

The Pilgrim



The Three Marys, Peter, John, and the Angel with Jesus
Photo by KG Theineman

St. John's Concerts will present a liturgical music drama, "The Pilgrim" by Richard Proulx, on Friday April 4 and Sunday, April 6, at 7:30 p.m. This church opera was composed in 1977 for a cast of nine in addition to a monastic choir and is accompanied by chamber orchestra and handbells. Guest artists Philip Bouknight as Jesus, Tara Bouknight as Mary Jacobi and Christopher Swanson as the Angel will join well-known Lynchburg area soloists Kris Martin-Baker as Mary Magdalene, Michelle Ellinwood as Mary Salome, Joshua Bell as the Spice Merchant, Robert Ellinwood as Peter, and Randy Speer as John. Peggy Haas

Howell will conduct the chamber orchestra, and the stage director will be Tom Harris.

The libretto for "The Pilgrim" is an adaptation by the composer from three twelfth-century sepulcher plays for Easter from Orleans, Fleury, and Saint Quentin. Additional texts are from two poems of Christina Rossetti, the Sarum Antiphony, and the Liber Usualis. The music drama tells the story of three women, Mary Magdalene, Mary Jacobi, and Mary Salome, going to Jesus' tomb on Easter morning. On the way, they stop to buy spices from a Spice Merchant, a "nervous, busy man" who



The Three Mary and the Spice Merchant
Photo by KG Thiememan



The Three Marys and the Angel
Photo by KG Thieneman

provides a bit of comic relief by bargaining with the women. On their arrival at the tomb, they are met by an angel who tells them that Jesus is not there, but is alive. After two of the women leave to tell the disciples about Jesus, Mary Magdalene remains at the tomb, and encounters Jesus. Peter and John arrive at the tomb with the other women, and all proclaim that Jesus is risen at which point the audience is invited to join in singing the final hymn.

Richard Proulx is a widely published composer of more than 300 works, including congregational music in every

form, sacred and secular choral works, song cycles, two operas, and instrumental and organ music. In 2006, he received the American Guild of Organists Distinguished Composer award.

The music for "The Pilgrim" includes Gregorian chant accompanied by handbells, unaccompanied choir motets, instrumental dances, and beautiful solos, duets, and trios accompanied by the orchestra. The work is an uplifting and inspiring experience, spiritually, visually, and musically!

Tickets are available from the Music Office at St. John's Church, 200 Boston Avenue, Lynchburg, VA 24503, or by calling the church office at 528-1138. Reserved seats are \$25 and general admission is \$12.



Mary Magdalene and
the Angel
Photo by KG Thieneman