Student Choruses Perform Christmas Concert Tradition Dec. 1

Ceremony of Lessons and Carols, first celebrated in 1918 at King’s College, Cambridge, on Christmas Eve, has been a Rockhurst University tradition for 22 years. This year’s concert will be performed by more than 30 student voices at 7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 1, in St. Francis Xavier Church, 52nd and Troost Avenue.

Pianist Kairy Koshoeva, with accompaniment by the Rockhurst Pro Musica ensemble and Kansas City area instrumentalists, will accompany the University Chorus, Chamber Singers and Women’s Chorale.

During the past 22 years, thousands of audience members have experienced the delight of this holiday event. Beloved traditions punctuate the concert—traditional and nontraditional seasonal music, which includes Daniel Kantor’s Ave Maria; scriptural readings representing the Christmas story; carols sung by the choruses and audience, which includes the candlelight singing of “Silent Night”; and the program’s signature finale, the hauntingly beautiful “O Holy Night.”

Admission to the concert is free, but a donation of a nonperishable food, a child’s gift, or a grooming product is requested. Last year hundreds of neighborhood families benefited from these contributions.

The audience is invited to take part in a candlelight procession from the church to Massman Hall on the Rockhurst University campus for a complimentary post-concert reception.

Please let us know if you plan to attend by calling 816-501-4828.

Musica Sacra Holiday Concert Features Works by Charpentier, Manfredini

Musica Sacra Chorus and Orchestra presents one of the jewels of Christmas choral repertory—the Messe de Minuit pour Noël (Midnight Mass for Christmas) by Marc-Antoine Charpentier—on Friday, Dec. 7.

Charpentier composed the Messe de Minuit pour Noël while in the employ of the Jesuits. Throughout the work, he makes use of popular French Christmas carols that would have been easily recognized by listeners of the time. From the dancelike music to the symbolic descent of the flutes in the “Et incarnatus est,” representing the descent of the Holy Spirit at the moment of incarnation, the Messe de Minuit is one of the most charming and glorious examples of French baroque music.

In addition, the orchestra will play the Christmas Concerto, Op. 3 No. 12, by Italian composer Francesco Manfredini. A student of Giuseppe Torelli, Manfredini worked in Ferrara, but is best known as a composer, teacher and performer at the Church of San Petronio in Bologna. His Op. 3 concertos were published in 1718.

Musica Sacra will conclude the concert with traditional carols. The concert will take place at St. Francis Xavier Church, 52nd and Troost Avenue. Artistic Director Timothy L. McDonald will present Live Program Notes at 6:15 p.m., followed by the concert at 7 p.m.

Tickets ($18 adults, $12 senior citizens and students) may be purchased at the Central Ticket Office by calling 816-235-6222 or online at www.rockhurst.edu/mstickets or at the performance. For more information, call Rockhurst’s Center for Arts and Letters, 816-501-4607.

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Submissions Requested for Fine Arts Journal

Rockhurst Review is accepting original, unpublished poems, essays, short fiction, drama and artwork for its 2013 journal until Jan. 11.

Requirements include: fiction and essays not to exceed 2,500 words; dramas not to exceed 10 pages; poems not to exceed 10 pages with a five-poem maximum; and art not to exceed five photographs and photographs of one’s own artwork.

Include a brief biography, address, phone number, email address and cover letter. Send electronic submissions to rockhurstreview@hawks.rockhurst.edu. In the subject line, include your name and “submission.”

Mail entries to Rockhurst Review, Patricia Cleary Miller, Dept. of English, 1100 Rockhurst Road, Kansas City, MO 64110. Include a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Manuscripts will not be returned.
International Poetry’s ‘Risen Star’ Reads for Midwest Poets Series

For 30 years, the Midwest Poets Series has been the host to many international writers. They include three of the greatest writers of our time—Yehuda Amichai (Israel), Eavan Boland (Ireland), and Luisa Valenzuela (Argentina). Now, we add Valzhyna Mort, who was born in Belarus, to that list.

Valzhyna Mort will present her poems at the Midwest Poets Series’ 7 p.m. Nov. 29 reading in Mabee Theater, Sedgwick Hall. “Valzhyna Mort can justly be described as a risen star in the international poetry world,” reports the Cuirt International Poetry Festival. She received the 2005 Crystal of Vilenica award in Slovenia and the 2008 Burda Poetry Prize in Germany. Her latest book of poems, Collected Body, was released by Copper Canyon Press in 2012.

“I was born in the city of Minsk,” she tells Poetry International, “which has a population of about 2 million; it is the capital of Belarus, a country that in 1981 [her birth year] was still called Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic.

Both of my parents are also city people: opera, theater, military parades, and subway trips across the city by myself were the norm of my childhood.”

However, Mort does not see her life experiences, captured in her poems, as especially exotic or strange. “I understand what you mean,” she tells an interviewer, “when you say that historical pain particular to Factory of Tears and Collected Body might be exotic to an American reader; but at the same time, what is American historical pain if not the pain of dislocation, Native American and African American dislocation especially.”

Midwest Poets Series Director Robert Stewart says, “This is why the voice of such an international poet matters. It offers the perspective both of literature and our own history.”

Her praise continues. “The searing work of Valzhyna Mort,” exclaims The Irish Times, “dazzled all who were fortunate enough to hear her.” Library Journal says, “Mort is a fireball—personal, political, passionate.” “Mort stuns her readers, re-imagining the world, its histories and myths, with unexpected language and imagery,” reports California Journal of Poetics. “In this world, ‘death mews,’ ‘cows howl,’ and ‘accordions grin at dismembered violin torsos.’ In this world, Mort is a god, planting many new Gardens of Eden and breathing life into new Adams and Eves.”

Mort has been a resident poet at Literarisches Colloquium in Berlin, Germany, and Internationales Haus der Autoren Graz, Austria. Her English translations of Eastern European poets have appeared in New European Poets (Graywolf, 2008). In 2010, she received a Lannan Foundation Literary Fellowship and the Bess Hokin Prize from Poetry.

Admission is $3 at the door. No one will be denied admission for lack of funds. Books will be available for purchase at the event. A reception and book signing follow the reading. For more information, call 816-501-4607.
Center for Arts and Letters Plans
Spring Trip from Vienna to Prague

The Center for Arts and Letters is headed to the crossroads of Eastern and Western Europe for its 2013 trip destination. Vienna, Prague and places in between fill the itinerary with elegant and enchanting sights. Join us April 24-May 3 for this exceptional Central Europe tour.

The trip begins in Vienna, Austria’s glittering capital—a city of castles, music and pastries. Vienna, the seat of the Habsburg dynasty that ruled over the German empire for nearly 650 years, offers extraordinary sights and experiences. During our three-day stay, we will visit St. Stephen’s Cathedral, the Spanish Riding School to learn about the Lipizzaner Stallions, the Vienna Opera House, Schönbrunn Palace, and the artists’ quarter of Grinzing where we will enjoy a Heuriger—a celebration of the new wine.

From Vienna, we take a short trip to Bratislava, capital of the Slovak Republic. A local guide joins us for a walking tour of this city on the Danube. We will tour the Old Town, the city’s historical heart, and see its splendid baroque palaces, churches and pleasant squares. We will visit St. Martin’s Cathedral and Bratislava Castle.

After departing Vienna, we will drive along perhaps the most beautiful section of the Danube River before reaching the elegant Baroque city of Melk. We will visit Melk’s magnificent Benedictine Abbey, which was built more than 900 years ago and rests majestically on a promontory above the river. Known as the “Cradle of Austria” more than a 1,000 years ago, Melk’s Old Gingerbread House (1657) and 15th-century Gothic Church make the city a historian’s paradise. We then continue to Cesky Krumlov, a medieval jewel in southern Bohemia and home for the next two nights.

In Cesky Krumlov, we will visit the city’s Renaissance castle and explore Unity Square, lined with shops and overlooking the castle. We will take a short drive to Ceske Budejovice to tour the imperial brewery that once supplied the Holy Roman Empire with Budweiser beer—the original Budweiser after which Anheuser-Busch imitated its beer.

Next, we will visit Hradcany Castle, the world’s largest castle complex. Its grounds include St. Vitus Cathedral and the Golden Lane—a collection of small cottages from the 16th century. We will walk across the famous Charles Bridge and arrive at Wenceslas Square. After a free afternoon, we will enjoy a dinner cruise and music on the Vltava River.

In Prague, we will visit Hradcany Castle, the world’s largest castle complex. Its grounds include St. Vitus Cathedral and the Golden Lane—a collection of small cottages from the 16th century. We will walk across the famous Charles Bridge and arrive at Wenceslas Square. After a free afternoon, we will enjoy a dinner cruise and music on the Vltava River.

Our last day includes a guided tour of the Jewish Quarter where we will visit Europe’s oldest surviving Jewish cemetery, museum and Pinkas Synagogue. We will visit Villa Bertramka where Mozart wrote Don Giovanni and will see Mozart’s manuscripts, personal correspondence and piano. We cap our journey with a performance of Mozart’s music and a wine reception.

For a complete itinerary and brochure, call The Center for Arts and Letters, 816-501-4607, or e-mail cynthia.cartwright@rockhurst.edu.

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Group Multimedia Exhibition Explores ‘Body Image’

While a student at the Kansas City Art Institute, the Greenlease Gallery’s guest curator, Terry Lynn Campbell, began creating work around a theme: body image. Using her own body as a medium, she began exploring themes of objectification. Campbell’s fascination with body image has inspired her to mount a multimedia group show titled “on display: exploring body image.” Campbell’s exhibit opens Friday, Nov. 2, with a 6:30 p.m. talk followed by a 7-9 p.m. reception in the Greenlease Gallery.

“Body image is a broad and vague theme, open to many interpretations,” Campbell says, “but, it’s an important topic, especially since people have very recently evolved in their views about body image. Within our culture, our bodies, our images, are so often on public display. Social media encourages us to post pictures of ourselves in order to create identification. The simple act of selecting a picture and publishing it online for the general public to see has put us on the same platform that was formerly reserved for celebrities, models, and other public figures.” Campbell asks, “Has this made us more self-aware? Has this affected the way we internally see ourselves? Is it fair to argue that we cannot help but second guess or scrutinize our personal image?”

Through her studies, Campbell discovered that other artists also were dealing with this topic. Although the body image concept may be universal, the conclusions are not. “Often when people hear the general term ‘body image’ in relation to art, they might immediately think about female artists creating work about oppression, or objectification,” Campbell says. “I think ‘body image’ is so much more than that—now more than ever. In this multi-artist exhibition, I have kept the theme broad and open to interpretation; however, it is all but simple.”

The exhibit will be on display through Saturday, Dec. 1.
Musical Comedy Comes to the Mabee Theater Stage

Rockhurst Theatre continues its season with a performance of “The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee,” a one-act musical comedy conceived by Rebecca Feldman with music and lyrics by William Finn.

Nominated for six Tony Awards, the show centers on six adolescent overachievers vying for the top prize in their school's spelling competition. Four unsuspecting audience members also are drawn into the quirky contest.

Guest Director Heidi Van is supported with musical direction by Tom Kodera and choreography by Ashley Otis. Van, a theatre creator and performer, is the cofounder and curator of the experimental Fishtank Performance Studio in Kansas City's Crossroads District. She recently received the 2012 Generative Performing Artists Award by the Charlotte Street Foundation.

Curtain times for “The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee” are 7:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday, Nov. 15 and 16, and 2:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 17 and 18, in Mabee Theater, Sedgwick Hall. Tickets, sold at the door, are $10.

Return to the Classics to Discuss Tolstoy's War and Peace

War and Peace, regarded as one of the world's most important literary works, will be the subject of discussion at the Monday, Nov. 5, Return to the Classics. Participants of the great books discussion group, led by Tom Ventresca, ’70, will examine and analyze Leo Tolstoy's monumental masterpiece at 7 p.m. in Massman Hall, room 241.

Published in 1869, this sprawling novel chronicles the entanglements of five fictional aristocratic families whose way of life is on the brink of change, with some families steadfastly holding onto the existing class structure while others know that the old life is disappearing.

To reserve a space for the book discussion, contact The Center for Arts and Letters at 816-501-4607 or email cynthia.cartwright@rockhurst.edu. The cost, $25 per person, includes a copy of the book (Norton Critical Edition) and refreshments; $10 for the discussion and reception only.

Return to the Classics will discuss The Arabian Nights at its next meeting on Monday, March 25. Books may be ordered in January by calling The Center for Arts and Letters.