MIT CONCERT CHOIR & CHAMBER CHORUS
present

Griffelkin

by Lukas Foss
Libretto by Alastair Reid

December 7, 2014 at 5 pm
Kresge Auditorium, MIT
The MIT Concert Choir and Chamber Chorus
William Cutter, music director
Lynn Torgove, stage director
Karen Harvey and David Coleman, pianists
Susan Wilson, stage manager
Kent B. Barrett, light design
Bozkurt Karasu, video design

PRESENT

Griffelkin

An Opera in Three Acts
By Lukas Foss
Libretto by Alastair Reid

ACT I – Hell’s Nursery

ACT II – A Public Square

Brief Intermission

ACT III – In a Garden or Street

Please turn off all cell phones, pagers and other electronic devices. Flash photography, audio and/or video recordings are prohibited.

Thank you.
CHARACTERS

Devil's Grandmother – Vanessa Schukis *, mezzo-soprano
Griffelkin (a ten-year-old devil) – Margaret Pavlovich, soprano
Statue – Jacquelyn De Sa, mezzo-soprano
Letterbox – Ben Horkley, tenor
First Lion – Jakob Dahl, baritone
Second Lion – Troy Welton, bass
A little boy – Caitlin Kerr, soprano
A little girl – Anne D Marinan, mezzo-soprano
Their mother – Kerry Deal *, soprano
Policeman / Oldest Devil – Christopher Follett, bass
Shopkeeper – Priyanka Satpute, mezzo-soprano
Housewife 1 – Tiffany Wong, soprano
Housewife 2 – Elisa Boles, soprano
Housewife 3 – Stephanie Marzen, soprano

*guest artist

SYNOPSIS

Griffelkin is a young devil residing in hell's nursery. On his tenth birthday, he is allowed to spend a day on earth to do as many bad deeds as he can. To aid him in the task, he is given a magic potion that will bring objects to life.

Griffelkin arrives in a city and causes havoc by bringing a statue, a mailbox, and a pair of stone lions to life. He is soon drawn to a human girl about his age. However, the girl runs home to check on her sick mother, leaving Griffelkin to search for her while being chased by the townspeople and the lions.

Later that evening, Griffelkin finds the girl and her brother mourning their mother's death. Moved by their plight, he secretly uses the last of his potion to bring the mother back to life. As the family is reunited, Griffelkin dissolves in tears.

His day on earth at an end, Griffelkin is summoned back to hell, where his outraged fellow devils place him on trial for his compassionate conduct. Griffelkin is found guilty; as punishment, he is transformed into a human boy and banished from hell.

Griffelkin then returns to the city and again finds the girl and her family, who remember the events only as a bad dream. When the family invites Griffelkin to live with them, he happily accepts.
GRIFF in HELL
Note from the director
Lynn Torgove

“It’s Griffelkin’s Birthday!” shouts the little devil Griffelkin’s Grandmother. “Quick! A Celebraaaaaaation!”

Griffelkin turns 10 years old tonight and this year the MIT Concert Choir celebrates its 25th Birthday. Officially born under the baton of John Oliver in 1989, this evening the Concert Choir joins its partner choir, the MIT Chamber Chorus, in a first ever joint concert, for one Helluva Celebration.

Griffelkin, by German born, American raised composer Lukas Foss, began its life as a fairy tale told to young Lukas by his mother. The story tells of the youngest devil in Hell’s nursery, Griffelkin, and what happens to him when he is given a day to play in The World as a present on his 10th birthday. His only instruction is to show how devilish, mean and nasty he can be during his 24 hours. But he doesn’t do many evil tricks while he is there. As a matter of fact, after being frustrated and confused, he actually commits a good deed! TERRIBLE! As Griffelkin tries to figure out the world and his place in it, he finds that love and friendship help him to grow into a devil-no-longer.

Lukas was so entranced by the story that when he was only 8 years old, he began composing an opera based on the tale. He didn’t complete the work until he was 33 years old, when in 1955, he picked up the story line for a commission from the CBC Opera Theater for a television performance. The opera, with a libretto by Alistair Reid, was directed by Kirk Browning, choreographed by Robert Joffrey, in his first ever foray into dance and song, and starred the incandescent Adelaide Bishop - a promising start! But birthdays are fraught with disappointments and challenges and as the opera matured, other than a production of the full-length opera at Tanglewood shortly after its television premiere, and a 1993 revival at City Opera, Griffelkin didn’t receive many performances.

Then in 2002, when Lukas Foss was asked what piece he would like to hear in celebration of HIS 80th birthday, he replied, “Griffelkin"! Under the supervision of Mr. Foss and with the Boston Modern Opera Project, I had the good fortune to meet Griffelkin that year and to sing in and direct a semi-staged performance of the opera at Tanglewood. It was from that performance that the only recording of the piece was made. Griffelkin had finally come of age.

And now, in a perfect confluence of birthdays, we also celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Concert Choir. Performing in Griffelkin as both the Devil Chorus in the Academy of Hell and the frightened Townspeople in the World, the Concert Choir and the Chamber Chorus bring the musical mayhem and joy of the story to life.

“Three cheers for Griffelkin!”

Three cheers for the Choirs at MIT!

PROGRAM NOTES

Although he was a German émigré, Lukas Foss was, from the start of his composing career, considered an important voice in the burgeoning world of American composition, along with Aaron Copland, Samuel Barber, Elliott Carter and Leonard Bernstein. And like Bernstein, he enthusiastically championed the works of his colleagues. But where Bernstein, in his compositions, melded jazz and theater music with a lush symphonic neo-Romanticism — or wrote theater music outright — Mr. Foss preferred to explore the byways of the avant-garde, focusing at different times on techniques from serialism and electronic music to Minimalism and improvisation. But as he moved from style to style, his voice remained distinctive, partly because he distrusted rules and never fully adhered to those of the approaches he adopted, and partly because a current of mercurial wit ran through his work.

He took particular pleasure in finding common ground between opposing languages and techniques. His String Quartet No. 3 (1975), for example, is essentially a Minimalist work, but it has a mildly atonal edge and uses dynamics more dramatically than other Minimalist works of the time.

Sometimes Mr. Foss would combine contemporary styles with those of the distant musical past. His “Baroque Variations” (1967) is a partly improvisatory, partly mischievous deconstruction of works by Handel, Scarlatti and Bach. In his “Salomon Rossi Suite” (1975) and “Renaissance Concerto” for flute and orchestra (1985), fragments of 16th-century works are refracted entertainingly through a modernist lens.

The British musicologist Wilfred Mellers once described Mr. Foss’s body of work as “a pocket history of American music during the 20th century,” Mr. Foss was aware that his detractors regarded his style-hopping as the sign of a dabbler, and that the critics complained that he tended to follow stylistic trends rather than to originate them. He rejected those criticisms and took particular pride in the fact that even listeners who followed his music closely never knew what to expect of his latest works.

“I would agree that my curiosity has led me absolutely everywhere,” he told The New York Times in 1979.

Allan Kozinn (NY Times, February 1, 2009)
Following the success of Gian Carlo Menotti’s Amahl and the Night Visitors, NBC decided to present new operas by other American composers and gave Foss a commission for the work. (Other composers involved in the project included Norman Dello Joio, Stanley Hollingsworth, and Leonard Kastle.) Griffelkin’s plot is based on a story that Foss’s mother told him when he was a child. Foss composed an early version of the opera shortly afterward.

If Mr. Foss’s musical language is straightforward and consonant enough for a 1950s television audience, allusions to Stravinsky, Mozart, Verdi and others peek through arias, vocal ensembles and instrumental interludes. Mr. Foss was an eclectic long before it became the style of the day, and while so much 1950s avant-gardism now sounds dated and quaint, “Griffelkin” sounds a bit like what composers are writing now.

The original 1955 NBC production starred Adelaide Bishop as Griffelkin and featured sets and costumes by Rouben Ter-Arutunian and choreography by Robert Joffrey. The opera’s stage premiere took place the next year at the Tanglewood Music Festival with Mildred Allen in the title role. The opera has received several revivals, most notably by the New York City Opera in 1993 and the Manhattan School of Music in 2007.

In 2002, the Boston Modern Orchestra Project presented Griffelkin at Tanglewood in a concert performance honoring Lukas Foss’s 80th birthday. The group recorded the opera shortly thereafter.

MIT CONCERT CHOIR
2014-2015

Sopranos
Daisy Tang ’17
Emily TenCate ’15
Joana Silva Carreira G
Lara Booth ’17*
Laura Treers ’18
Lillian McKinley ’15
Linda Xu ’15
Misha Jamy ’16
Sasha Miao G
Shannen Kiziliski ’15
Stacey Terman ’15

Tenors
Aaron Downward ’16
Andrew Turner G
Anthony Lu ’15
Aquil Fannis ’16
Bhaskar Balaji ’16
Evan Zayas ’15*
Gaurav Singh ’15
Justin Mazzola Paluska, Sc.D. ’13
Kevin Kaczorowski G
Mitchell Lee ’16
Nick Benson ’16
Tej Kanwar ’15

Alto
Allison Mann ’16
Anni Zhang ’17
Cherry Gao G
Erlin Main ’16
Lily Chen ’16
Lucy Zhang ’16
Marianne Gosciniak ’15
Marvel Onga Nana ’18
Sarah Wharton ’17*

Basses
Adam Hood ’15
Alex Danielsen ’16
Alex Ji G
Alex Tinguey G
Anders Kaseorg ’08/G
Anderson Wang ’16
Benjamin Gunby ’15*
Eric Chan
Gabriel Teixeira ’18
Isaac Garza ’17
Israel Ridgley ’17
Jonathan Birjiniuk ’15
Jose Salazar ’17
Kevin Zhou ’17
Rashed Al-Rashed ’15
Xavier Soriano ’15

*denotes the section leader

MIT CHAMBER CHORUS
2014-2015

Tej Kanwar ’15
Margaret Pavlovich ’16
Jacqui De Sa ’16
Tiffany Wong ’16
Chelsea Levy ’16
Troy Welton ’15
Chris Kevin Ong ’16
Dominique Hoskin ’15
Jakob Dahl ’15
Priyanka Satpute ’17
Caitlin Kerr ’15
Stephanie Marzen ’15
Elisa Boles ’18
Mitchell Lee ’16
Nicholas Garcia ’17
Jeongwan Haah Postdoc
Anne Marinan G
Ben Horkley G
Caralyn Cutlip ’18
Bhaskar Balaji ’16
He also prepared backup singers for a concert with James Taylor at Tanglewood in August 2009 and August 2011. In 2010, Cutter prepared the women of the Tanglewood Festival Chorus for a performance of Holst's "The Planets" at Tanglewood under the baton of David Zinman. For the 2012-2013 season, Cutter was rehearsal conductor for the Tanglewood Festival Chorus in performances of Poulenc's "Stabat Mater", Britten's "War Requiem", Verdi's "Requiem" and Haydn's "Mass in Time of War", all with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Guest conducting appearances include the New England Conservatory Chamber Singers (2007), Chorus Pro Musica in Boston (2010), chorus master for the Montreal Symphony Chorus preparing Haydn's "Creation" for Maestro Kent Nagano (2010) and the Boston Choral Ensemble where he conducted a program entitled "Bang", music for percussion and chorus, featuring works by Dominick Argento, Leonard Bernstein, Peter Klatzow, and Timothy Takach (2011). His M.I.T. Chamber Chorus performed with the Kronos String Quartet as well as the Bang on a Can All-Stars in a new version of Brian Eno's "Music for Airports". In March of 2012, Cutter served as chorus master for a performance of Andrew Imbrie's "Songs of Then and Now" with the College New Music Ensemble and women from the MIT Chamber Chorus. Dr. Cutter has also served on the faculty of the North Carolina Summer Institute of Choral Art and is in demand as a guest conductor and adjudicator throughout the United States and Canada. In 2002, he was asked to serve as a choral consultant for the Boston Symphony's educational outreach program. With degrees in composition, Cutter maintains an active career as a composer with recent performances by the The Chatham Chorale, the Illinois State University School of Music Orchestra, Cantata Singers, PALS Children's Chorus, Monmouth Civic Chorus, the New Jersey Gay Men's Chorus, the Boston Pops, the New World Chorale in Boston, Melodious Accord, New York City, and Opera Omaha. His music is published by E.C. Schirmer, Boston; Lawson and Gould, New York; Alfred Educational Publishers, Los Angeles; Roger Dean Publishers, Wisconsin; Shawnee Press; Pennsylvania; and Warner/Chappell of Ontario, Canada. His primary composition teachers included Pulitzer Prize winning composers David del Tredici and Bernard Rands.

Dr. William Cutter, William Cutter is Director of Choral Programs at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he is conductor of the M.I.T. Concert Choir and Chamber Chorus. A member of the conducting and theory faculty and former Director of Choral Studies at the Boston Conservatory, he currently teaches graduate conducting, harmony and ear training, and is Artistic Director of the Boston Conservatory Summer Vocal/Choral Intensive. He has also held academic posts at the Boston University School for the Arts, the University of Lowell and the Walnut Hill School for the Arts. He served as music director and conductor of the Brookline Chorus, an auditioned community chorus of eighty voices, for five seasons and served as Chorus Master and Associate Conductor of the Boston Lyric Opera Company from 2002-2007. For four summers he was conductor of the Boston University Young Artists Chorus of the Tanglewood Institute, and was music director and conductor of the Opera Laboratory Theater Company, as well as founder and music director of the vocal chamber ensemble CANTO which specialized in contemporary choral music. As assistant to Maestro John Oliver for the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, he has prepared choruses for John Williams and Keith Lockhart and the Boston Pops.

In August 2002, Cutter prepared the Tanglewood Festival Chorus for their performance of Beethoven's Symphony #9 under the baton of Sir Roger Norrington. During the summer of 2009, Cutter was chorus master for "Red Sox Album" CD recorded by the Boston Pops.
Lynn Torgove, (stage director) is well known to Boston audiences as a singer and director. Over the last several years, she has enjoyed a special relationship with MIT. In 2013, she directed 'Dido and Aeneas' and in 2010, she directed Amahl and the Night Visitors for MIT’s Chamber Chorus and she is very excited to be back working with both the Chamber Choir AND the Concert Choir for a first ever operatic collaboration! Ms. Torgove has a fondness for Lukas Foss' Griffelkin; she was the stage director for the Boston Modern Orchestra Project's semi-staged performance of Griffelkin, from which the only recording of the opera was made. Lukas Foss was in attendance for the rehearsals, performances and recording. It is with great joy that Ms. Torgove is once again involved with bringing this wonderful piece to life at MIT. Ms. Torgove has worked extensively both as a director and a mezzo-soprano soloist. In recent seasons, she has directed the stage movement and has sung the role of the ‘Tango Singer’ in John Harbison’s The Great Gatsby for Emmanuel Music both at Jordan Hall and Tanglewood. This past January, she directed and sang the role of ‘Desiree Armfeldt’ in Stephen Sondheim’s A Little Night Music, also with Emmanuel Music. With the Cantata Singers, she has directed Stravinsky’s The Rake’s Progress, Britten’s The Little Sweep, Hans Krása’s opera Brundibár, A Kurt Weill Cabaret, and Britten’s Noye’s Fludde. Through her work with both Emmanuel Music and the Cantata Singers and other Boston musical organizations, Ms. Torgove has had a long association with the music of John Harbison, having directed Mr. Harbison’s opera, Full Moon in March for the Boston Modern Orchestra Project. As the Alto Soloist, she has also sung and recorded Mr. Harbison's Four Psalms with the Cantata Singers and, this past season, she sang the role of the Disciple in the world premiere of the Cantata Singers’ and Emmanuel Music’s joint commission of Mr. Harbison's Supper at Emmaus. This coming Spring, on April 25th, Ms. Torgove will be performing a full recital of Mr. Harbison's songs for mezzo soprano, piano and ensemble, The Songs of John Harbison, with readings by Lloyd Schwartz at the Longy School in Cambridge. Ms. Torgove has also had the privilege of directing another MIT composer's opera, The Bridal Night, by Edward Cohen, with Collage New Music. Ms. Torgove is a regular soloist with the Cantata Singers and other Boston area ensembles. Last year during the Cantata Singer's 50th Anniversary season, she sang alto solos in Mendelssohn's Elijah, Bach Cantata BWV 72 and in the world premiere of Betty Olvero's Lo Ira (I Will Not Fear). In recent seasons she has sung the role of 'Commeres' in the performance of Virgil Thomson's Fours Saints in Three Acts and the role of the 'She-Ancent' in Tippett's Midsummer Marriage, both with the Boston Modern Opera Project. Ms. Torgove has also sung the role of 'The Sorceress' in Aston Magna's 40th Anniversary Concert of Purcell's Dido and Aeneas in Boston and at Tanglewood and has performed the role of the 'Witch of Endor' and directed a semi-staged performance of Honegger's King David, with the Zamir Chorale of Boston. She has appeared as a soloist with Opera Boston, Boston Camerata, St. Louis Symphony, Portland Symphony, and Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra. She has been on the faculties of the Opera Institute at Boston University, New England Conservatory, Boston Conservatory Vocal Choral Intensive and the Walnut Hill School for the Arts. Currently, she teaches at the Longy School of Music and Hebrew College, where she is the Head of Vocal Arts. Ms. Torgove recently received her Masters in Jewish Studies and was ordained as a Cantor in June 2012 from Hebrew College in Newton, Massachusetts.

Vanessa Schukis, (Grandmother) Ms. Schukis has had a multi-faceted career as a character mezzo, actress, stage director, choreographer, vocal coach, educator and administrator. She has sung a wide variety of operatic, oratorio and Broadway repertoire to great critical acclaim and has performed roles with the Boston National Company of Nunsense starring Pat Carroll and Alice Ghostley, Boston Lyric Opera, Utah Festival Opera, Opera Providence, New England Light Opera, Intermezzo Chamber Opera, Raylynmoor Opera, Wheelock Family Theater; Lyric Stage Company of Boston; New Opera and Musical Theater Initiative, Opera New England, Longwood Opera Company, Northeastern Repertory Theater, Boston Public Theater, Stoneham Theater, Old North Chamber Orchestra, Weymouth Fine Arts Chorale, Rivers Symphony Orchestra and Newton Symphony. Ms. Schukis has been a soloist/section leader for the historic Old North Church, Boston, Massachusetts for 26 years and a soloist/cantor for 15 years at St. Paul Church in Wellesley, Massachusetts and continues to perform in theater, opera and concert engagements throughout the United States. Special performances that deserve mentioning are: National Anthem and “God Bless America” at a Boston Red Sox Game at Fenway, National Anthem on the U.S.S. Constitution (Old Ironsides) turn around, National Anthem at New England Dragway, Epping, NH and the National Anthem at Lebanon Valley Speedway, MA and a televised performance with The Mormon Tabernacle Choir, Salt Lake City, UT. In addition to being a performer, Vanessa is an award winning teacher with over thirty years experience in performing arts education focusing on students with learning disabilities and special needs. Recently Ms. Schukis was the recipient of the MacDill Prize for excellence in teaching. Currently Vanessa teaches music at The Murphy School in Dorchester, MA and Harvard Kent School in Charlestown, MA through the outreach program of The Community Music Center of Boston. Recently, Miss Schukis has published two children's books ("Miss Sugar" and "Mr. Dimes") and won 2013 Children's Book of the Year for her book "Mr. Dimes". Both books are available for purchase @ www.bookemon.com Vanessa has been a member of the guest faculty at New England Conservatory, Boston, MA and visiting faculty at Longy School of Music Cambridge, MA.

Kerry Deal, (Mother) Full lyric soprano Ms. Deal is a versatile performer in the greater Boston area. As a frequent interpreter of oratorio, she has been especially heard in the sacred works of Mozart, including his Requiem, Coronation Mass, Solemn Vespers, and the Grand Mass in C Minor, but her performances also encompass a variety of other sacred works, ranging from baroque oratorio such as Handel's Messiah, to the more romantic religious works of Brahms, Fauré and Gounod. Also a champion of new music, Ms. Deal often features 20th and 21st century music in recital and has premiered and recorded new works with St. Cecilia Music, and has sung the world premier of artsong by American composer Gloria Coates at Rubin Stein Hall in the Munich Steinway Haus. As a young artist at Opera in the Ozarks, Ms. Deal sang the role of Mimi in La Bohème. More locally, she has sung with Longwood Opera, Opera Aperta, and with New York Opera Forum as Nedda in I Pagliacci. Ms. Deal earned her BA magna cum laude in languages and literature at the College of William and Mary in Virginia before pursuing her graduate studies in music, with a MM in Opera Performance from the Boston Conservatory and a DMA in Voice Performance from Boston University. Ms. Deal has been a member of the voice faculty at the Boston Conservatory for the past twelve years, where she teaches a combined studio of music theater and vocal performance majors. In addition to her teaching responsibilities at Boston Conservatory, she has been featured in several faculty recital series and as a guest soloist in both Haydn's The Creation and Mozart's Regina Coeli.
Jacquelyn De Sa, (Statue) is a junior studying Electrical Engineering & Computer Science here at MIT. She has been a member of the MIT Chamber Chorus since freshman year, singing the role of Carmen in their Opera Scenes Concert Fall 2012 and the Mezzosoprano soloist in the MIT Concert Choir's Beethoven's Mass in C Fall 2013. She is an Emerson Vocal Scholar studying under the direction of Kerry Deal and hopes to continue her study of music throughout her time at MIT and beyond.

Ben Horkley, (Letterbox) is an MEng student in course 6, and received a Bachelor's degree in course 6 and 8 last year, with a minor in music. He previously played the Sailor in the Chamber Chorus production of Dido and Aeneas last year, and studies with Sarah Shectman. He also sings with the MIT Asymptotes, MIT's newest a cappella group.

Jakob Dahl, (Lion I) Jakob is a senior in chemistry with a minor in music. He has performed in the chamber chorus at MIT since his sophomore year. Griffelkin is the third opera he is performing in and it has definitely been very fun to growl at the audience.

Troy Welton, (Lion II) Troy is a senior in Courses 8 and 18 (Physics and Math) and also has a minor in music. Woohoo! He enjoys a variety of musical approaches and has performed with some subset of the Chamber Chorus and Concert Choir for all his years at MIT. An opera is a new and exciting experience for him.

Caitlin Kerr, (Little Boy) Caitlin is a senior studying aerospace engineering with a minor in music. A trained soprano, this is her third year in Chamber Choir, and she is also the musical director for MIT's Christian a cappella group, The Cross Products. She would like to thank Bill, Lynn, Karen, and the rest of the cast and crew for fabricating such a fantastic production of Griffelkin!

Anne Marinan, (Little Girl) is a PhD student in AeroAstro. She completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Michigan where she sang with the University Choir and the Women's Glee Club. This is her fourth semester and second opera with the MIT Chamber Chorus. She is an Emerson Voice Scholar and studies with Kerry Deal.

Christopher Follett, (Policeman & Oldest Devil) Christopher was an undergraduate, graduate student, and now postdoc here at MIT. After a many year hiatus in which he tried musical theater, Chris is happy to be back singing with the Chamber Chorus.

Priyanka Satpute, (Shopkeeper) Priyanka has been a member of the Chamber chorus for two semesters and is also heavily involved in music and theatre arts at MIT as an active member of Syncopean, the Shakespeare Ensemble, the Gilbert and Sullivan Players, and the Musical Theatre Guild. She would like to thank the wonderful cast and crew for this amazing experience! Unfortunately she did not dye her hair for this event. Enjoy the show!

Tiffany Wong, (Housewife 1) Tiffany is currently a junior in computer science and studies voice with Kerry Deal as part of the Emerson program. She has been in Chamber Chorus since her freshman year and has especially loved singing in operas or in the opera scene showcases that Chamber Chorus puts on. Recent roles with Chamber Chorus have included Dido in Dido and Aeneas, and the title role in a scene from Susannah.

Elisa Boles, (Housewife 2) Elisabeth is a freshman and enjoying her first semester in Chamber Chours.

Stephanie Marzen, (Housewife 3) is a senior majoring in materials science and engineering. Besides music and running, she also loves to eat food.
THANK YOU
We would like to thank all who have helped make this performance possible.
The Concert Choir & Chamber Chorus section leaders and officers
The Concerts Office
Kalina Schloneger
Jillian Scales
MIT Theater Arts
Sara Brown
Nancy Flessas
MIT Musical Theatre Guild
Nancy Burdine
Diane Sokal
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The MIT Shakespeare Ensemble
MIT Campus Activities Complex
MIT Environment Health & Safety
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