6-13-1999

Park Forest Singers

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Music for the Stage:
From Grand Opera to the American Theater
The Park Forest Singers
Natalia E. Lyashenko, Artistic Director and Conductor
Lisa Kristina, Accompanist
Sue Pawlak, additional keyboards
Sunday, June 13, 1999 4:00 p.m.

Order of Program
Act I Grand Opera
Prelude
from Modest Moussorgsky's Boris Godunov
Chorus
Brandon Mayberry, bass-baritone
Co-winner of the PFS Collegiate Vocal Competition
Randall C. Madderom, bass
Lyubvi vsye vozrasti pokorni (Prince Gremin's Aria)
from Peter I. Tchaikovsky's Eugen Onegin
Brandon Mayberry, bass-baritone
Les Voici
from George Bizet's Carmen
Chorus and the Park Forest Singers Children's Choir
Ou va la jeune indoue (The Bell Song)
from Léo Delibes Lakmé
Cari Plachy, soprano
Co-winner of the PFS Collegiate Vocal Competition
Va Pensiero (Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves)
from Giuseppe Verdi's Nabucco
Chorus
Mein Herr Marquis (The Laughing Song)
from Johann Strauss' Die Fledermaus
Samantha T. Malk, soprano
Winner of the Elsa Ropke Mack Memorial Vocal Scholarship Competition
Regina Coeli
from Pietro Mascagni's Cavalleria Rusticana
Chorus
Cari Plachy, soprano

Intermission
Act II The American Stage

Selections from Show Boat
Jerome Kern, lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II, arr. Jackie O'Neill
Cotton Blossom
Make Believe
You Are Love
Bill
Why Do I Love You?
Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man
Ol' Man River
with Brandon Mayberry, bass-baritone

Not a Day Goes By . . . a medley of Stephen Sondheim
arr. Robert Page
No One Is Alone
A Parade In Town

Selections from Porgy and Bess
George Gershwin, lyrics by Ira Gershwin and Dubose Heyward
arr. Clay Warnick
I Got Plenty O' Nuttin
Summertime
It Ain't Necessarily So
Bess, You Is My Woman Now
There's A Boat That's Leaving Soon

The Best Of All Possible Worlds from Candide
Leonard Bernstein, lyrics by John LaTouche and Richard Wilbur
Make Our Garden Grow from Candide
Leonard Bernstein, lyrics by John LaTouche and Richard Wilbur
Cari Plachy, soprano
Marilyn Keblusek, soprano
Brandon Mayberry, bass-baritone
Bill Wesender, baritone
Conrad Urban, bass

Music for the Stage: From Grand Opera to American Theater

Whether the music be grand opera or musical theater, the plots are rich in pathos and the human experience. For our program notes, we thought it most helpful to give you a brief summary of the plots of the operas and musicals from which we have chosen this afternoon's selections.

Boris Godunov
Boris was a bad man—you had to be if you were Ivan the Terrible's closest advisor. Boris has managed to be named regent to Ivan's two sons, a halfwit and a little boy. He was also sneaky and, at least at first, beloved of his people. As the opera opens, he is begged by the people to become the next Tsar, and he reluctantly agrees. Boris is not the virtuous ruler his people thought. The half wit dies and Boris plots to kill the little boy, Dimitri. Boris' harsh proclamations have now made him hated by the Russian people. An opportunistic young monastic novice, Grigori, pretends to be the murdered Dimitri, risen from the dead. He masses an army to overthrow Boris. As the false Dimitri vows to become Tsar, Boris holds court in the Kremlin. Tormented by the murder of Dimitri, he collapses on his throne and dies. During his death scene, he pronounces his son Feodor as the next Tsar and begs his forgiveness.

Eugen Onegin
Eugen, a wealthy young fellow, visits the house of Madame Larina with his friend Lenski so that Lenski can court his fiancee, Olga. Onegin is paired up with Olga's sister, Tatiana, and she immediately falls in love with him. Onegin is attracted to her, but like many young men, shies at the thought of commitment. Tatiana writes a letter to Onegin professing her love, and Onegin meets her late that evening in the garden, only to tell her that he has no intention of marrying her, or anyone. Later, at Tatiana's birthday ball, Onegin and Lenski exchange words because Onegin is flirting with Olga. The insults continue, and the two friends find themselves fighting a duel. Honor prevails over common sense, and Onegin kills his friend Lenski. Years later, Onegin arrives at the home of his relative, the retired general Prince Gremin, still trying to overcome his feelings of remorse. He meets Gremin's wife, the beautiful Tatiana, and after hearing Gremin extol his wife's virtues, realizes that he does indeed love her. The roles are reversed, and Onegin writes her a love letter and begs to meet her in the garden later. Tatiana agrees to meet him, and spurns him for the secure love of her husband.

Carmen
The fickle Carmen, a worker in the Seville cigarette factory, always wants what she does not have, and when she gets it, no longer wants it. She sets her sights on Don José, a corporal in the Spanish army. Don José falls deeply in love with Carmen, and allows her to lure him into deserting his post and joining up with her band of thieves. In the thieves' mountain hideaway Carmen grows tired of Don José and sets her sights on Escamillo, the famous toreador. The two men fight, and just as Don José begins to get the better of Escamillo, Micaela arrives with the message that Don José's mother is dying. As he leaves, he warns Carmen that they will meet again, and that only death can part them. Our selection tonight opens the last act, where the entire city is gathered to watch the parade of bullfighters enter La Maestranza, Seville's bull ring. The last to enter is Escamillo, with Carmen on his arm. Carmen stays back as he enters the
ring, only to be confronted by a pitiful Don José. He begs her one last time to take him back, and when she responds only with contempt, he pulls a knife on her and kills her.

**Lakmé**

This opera, set in Victorian India, tells the story of Lakmé, the high priest’s daughter, and her ill-fated love of Gerald, a soldier in Queen Victoria’s army. He happens upon her in a sacred grotto and of course, they fall in love. Lakmé warns him that he must leave, but just as he does so, her father arrives and avows to kill the man who has desecrated his holy garden. Later, on a Hindu feast day, Gerald and his friend Frederick are exploring the bazaar. Lakmé’s father Nilakantha enters, disguised as a beggar, and demands that his daughter sing. She obliges him with *The Bell Song*, which tells of a Hindu maiden and how she attracted the great god Vishnu with her bells. Gerald appears, attracted by her song, and is stabbed by the waiting Nilakantha. Lakmé takes him to her hidden grotto to recover. As Gerald lies in the grotto, Lakmé goes to a sacred spring for water which will heal him. While she is gone, Gerald’s fellow officer Frederick enters and persuades him to leave and rejoin his company. Gerald refuses her magical drink and in despair, Lakmé eats the poisonous datura blossoms in the garden. Gerald reconsiders, but too late. As her father enters and makes to strike Gerald dead, Lakmé offers herself as a victim and dies.

**Nabucco**

Nabucco tells the Biblical story of Nebuchadnezzar (Nabucco) and his conquest of the Hebrews. The great priest Zachary attempts to restore the courage of the Hebrews by informing them that he has captured Nebuchadnezzar’s daughter Fenena. Ismael, the nephew to the king of Jerusalem, falls in love with her and saves her from death by Zachary’s hand, thereby branding him as a traitor. Abigail, the slave, plots to unthrone Nebuchadnezzar, and eventually succeeds. She decides to sacrifice the captive Hebrews, including Fenena, who has converted to Judaism. The Hebrews, lamenting their misfortune, sing *Va Pensiero*. The king returns in time to save the Hebrews and his daughter, Abigail kills herself, and in her dying breath, begs for forgiveness and pleads that Nebuchadnezzar allow Fenena to marry Ismael.

**Die Fledermaus**

Practical jokes, mistaken identity, and a masked ball combine in this lighthearted operetta. Ladies’ maid Adele is invited to a fancy dress ball at the ballet, if only her employer Rosalinda will give her the time off. Rosalinda refuses, because her husband von Eisenstein has been sentenced to five days in prison for some such crime against the state and his sentence begins that night. Rosalinda is distracted from her preparations by a serenade, given, she soon finds out, by her former suitor Alfred. She agrees to meet Alfred once her husband is safely in jail. Then, Eisenstein’s friend Dr. Falke arrives and quietly tells Eisenstein about a fancy dress ball (yes, the same one) that night. Eisenstein gives Rosalinda a lame excuse about needing his evening clothes for jail—something about being a most distinguished prisoner—and he is off to the ball. Meanwhile, Alfred arrives and professes his love for the fair Rosalinda. No sooner than he does, in comes the governor of the prison, demanding that Eisenstein report. Alfred is pawned off as Eisenstein and is taken to the prison so that the governor can attend (hmm . . . ) a fancy dress ball! Everyone, disguised, of course, meets at the ball, and deception and tricks abound. Eisenstein reports to the jail the next morning only to find Alfred in his place. Confusion reigns, and in the end, all ends well, with everyone once again speaking to each other and singing the joys of champagne.

**Cavalleria Rusticana**

The title of this one-act opera is ironic, since the behavior of most of the characters is anything but chivalrous. It takes place on Easter Sunday in a small Sicilian village. The opera opens with the newly returned soldier Turiddu serenading his lover Lola. Turiddu’s fiancee, Santuzza, goes to his mother Mamma Lucia’s house to ask about Turiddu’s recent behavior. They are interrupted by Alfio, a young teamster who extols the virtues of his pretty wife Lola. Outside the church, Santuzza and the villagers join the church choir in the *Regina Coeli*, our selection tonight. Afterwards, Turiddu arrives and offers unconvincing excuses to Santuzza about his recent flirtations, finally hurling Santuzza to the ground. She remains outside the church and shares the seamy tale with Alfio. Alfio waits outside the church for Turiddu and after an exchange of angry words, the two agree to a duel. Theickle Turiddu is killed and no one lives happily ever after.

**Show Boat**

In 1927, Kern and Hammerstein crafted this epitome of American musicals from Edna Ferber’s novel of the previous year. Captain Andy’s daughter Magnolia falls in love with Gaylord Ravenal, a handsome riverboat gambler. They marry and end up in Chicago until the money runs out. Meanwhile, Julie, the star of the showboat, is found to be of mixed blood and is barred from the showboat and spurned by her white husband in the prejudiced Deep South of the time. Julie works behind the scenes to help Magnolia get a job to support herself. Cap’n Andy and “Nolie” reunite at a New Year’s Eve party at which she is performing, and she returns to the showboat with him, where she gives birth to Kim. Years later, Gay returns to the showboat, and when he meets Kim and realizes who she is, apologizes to Nolie and pledges his everlasting love. The musical broke new ground because the music flows from the characters and the plot, rather than set pieces that simply come from nowhere, and because of the mature nature of the story which represented the tensions in the Deep South of the 1890’s.

**Candide**

Based on the 1759 story by Voltaire, Candide is the personification of optimism, having been taught by his mentor Dr. Pangloss that “All is for the best in this best of all possible worlds.” Candide maintains this theory in the face of insurmountable evidence to the contrary. He lives in a world where what seems to be turns out not to be. Dr. Pangloss is hanged by the Inquisition, but Candide later meets him on a ship bound for Turkey—it seems that Pangloss had not been “properly” hanged. All of the characters settle down on a little farm where Pangloss still claims that everything happens for the best. Now having his own perception of life, Candide replies, “We must cultivate our garden.” Work is the antidote for man’s unhappy lot.

**Porgy and Bess**

Premiering in 1935, this quintessential American folk opera is set on Catfish Row in Charleston, South Carolina. Porgy, a crippled beggar, comes to the defense of Bess as
Meet Our Artistic Staff and Guest Soloists

Natalia E. Lyashenko, Artistic Director

Dr. Natalia E. Lyashenko is an internationally renowned choral conductor. Before coming to the United States, she received her doctorate in chorus conducting at the Novosibirsk State Conservatory in Russia, where she was also chorus conductor at the Novosibirsk Opera and Ballet Theater. The Novosibirsk, the Bolshoi and the Kirov Theaters are the three most important musical organizations of their kind in Russia.

Opera News, an international publication, said this about our new Artistic Director. "1993's La Traviata was the watershed [for the Sakai City Opera in Osaka, Japan] .... The main creative forces [were] complemented by the crucial addition of Natalia Lyashenko of the Moscow Choral Theatre, who lived in Japan for a year and trained the Sakai chorus to a peak of precision. [She] shaped a production that crackled with a sure sense of attack rarely achieved by any opera company in Japan."

In the first quarter of 1995, Dr. Lyashenko trained and conducted an 80-voice Oratorio Choir in concert at Iowa State University. John Mullen, reviewer for the Iowa State Daily, stated that "Conductor Lyashenko has been preparing students not only for this concert, but instructing them vocally as well." According to Dr. Robert Molison of the Music Department, "She's been with [the Chorus] for six weeks... and it's made a difference.... It is a significant meeting of minds and spirit that are very different and she's had a profound effect. If you want to talk about the university trying to become more culturally aware of the rest of the world, here's an example." The reviewer continues, "Mrs. Lyashenko's career has taken her worldwide, leaving the teachings of her ideas and influence with vocalists long after she's gone."

More recently, Frederick Ockwell of Northwestern University's Mason and Ragland Opera Theatre, referring to a 1996-97 production, said, "[Natalia Lyashenko's] work with the students was outstanding in every way—she ran the rehearsals in a thoroughly professional manner, preparing the music in precise detail and developing a marvelous rapport with the group. Her fine work helped make this Boheme one of our most successful productions ever." Dr. Lyashenko is currently a lecturer for the Northwestern University School of Music, Evanston, Illinois.

Lisa Kristina, Accompanist

Lisa Kristina, a native of Chicago Heights, began piano studies at age four, and began accompanying for choruses at age 10. She received degrees in voice from DePaul University and the Manhattan School of Music, and has made a career as a singer, pianist, and musical director throughout the United States and Germany. An extremely versatile performer, she has toured the U.S. and appeared on Broadway in Phantom of the Opera, and has been heard on the Studs Terkel Show on WFMT singing Gilbert and Sullivan selections, and accompanying excerpts from Stravinsky's Rake's Progress. Currently she is a staff accompanist at DePaul University and choir director at St. John the Evangelist Church in Flossmoor, and she frequently serves as musical director for the Chicago Heights Drama Group. Lisa was recently inducted into the Marian Catholic High School Hall of Fame.

Cari Plachy

Co Winner, The Park Forest Singers Collegiate Vocal Competition

Cari Plachy is recent graduate of DePaul University with a major in music education. At DePaul, she has sung with the concert and chamber choirs, and was the recipient of a DePaul Music Scholarship. She recently appeared with the DePaul Opera Theater as the Queen of the Night in Mozart's The Magic Flute. She also appeared as Mabel in the Janus production of The Pirates of Penzance. Other DePaul Opera Theater credits are Sally in Die Fledermaus, The Second Woman in Dido and Aeneas, and Dolly in The Threepenny Opera. She has won the Bel Canto Foundation Maude Miller Award, the Evanston Music Scholarship Award, and received an honorable mention at this year's NATS competition. Ms. Plachy proves that persistence pays off, as she received an honorable mention in last year's Collegiate Vocal Competition. She has plans for a number of auditions in order to begin her singing career. Ms. Plachy studies with Ann Perillo.
Brandon Eugene Mayberry
Co Winner, The Park Forest Singers Collegiate Vocal Competition

Originally from Wooster, Ohio, Brandon Mayberry graduated from East Richland High School in Olney, IL, and is a senior majoring in vocal performance at DePaul University. He is the recipient of the prestigious DePaul University Merit Scholarship for Voice Performance, and was the 1995 runner up in the St. Louis NATS competition in the men's upper high school division. His credits include Lt. Lavergne at Light Opera Works' The Desert Song and Ivan in Die Fledermaus, Carl Olsen in Street Scene and Reverend Kimball in The Threepenny Opera, all with DePaul Opera Theater. Most recently Brandon performed the role of Rapunzel's prince in the Janus production of Into the Woods. This summer he will be a young artist with Opera North of New Hampshire and will sing Sarastro in the youth production of Die Zauberflöte as well as understudying the roles of Sarastro and Elder Ott in Floyd's Susannah. After graduation, Brandon plans to enter graduate school to focus on opera performance. Brandon studies with Theresa Brancaccio.

Samantha T. Malk
Winner, The Elsa Ropke Mack Memorial Scholarship Competition for High School Vocalists

Samantha was born in South Africa and her family moved to the Chicago area when she was twelve. Since that time, Samantha has performed in numerous musicals, including Once On This Island, My Fair Lady, A Chorus Line, Sweet Charity, The Wizard of Oz and Anything Goes. She is a recent graduate of Highland Park High School, where she participated in three choirs. Samantha plans to enroll at Northwestern University in the fall where she will continue her study of music. She studies privately with Jina Varis.
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- Michelle L. Clark
- Matt Clarke
- Patti J. Collier
- Isaac Cushingberry
- Carl D. Dalke

**Please Support The Park Forest Singers**
If you haven't already, won't you consider adding your name as a financial supporter of quality choral music in our region? All donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law and are gratefully acknowledged in each of our concert programs. Join the many others who value the unique mission of The Park Forest Singers. You are making a “sound investment.” Thank you for your generous support.

**Have You Considered Volunteering Your Time With The Park Forest Singers?**
Like all not-for-profit organizations, we are always in search of friends who can volunteer their time to help us with the many tasks needed to keep our organization running smoothly. If you have a few hours you could share with us, please call 481-8684 and ask for Marcia. Help us keep choral music alive in the southern suburbs.

**Auditions for The Park Forest Singers**
Would you like to become a member of the premier community chorus in the Chicago Southland region? We are always interested in adding new talent to our roster. The next auditions for The Park Forest Singers will be held in early August. Contact Marcia Abbott, Chorus Manager at 481-8684 for more information or for an appointment.

**We've Moved Our Offices!**
Contact the Singers at their new offices in Downtown Park Forest at 346 Victory Drive, Park Forest, IL 60466. Our new phone number is 481-8684 and our new fax number is 481-6884.
# Our Lifelong Commitment to Music Education

The Park Forest Singers believes that music is essential to our development both as individuals and as a society. We sponsor the following programs for children and young adults as a way of underscoring our commitment to the development of musical talent in our community.

## The Park Forest Singers Children's Choir

The Park Forest Singers Children's Choir is dedicated to the development of musical excellence in the children of the south suburban Chicagoland area, to fostering a love of and an appreciation for choral music of differing periods, styles and ethnic origins and promoting commitment to musical growth in a multi-ethnic community.

The Park Forest Singers Children's Choir provides an overall music education program, emphasizing the art of singing. Through its programs it seeks to develop the musical abilities and talents of each child to the fullest extent, promote appreciation for and understanding of the cultural diversity of the south suburbs through the choral literature of multiple ethnic origins, and share the joy of singing with its members and its audience.

The Park Forest Singers Children's Choir is open to all children, kindergarten through grade 6, regardless of musical background or training. The choir rehearses on Tuesday afternoons at Faith United Protestant Church in Park Forest. More information on the Park Forest Singers Children's Choir is available from Annette Sullivan, Administrative Director, at 708-748-4353.

## The Elsa Ropke Mack Memorial Vocal Scholarship Competition

High school vocalists are encouraged to participate in the Elsa Ropke Mack Memorial Vocal Scholarship Competition, now in its fifteenth year. The competition was established by Robert Mack in memory of his late wife and provides scholarship funds for music study to promising high school students intent on pursuing a career in music. Through this program the Park Forest Singers has awarded thousands of dollars in support of music study by these talented young individuals. The competition is held in March each year and the winner performs at our final concert of the season.

More information on next year's competition is available from Ernest Jones, Scholarship Chairperson, at 708-798-1463.

## The Park Forest Singers Collegiate Vocal Competition

Now in its fifth year, the Park Forest Singers Collegiate Vocal Competition provides encouragement and monetary awards to outstanding vocalists at the undergraduate level. The winner also performs as a featured artist at our final concert of the season. The competition is held in March each year. More information on next year's competition is available from Ernest Jones, Scholarship Chairperson, at 708-798-1463.

Information about all of our educational programs is also available by calling the chorus office at 708-481-8684.

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**THE PARK FOREST SINGERS**

**CHORUS COMMITTEES**

* = Committee Chair

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>Chair</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Archival Tapes</td>
<td>Doretha Holliday*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attire</td>
<td>Ollie Palmer*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorus Rep.</td>
<td>Dorothy Edison, soprano Priscilla Mereness, alto Frieda Wilson, tenor Charles Schutte, bass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concert Programs</td>
<td>Ruth A. Rich*, Dolores Barnes, Laura Barnes, Stephen Barnes, Elaine Degenhart, Roberta Gleason, Betsy Gottschalk, William Messersmith, Jean Scott</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fest Planning Committee</td>
<td>Dolores Barnes, Laura Barnes, Stephen Barnes, Patti Collier, Dawn E. DeVries, Wally Gleason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historian</td>
<td>Peg Scoggin*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td>Ruth A. Rich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mailing List</td>
<td>William Messersmith*, Ruth A. Rich, Leona Zylka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>Ruth A. Rich*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Library</td>
<td>Ann Smies*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Ads</td>
<td>Ernest Jones*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarship</td>
<td>Ernest Jones*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage</td>
<td>William Messersmith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunshine Club</td>
<td>Dolores Barnes*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticket</td>
<td>Stephen Barnes*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**THE PARK FOREST SINGERS**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS COMMITTEES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>Chair</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board Luncheon</td>
<td>William Messersmith*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's Choir Search</td>
<td>Terry Medhurst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive</td>
<td>Dolores Barnes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td>Walter Gleason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Range Planning</td>
<td>Terry Medhurst*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominating</td>
<td>Dolores Barnes*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Betsy Gottschalk
Lisa Kristina
Dan Pollack
Ruth A. Rich
Audrey Wesender
Program Ads
Ernest Jones*
Ruth A. Rich
Sunshine Club
Dolores Barnes*
Scholarship
Ernest Jones*
William Messersmith
Stage
Walter R. Gleason*
Barry Bruckner
Tim Krieger
Randall M. Madderom
Harry Sherrill
Paul Sloth
Bill Wesender
Tickets
Stephen Barnes*
Edith G. Albrecht
Kathie Darman
Kirk J. Ongman
Ruth A. Rich
Laurie Ulrich
Laurie Ulrich
Join the Singers for their Twenty Third Spectacular Season

Chairman of the Board: An Evening with Frank Sinatra
The legendary Frank Sinatra stands at the head of the "Big Band" singers with hits like The Lady is a Tramp, Strangers in the Night, and My Way. Join us as we present our favorite Frank Sinatra tunes, with guest soloist.
Sunday, October 24, 1999 4:00 p.m.
The Center for Performing Arts at GSU

Glory and Hallelujah
The season wouldn't be complete without the Singers' annual Holiday concert, featuring Francis Poulenc's Gloria on the 100th anniversary of his birth. Seasonal favorites and a visit by the Park Forest Singers Children's Choir round out this festive program.
Sunday, December 12, 1999 4:00 p.m.
The Center for Performing Arts at GSU

The Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber
Both sacred and secular works are featured on this program devoted to the British composer Andrew Lloyd Webber. Webber's Requiem for soprano, tenor and boy soprano soloists and full chorus begin the afternoon. Songs from the musical stage, including Jesus Christ Superstar and Phantom, add a lighter touch in the intimate setting of St. Joseph Catholic Church.
Sunday, March 26, 2000 4:00 p.m.
St. Joseph Catholic Church, Homewood

The Dance of Love
Dance music from around the world caps off the Singers' season. Enjoy music from Brahms, Johann Strauss, Bizet and Offenbach as the Singers bring their season to a close.
Friday, June 9, 2000 7:30 p.m.
The Center for Performing Arts at GSU

Single tickets are $15 each, but you can save now by purchasing a subscription to all four concerts for only $47, a savings of over 20% off the single ticket price.

Turn in the accompanying insert with your payment at the ticket table after tonight's concert for the best seats in the house!
The Park Forest Singers
Season Subscription Order Form
1999-2000 Season

Name ____________________________________________

Address ____________________________________________

City/State/Zip ____________________________________________

Phone (_____) ____________________________________________

Please check one:

☐ I am a new subscriber. Please assign me the best seat(s) available.

☐ I am renewing my subscription.

☐ Please give me the same seat(s) as last year.

☐ Please change my seats to ______________________

Total number of season tickets @ $47 each __________

Total remitted $ __________

(Please make checks payable to The Park Forest Singers)

Turn in this sheet with your payment tonight at the ticket table or mail to:

The Park Forest Singers
346 Victory Drive
Park Forest IL 60466

You may also charge your tickets on Visa or Mastercard. Just have us fill out a slip at the ticket table tonight when you turn in this sheet.