

Features

Composer Richard Clark's New Work Sees 'Light' of Day

By Tom Pilla
Times Staff

A new work by resident and composer Richard J. Clark, the 25-year musical director at St. Cecilia Parish in Boston, will receive its world premiere at the "Heavenly Light" choral program of the Boston-based chamber choir, the Seraphim Singers, with performances on Feb. 2 in Cambridge and Feb. 7 in Boston. Clark will also serve as organist for the concerts.

The composition, "Christe qui lux es et Dies" (Christ Who is the Light and Day), was commissioned by the choir, and is based on liturgical text that has for centuries seen use around the world in end-of-day services. However, it had not been officially retained in the Roman Breviary of the 11th century, which serves as the main source material for canonical music.

Clark was able to find original melodies for Gregorian chants associated with this liturgy by researching texts dating to the fifth century, C.E. The new composition is based in-part upon these ancient melodies as well as others from the Roman Catholic musical tradition.

Originally from Long Island in New York, Clark is a prolific composer and performer whose work has been presented on four continents by world-class artists. He collaborates frequently with Boston's professional musicians, including members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and has lectured at the Berklee College of Music as well as other higher learning institutions.

He holds degrees from Berklee and the Boston Conservatory, and is also the organist and Cantor at St. Mary's Chapel of Boston College. St. Cecilia Parish, where Clark spends the bulk of his professional life, is located in the heart of Boston's musical district, and St. Cecilia is the patron saint of music and musicians.

Said Clark of this most recent work, "Some of that [original] melody finds its way into the piece. There is an initial theme that is completely brand new that is my own, recalling perhaps Russian Orthodox, and the chant is weaved in." Seven verses, each with a different arrangement, said the composer, culminate when the text invokes: "Be with us, Lord, you are the defender of our soul."

Though Clark said this is one of his more traditional creations, he has generally been a boundary-pusher when it comes to his religious compositions.

With musical influences ranging from John Cage to Thelonious Monk, as well as the folk and rock musicians of the 1960s and 1970s, Clark will often bend tones and melodies in his work, stretching the ear of the listener to hear new things that can sometimes be a bit shocking. He has also written pop and jazz songs.

Bringing ancient, sacred texts into the present with arrangements that are more than just traditional is something that Clark sees as one of his missions. It always begins with the text and the message, though.

"You understand the core material first and then bring it to life for people," he said, adding, "... Part of the reason to do that is, and I think the fascination of the traditions is, that it's alive, it informs you of

who you are. It's kind of like learning about your family heritage."

The "Heavenly Light" concert will feature a wide range of work focusing on the theme of "Light as the presence of God," with classic masterworks as well as original compositions by regional artists. The first of two concerts will be held on Sunday, Feb. 2, at 3 p.m., at First Church, 11 Garden St., Harvard Square, Cambridge, and the second on Friday, Feb. 7, at 8 p.m., at St. Cecilia Parish, 18 Belvedere St., Boston. Tickets are sold at the door for \$20, or \$15 for seniors and students.

Clark has lived in town since 2009 with his wife and two school-age children, with a third on the way.

Visit Clark's website at www.rjcceciliamusic.com, and the Seraphim Singers' at www.seraphimsingers.org.



Composer and organist Richard J. Clark.
(Photo courtesy of Michael J. Lutch)

Assisted Living at Winter Valley

Enjoy your independence while we do the cooking and cleaning.

Assisted living one-bedroom apartments range from \$2,050 to \$2,900.

Please call 617-698-3005 to schedule a tour

Managed by MRE, Inc.
600 Canton Ave, Milton
MA 02186
www.mreinc.org

- Two meals per day
- One hour of services per day*
- Hair salon
- Beautiful grounds designed by Fredrick Law Olmstead
- Activities included: health and wellness seminars, exercise classes, music & art events, book groups, gardening and more
- Weekly trips

*Additional Services and transportation available for a fee.

MILTON ACCESS TELEVISION

<p>Monday 8am - St. Elizabeth's Church 9am - Sound Advice 10am - Basic Buddha 12pm - Music Concerts 2pm - Fuller Village Hour 3pm - Meeting House Forum 4pm - Milton Rotarians 5pm - Milton Speaks 6:30pm - My Town Matters 7:30pm - Meet me in the Kitchen 8pm - The Brian A. Joyce Report 9pm - Great American Songbook</p>	<p>Thursday 8am - St. Elizabeth's Church 10am - MRTV 11am - Telegalaxie 11am - Literati Scene 12pm - St. Elizabeth's Choir 1pm - Reel Talk 3pm - Preview Show 3:30pm - Music Concerts 5pm - The Brian A. Joyce Report 6:30pm - Board of Selectmen OR Planning Board</p>	<p>COMCAST 22/RCN 15</p> <p>Monday 4pm - Spanish Stories 7pm - Pierce Middle School Concert Series</p> <p>Tuesday 4pm - Spanish Stories 7pm - Milton High School Concert Series 9pm - MHS Graduation</p> <p>Wednesday 10am - Pierce Middle School Concert Series 4pm - Spanish Stories 7pm - School Committee</p> <p>Thursday 10am - Milton High School Concert Series 4pm - Spanish Stories</p> <p>Friday, Saturday, Sunday 10am - Pierce Middle School Concert Series 12pm - School Committee 4pm - Spanish Stories 7pm - Milton High School Concert Series</p> <p>Please check Comcast 8 and RCN 3 for schedule changes and updates.</p> <p>Program Guide also available at www.miltonaccessstv.org</p> <p>Any questions or comments please email info@miltonaccessstv.org or call 617-698-0814</p>
<p>Tuesday 8am - St. Elizabeth's Church 9am - Sound Advice 10am - The Brian A. Joyce Report 11am - Meet me in the Kitchen 11:30am - It's All Write with Suzette 12pm - St. Elizabeth's Choir 1pm - Talk of the Town 5pm - Milton Speaks 6pm - Play by Play 7pm - Flavorquest 8pm - MRTV 8:30pm - Omnibus Milton 9pm - Physician's Focus 9:30pm - Preview Show</p>	<p>Friday, Saturday, Sunday 7am - St. Elizabeth's Church 8am - Parkway United Methodist Church 10am - East Congregational Church 11am - First Parish Church 12pm - Real Estate Today 1pm - You've got to have Art 2pm - Chef's Table Series 3pm - Omnibus Milton 5pm - Milton Speaks 6pm - Effort Pour Christ 7pm - Meet me in the Kitchen 7:30pm - My Town Matters 8pm - Reel Talk 8:30pm - It's All Write with Suzette 9pm - Talk of the Town 10pm - Greater Boston Gala Girls</p>	<p>COMCAST 11/RCN 13</p> <p>Sunday - Saturday 8am - Board of Appeals Replay 12pm - School Committee Replay 2pm - MCAA Meeting 4pm - Planning Board Replay 8pm - Board of Selectmen Replay</p>

Keep it Local.

When you shop small and local, more than 50% of the money you spend stays in the community.*
Shop local whenever possible.

*Source: American Booksellers Association Indie Impact Study Series survey of independent, locally-owned business owners, conducted by Civic Economics. Sept. 2013.