New Richmond, Wis.*

### BASS 1:

- Erik Berthelsen, *Northfield, Minn.*
- Nathan Berthelsen, *Northfield, Minn.*
- Phil Biedenbender, *New Ulm, Minn.*
- David Gindra, *Charlotte, N.C.*
- ◇ Nathaniel Hendrix, *Edmonds, Wash.*
- Harrison Hintzsche, *DeKalb, Ill.*
- Andrew Parr, *Metuchen, N.J.*
- Devon Steve, *Cleveland, Ohio*
- Duncan Tuomi, *Portland, Ore.*

### BASS 2:

- Soren Bjornstad, *Valparaiso, Ind.*
- John Carson, *Northfield, Minn.*
- Brandon Cash, *St. Cloud, Minn.*
- Jason Curtis, *Cape May, N.J.*
- Jacob Fossing, *Excelsior, Minn.*
- Andrew Horton, *Lake Forest Park, Wash.*
- Erik Jones, *Andover, Minn.*
- Benjamin Kerswell, *Fair Lawn, N.J.*
- Michael Pearce, *Wayzata, Minn.*
- Gabe Salmon, *Palo Alto, Calif.*
- Sebastian Surom, *Iowa City, Iowa*

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**MAGNUM CHORUM**  
**MARK STOVER, *ARTISTIC DIRECTOR***  
**KAREN LUTGEN, *CONDUCTOR – TREBLE CHOIR***

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**SOPRANO 1:**

Meryl Burman  
Jenna Hoge  
Deanna Loken  
Karen Lutgen\*  
Heather Nelson  
Emma Ostby  
Meredith Samuelson  
Sarah Stevens

**SOPRANO 2:**

Catherine Erickson  
Megan Hadley  
Sarah Hammel  
Erica Hollom  
Katelyn Larson  
Christine O'Brien  
Erin Schmidt  
Olivia Snortland

**ALTO 1:**

Katherine Atchison  
Kim Bowman  
Christine Dold  
Jennifer Dusek\*  
Brianna Haus  
Rosa Haxton  
Angie Hugo  
Melissa Hugo  
Amy Lohmann

**ALTO 2:**

Amanda Balgaard  
Alyssa Boehnlein  
Martha Kunau  
Sara Kunau  
Julia Mann Gunderson  
Damara O'Malley  
Tara Ritter  
Sarah Tengblad

**TENOR 1:**

Tom Frank  
Albert Jordan  
Michael Lenz  
Keith Lutgen  
Scott Senko  
Mark Tiede  
Zachary Westermeyer  
Bryan Wells

**TENOR 2:**

Alex Engelsgjerd  
Michael Jeffrey\*  
Daniel Lee  
Nate Raabe  
Bryan Waznik  
Christian Weeks  
Pete Zvanovec

**BASS 1:**

Alex Gerleman  
Steve Grundahl  
Mark D. Henning  
Matt Knutson  
Chris Nelson  
Nathan Oppedahl  
Chris Paul  
Adrian Rossing  
Derek Steinke

**BASS 2:**

Noah Anderson  
Michael Betz  
Jordan Boucher  
Adam Burman  
Nate Crary  
Rudyard Dyer  
Tom Phelps  
Benjamin Simmons\*

\* Denotes section leader

**MAGNUM CHORUM STAFF**

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Martha Kunau, *executive director*  
Kim Bowman, *director of development*  
Peter Haugen, *operations manager*  
Jennifer Haugen, *librarian & administrative support*  
Tim Strand, *accompanist*