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Concert: Ithaca College Women's Chorale

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Janet Galván

Jennifer Haywood

Rachael Allen

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ITHACA COLLEGE WOMEN'S CHORALE

Janet Galván, conductor
Jennifer Haywood, Rachael Allen,
assistant student conductors
Amanda Capone, Stephanie Kane, Emily Rider,
Mihyun Yum, accompanists

Svete tihy

Pavel Chesnokov

Missa Brevis in C

Imant Raminsh

Kyrie

Mary Lynn Sindoni, soprano
Lauren Urban, oboe

Gloria

Jessica Julin, soprano

Sanctus

Teresa D'Amico, soprano

Agnus Dei

Lauren Dragen, soprano
Lauren Urban, oboe

INTERMISSION

Herbstlied

Felix Mendelssohn

Ave Maria

Francis Poulenc

Ave Maria

David MacIntyre

My Heart's Friend

Imant Raminsh

How Can I Keep From Singing

Michael Levi

Cantan

Francisco Nunez

John Lufburrow and Jeff Rappold, trumpets
Todd Pray, alto saxophone
Joe Tubiolo, tenor saxophone
Grace Yum, piano
Dave Boisvert, Anthony Calabrese, Tim Collins,
and Sloane Treat, percussion
Nicholas Wehr, double bass

Las Amarillas

Stephen Hatifeld

Ford Hall Auditorium
Wednesday, April 28, 1999
8:15 p.m.

PROGRAM NOTES

Svete tiliy (Gladsome Light) Pavel Chesnokov (1877-1944) is the most prolific composer associated with the Moscow Synodal School. His compositional output includes over 500 choral works, over 400 of which are sacred. His choral writing is characterized by a variety of textures, from austere unisons to sumptuous eight-voice polyphony, and colorful harmony. Approximately one-third of his sacred works are chant-based. Relatively early in his musical career Chesnokov served as instructor of choral music at several girls' secondary schools. Finding a dearth of quality choral music written for women's voices, he composed his Opus 9, a series of 30 sacred works drawn from the Divine Liturgy, All-Night Vigil, and Lenten services of the Orthodox Church. These works do not use pre-existing chant melodies although many of the melodies are chant-like. "Gladsome Light" is one of the most ancient of hymns still in use today.

Translation:

Gladsome Light of the holy glory of the Immortal One—the Heavenly Father, holy and blessed—

O Jesus Christ! Now that we have come to the setting of the sun, and behold the light of evening, we praise the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, God.

Thou art worthy at every moment to be praised in hymns by reverent voices.

O Son of God, Thou art the Giver of Life; therefore all the world glorifies Thee.

Missa Brevis in C was commissioned in 1989 by Henry Leck. Mr. Raminsh was chosen for his wonderful sense of color, texture, melodic contour, and harmonic movement. The opening movement is in c minor with the ascending triad becoming a cornerstone in the work. The same theme returns at the end of the mass creating a balanced unity. The Kyrie is in ABA form. The Gloria is written for double choir with a middle section providing a contrasting plaintive c minor melody. The movement concludes with a fugue in A-flat major. The Sanctus offers a contrast with the gentle swaying of parallel triads.

Born in Venspils, Latvia, Imant Raminsh emigrated to Canada at an early age and studied at the Royal Conservatory of Toronto, University of Toronto; Akademie Mozarteum, Salzburg; the University of British Columbia; and the University of Victoria. His music is tonal and romantic, and he has received many commissions and performances worldwide. He was the founding conductor of the New Caledonia

Chamber Orchestra (now the Prince George Symphony) and the Youth Symphony Orchestra of the Okanagan, among others.

Herbstlied was written in 1844 on a text by Klingemann. It was written as a vocal duet. While Mendelssohn was tremendously prolific in his writing for the voice, the vocal duets are rather obscure and among the most lovely compositions by Mendelssohn. In this comparison of the quick passing of autumn into winter to the quick passing of love, youth, and life, Mendelssohn's ability to express the emotional content of the text is heard. In addition, his great technical skill and creative imagination was demonstrated in this duet which is very well suited to choral performance. Grout stated that Mendelssohn and Brahms were the two composers of the Romantic period who knew best how to write idiomatically for chorus. Both composers wrote many works for female voices.

Translation:

Ah, how soon the dance fades away

Spring changes into winter

Ah, how soon all the merriment transforms into the mourning of silence.

Soon the last green is gone.

All of them want to leave for home.

Joy changes to longing pain.

Thoughts of love sweet as the spring and quickly blown away.

One thing, only one that will never waver. That is longing which never goes away.

Ave Maria By the time Francis Poulenc began the composition of his opera *Dialogues of the Carmelites* in 1953, he had already written dozens of mélodies, three song cycles; the Litanies of the Black Virgin; a Mass in G, a vast setting of the Stabat Mater text for soprano solo, mixed chorus, and large orchestra; and his four Motets for Times of Penitence. In short, he was a skillful and experienced composer who knew how to use voices expertly.

The scenario of the Dialogues stems from a short story by Gerturd von le Fort entitled *Die Letzte am Schaffot* (Last on the Scaffold). This gruesome little tale recounts the fate of thirteen Carmelite nuns who, during the French Revolution, were condemned to decapitation at the guillotine for their refusal to disband their convent at Compègne. The story was subsequently supposed to have been treated in a film version, and Bernanos (1888-1948) wrote the screenplay entitled *Dialogues des Carmélites* shortly before his death. Though the film never

materialized, Albert Déguin, the executor of the Bernanos estate, published the texts in 1949. Subsequently, Guido Valcarengi commissioned Poulenc "for a good fee, to write this work for the publishing house of Ricordi." (London: Gollancz, 1991, no. 239)

In the opera, the aristocratic Marquis de la Force sends his daughter, Blanche, to the convent in order to shelter her from the dangers of the revolution. In the second act, it becomes apparent that the convent is one of the targets of the revolutionaries: The Father Confessor informs the nuns that he has been forbidden from continuing his priestly ministries in the convent. As he leaves, the revolutionary soldiers appear at the convent door. In act three, the convent has been ransacked. Blanche has fled to her father's protection, but the Mother Superior comes to remind Blanche of her responsibilities. As the opera draws to its inexorable conclusion, the nuns are shown ascending the platform for execution.

Poulenc, himself a devout Catholic, was deeply immersed in the score of *Dialogues*. He commented to a friend concerning the work: "Obviously, people won't find it exactly amusing, but I think and hope they will be deeply moved." (Ibid., No. 238)

Notes by Mark Radice

David MacIntyre's *Ave Maria* was commissioned by the professional women's ensemble, Elektra for the 35th anniversary of the Canadian Music Centre. When MacIntyre was asked to write the piece for Elektra, it came at a propitious time in that he was deep in research on a new opera he was planning about paranormal spiritual events occurring in war-torn Bosnia Hercegovina. There was at that time a story told about a small village where children and young adults were running daily out into the hills to "see the Virgin Mary." Researchers supposedly came to the village to investigate and found that this daily visitation was very real to many of the villagers and eventually some of the researchers claimed they also saw the vision.

MacIntyre was particularly struck by the celebratory nature of the visitations and the necessity of connecting with the feminine maternal nature of the Divine. The effectiveness of the piece comes through the remarkable portrayal of anticipation, joy, and eventual realization. This is accomplished through the repeated "Ave Maria" ostinato as it continues to increase with intensity and speed throughout the composition. The piece ends rather abruptly. One can speculate that perhaps the vision is suddenly gone.

My Heart's Friend is an interpretation of a Native American text comparing the beauty of the woman described to nature.

Cantan is a dance-like piece using traditional Afro-Caribbean sounds and rhythms. The text comes from a children's book of poetry, *Columpio de luna a sol* (Pendulum from the Moon to the Sun) by Pura Vasquez. A native of New York City, Francisco Nuñez has been awarded the Young Virtuoso International Composition Grant and a Certificate of Recognition from New York City's Mayor Rudolf Guiliani. He is the founder and artistic director of the Young People's Chorus of New York City and a frequent clinician at professional music conferences and universities.

Las Amarillas is in the southern Mexican style the huapango. One of the distinguishing characteristics of the style is the "floating downbeat" which can be felt most clearly in the alto part. Many times throughout the composition, a major downbeat is a rest for the altos while the pulse that naturally falls in the middle of the bar is nudged aside by another rest. The resulting effect is that of a rhythm whose downbeat keeps vanishing at just the point our ears would expect the primary emphasis to fall. Because of the "floating downbeat," the huapango combines the single-minded drive of an ostinato with a sense of nimble-footed elasticity. In this piece, the composer has suggested that the meaning of the words is not as important as the sound of the words.

Translation: The yellow birds fly from the cactus. No longer will the cardinals sing happily to the song. Because the trees on the hillside have not come back to life the birds will either sing or crush their nest. You are small and beautiful and I love you just the way you are. You are like a little rose from the coast of Guerrero. Everybody has their own farewell, but there's none like this one. Four times five is twenty, three times seven is twenty-one.

10760
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Rachael Allen, student conductor

Amanda Capone, Stephanie Kane, Emily Rider,

Mihyun Yum, accompanists

Soprano I

Sarah Bartolome

Sharon Costianes

Lauren Dragan

Kristen Robinson

Soprano I-II

Theresa Andersen

Heather Barmore

Maria Biffer

Ann Chrastina

Allyson Clark

Alyson Cury

Amy Hayner

Meagan Johnson

Elizabeth Karam

Michelle Lorenz

Sabrina Martin

Christine Pratt

Angela Ramacci

Sonia Rodriguez

Margaret Schniepp

Mary-Lynn Sindoni

Elizabeth Ulmer

Bora Yoon

Soprano II

Teresa D'Amico

Aimee Davis

Elizabeth Gerbi

Lauren Quigley

Beth Scalonge

Brittany Sawdon

Christine Stevens

Soprano II - Alto I

Amanda Capone

Elizabeth Fallesen

Jessica Julin

Carrie MacDonald

Elizabeth Sullivan

Allison Yeager

Alto I

Nicole Asel

Michele George

Lauren Pokroy

Emily Rider

Alto I-II

Meredith Allen

Amanda Blamble

Rosemarie Flores

Elizabeth Getlik

Stephanie Kane

Jeanette Kolb

Tiffany Rahrig

Deana Saada

Rebecca Sach

Heather Tryon

Alto II

Rachael Allen

Emily Berg

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