

Chorale to open winter concert season

Music lovers of this area will have an opportunity to hear a classical Christmas concert at 8 p.m., Friday and Saturday in the Eastwood Baptist Church, Medford. The Rogue Valley Chorale, under the direction of Lynn Sjolund, opens its fifth concert season with some major works by composers Bach, Poulenc, Charpentier, and Respighi.

The Motet, "Komm, Jesu, Komm," written by J.S. Bach in the early 1700s, is for double chorus, whose antiphonal effects add to the impressiveness and interest of the music. It is an exalted manifestation of Bach's own faith and Christian hope.

Four motets by the contemporary French composer, Francis Poulenc, lend an atmosphere of mystery and beauty in their intricately blended harmonies. "O Magnum Mysterium" announces the birth of Christ; "Quem Vidistis Pastores Decite" proclaims the adoration of the shepherds; "Videntes Stellam" is a revelation of the Wise Men as they follow the star to the Child; and "Hodie Christus Natus Est" is an exultant laudation by the praises of the Archangels.

"Midnight Mass for Christmas" by Charpentier is scored for soloists, mixed chorus, string ensemble, and organ. Much of its charm and appeal comes from the fact, that it was based upon French Christmas carols.

This work includes two soprano soloists, Bev O'Leary and Regina Glasgow. Miss O'Leary has sung with the Anchorage Symphony in Alaska and is currently a church organist and choir director. Miss Glasgow has soloed with the Chorale numerous times, including the

Britt Festival. She was also winner of a state solo contest.

Male soloists for Charpentier's "Mass" include Carroll Graber, William Matthews, and Deane Tack. Graber has taught choral music in the Medford schools for 26 years. He is director of music in the Eastwood Baptist Church and is assistant director of the Chorale. Dr. Matthews is a charter member of the Chorale, having appeared frequently as soloist. His profession is that of physician in Medford. Mr. Tack has sung with the Roger Wagner Chorale, Euterpe Opera Company of Hollywood, and the Papermill Playhouse in Millburn, N.J. He is an English and art teacher, living in Grants Pass.

An instrumental ensemble, mixed chorus, soloists, and two pianos combine to make

Respighi's "Laud to the Nativity" a spectacular work of triumph and praise. The pianists are Kathleen Davis and Greg Smith. Mrs. Davis also sings with the Chorale and is a member of the Chorale board. Smith graduated from the University of Oregon in piano and organ and has accompanied the Chorale for several seasons.

Sharyl Lonstrom sings the role of Mary, written especially for coloratura soprano. Mrs. Lonstrom had her musical education in California at San Jose State and Fullerton under Howard Swan. She toured with the American Dance Theater of Hollywood for two years as female vocalist and musical director. She has also been the director of Children's Theater in Newport Beach and taught

music in Huntington Beach. Currently she and her husband, Allen, own and operate a popular resort, Jump Off Joe Ranch north of Grants Pass.

The part of the angel is sung by Kathy Gordon, soprano, who has done considerable solo work with the Chorale and throughout southern Oregon. She studied at the University of Oregon in vocal music performance and later sang with the Portland Opera Association under the direction of the late Herbert Weiskopf with whom she studied voice. A former Grants Pass resident, she now resides in Medford.

Steve Simmons, a newcomer to the Chorale, is singing the tenor role of the shepherd. Simmons, along with his wife Cindy, is the assistant pastor of the First

Presbyterian Church in Medford. He originally came from Illinois and has recently completed theological training in San Anselmo, Calif.

Director Lynn Sjolund is also known for his being director of vocal music at Medford Senior High School. Sjolund is a member of the board of directors of University of Oregon Music Society where he has been guest instructor during the summer session. He has served as president of the Oregon Music Educators Association and has conducted numerous festivals and clinics throughout the Northwest.