Grinnell, Iowa

Work: Suite of 3 choral works with wind chamber ensemble accompaniment

Performers: Grinnell College Singers, Grinnell High School Concert Choir, and a large all-city community choir

Theme: Roots of Renewal, an exploration of the changing face of the tall grass prairie

Tentative premiere dates: Early Fall and November 16, 2003

Collaborators: Faulconer Gallery
The City of Grinnell
Grinnell High School Music Department
Grinnell College Music Department
Grinnell Renaissance
Grinnell Area Arts Council
The Center for Prairie Studies

These choral works will enhance the impact of a major art exhibit, Roots of Renewal, at Grinnell College’s Faulconer Gallery, by adding to other programs, including art installations, education events, and broad-based collaborations. An excerpt from the core statement for the exhibition elucidates the project’s theme:

New Immigrants, new industries, new farming practices, and new attitudes towards the original tall grass prairie are all changing the perception of the Upper Midwest in the early 21st Century. While still agriculturally grounded, virtually every aspect of the culture and land is being re-examined. Roots of Renewal will use contemporary art as a catalyst for an exploration of the issues facing those who live...[in] the region, as they rethink their land, their livelihoods, and the sense of self.

The work will be performed in two stages: the first movement, performed by a select group of singers from the H.S. Concert Choir and the Grinnell College Singers, will be performed in the early Fall at various locations as part the exhibition’s community outreach. The second movement is for the full combination of the same singing groups, while the last is for an all-city choir consisting of middle school, high school, community and college choirs. The full work will be performed in November.

Texts utilized in the pieces may be taken from existing sources, for example, an archive of interviews with Grinnellians done as part of the National Endowment for the Humanities’ ‘Voices of the Past’ project and a group of writings created by high school and college students and adult members of the community as part of the Iowa River Corridor project. The composer may be able to work with one or more artists from the exhibition as well.

Residency activities include workshops and interviews to develop texts as well as workshops on composing for high school students and master classes at the College.

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