Presents
Three One-Act Christmas Operas

Good King Wenceslas
The Shepherd’s Play
St. Nicholas

Music by Richard Shephard
Libretto by Mark Schweizer

Directed by Cheryl Greene
Good King Wenceslas

Cast:
Stephan  Ethan Byars
Mother    Lachuné Boyd
Chancellor Steven Bates
Good King Wenceslas Josh Brown
Angel “Old Woman” Hannah Hunter
Shepherd Girl Sarah Lindquist
Kaspar    Steven Bates
Balthazar Drew Collins
Melchior  Bill Blount
Chorus    North Greenville Singers

Synopsis:
The story centers round a rude and spoiled young page, Stephen, who is celebrating his birthday. Good King Wenceslas summons Stephen and informs him that together, they will be embarking on a journey to bring food, drink, and fuel to a poor peasant. Stephen grumbles and complains incessantly as he makes the journey with the King. The weather turns bad and they soon lose their way in the storm. They find shelter, and as Stephen watches over the sleeping King, an angel, disguised as an old woman, appears to Stephen and tells him a story. A mystery play unfolds which reveals a story about selfless giving to the Christ child. Stephen’s selfish heart is changed and he completes the journey in great joy with Good King Wenceslas offering “charity toward the upright.”
The Shepherd’s Play

Cast:
Shepherds
Bill Blount
Steven Bates
Michael Cheek
Josh Brown
Chorus
North Greenville Singers

Synopsis:

Three shepherds hear the angels proclaiming the birth of Christ and immediately leave their sheep to take their gifts to the Savior of the world. The fourth shepherd finds the sheep unguarded and scolds the three shepherds for their carelessness. The three shepherds exclaim their awe and amazement at hearing the angel’s song and try to recreate the joyous sound. The angel chorus bursts in and beckons the fourth shepherd to come to see the wondrous sight. The three shepherds chime in and encourage the fourth shepherd to give the best gift of all, his heart.

String Ensemble
Michael Weaver, violin
Justin Keck, violin
Alice Bristol, violin
Kendra Webb, viola
Sarah Kieffer, cello
St. Nicholas

Cast:

Sophie  Sarah Lindquist
Juliet  Lachuné Boyd
Lucy  Hannah Hunter
St. Nicholas  Josh Brown
Traveler  Bill Blount
Traveler’s wife  Emma Sherer
Sir William  Steven Bates
Chorus  North Greenville Singers

Synopsis:
Three sisters, Juliet, Lucy and Sophie, are cleaning the house in preparation for Christmas. They are poor, having lost their father, but in the spirit of the season make wishes. All three wish for husbands. They go to bed. St. Nicholas arrives and leaves three gold coins for them. Juliet awakens first and selfishly takes all of the coins to buy a dress for herself. St. Nicholas then leaves two more coins which Lucy takes in hopes of attracting a husband. At last, St. Nicholas leaves one coin for Sophie over which she rejoices in the knowledge that the money will keep herself and her sisters from going hungry.

There is a knock on the door. A man and his wife who are about to deliver a baby appear. They ask for food and shelter. Sophie tells them she has nothing to offer except one gold coin. They thank her and leave for the warmth of a nearby inn. The two sisters return from their shopping spree, discovering that Sophie also received a gold coin. Their jealousy turns to rage and they tear each other’s new clothes. St. Nicholas, observing them, chastises the two girls for their greed. A knock at the door reveals Sir William, Sophie’s long lost love. He has been searching for Sophie, having encountered a young couple with a new baby who told him that a young girl provided for their needs. Suspecting Sophie as the young girl, Sir William, having now found his Sophie, pledges to marry her. St. Nicholas entreats all to remember the true meaning of Christmas.

Notes from “The Sacred in Opera”, The National Opera Association April 2008
North Greenville Singers

Soprano: Hannah Hardwick
        Savannah Johnson
        Anna Grace Sullivan

Tenor: Jay Hardee
       Donald Starling

Alto:  Anna Copelan
       Naomi King
       Paulina Ray-Zorick
       Grace Todd

Bass:  Michael Cheek
       Drew Collins
       Dillon Hollifield
       Caleb Ruppe

Special Thanks

Costumes provided by Mark Schweizer
Costumes Cheri Whitley
Photography Blythe Whitley
Props, Set, and Other Doug Whitley
                          Cheryl Greene
                          NGU Theatre Department

Composer and Librettist

Richard James Shephard (b. 1949), is a noted composer as well as a vicar-
choral, director of development, and chamberlain at one of the great cathedrals
degrees at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and in 2001 was awarded a
Lambeth Doctorate by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Shephard’s career in
education includes service as director of music and deputy headmaster of the
Cathedral School in Salisbury as well as nine years as headmaster of York
Minster School. His compositions include six operas, seven musicals, five
oratorios, and many choral works.

A native of Florida, Mark Schweizer received music degrees from Stetson
University in Deland, Florida and the University of Arizona including a doctoral
degree in vocal performance. He returned to teach at Stetson University from
1982 to 1985 followed by eight years on the music faculty of Louisiana College.
Mark currently lives in North Carolina where he serves as editor of St. James
Music Press. He is the author of twelve “Liturgical Mystery” novels, as well as
other books, and several opera and musical librettos. His published musical
compositions can be found in the catalogs of Concordia Publishing House, H.T.
Fitzsimmons, Lorenz, Selah Publishing, Musik Fabrik, and St. James Music
Press.
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