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Concert: Ithaca College Women's Chorale: 2010 Western NY ACDA Fall Conference

Ithaca College Women's Chorale

Janet Galvan

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Ithaca College
Women's Chorale

2010 Western NY ACDA
Fall Conference

Saturday, October 23, 2010
1:45 PM

ITHACA COLLEGE WOMEN'S CHORALE

Janet Galván, conductor

Gina Fortunato, Lisa Wenhold, collaborative pianists

Longing

From *Behind the Caravan: Songs of Hâfez*

Abbie Betinis

I. we have come

(b. 1980)

III. closer to the fire

Justin Canzano, soprano saxophone

Andrew Thomson, percussion

Soloists: Christina Santoro, Alyce Daubenspeck,

Katrina Kuka, Shaylyn Gibson

Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen

Josef Rheinberger

(1839-1901)

Scântei solare

Jonathan R. Pieslak

(b. 1974)

Tximeletak

Eva Ugalde

(b. 1973)

In Time of Silver Rain

René Clausen

(b. 1953)

Song of Perfect Propriety

Carol Barnett

(b. 1949)

Still I Rise

Rosephanye Powell

(b. 1962)

Andrew Thomson, percussion

Program Notes

From Behind the Caravan: Songs of Hâfez

Notes from the composer:

Johann Wolfgang Goethe once wrote, “Only with you, Hâfez do I wish to compete, for the older you get the younger you become... And religion is no obstacle, for the word ‘Islam’ means to submit to God, we all live and die in Islam.”

Khwajeh Shams al-Din Muhammad Hâfez-e Shirazi (ca. 1320-1390) was born in Shiraz, Persia (Iran). He wrote nearly 400 lyric poems, called *ghazals*, and is the undisputed master of that particular poetic form. His writing is mystical and based on Sufism, a tradition of denominations, as well as other currents of Islam.

I was drawn to these four *ghazals* particularly because of the elegant way they depict longing... longing for Truth, longing for Reason, longing for Kindness, Love and – always – longing for the Beloved. Also, as I was reading, I found that many of Hâfez’s poems seem to have in common beautiful metaphors of transience: fire, breath, breeze. It is from this idea that the program title is drawn. Each piece in today’s program depicts longing in some way.

In fact, I was fascinated to learn that the symbols of breath and fire are connected. In the first text, Hâfez addresses himself, asking himself to throw off his “kherque” (his woolen shawl), which is a symbol of outward piety, and to show his true faith by breathing out his despair with the sigh “Ah!” It is said that the “Ah!” is a sign of sincerity, and can burn a hypocrite with the genuine fire of the soul.

Above all, I have tried desperately to remain true to the intonation of the language, and to Hâfez’s poetic instinct. Unfortunately, each poem had to be shortened for the purpose of creating a concert piece, but I encourage anyone interested to read the original poems in their entirety.

The music is entirely my own, and not at all authentically Persian. It is my interpretation of an assortment of influences, which included my recent study of Persian speech, scales, and modes, listening to live Turkish music, and perhaps also from somewhere far back in my memory as when I was four years old and danced – joyfully and tirelessly – with my Greek relatives in Athens.

Translation

I. we have come

We to this door, seeking neither pride nor glory...we have come.

For shelter from ill-fortune, here...we have come.

Traveling along love's journey, from the borders of nothingness,

Now into states of being, all this way...we have come.

O ship of grace, where is thy anchor of forbearance?

For in this ocean of generosity, immersed in sin...we have come.

Hâfez, throw off your woolen kherque [Sufi cloak], for we, from

behind the caravan, with the fire of sighing "ah!"...we have come.

III. closer to the fire

Last night I saw the angels beating at the door of the tavern,

The clay of Adam they shaped, and into the mould they cast it.

The churches war among themselves, forgive them;

When they cannot see the truth, the door of fable they beat.

Fire, Fire! Oh! Oh!

Thanks be to God, for between me and Him, peace chanced,

Sufis, dancing, cast their cups of thankfulness!

Fire, Fire! Oh! Oh!

Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen

While **Josef Gabriel Rheinberger** is known primarily for his organ works, he also wrote many compositions for mixed, female and male voice ensembles. The majority of his secular part songs were written for male-voice choir while his sacred pieces featured female voices.

In addition to three masses, Rheinberger wrote twenty smaller pieces for two to four part female-voice choir.

Translation:

How lovely are your dwellings, O Lord

My soul longs for the courts of the Lord

My heart rejoices in the living God.

For the sparrow finds its house and the pigeon shelter in the storm. I find your altars. My king and my God.

Blessed are they that live in Your house.

In all eternity, praise You. Truth and mercy for those who love God and those walking in innocence receive grace.

Scântei solare

Notes from the composer:

Scântei solare (Solar Flares) began as a piano etude that was later adapted for women's chorus. In the fall of 2005, Riikka Pietiläinen, conductor of Las Sirenas Women's Chorus at The City College of New York, asked me to write a piece for her ensemble. After I finished the work, which was rather serious, I began thinking about how to compliment it with something more light-hearted, and I came up with the idea of arranging a piano etude I had written a few months earlier. I then asked my wife Sabina to write a text in Romanian that would fit with the music.

Translation:

Sun and stars, many tiny ones,
A game of light on the mountain peak,
The snow has melted easily, it flows clearly towards the spring.
The warm wind carried the spring,
The doe once again leaps through the valleys.
She drinks from the pure crystal river
That pours itself smoothly into the sea;
Springtime is fully born.
The sea is rising, waves with foam,
Migratory birds are gathering,
A siren sings sweetly to them, "la da lo..."

Tximeletak

Eva Ugalde was born in San Sebastian, Basque County, Spain. Tximeletak is based on a poem by Bernardo Atxaga, the most famous Basque poet. Ugalde dedicated this 1999 composition to her fellow singers, Kanta Cantemus Coroa, a semi-professional women's choir. Its pulsing beats in irregular groupings suggest the movement of a cloud of butterflies moving out to sea, into danger.

Translation:

Those butterflies flying towards the inside of the sea,
Those butterflies flying by. they moved away from the coast
Like a small cloud, leaving behind the ships,
They disappeared in the distance.
It has no islands; it has no rocks.

That sea has only water, dark water...
Those butterflies flying toward the silence of the sea...
Do not go! Do not go! You will not find in that sea
A place where you can settle, butterflies...

In Time of Silver Rain

This beautiful composition by René Clausen was commissioned by the Texas Choral Directors Association in 2009. The setting of a poem by Langston Hughes describes how spring brings new life. Clausen's setting is filled with creative word painting describing the grasses growing, the lifting of flower heads and the spreading of the wonder of life. Thematic material is passed from voice to voice creating a harmony similar to the harmony of nature as new life is created.

Song of Perfect Propriety

Notes from the composer:

Song of Perfect Propriety was written for the Cornell University Women's Chorus as part of a multi-year commissioning project unofficially called "No Whining, No Flowers," in which several women composers were commissioned to set texts by women on topics other than above. I was inspired by Dorothy Parker's feisty poem, and by hearing the chorus sing Scott Tucker's wonderfully unpredictable arrangement of Gershwin's "I Got Rhythm." "Writing little verse as ladies do" might be constructed as whining, but it doesn't have to be that way...

Dorothy Rothschild Parker was one of the most accomplished and successful feminist literary writers in women's history. In spite of a sad and difficult childhood and struggles with alcoholism and depression as an adult, Ms. Parker received literary acclaim for her satirical wit. Many of the critics of her day said she "wasted herself by writing about narrow topics," but her works encouraged other women writers who were struggling to move away from their Victorian ideals.

Dot or Dottie, as she was called, was born in Long Brach, New Jersey on August 22, 1893. She was raised in New York City and attended a

Roman Catholic elementary school despite the fact that her father was Jewish and her stepmother was Protestant. She was asked to leave after characterizing the Immaculate Conception as “spontaneous combustion.” Dorothy finished her education at a finishing school in New Jersey. She was characterized as a “plain disagreeable child with stringy hair and a yen to write poetry.”

Ms. Parker was known for her caustic, dry wit and took seriously her verse about men and glasses: *Men seldom make passes at girls that wear glasses*. Although she was very nearsighted, Dorothy did not wear her glasses in public, preferring to blink her hazel eyes instead. Dorothy Parker wrote realistically about poverty and sexism and how they affected women in a witty and blunt style. The imaginative and sometimes cruel lyrics of this poem reflect Dorothy Parker’s varied feelings of being a female in her time.

Still I Rise

Notes from the composer:

Still I rise was inspired by the poem of the same name by poet laureate Maya Angelou. It is a women’s anthem, saluting the strength of women to persevere through life’s difficulties – low self-esteem, physical and emotional abuse, rape, incest, prejudice, abandonment, and such like. In summary, though a woman’s life or past may be filled with tears and heartaches, with each day that she finds herself still living, she finds that she has grown stronger and risen a little higher because her circumstances have not overcome her. Thus, every new day can be one of hope and joy because regardless of the past, today, “still I rise!” During a visit to Ithaca College, Rosephanye heard the Women sing this piece and loved the strength, spirit, style, and understanding they bring to her work.

Still I Rise has become an anthem and signature piece for WoCho.

The **Ithaca College Women's Chorale** (WoCho) is one of five choral ensembles in the School of Music. The group includes between 50 and 65 singers, both music and non-music majors, freshmen through graduate students. The Women's Chorale has distinguished itself for its innovative programming and performs a variety of repertoire that balances master composers from all musical periods, compositions of high quality from less celebrated composers, contemporary pieces that stretch the boundaries of choral sound, and works that embody the world's many musical heritages.

WoCho has performed on tour in Ireland, Carnegie Hall, and Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall and Avery Fisher Hall. Other performances have taken place at the Eastern Division Convention of the American Choral Directors Association, the national and regional conventions of the Music Educators National Conference, and at the New York State School of Music Association (NYSSMA) Conference. The ensemble was the resident artist choir at the first International Women in Song Festival in Toronto, Canada. WoCho has worked with many guest artists including Horace Boyer, Libby Larsen, Chen Yi, Gregg Smith, Lukas Foss, Ron Nelson, and Samuel Adler. The Women's Chorale can be heard on their CD, *Cantan*, which features the treble compositions of Francisco Núñez, produced in collaboration with the composer, and on numerous CDs of live performances at music conventions.

Dr. Janet Galván, Professor of Music at Ithaca College, conducts the Ithaca College Women's Chorale and the Ithaca College Chorus. She is Artistic Director for the Ithaca Children's Choir. Her New York colleagues recognized Dr. Galván's contribution to choral music in 1995 when she received the ACDA New York Outstanding Choral Director Award.

Dr. Galván has conducted national, regional, and all-state choruses throughout the United States in venues such as Carnegie Hall, Washington's Constitution Hall, Minneapolis' Symphony Hall, Pittsburgh's Heinz Hall, and Nashville's Schermerhorn Symphony Center. She has conducted her own choral ensembles in Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall, and Avery Fisher Hall as well as in concert halls in Ireland, Italy, Austria, the Czech Republic,

and Spain. She has conducted the chamber orchestra Virtuosi Pragenses, the State Philharmonic of Bialystok, Poland, the Cayuga Chamber Orchestra, the Madrid Chamber Orchestra, and the New England Symphonic Ensemble in choral/orchestral performances. Galván was the sixth national honor choir conductor in the history of ACDA, and was the conductor of the North American Children's Choir which performed annually in Carnegie Hall from 1995-2007. She was also a guest conductor for the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. Dr. Galván has been a guest conductor and clinician in the United Kingdom, Canada, Belgium, Austria, Brazil, and the Czech Republic as well as national and regional choral and music education conferences and the World Symposium on Choral Music.

She has two choral music series with the Roger Dean Publishing Company and is the author of chapters in two books, *Teaching Music through Performance in Choir, Volume 2* and *The School Choral Program: Philosophy, Planning, Organizing and Teaching*. She is also the series advisor to *Latin Accents*, a series with Boosey & Hawkes. Her article on the changing voice was published in the *International Federation of Choral Music Journal* in August of 2007 and was reprinted in *La Circulare del Secretariat de Corals Infants de Catalunya*.

Galván has been recognized as one of the country's leading conducting teachers, and her students have received first place awards and have been finalists in both the graduate and undergraduate divisions of the American Choral Directors biennial National Choral Conducting Competition. Dr. Galván was a member of the Grammy Award-winning Robert Shaw Festival Singers.

For more information about the Ithaca College School of Music, please contact Tom Kline at tkline@ithaca.edu or (607) 274-3171.

ITHACA COLLEGE WOMEN'S CHORALE

Janet Galván, conductor

Soprano I-II

Courtney Ahearn-Feketa
Lauren Barchi
Taylor Braggins
Seanna Burke
Anne Carlin
Meagan Carrick
Ashley Carver
Katie Cohen
Gina Fortunato
Shaylyn Gibson
Jaime Guyon
Alexandra Haines
Daria Harper
Madeline Harts
Caitlin Henning
Brigid Kegel
SooYeon Kim
Brittany O'Reilly
Brittany Powell
Laura Proctor
Sarah Scott
Lisa Wenhold
Adrienne Wood

Soprano II

Fanny Lora
Emily Richards
Chelsea Swan

Soprano II-Alto I

Taylor Eike
Jenna Fishback
Adiza Jibril
Jocelyn Ponce

Alto I

Dana Ayers
Kirstine Purcell
Haley Rowland
Sarah Stanley

Alto I-II

Ashleigh Ciambriello
Janine Colletti
Alyce Daubenspeck
Emma Gibson
Alex Haight
Molly Korroch
Christina Santoro
Jennifer Steiger

Alto II

Emma Alban
Michelle Ammirati
Allyce Barron
Katie Bickford
Isabela Hanu
Anna Kimble
Taylor Kohnstam
Katie Krampf
Katrina Kuka
Kelly Sheehan
Jacquelyn Simone
Elyse Wadsworth