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Graduate Recital: Elizabeth Kay Swanson, graduate conductor

Ithaca College Madrigal Singers

Elizabeth K. Swanson

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ITHACA COLLEGE

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

GRADUATE RECITAL

ITHACA COLLEGE MADRIGAL SINGERS

Elizabeth Kay Swanson, graduate conductor
Lawrence Doebler, director
Dimitri Shapovalov, piano

Hockett Family Recital Hall
Sunday, April 24, 2005
4:00 p.m.

ITHACA

PROGRAM

O magnum mysterium Tomas Luis de Victoria
(1548–1611)

Ave verum corpus, K. 618 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756–1791)

Rebecca Hunter and Brenna Gillette, violins
Sarah Hart, viola
Ben Reynolds, double bass

Op. 103 No. 5, from *Zigeunerlieder* Johannes Brahms
(1833–1897)

Quatrains Valaisans (Op. 206) Darius Milhaud
(1892–1974)

- I. *Pays, arrêté à mi-chemin*
- II. *Rose de Lumière*
- III. *L'année tourne...*
- IV. *Chemins qui ne mènent nulle part*
- V. *Beau papillon...*

Tomorrow shall be my dancing day, Op. 75, No. 2 John Gardner
(b. 1917)

Son of God Mass James Whitbourn
(b. 1963)

- V. *Lava Me*
- VI. *Sanctus and Benedictus*
- VII. *Pax Domini*
- VIII. *Agnus Dei*
- IX. *Amen*

Shawn Allison, soprano saxophone
Michael Lippert, keyboard

IV. In Remembrance, from *Requiem* Eleanor Daley
(b. 1955)

Ale Brider (Yiddish Folk Song) arr. Joshua Jacobson

Veniki (Russian Folk Song) arr. Feodosii Rubtsov

Graduate Recital presented in partial fulfillment for the degree
Master's of Music in Conducting.

Elizabeth Kay Swanson is from the studio of Lawrence Doebler.

The preeminent Spanish composer of the Renaissance period, Tomas Luis Victoria spent many years of study in Rome—the musical center of Italy during this time period. He has been called 'the Spanish Palestrina' because he was likely a student of Palestrina and was greatly influenced by his writings; however, Victoria's compositions treat dissonances more freely, and include chromatic harmonies and melodic intervals forbidden in the Palestrina style. For instance, in 'O magnum mysterium,' which is in transposed first mode, the sixth degree is often lowered and the seventh raised as in the later minor mode. This motet is quite dramatic, with phrases of irregular length and utilization of a variety of textures and motives to express the mystical, wondrous, and modest beginning of Christ's life. Victoria was ordained as a priest at the age of twenty-six, and his musical output was exclusively for the church.

In the Classical period, choral music was heard almost exclusively in the Church. Given that W. A. Mozart's father, Leopold, worked as a musician for the Archbishop of Salzburg, and Wolfgang himself held similar appointments—as a concertmaster and an organist—it was quite natural for Mozart to compose music for the Church from a young age. However, with exceptions, his masses, motets, and other settings of sacred texts are not counted among his major works. Among his short works for chorus, *Ave verum corpus*, was poignantly completed within the final months of Mozart's short life. The Latin text evokes Christ's redemptive Sacrifice, as well as the symbol of Baptism: '*cujus latus perforatum unda fluxit sanguine*'.

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, festival choirs came into existence throughout Europe. This practice was most widely found in German- and English- speaking countries for reasons of growing economic status as well as growing prominence of Protestantism both as a religious and musical tradition. Johannes Brahms' musical and compositional interests were wide and varied, and he was a choral conductor for brief periods throughout his life. *Zigeunerlieder* was initially given to Brahms as a collection of Hungarian folk songs by a wealthy Viennese merchant. These songs were translated into German and set to music in 1887 as *Zigeunerlieder für Vier Stimmen*; he initially composed the songs for solo quartet. In the fifth song, 'Brauner Bursche,' a strong and dashing gypsy 'lad' leads a sweet young blue-eyed blonde in a dramatic and whirling dance. Colorful language is used to heighten the drama between the two dancers. The off-beat entrances and triplet figures in the piano accompaniment add a peculiar momentum when paired with the accurate and predictable rhythms within the vocal lines—perhaps in direct representation of the intriguing pair of lovers.

Dissimilar to practices in other European countries of the time, choral music in France was not widely cultivated or favored in by the greater public. Regional folk-music did exist, but it was primarily aristocratic in practice. Darius Milhaud was born in provincial France: Aix-en-Provence. One of Les Six, he had a large and varied musical output, of which thirty of his works are for choir. Like many of his contemporaries, Milhaud frequently employed polytonality, where two lines of melody and planes of harmony, each in a distinct and different key, sound simultaneously. For instance, in the opening few measures of the first motet 'Pays, arrêté à mi-chemin,' the sopranos and altos, in C-major, move in parallel motion with tenors in G-major. *Quatrains Valaisans* is not only little-known and rarely performed within the United States, it is no longer in print. A *quatrain* is a stanza or poem of four lines. These five motets are like precious gems: rare, beautifully-crafted, and detailed in texture and sonority. Each motet looks into an ever-changing kaleidoscope of beautiful colors and imagery. The exquisite text as part of a larger collection, *Quatrains Valaisans*, was completed in 1926 by the great German writer and poet, Rainer Maria Rilke (1875–1926). Rilke's poetry is often marked by precise imagery, and is responsible for creating the 'object poem' as an attempt to describe physical objects with extreme clarity— 'the silence of their concentrated reality.'

John Gardner, a contemporary English composer, was born in Manchester and has led a long career as composer, teacher, pianist, and conductor. His musical output has been diverse—including three symphonies, several large-scale cantatas, concertos for piano, trumpet, organ and oboe, string quartets, operas and a great variety of solo, theater, and choral music. One of his most popular carols, 'Tomorrow Shall Be my Dancing Day' was written in 1960. The original text, likely dating back to medieval era, has twelve verses telling the story of Jesus' life. Set here, the first four verses are narrated by the infant Jesus as he proclaims of his life's prophesy to his mother. In this joyful text, Jesus' 'true love' represents mankind and 'my dance' is a metaphor for life. The line 'to see the legend of my play' suggests it may have originally been part of a medieval mystery play, in the same way as was the Coventry Carol.

James Whitbourn is a versatile composer of film, television, and concert works. He studied at Magdalen College, Oxford. He composed the BBC's title music for the funeral of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, and was commissioned to write a new work for the broadcast of a Westminster Abby service for the victims of 9/11—later performed in New York on the first anniversary of the attacks. Other new compositions include a collaboration with the former Archbishop of Cape Town, Desmond Tutu, and a large-scale work for choirs and orchestra written from the diaries of Anne Frank, due to be premiered in 2005. Whitbourn's *Son of God Mass* (2001) has been performed throughout the world. All nine movements can be easily sung within the normal liturgical setting of the mass, or as extracted movements for a concert performance setting. A part of the choir's role is to accompany the solo soprano saxophone as well as provide a meditative and soothing timbre for the listener.

Canadian composer and church musician, Eleanor Daley, received a BM in Organ Performance from Queen's University in Ontario and holds degrees in organ and piano performance from the Royal Conservatory of Toronto and Trinity College, England. She has held a conducting position in Ontario for over twenty years and works as a freelance accompanist for many children's choirs. *Requiem* was commissioned by Jake Neely for the Elmer Iseler Singers and was premiered in Ontario in 1993. In 1994, *Requiem* was awarded the National Choral Award for Outstanding Choral Composition of the Year by the Association of Canadian Choral Conductors (ACCC) at their National Convention. The origin of the text from 'In Remembrance,' the fourth movement of *Requiem*, is unknown. The text is peaceful, bittersweet, and almost Buddhist in approach, as the spirit of a person who has died lives on in beautiful earthly surroundings such as the 'sunlight on ripened grain' and the 'sweet uplifting rush of birds in circled flight'. 'Do not stand at my grave and cry. I am not there I did not die.'

'Ale Brider' is a popular Yiddish folk song derived from a political movement in Eastern Europe, which promoted Yiddish-language Jewish culture. The majority of the text for 'Ale Brider' consists of vocables (untranslatable syllables) that are typical of the lively Hassidic melody. Each key phrase is sung by the soloist, and then repeated by the chorus. Joshua Jacobson, director for the Zamir Chorale of Boston, holds a BM from Harvard, MM in Conducting from New England Conservatory, and DMA from the University of Cincinnati. He is also Professor of Music and Director of Choral Activities at Northeastern University.

Feodosii Antonovich Rubtsov, folklorist and composer, completed studies at the Leningrad Conservatory in 1931 and taught there from 1948 on. He was an author of many articles about folk songs of western Russia and Belarus, and also made numerous arrangements of Russian folk songs.

ITHACA COLLEGE MADRIGAL SINGERS
Elizabeth Kay Swanon, graduate conductor
Lawrence Doeblen, director

Soprano

Leslie Cantin
Julia Chalfin
Tiffany Desmond
Heidi Miller

Alto

Rachel Armstrong*
Karla Faggard
Roger Grant
Lindsay Rondeau

Tenor

Brian Long
John Marnell
Matt Montroy
Allen Perriello

Bass

Stephen Buck*
Michael Lippert
Dan Richards
Michael Rosenberg

*denotes soloists in *Ale Brier*