



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 18, 2011

Music Society - Choral presents:

What: *African Sanctus*

When: March 13 • 3pm

Where: Auditorium, Midland Center for the Arts, 1801 W. St. Andrews Rd., Midland, MI 48640

Cost: \$15 Adults | \$10 Students

Information: Call Ticket Office at (989) 631-8250 or (800) 523-7649 or www.mcfta.org

Find this on our website: <http://www.mcfta.org/tickets/calendar/view.aspx?id=10887>

**AFRICAN SANCTUS:
CELEBRATING DIFFERENCES & UNITING CULTURES**

MIDLAND – Join Music Society Chorale at Midland Center for the Arts on March 13 at 3pm to celebrate the internationally acclaimed composition, *African Sanctus* by David Fanshawe. Known as one of the world's most original composers, David Fanshawe, passed away at the age of 68 in July of 2010. His life mission – to celebrate the universal language of music – lives on through worldwide performances of this musical masterpiece. Considered to be his most influential work, *African Sanctus* is a sensory and multicultural expression of power and energy that captures both the eternal and spiritual sound of music. An interpretation of the Latin Mass, it informs both the listener and performer about African music and its relationship to Western polyphony. The recorded music from Egypt, Sudan, Uganda and Kenya is heard in counterpoint with the live chorus, soprano soloist, and instrumental ensemble. *African Sanctus is truly a visual and musical mosaic that celebrates differences and unites cultures!* Musical direction by Jim Hohmeyer. Tickets are \$15 adults; \$10 students. Call Ticket Office at (989) 631-8250 or (800) 523-7649 or visit www.mcfta.org.

The Sanctus Journey (1969-1975)

Long before the craze for world music took place in the Western world, David Fanshawe traveled up the Nile, from the Mediterranean to Lake Victoria and from the mountains of West Sudan to the Red Sea – a symbolic cross-shaped pilgrimage – to record music from the world's indigenous people. Armed with a rucksack and a stereo tape recorder, he traveled thousands of miles, largely on foot, successfully recording traditional songs and sounds from over 50 tribes with amazing clarity and insight. Having created film soundtracks for the BBC for many years, the British composer learned to achieve remarkable sound quality in adverse recording conditions.

Often creating close relationships with many of the communities he visited, Fanshawe contributed much of his success to the people. In an interview with the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, he stated "But whenever I got to the villages, I found nothing but cooperation. They got a buzz from being recorded. They enjoyed themselves. And I enjoyed myself." Fellow composer and broadcaster,

Howard Goodwall remarked, "David's passion for the music of other cultures was never touristic; he had a deep respect for the people and cultures he engaged with and believed that the recording of their music was an act of love and admiration, which it was."

A key moment that largely inspired the conception of *African Sanctus* came at the beginning of this journey in 1969 when Fanshawe was sitting in a Christian church in Egypt and overheard the sounds of a nearby mosque calling the faithful to prayer. He envisioned these beautiful sounds in counterpoint with Western choral harmony. He then fused this concept into the traditional Latin Mass setting, adding a variety of unique sounds and visual displays, thus creating a work of great complexity.

Due to its complex nature, *African Sanctus* has never been placed in the conventional, classical-music category. Unlike most traditional choral classics, it requires eight instrumentalists in addition to the recorded sound bites. For this reason, Music Society Musical Director Jim Hohmeyer is "very excited to present this unique work to the Great Lakes Bay Region. It is growing in popularity across the country for good reason. This is a timely look at multicultural differences."

Reviews

"These performances have the size and feel of a millennium turning event. The significance of African Sanctus hardly stops at its being a symbolic meeting of two worlds. The work deeply engages its audiences...African Sanctus has in fact become an unintentional Requiem."
~ ***Philadelphia Inquirer***

"The effect was spellbinding and won an ovation from a capacity audience." ~ ***London Times***

"A very engrossing, musically rewarding piece." ~ ***Washington Post***

Music Society of the Midland Center for the Arts is a premier, volunteer musical arts organization serving mid-Michigan. It provides volunteers and audiences with exciting, quality musical events, utilizing professionals to educate and develop its talented, community-based participants.

Midland Center for the Arts, Inc. is a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation formed under the laws of the State of Michigan incorporating six groups: Alden B. Dow Museum of Science and Art, Center Stage Theatre, MATRIX:MIDLAND, Midland County Historical Society, Midland Symphony Orchestra, and Music Society – Choral. Activities at Midland Center for the Arts are supported in part by the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts. For the latest Center news, visit our web site at www.mcfta.org.

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