

FOR RELEASE

The Music Department of the University of Wisconsin-Parkside presents the UW-Parkside Choirs and the Milwaukee High School of the Arts Concert Chorale in two performances of the *Requiem Mass* by Jose Mauricio Nuñez-Garcia on Friday, November 4 and Saturday, November 5. Both performances start at 7:30 pm and will take place in Bedford Hall in the Rita Tallent Picken Regional Center for Arts and Humanities on the UW-Parkside campus. The choirs, soloists, and accompanying orchestra will be conducted by James Benjamin Kinchen, Jr., UW-Parkside Director of Choral Activities. The Milwaukee High School of the Arts Concert Chorale, which enjoys a regional and national reputation for excellence, is under the direction of Raymond Roberts, who is in his 26th year on the faculty of the celebrated MPS arts magnet school.

These performances mark the inauguration of the university's "Experiencing Choral Treasures" series, which brings some of the elite high school choral groups from the region to the UW-Parkside campus to collaborate with the university's choirs in singing significant choral orchestral works.

This *Requiem* setting was composed in 1816 by Nuñez-Garcia (1767-1830), an Afro-Brazilian composer who wrote in the style of European Classical composers, such as Haydn and Mozart. This is especially remarkable because Nuñez-Garcia, who never left the continent of South America, was the child of two mixed blood parents, themselves free, but the product of slavery. Nuñez-Garcia began the study of music at an early age. As a young boy he was noted for his beautiful singing voice and his remarkable memory for music. In 1792, he was ordained a priest, and Nuñez-Garcia had been appointed to head music at the Royal Chapel by the time that the Portuguese crown fled French invasion in 1808 and sought exile in Brazil, which was a colony of Portugal. It is thought that the deaths of the Portuguese Queen Maria and his own mother, both on the same day in 1816, influenced Nuñez-Garcia to write this *Requiem* setting, which is considered one of his best works. The following year he composed Brazil's first opera.

The *Requiem* setting is about 40 minutes long and is scored for four-part choir of mixed voices and the typical Classical orchestra, which consists of strings, double winds, and timpani. The work also calls for soloists who perform as an ensemble, as well as singing short individual arias. The text is the *Missa Pro Defunctis*, the traditional Roman Catholic Mass for the Repose of the Dead. This liturgy omits the "Gloria in Excelsis" and "Credo in Unum Deum," but includes the deliberate and mournful "Requiem Aeterna" and the fiery "Dies Irae." While close examination of Nuñez-Garcia's work readily reveal its individuality and uniqueness, the composer's debt to Mozart, one of Classicism's undisputed masters is also obvious.

Adult tickets are \$10 and student admission \$5. For further information call the box office at 262-595-2564.