



The Voice of Orpheus

The Newsletter of Sons of Orpheus – the Male Choir of Tucson

Grayson Hirst, Founder/Artistic Director

VOLUME 15 ISSUE 1 - WINTER 2013



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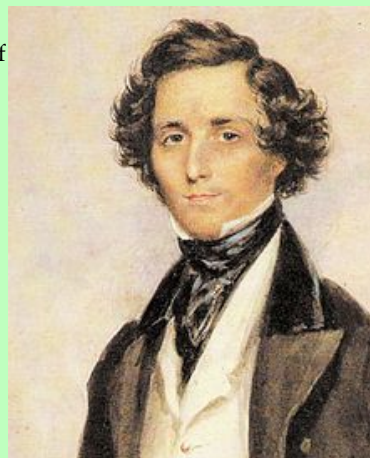
A Little Mendelssohn for Christmas

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847) is among the choir’s favorite composers, so it was a thrill to visit his home in Leipzig during our concert tour of Germany and the Czech Republic in the summer of 2008.

Chuck Dickson included the following in his account of the trip for our newsletter:

Next morning, wearing our blue shirts with the Orpheus logo, we toured Mendelssohnhaus at Goldschmidtstrasse 12, the last residence of Felix Mendelssohn, who lived there on the second floor with his family from 1845 until his death late in 1847. In his parlor, which continues to be used for regular performances, we sang several of Mendelssohn’s works.

It was in that very parlor that Mendelssohn worked on a masterpiece left unfinished at his death—the oratorio *Christus*. One of our Christmas numbers comes from a portion of the text (compiled by C. K. J. von Bunsen from



FELIX MENDELSSOHN

various biblical passages) that first announces the birth of Christ in a brief tenor recitative and then continues as the chorus begins “*Es wird ein stern aus Jacob aufgehen, und ein scepter aus Israel kommen,*” (There shall a star arise from Jacob, and a scepter come forth from Israel). The piece opens serenely, and then bursts into dramatic choral splendor as the text continues “*der wird zerschmettern Fürsten und Städte.*” (and dash to pieces princes and nations.)

The sublime conclusion returns to tranquility with a passage that begins “*Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern!*” (How lovely shines the morning star.) It’s Mendelssohn at his best, and it’s just the thing for a male choir.

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Our Holiday Concert Schedule

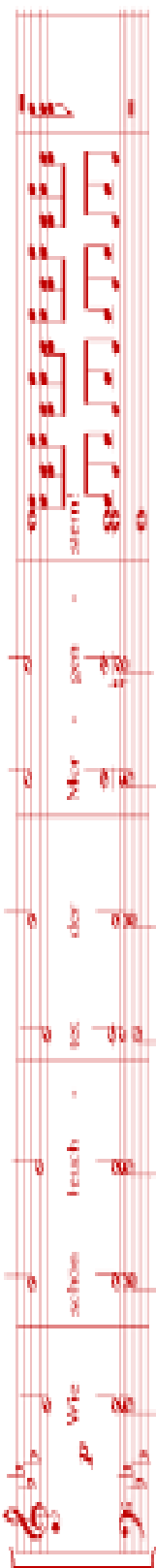


Wednesday, December 4, 7:00 P.M. Sixteenth Annual Holiday Benefit Concert for the Community Food Bank, with elementary students from the Arizona School for the Deaf and the Blind, *Nichole Skaggs, violin, Lindsey McHugh, soprano, and Mariachi Tapatio.* Berger Center for the Performing Arts, ASDB campus, 1200 W. Speedway, Tucson AZ.

Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday, December 10–12, 6:00 P.M. and 8 P.M. Sixteenth annual “Christmas at San Xavier” in collaboration with the Tucson Arizona Boys Chorus at Mission San Xavier del Bac, 1950 W. San Xavier Road. The concert benefits the restoration and preservation of Mission San Xavier. Sponsored by *Patronato San Xavier.* Contact Vern Lamplot, 520-407-6130, for ticket information.

Sunday, December 15, 3:00 P.M. Holiday Concert with *the Tucson Arizona Boys Chorus, Lindsey McHugh, soprano, and violinist Nicole Skaggs* at the Coolidge Performing Arts Center, 684 W. Northern Ave. Coolidge, AZ 85128. Ticket Information (520) 320-8132.

Thursday, December 19, 7:00 P.M. Green Valley Performing Arts Center, 1250 W. Continental Road, Green Valley AZ. Call 520 393-5822 for more information.





On the Lighter Side

Jim Filipek, our most prolific arranger, has done up two catchy, wintry tunes for the secular part of our holiday concerts: Frank Loesser's *Baby, It's Cold Outside* and Irving Berlin's *I've Got My Love to Keep Me Warm*. *Baby, It's Cold Outside* is written as a duet—one role marked by Loesser as Mouse, and the other as Wolf. (Mouse: "I really must go." Wolf: "But baby, it's cold outside.") Soprano Leslie McHugh will sing Mouse; the choir will be at its most lupine in the role of Wolf.

Frank Loesser and his wife, Lynn Garland, sang this song at parties for years before Loesser sold it to MGM for the 1948 movie *Neptune's Daughter*. In this film the song is sung twice, first with Esther Williams as Mouse and Ricardo Montalban as Wolf. The second time through, the tables are turned: Wolf sung by Betty Garrett and Mouse by Red Skelton.

The song has been recorded dozens of times by other famous couples, the oddest being Rudolf Nuryev as Mouse and Miss Piggy as Wolf.

I've Got My Love to Keep Me Warm is a song from Twentieth Century Fox's 1937 movie *On the Avenue*. It's written as a duet sung by Alice Faye and Dick Powell before Powell morphed into a film noir hero. Powell's transformation from sweetness to toughness in film roles rivals Frank Sinatra's. (Think of the suddenness of Sinatra's Private Angelo Maggio in *From Here to Eternity*.) It's a shock to hear Powell as a crooner in films like *On the Avenue* and *42nd Street* if one has only known him as such hard-bitten types as Raymond Chandler's private eye, Philip Marlow. We'll sing the song as close to Powell's sweet side as we can.

Festival of Lights

We have always included a couple of Chanukah songs in our holiday concerts, so we have learned to sing in Yiddish and Hebrew. This year we are singing "Ocho Kandelikas," written in a language called Ladino, originally a form of Judeo-Spanish used only for translating Hebrew sacred texts.

Ladino is to Sephardic Jews (whose traditions derive from Spain, Portugal, North Africa, and the Middle East) what Yiddish is to Ashkenazic Jews (whose traditions derive from Germany, France, and Eastern Europe.) The two traditions began to diverge more than a thousand years ago; the expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492 accelerated the split and quickened the archaic form of Ladino into a living language.

Spanish speakers who hear us singing "Ocho Kandelikas" may think our pronunciation is pretty bad, but Ladino exhibits differences from Spanish. For example, the letter "s" is pronounced as a "z" in the middle or at the end of words. You'll hear us singing kandelikas (candles) as kandelikaz; los, as loz; tres, as trez; muchos as muchoz.

"Ocho Kandelikas" also illustrates a gustatory difference between the two customs: latkes are the traditional food for Ashkenazim at Chanukah; Sephardic Jews eat sweets (pastalikos) made from honey and almonds, and for them Chanukah is a time not only to celebrate the Festival of Lights but for families to gather so grown-ups can scrutinize the youngsters and engage in some matchmaking. In the right circumstances, "Ocho Kandelikas" could start a different kind of flame!



The Younger Set

Three youngsters will perform with Orpheus this holiday season. The youngest is Nicholas Scheier, a 7th grader at Magee Middle School. He also takes music, acting, and dance classes with ACT 1 Academy and finds time for private guitar and voice lessons. We call him Nikolai because he has the solo in *Da ispravitsya molitva*

(Let My Prayer Arise) by the Russian composer Pavel Chesnokov. At a recent Benjamin Britten/Samuel Barber festival, Nicholas and our director, Grayson Hirst, sang Britten's *Canticle II*, the story of Abraham and Isaac.

We will feature another Nick of sorts, Nicole Skaggs, our superb violinist. She's Niki to us, a student at Canyon Del Oro High School. Niki has

appeared with us numerous times in the past three years, and she and her father traveled with us to Italy in the summer of 2012. She has received many honors in her young life, the most recent coming when she was named Concert Master of the Tucson Youth Philharmonia.

The only adult in this group is Lindsey McHugh, and she just barely qualifies. Lindsey is a student in the University of

Arizona's School of Music. She first appeared with Orpheus at our ASDB/Food Bank Holiday Concert two years ago, an especially poignant performance because Lindsey, who is blind, was a student at ASDB in her early years. She has sung with us in nearly every concert since that occasion. She's a brilliant soprano who recently participated in the President's Concert competition at UofA.

Holiday Benefit Concert

Almost from the choir's inception (this is our 23rd year) we have supported the Community Food Bank. We solicit funds through our newsletter, from friends and family and neighbors, from our own wallets and easy chairs, but most significantly from our annual Holiday concert at the Berger Performing Arts Center on the campus of the Arizona School for the Deaf and the Blind. (See schedule on page 1.)

We'll feature Lindsey McHugh, our soprano soloist; and Nicole Skaggs, our violinist. The ASDB kids will charm you as always, and Mariachi Tapatio will blow you away! It's just the jolliest way to start the season.

Although your ticket is just a can of food at the door, we remind you that the CFB can purchase about \$9 worth of food for every dollar they receive. A representative of the CFB will be there to take your contribution in whatever form you choose to give it.

Jim Hogan, who has rallied our food bank support for the past six years, recently received a full accounting from Jack Parris, public relations manager of the CFB. We feel a sense of satisfaction at the end of each campaign, but we were amazed to see the figures toted up from 2007 - 2012: \$49,260.

In addition to his leadership in our food bank fundraising, Jim has meant much to us in other ways. In fact, he has been the very spirit of the Sons of Orpheus. He has served on our Executive Committee, and he has been our unofficial trail boss, the drover who has herded us onto the risers, moved us to where he wants us to stand, told us how to get to our spots when the curtain goes up and how to get down again and off the stage without looking like somebody in the audience has just yelled "Fire!"

Jim has that easy presence and natural grace that marks him for the spotlight. He often speaks for the choir from the stage, and as one of our best singers, Jim been featured in pieces ranging from Nicoló Puccini's "Nessun Dorma" to George Dunning's "The 3:10 to Yuma,"

This year Jim is going to enjoy a little more freedom from his professional life, and he is going to dial back his time with Orpheus. He and his wife Esther have a new grandchild here in Tucson and a home away from home on the island of St. Lucia where Esther's family lives. Happy days for Jim and Esther. We wish them the best.



Jim Hogan in Front of Some Dudes



A Red, White and Blue Weekend

On Saturday, November 9th, we enjoyed our annual participation in the Veterans Day Ceremonies at the VA Hospital. To guarantee an appreciative audience, we brought along our own veterans, some of whom can still fit into their uniforms. (A faint odor of mothballs drifted from the stage.)

Darrell Bishop, Army	Mike Bradley, Marines	Terry DeGrenier, Army	Chuck Dickson, Army Reserve
John Evans, Army	Cam Fordyce, Army	Eugene Friesen, Army	Frank Hartline, Army
Bob Kurtz, Army	George Ledbetter, Navy	Tom McGorray, Navy	Jim Naughton, Air Force Nat'l Guard
Doug Nordell, Navy	Larry Ross, Army	Larry Sayre, Air Force	Jim Tomlinson, Army
Jerry Wozniak, Marines	Jim Filipek, Army, Air Force Nat'l Guard, Army Nat'l Guard		

One of the songs we sang was *Salute to the Armed Forces*, a medley of tunes associated with each of the military branches. It's a stirring piece, and every man listed above sang with special fervor the portion that represented his service to the nation:

"Over hill, over dale, we will hit the dusty trail as the Army goes rolling along..." "Anchors aweigh, my boys, anchors aweigh..." "We're always ready for the call, we place our trust in Thee..." "Off we go into the wild blue yonder, flying high into the sun..." "From the halls of Montezuma, to the shores of Tripoli..."

Sunday afternoon we sang a program of patriotic and Christmas selections at Tucson Estates. After the National Anthem the veterans in the audience were asked to stand and be recognized. Among those who stood was Jim Campbell, a founding member of Sons of Orpheus. Jim and family members had come from his home in Tucson for the concert. We wrote about Jim in the April, 2004 edition of our newsletter:

AKA Wildcat Kelly for his solo role in our rendition of "Don't Fence Me In," Jim brings audiences to tears when he sings of Kelly "a settin' by the sheriff's side" pleading: "Oh, give me land, lots o' land under starry skies above." Jim is one of the founding members of Orpheus. Thirteen years ago when Grayson Hirst was stealing singers out of church choirs to put his dream together, Jim was the fourth man to volunteer. He is the only one of the original group of eighteen still singing with the choir. He has seen the number of singers rise into the 50s, and the number of concerts rise from one the first year, to two the second, to more than two dozen in the choir's thirteenth year.

After high school in Altoona, Pennsylvania, Jim passed up a scholarship that wouldn't have been quite enough to keep him alive through college. After a year shoveling coal on the railroad, he joined the Army Air Corps to take advantage of the GI Bill and to fulfill an interest that had begun when he was a kid who liked to ride his bike out to see the mail plane land. In 1942 Jim was 20 years old and training as a B-24 pilot. Two years later he was flying combat missions out of Italy. His first mission was over Sopron, Hungary, one of the concert stops on our tour of Germany, Austria, and Hungary in 2000. For Jim this tour meant something quite different from what it meant to the rest of us. As the choir was traveling through an Austrian town, Jim remarked that his navigator had been killed on a mission over the rail yards there. Jim's last mission, April 25th of 1945, was also a harrowing one: he lost two engines and landed a plane with a 128 extra holes in it.

His military career over, Jim spent several months as a ranch hand in Musselshell, Montana. After that he signed up for the GI Bill (he spent all but 28 cents of it) and began his education in architecture at Carnegie Tech in Pittsburgh. That's where he met Gerri, the love of his life. She was training for a career in dietetics, a course of study that came in handy when she was feeding their eight children. From 1955 to 1987 Jim practiced in Sewickley, Pennsylvania. He won some awards from the American Institute of Architecture, but his favorite project, the one he's proudest of, is the straw bale home he designed and built for his family. He added a large greenhouse where he enjoys his flowers and studies the effects of various lighting on them.

Jim says, "Gerri gets most of the credit for any claim to fame I might have had." But it's Orpheus that lets him be Wildcat Kelly.

It's been a few years since Jim has sung with us, but any time he wants to revive Wildcat Kelly, we'll put the song back into our repertoire.



Jim Campbell, the last of the first



Our Winter Appeal

Jeepers Creepers," you might say. "Didn't we get a request from these guys just a couple of months ago?" Yes, you did. It was from Richard Miller, the chairman of our Executive Committee. We have received generous responses to Richard's letter, but we worry that some of our patrons missed out, either because they were waiting for our winter newsletter or because they wondered if the United States of America would still be in existence come the winter solstice. We seem to be past that at this writing. We're safe, at least for a while.

We suggest three ways to use the enclosed remittance envelope:

1. You can contribute to the general fund which pays everybody but the piper: our director and our accompanist, our female soloists and our instrumentalists. From the general fund we pay rent for rehearsal spaces and some concert venues, for sheet music and for various permissions and fees. And we put money by for big ticket items like impending (as in doom) replacements for the creaky old risers we stand on to sing to you. The men, of course, sing for the fun of it!

If you so choose, please write "general fund" on the memo line of your check.

2. You can use us as a conduit to the Community Food Bank. This is helpful to us as well as to the food bank, for not only do we enjoy assisting them, our effort reminds our granting agencies that we are a vital part of this community. **Make your check payable to the Community Food Bank.**

3. Our CDs make great Christmas gifts. See our CD lineup on page 6, make your choice or choices, and let us know your pleasure. You'll find details in the remittance envelope. Write "CDs" on the memo line of your check.

Men At Song -Grayson Hirst

Why do people come together to sing? What, if anything, is different about singing in a male voice choir? Well, to begin, while the world is out there negotiating costs, benefits, and rewards, spending hours rather than redeeming them, here we are in our rarefied choir world negotiating spirited interpretations and reveling in a place where we are rewarded with connections, harmonies. Our reward is the celebration of what it means to do something worth

doing just for the sheer love of doing it.

Beyond a feeling of brotherhood, beyond the joyful friendships, I believe reward for us lies in the pure love of singing itself. When we sing together, we unleash something inside ourselves that might otherwise be missing in our daily lives. We are able to give voice to what is otherwise emotionally inexpressible. There's no denying it, when the tussling beefiness of a big male voice choir pours into us, we feel exuberant, enhanced by the soul-mix. We're enlarged, recharged. Call it a spiritual ecstasy; call it gratitude for life's mysterious

unearned gifts.

Editor's note:

By the time you read this, our winter semester will be coming to a close. We hope you'll be there for our final exams (See our schedule on page 1)!

Rehearsals for the spring season begin soon, and we welcome new singers. Call Grayson Hirst at 621-1649, or drop by the Tucson Arizona Boys Chorus building, 5770 E. Pima St. at 7:00 p.m., January 8th, We'll have a book of sheet music for you.

OUR CHOIR

First Tenors:

Brandon Dale
Eugene Friesen
John Kamper
Tom McGorray
Bruce Mortensen
James Naughton
Bryce Rodriguez
Jim Tomlinson
Jerry Villano
Dick Wroldsen

Second Tenors:

Darrell Bishop
Dave Burns
Darwin Hall
Jim Hogan
Van Honeman
Bob Kurtz
Richard Miller
Mike Negrete
Doug Nordell
Ken Rosenblatt
Larry Ross
Larry Sayre

Baritones:

Mike Bradley
Terry DeGrenier
Chuck Dickson
John Evans
Jim Filipek
Cameron Fordyce
Michael Fraser
Frank Hartline
Jim Kitchak
Ned Mackey
Rick Sack
Walter Thomas
Jerome Wozniak

Basses:

Matthew Boberg
Jeffrey Handt
Tom Kane
George Ledbetter
Gary Smyth
Eugene Stevick
Thomas Wentzel
Woon-Yin Wong

Profiling Jim Naughton



JOVIAL JIM, HIMSELF

Jim was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, but having lived in Tucson since 1951, he can call himself a native. He sang in school and church choirs growing up, and later got into the folk music craze.

Before his freshman year in high school, Jim decided to prepare for a vocation in the Roman Catholic priesthood. He kept up his interest in music during his seminary days at Our Lady Queen of Angles

in Los Angeles where he became a member of the "Schola Cantorum," a quintet that sang for special archdiocesan occasions and services.

One winter Jim's group found themselves sharing the stage with Lawrence Welk and the Lennon Sisters at Cardinal McIntyre's Christmas party at the Beverly Hilton Hotel.

That wasn't Jim's only brush with fame. Once when he was heading back from Tucson to seminary on the train, a man approached and introduced himself as Colonel Tom Parker. Jim assumed he was talking to an officer from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, but as the conversation continued, Jim became pretty sure this man knew nothing about airplanes. At one point Jim's new friend asked him if he'd like to meet Elvis Presley.

"Seminarians don't get out much," Jim says, "but I did know about Elvis!" Jim said

sure, he'd like to meet the star. A couple of minutes later, two burly gents entered and gave Jim the once-over. Satisfied that their charge was not about to come face-to-face with a kidnapper, they left, and Elvis came in and sat down. Jim was struck by Elvis's genuine, homespun friendliness and by how interested he was in Jim and in seminary life.

The chat ended when Elvis had to leave to change clothes before the train got to the station. The transformation went way deeper than a rhinestone outfit. Jim says when Elvis next appeared, he was the public Elvis to the core!

During Jim's junior year in college, homesickness convinced him that he was a family man, not cut out for the priesthood. He came home and finished at the University of Arizona with a degree in marketing, after which he

went to work at Naughton's Plumbing and Home Improvement, a business founded by his father.

Jim and his wife Lesa have been married for 44 years. They have two children and two grandchildren. The Naughtons, an athletic couple, took up scuba diving in 1991 and have made over 300 dives. Last summer they visited the island of Palau in the Philippines and spent almost as much time under water as on land. When they're not physically engaged in sport, they are Arizona Wildcat football and basketball fans.

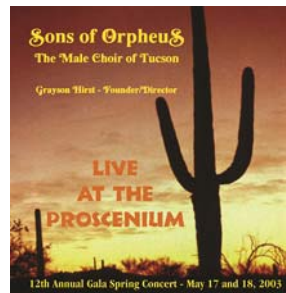
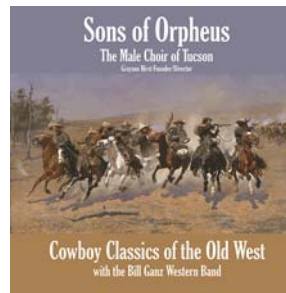
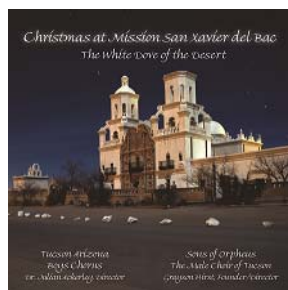
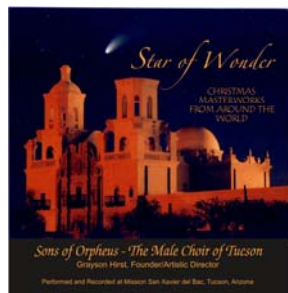
Since 1972 Jim has been a member of Centurions, a group 100 men who raise funds for St. Mary's and St. Joseph's Hospitals. He is also a Rotarian and a member of the advisory board of a group that raises funds for tuition to Catholic schools. He also does more than his share of fundraising for Orpheus.

Jovial Jim has been a member of Orpheus since 2001. He is a mainstay in the first tenor section, but we wonder if he is just keeping his voice in shape should our director put "Heartbreak Hotel" into the repertoire.

Sons of Orpheus CDs For Sale

We proudly present our current line-up of CDs, which features our newest album, *Star of Wonder*, Christmas Masterpieces from *Around the World*, performed and recorded live at Mission San Xavier del Bac, as guests of the Tohono O'odham Nation.

Our CD repertoire includes sacred music from around the world (sung in English, Latin, Italian, French, Ladino, Church Slavonic and even Nigerian), classical choral favorites, popular passages from many operas, and of course the best cowboy songs from the Western music genre.



Hangin' In There

Last summer I started thinking that my 16 years with Orpheus might be enough. In mid-August, as the choir's summer break was about to come to an end and I needed to make a decision, my wife and I went to see the movie *20 Feet from Stardom*. It's a documentary about singers Darlene Love, Merry Clayton, Lisa Fischer, and others who for years have been backing the great names in the rock era. Making music was the thing for them. It's a wonderful film! It made me think I might have another year of singing in me.

I suppose I would have shown up for that first rehearsal even if I hadn't seen the movie. I like the music, especially the heavy-duty stuff: art music, sacred or secular, in English and in foreign languages. And opera choruses. And that sound that a men's choir produces. And the camaraderie.

These photos were taken at a Wednesday evening rehearsal. How could anyone not want to spend time with this crew?

-NM



Photos Courtesy of Gary Smyth

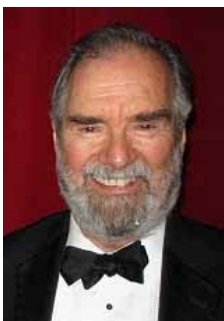
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The Male Choir of Tucson
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Photo: Kathleen Schumpert

TUCSON'S AMBASSADORS OF SONG



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Our Sponsors

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We're on the web at
www.SonsOfOrpheus.org

Want More Information?

We invite you to go to our web site and look through the repertoire Grayson Hirst has chosen for our first 21 years. While you're at it, please consider sending us your email address so we can add you to our electronic list. Please write us at:

contact1@SonsOfOrpheus.org

We'll send you a heads-up whenever the newsletter or other information is online. You can see our newsletters in color and save us some postage for snail mail.

WE HOPE YOU LIKE THE VOICE OF ORPHEUS.
IF YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS, QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS, PLEASE EMAIL US.