

School of MUSIC

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA / COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

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The University of Florida Choral Union Presents *Hymns & Heroes from the Movies* April 15

Gainesville, Fla., March 21, 2017 — The University of Florida (UF) Choral Union, representing the UF School of Music's Concert Choir, Symphony Orchestra, and the Gainesville Master Chorale, will present *Hymns & Heroes from the Movies* on Saturday, April 15, 2017 at 7:30 p.m. at the Phillips Center in Gainesville, Florida. *Hymns & Heroes* presents the rousing musical scores from some of your favorite epic films. For example, the final lightsaber duel between Qui-Gon Jinn, Obi-Won Kenobi and Darth Maul in *Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace* just wouldn't be the same without the pulse-racing beat of the drums and the driving orchestrated energy coupled with the "war-cry" lyrics in the old Welsh tongue.

Presented by the same performing forces you've come to enjoy at the School of Music's annual *Sounds of the Season* concert, *Hymns & Heroes* presents the music that propels the bravery of heroes, whether they be the blockbuster hero you've come to know and love or the unsung hero simply trying to do the right thing. The performance is conducted by Dr. Will Kesling.



Stephen Mark Brown with Luciano Pavarotti.

"Bravo! This tenor reminds me very much of myself." - Luciano Pavarotti on Stephen Mark Brown

There are two major highlights for the evening of *Hymns & Heroes*. First, Verdi's cantata "Hymn of Nations" calls for a tenor soloist with bravura. Internationally acclaimed American tenor Stephen Mark Brown is that singer, with the ability to handle one of Verdi's most demanding vocal exercises. Brown has been highly visible in his collaborations with the late Luciano Pavarotti on Pavarotti Plus, Emmy winning performances on "Live from Lincoln Center," live broadcasts in Europe of Manon Lescaut with Karita Mattila, and the opening of the season at Milan's La Scala with Maestro Riccardo Muti.

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The second highlight will be the presentation of Sergei Prokofiev's monumental cantata from the very first sound score to a movie, *Alexander Nevsky*, about the 13th-century military hero. The result is one of the rare occasions when a great film not only boasts a great score, but is made infinitely more powerful and meaningful by that score. In this film, there no way traditional Hollywood "mickey-mousing," where music playfully follows the exact action on the screen. Rather, it is a breathtaking synthesis of sound and image. The colossal "Battle on the Ice" is the rousing centerpiece of the cantata. It is a tour de force where the audience can the literally hear the battle between the Teutonic Crusaders and the Russian peasants being fought in sound by the orchestra and the chorus.

"I have conducted *Alexander Nevsky* several times, including performances with Moscow State Philharmonic, the Moscow State Opera Chorus and with the St. Petersburg State Symphony & Chor LK in 1993," Kesling said. "I am thrilled to revisit this electrifying score!"

Hymns & Heroes will also feature other musical scores from film favorites including, *Saving Private Ryan* and *Chariots of Fire*. For more information about the concert and its program, please visit www.arts.ufl.edu.

Performance and Ticket Information

The Curtis M. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts is located at 3201 Hull Road, Gainesville, FL 32611. Tickets for *Hymns & Heroes* are \$20-\$40 for the public and \$10 for students. Tickets may be purchased by phone at 352-392-ARTS (2787) or online at www.ticketmaster.com (Please note additional processing fees may apply for online purchases).

About the School of Music

The School of Music is one of the University of Florida College of the Arts' three institutionally-accredited schools. The School of Music plays an important role in the academic life of the University and the community. The school's programs provide broad-based instruction in performance, composition, history and literature and music disciplines, through a strong curriculum as well as through professional experiences such as ensembles and internships. UF students also have the opportunity to join more than a dozen music ensembles, including jazz bands, the University Choir, the University Symphony Orchestra and the "Pride of the Sunshine" Fightin' Gator Marching Band. To learn more, visit www.arts.ufl.edu/music.

About the College of the Arts

The College of the Arts is one of the 16 colleges and more than 150 research centers and institutes at the University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida. The College of the Arts offers baccalaureate, master's and Ph.D. degree programs in its three institutionally-accredited schools — the School of Art + Art History, School of Music and School of Theatre + Dance. The college is home to the Center for Arts in Medicine, Center for Arts and Public Policy, Center for World Arts, Digital Worlds Institute, University Galleries and the New World School of the Arts in Miami. More than 100 faculty members and approximately than 1,200 students work together daily to engage, inspire and create. The college hosts more than 300 performances, exhibitions and events each year. Faculty and students also exhibit and perform at other local, national and international venues. To learn more, visit www.arts.ufl.edu.

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About the Gainesville Civic Chorus

The mission of the Gainesville Civic Chorus organization is to bring a variety of choral music of a high quality to the Gainesville community by providing a service to the community in the form of concerts and assist singers of ability to develop their talents to their highest potential. For the past 39 years the GCC has offered choral music of distinction to Gainesville and the surrounding communities. Organized to participate in the Gainesville Bicentennial Celebration, the GCC gave its first concert in 1976. Today, the Gainesville Master Chorale consists of about 80 mixed voices performing five major concerts each year. Director Will Kesling often selects masterworks best appreciated with orchestral accompaniment, organized as the Gainesville Philharmonic Orchestra in most of our concerts. In 1992 the chorus formed The Choristers, now Chamber Singers, to better serve local civic and community groups. The Chamber Singers perform at smaller venues as an outreach to audiences who may not attend the Master Chorale. Together, both groups achieve the GCC mission to present outstanding choral music to enrich our community while providing opportunities for area singers to develop and share their talents.

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