

Mormon Artists Group Press
announces the publication of



Mormoniana

| COLLABORATORS | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Christian Asplund | Gaylen Hatton |
| Valerie Atkisson | Michael Hicks |
| Murray Boren | Grant Johannesen |
| Todd Coleman | Jeff Manookian |
| Robert Cundick | Lansing D. McLoskey |
| Lisa DeSpain | Reid Nibley |
| Nathan Fifield | Deon Nielsen Price |
| David Fletcher | David H. Sargent |
| Crawford Gates | Rowan Taylor |
| | Royce Campbell Twitchell |

Sixteen American composers who are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints were invited to participate in a collaborative project initiated by Mormon Artists Group. The premise was simple: each composer was to select a visual artwork created by an LDS artist and then write a piano composition inspired by it. Together, the finished piano works form a new, 16-movement concert work for the piano. The resulting score, a celebration of LDS artists and composers, is titled *Mormoniana* (Mor-mo-ni-ana).

Alongside the composers, visual artist Valerie Atkisson was engaged to create two original artworks on the theme of music (the first for the front cover, and the second, a large image to be bound into the volume as a frontispiece). Michael Hicks, himself a gifted composer, accepted an invitation to author an essay on the topic of Mormon music. Finally, the distinguished concert pianist Grant Johannesen agreed to place the compositions in sequence and record the score.

The process of creating the music began with each composer selecting a visual artwork and then responding to it musically. The composers approached this task in various ways. Some composers reacted to the visual work (painting, graphic work or photography) in a literal fashion and created a musical sibling of the image. For others, it was sufficient that an artwork and music share a related atmosphere. A few of the composers engaged in a dialogue directly with the visual artists and, upon

discovering a common theme, explored similarities and differences of approach. There was no specific direction given regarding the connection of music and art, only that the music react in some way to the visual art.

The volume, *Mormoniana*, includes the complete score of sixteen compositions, the reproductions of the artworks that each composer selected, the CD recording, the essay, and the original editioned print. Each copy is signed by the artist and numbered. *Mormoniana* to be issued in Spring, 2004.

ORIGINAL ARTWORK

Valerie Atkisson, a compelling young LDS artist whose installations and sculpture have been the increasing focus of exhibitions in New York and in the west, created original artworks for the project. Atkisson's art thematically responds to an urge to connect, typically over a broad expanse of time and cultures. Her recent, large installations of sculptures and wall paintings trace the names, stories and sites of her family history.

For example, Atkisson spent the duration of a recent exhibition in New York City's prominent gallery for emerging artists, Artists Space, in a white gallery room, scrawling onto the walls in tiny letters and numbers the names and dates of her ancestry. For an artworld public, the sight of an artist visually labeling several centuries of her own past was mesmerizing. It went beyond the scope of genealogy or artistic performance; her installation hit the viewer as a pure and strange detailing of a world freed of mortality.

Valerie Atkisson's other paintings, sculptures and installations have dealt with the ways one person's experience is inherited by another, the charted bestowal of legacy.

For *Mormoniana*, Valerie Atkisson decided to respond to the shapes and colors of musical notation throughout multiple centuries. The resulting artwork, "Notation in Time," incorporates musical marks spanning four thousand years and includes such diverse sources as illuminated manuscripts, Byzantine chant, Bach and Beethoven manuscripts, early American "Sacred Harp" notation, and contemporary computer-generated note-making instructions. To this found vocabulary of notational marks, Atkisson improvised landscapes of imagery that the musical



Notation in Time (detail) 2004, Valerie Atkisson

notes suggested to her using the methods of a visual artist to bridge the gap between sight and sound. A gouache painting followed, ultimately culminating in a finished work which was digitally scanned and then manipulated to incorporate further imagery.

Atkisson also created an untitled drawing for the volume's front cover. It is reproduced on the book-cloth in twelve-color embroidery.

The other visual artists in the volume (selected by each composer) include two from among the earliest artists in church history—British painter Alfred Lambourne (1850-1926), and William Weeks (1813-1900), the architect of the Nauvoo temple. The remaining artists are contemporary painters, photographers, and printmakers. They are: Monte Anderson, Ray Andrus, Natasha Brien, Matthew Day, Thomas Epting, David Linn, Jon Moe, Stephen Moore, Peter Livingston Myer, Sallie Clinton Poet, Walter Rane, Bruce Hixson Smith, V. Douglas Snow, Lane Twitchell, and Leslie Williams. Each of the artists, their estate representatives, or the holders of image rights has kindly granted permission for their works to be reproduced in the volume.

THE RECORDING

One of the twentieth century's most celebrated pianists, Grant Johannesen made his orchestral debut at age fifteen in his hometown of Salt Lake City, Utah. His subsequent debut recitals in New York and his soloist debut with the New York Philharmonic under George Szell elicited glowing critical appraisals, the likes of which have followed him throughout his career, now in its sixth decade. Of his playing recently, *The New York Times* has remarked: "One of the true artists at the keyboard." The *New Yorker* describes him as, "One who stands among the truly distinguished masters of his instrument."

What is less well known, even by Mormon audiences, is that Grant Johannesen has also championed music by Mormon composers throughout his career, including principal works by Arthur Shepherd, Leroy Robertson, Crawford Gates, Robert Cundick, and Helen Taylor. *Mormoniana*, recorded at the historic Assembly Hall on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, is co-produced by the Heritage Series imprint of Tantara Records. It is Johannesen's fifty-first recording.

THE ESSAY

Is there such a thing as Mormon music?

In his essay for *Mormoniana*, "Toward (and Away From) The Mormonistic," Michael Hicks tackles the question of Mormon music with uncommon zeal and unflinching candor. Michael Hicks, professor of music theory and composition at Brigham Young University, is the author of the books *Mormonism and Music: A History* (1989); *Sixties Rock: Garage, Psychedelic, and Other Satisfactions* (2000); and *Henry Cowell, Bohemian* (2002). He begins the essay directly:

Mormons think there ought to be something called "Mormon music." But read that sentence again and you see the problem: "Mormon" is a noun posing as an adjective....

Hicks then presents a fascinating overview of liturgical music history and the commonalities of Americanism and Mormonism before he explores how we got here, musically.

One idea for Mormon music's "distinguishing characteristics," this one proposed by British emigrant John Tullidge in 1858, was that Mormonism should have "a different style of music to that dolorous, whining class, so incompatible with praise from grateful hearts." This was clearly spoken by a newly converted immigrant: to those leaving the British Isles, Mormonism represented new hope, "freshness and vigour," as Tullidge put it, optimism and liberty. What he didn't acknowledge, perhaps did not even sense, was that for American-born Mormons (certainly first-generation ones), Mormonism was blanketed by a sense of tragedy. The illness, bloodshed, imprisonments, torchings, and ransacking the American Saints had endured certainly would have led to the "dolorous" (if not the "whining"). But the British emigrants, by dint of their numbers and their superior academic training transformed the implicit sorrow of at least some Mormon music into fanfaring jubilation.

At the end of the nineteenth century, LDS composer and Mormon Tabernacle Choir director Evan Stephens echoed the requirement that Mormon music be resolutely cheerful, as Hicks writes:

...The sound of Mormon music, he said, is "that which breathes optimism and not pessimism." If Mormons composed any somber music, it "must not predominate, but be used only as a means of contrast to heighten the effects of the bright." Mormon communities instinctively understood that, he noted. When music was presented to them that did not seem optimistic, he said, it should be publicly censured. (It usually is not, he added, simply because of the innate charity of those hearers who rightfully disapprove it.)

The essay continues with a chronicle of the upheavals of the twentieth century, particularly of the 1960s, their effect on American culture, music and on the Mormon church as an international entity.

In the latter third of the twentieth century, an unusually self-reflective period in Mormon history, with the church now well-established as a major religion and not just an embellishment to Protestantism, intellectuals and artists were really surveying the church as part of Mormonism, rather than vice versa. Mormonism and Mormon culture were somehow deeper and wider than the institution of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—not just rivers flowing around the church but the ocean in which the church was an island. The question became this: if there is such a thing as Mormonism, a peculiar world view, then we should ponder its salient traits. If Impressionism could yield works that were Impressionistic, shouldn't Mormonism yield works that were Mormonistic? A heavy responsibility rides on any "ism"; Mormonism seemed at last prepared for (and by some, eager for) the burden.

...What is most delightfully Mormonistic about the visual and musical art presented here [in *Mormoniana*] is that it is all over the aesthetic map. It wanders from one frontier to another, confident in a love of the senses and a belief in beauty as a corollary of truth but mistrustful of any attempt to say that it is what it should be, according to some commonly held orthodoxy of art or Mormon-ness. For these artists the aesthetic canon of Mormons is not only open, it is palpably unfinished—and must always remain so. No creeds for these musical and visual artists, who have essentially nothing in common but their membership in a church that enjoins the divinity of all and the sanctity of the senses. Their Mormon-ness as Mormons may be rooted in common convictions and moral values, along with their sense of consecrating their art to the God and church they celebrate. But their work, their business, is independent,

at last, in an individual sense. It springs (without the necessity of words) from each artist's continuing progression, not the safety of the community or the stasis of orthodoxy—that is, from the prophetic quest, not priestly guardianship. And what could be more hopeful to a culture than that?....

THE COMPOSERS

It must be noted that there are many Mormon composers writing what could be called classical music today. The Barlow Foundation, the most significant grant-giving organization for Mormon composers, lists 185 such composers living in the United States and around the world. For our purposes, we limited ourselves to sixteen of the composers who are actively working in the United States now. They are men and women whose ages, locations, and experience vary widely. Below is a much-abbreviated introduction to the composers of *Mormoniana*.

Christian Asplund is the co-founder and musical director of the Seattle Experimental Opera in addition to leading several experimental and avant-jazz ensembles. His music explores intersections between improvisation and composition, as well as new and subtle approaches to text. Formerly assistant professor at Oklahoma University, he is now associate professor of music theory, Brigham Young University.

Murray Boren is composer-in-residence at Brigham Young University. Recent compositions commissioned by the Barlow Foundation include *Liturgical Dances* for the Belarussian Wind Octet; and *Concerto for Piano and Winds* for The University of Delaware Wind Ensemble. Other recent commissions include *Verities*, an evening-length work for solo cello in sixteen movements by the Peterson Fund for cellist Julie Zumsteg. He is currently completing a Chamber Concerto for Harp for the American Harp Society, to be premiered at their 2004 National Convention in Philadelphia.



Notation in Time (detail) 2004, Valerie Atkisson

Todd Coleman studied at Eastman with Joseph Schwantner, Christopher Rouse, and Augusta Read Thomas (DMA, 2002; MM, 1999), and at BYU with Stephen Jones, Murray Boren, and David Sargent (BM, 1996). His music has been performed by the Minnesota Orchestra, Buffalo Philharmonic, and Chicago Civic Orchestra, among others. Whether writing for orchestra, film, or electro-acoustic combinations, Cole-

man strives to create music that is well crafted, rich in expressive detail, and engaging to both mind and spirit.

Robert Cundick's best-known works are the oratorio *The Redeemer* and the cantata, *The Song of Nephi*. He has also written chamber music, orchestral works and concertos, songs and arrangements of hymns. An energetic supporter of LDS composers, he is chairman of the Heritage Series of recordings on the Tantara label that has preserved and disseminated some of the Church's most treasured compositions. He is organist emeritus with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

Lisa DeSpain is a nationally recognized, award-winning jazz composer. Her accolades include an Aaron Copland Fellowship, the ASCAP/IAJE Commission Honoring Duke Ellington, a Barlow Commission, a Julius Hemphill Jazz Composers Award and a National Endowment Jazz Fellowship. Her collaborations with American dance legend, Donlin Foreman have yielded a trio of jazz-based ballets labeled "intoxicating" and "intelligent and witty," by *The New York Times*. Her current projects include a jazz symphony and a Broadway show based on the fall of Storyville.

Nathan Fifield is currently a Master's candidate in orchestral conducting as a student at the Mannes College of Music in New York City. He has conducted the Sienna Summer Festival Orchestra in concerts throughout Italy and Switzerland. This past summer he conducted the Bohuslav Martinu Philharmonic in the Czech Republic. He has been a pianist for the American Ballet Theater and plays for the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, the Mark Morris Dance Group, and the New York City Ballet. Many of his original compositions can be heard on ballet-class CDs: two produced by David Howard and two produced by Laura Hausmann.

David Fletcher studied composition with: Merrill Bradshaw, David H. Sargent, Robert Manookin (BYU), Mary Rodgers, Arthur Laurents, Stephen Sondheim, Richard Maltby, (NYU, Hammerstein Scholarship). Original songs: Sundance, Village Gate, No-Smoking Playhouse, Palssons Supper Club, Lyceum Theater, Papermill Playhouse. Television scores: A&E, History Channel, Hal Prince interview, Caroline's Comedy Hour. Theater music: St. Johns Cathedral, Handcart Ensemble. NYC sacred performances: Radio City, Madison Square Garden, Carnegie Hall. Nine CDs: with Ariel Bybee, George Dyer, Clayne Robison, Jamie Baer. Publisher: Jackman Music.

Crawford Gates's career in music includes a Ph.D. from Eastman School of Music, academic positions at Brigham Young University and Beloit College in Wisconsin, and conducting posts at many symphonic orchestras. A composer of more than 800 works, including *Promised Valley* (2,700 performances), two musical scores for *The Hill Cumorah Pageant*, *Pentameron: Concerto No. 2 for Piano and Orchestra*, *Visions of Eternity* (oratorio), sacred works and seven symphonies plus other concert works, he has received 20 awards from the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers.

Gaylen Hatton is retired from the faculty at BYU, having taught previously at the University of Utah and California State University-Sacramento. His commissions include those from the Barlow Endowment for Music Composition, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Works have been performed by the Utah Symphony, Charlotte Symphony, Bedford Springs Festival Orchestra, and dance works by Ballet West, the Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company, and the Sacramento Ballet.

Jeff Manookian, a Barlow Endowment Commission recipient, has been awarded grand prizes in the Delius Composition and Composers Guild International Composition competitions. Manookian's

music is published by Warner Brothers Publications, recorded on the Albany Records and 4-Tay labels, and has been performed and recorded by the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra, National Opera Orchestra and Chorus of Armenia, Serenade Chamber Orchestra, Pasadena Symphony, Czech Radio Symphony, Mexico State Symphony, Utah Symphony, Salt Lake Symphony, America West Symphony, among other noted ensembles and soloists.

Lansing D. McLoskey's music has been performed to critical acclaim across the U.S. and in ten other countries. He has received over three dozen awards, including the Omaha Symphony International New Music Competition, Kenneth Davenport National Orchestral Competition, Charles Ives Center Orchestral Competition, Lee Ettelson Prize, and the SCI/ASCAP National Composition Competition. Among his many grants & commissions are those from the N.E.A., American Academy of Arts & Letters, ASCAP, and the Barlow Endowment. McLoskey holds a Ph.D. from Harvard University.

Reid Nibley is warmly described as one of Utah living legends of the keyboard. Having been a soloist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at age 17, and later becoming one of the Utah Symphony's most frequent guest artists, he has also been an educator (at University of Utah, University of Michigan, and Brigham Young University) and composer of chamber works, piano solos, and religious art songs. Among his most-loved compositions is the simple children's song, "I Know My Father Lives."

Deon Nielsen Price (D.M.A. University of Southern California) serves as President of the National Association of Composers, USA and is former president of the International Alliance for Women in Music. As a recipient of many grants and commissions, including Arts International, American Composers Forum, Mu Phi Epsilon, and Barlow Endowment for her Cantatas on Christ, she performs and records with international chamber ensembles who often program her compositions. Her Sacred Choral Music Series, instrumental works, books for pianists, and Cambria recordings are listed online at www.culvercrest.com.

David H. Sargent has been a faculty composer at BYU since 1976. There, he was the Composer-in-Residence from 1995 to 1998 and then became the recipient of the Harold R. Laycock University Professorship for Music Composition (1998-2003). His music has been performed in cities throughout the United States including New York City, Rochester, Chautauqua, Buffalo, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Kansas City, Cincinnati, Columbus, Athens, Dallas, and Austins, and internationally in Germany, France, Denmark, Switzerland and Bolivia.

Rowan Taylor owns the distinction of being the most prolific composer in history, with an unfathomable 265 symphonies, 46 concertos, 2,502 songs, 250 chamber works and hundreds of other compositions to his credit, including opera, choral works, ballets and solo works. He has taught music at Los Angeles Pierce College in Woodland Hills, California for the past 39 years. He has received innumerable awards and is listed in many journals of high achievement, including the World Who's Who Hall of Fame.

Royce Campbell Twitchell studied composition at Brigham Young University, but spent forty years as a vocal coach and accompanist with American opera companies and on Broadway. She also taught at the prestigious American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York. Recently, she returned to composing, studying computer music programs at the Lighthouse in NYC, where she was named outstanding student in the music school in 2003.

THE EDITION

The format for *Mormoniana* is quarto, 9 5/8 inches by 12 1/2 inches, 128 pages. The text paper is Mohawk Superfine. The type is composed digitally and printed by University Lithoprinters, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Endpapers are Fabriano Tiziano. The volume is hand-sewn into signatures and full-bound by hand over boards in brown Asahi silk, onto which the volume's title and a twelve-color drawing are embroidered.

Valerie Atkisson has created a limited edition original print—size: 18 by 12 inches, tipped into the volume as a frontispiece—published at Coleman Studios in Orem, Utah using a iris/giclee process with pigmented inks laid onto archival paper. All books are numbered and signed by the artist.

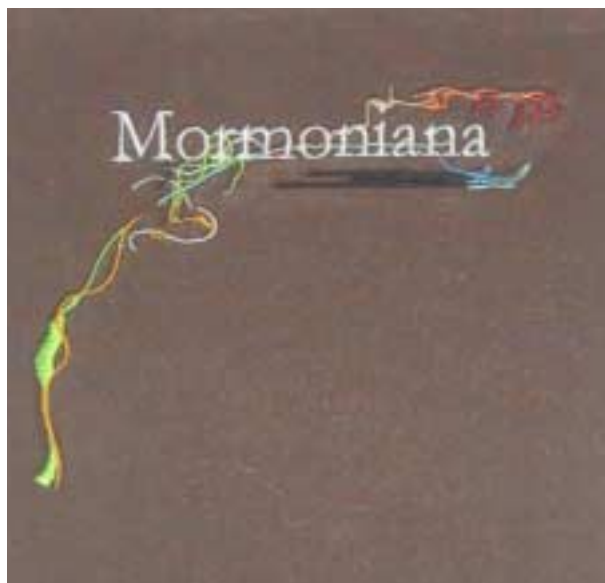
The edition is limited to 175 copies for sale, numbered 1-175; and 26 *hors de commerce* copies (for the collaborators—composers, artist, essayist and pianist) lettered A-Z. Of the 175 for sale, 25 books comprise a deluxe edition which are signed by all the the collaborators and include a duplicate, unbound print with extended margins 22 by 16, with hand-colored additions, and signed and numbered by the artist. The deluxe print is limited to an edition of 25 copies, plus three artist's proofs, and three publisher's proofs.

PRICING AND ORDERING INFORMATION

The limited edition volume (which includes the full musical score, reproductions of sixteen artworks selected by the composers, CD recording, original art and essay) is priced at \$150.

The deluxe edition (with contents identical to the above volume, autographed by all of the collaborators and with the additional original print) is priced at \$500.

Copies of the limited and deluxe editions of *Mormoniana* are available now; items will be sold and shipped in the order requests are received. To purchase *Mormoniana* or to request further information, see the enclosed order form or visit the website: www.mormoniana.com



Mormoniana (front cover), silk and embroidery, 2004

MORMON ARTISTS GROUP

Mormon Artists Group is a collective of approximately 50 LDS artists who live in New York City. We are painters, authors, composers, photographers, playwrights, filmmakers, historians and so forth. We are affiliated with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints only to the extent that our participants are members of the Church.

The Group's activities include curating and mounting exhibitions, developing collaborative projects, organizing events for charities, a lending library, a writers' group, a virtual discussion group, and fine edition publishing of books and original artworks. *Mormoniana* is our fourth publication.

www.mormonartistsgroup.com

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