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## **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 Bostonbased 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

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

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 boundarypusher 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

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.

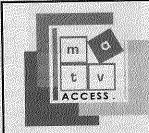
"You understand the core material first and then bring it to life for people," he said, adding, "... Part of the reason to do that is, and I think the fascination of the traditions is, that it's alive, it informs you of

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.



Barn - 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

#### 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

#### Wednesday

8am - St. Elizabeth's Church

I0am – MH I∙V 11am - Literati Scene

12pm - St. Elizabeth's Choir

2pm - Real Estate Today

4pm - Encankar

5pm - Telekreyol 6pm - Chef's Table Series

7pm - It's All Write with Suzette

8pm - Labor Talk

8:30pm - Life Matters

9pm - Preview Show

9:30pm - Greater Boston Gala Girls

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8am - St. Elizabeth's Church

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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** 

### 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

#### COMCAST 11/ RCN 13

Sunday - Saturday

8am - Board of Appeals Replay 12pm - School Committee

Replay

2pm - MCAAl Meeting

4pm - Planning Board Replay 8pm - Board of Selectmen

Replay

#### COMCAST 22/RCN 15 Monday

4pm - Spanish Stories 7pm - Pierce Middle School

Tuesday

Concert Series

4pm - Spanish Stories

7pm - Milton High School **Concert Series** 

9pm - MHS Graduation

#### Wednesday

10am - Pierce Middle School

Concert Series

4pm - Spanish Stories

7pm - School Committee

#### Thursday

10am - Milton High School Concert

Series

4pm - Spanish Stories

### Friday, Saturday, Sunday

10am - Pierce Middle School

Concert Series

12pm - School Committee

4pm - Spanish Stories

7pm - Milton High School Concert

Please check Comcast 8 and **BCN 3 for schedule changes** 

Program Guide also available at www.miltonaccesstv.org

and updates.

Any questions or comments

please email info@miltonaccesstv.org

or call 617-698-0814



Composer and organist Richard J. Clark.

(Photo courtesy of Michael J. Lutch)

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