

To the Ploughboy

Songs of Harvest & Thanksgiving
Cantigas Women's Choir

Joan Isaacs Litman, Director
Erasmia Voukelatos, Accompanist

Community Church of Hoboken, Hoboken, NJ
Saturday December 2, 2006, 7:30pm

I. THANKSGIVING FOR AUTUMN AND THE HARVEST

- To the Ploughboy English Folksong
- Autumn Voices Finnish Folksong
Shaylin Schundler, Soprano
- Autumn Song Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

II. HOPE OF HEAVEN

- Cantique de Jean Racine Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)
- Du Ring an Meinen Finger Robert Schumann (1810-1856)
Frances Marsh, Mezzo Soprano
- Panis Angelicus César Franck (1822-1890)
Carla Williams, Soprano

III. LOVE AND LONGING

- Ani P'Dodi Yemeni Melody
Patricio Díaz, Fidula
- La Rosa Enflorece Sephardic Song
- Somewhere Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990)

IV. WISDOM OF THE ANCIENTS AND ANCESTORS

Breaths..... Ysaye Barnwell

95/96..... Michael Fahie (b. 1976), lyrics Emily Polk

Take a Step..... Stephen Hatfield (b. 1956)
Carlos Frías, Percussion

Adiemus, from *Songs of Sanctuary* Karl Jenkins (b. 1944)
Patricio Díaz, Viola
Lillian Meyer, Flute
Carlos Frías and Shanna Pargellis, Percussion

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INTERMISSION

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V. PROMISE OF THE FUTURE

Havanaise Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)
Naoko Tajima, Violin
Yuki Tajima, Piano

Winter Night Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809), lyrics C. Baldwin

Bashana Haba'ah Nurit Hirsh

To the Ploughboy Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

*Many thanks to the congregation of the Community Church of Hoboken for the use of their sanctuary;
to Mustard Seed School for our weekly rehearsal space;
to language coaches Anne Hy and Catharine Baldwin (French) and Deborah Wenger (Hebrew);
and to Amelia Pargellis, who serves faithfully as administrative assistant each week.*

PROGRAM NOTES AND TRANSLATIONS

As a **chorus of urban women**, we offer this evening in tribute to the invisible ploughboys (and girls) everywhere whose diligent labor brings bread of all varieties to our table. “For if [they] don’t labor, how can we get bread? Let’s sing and be merry with all.”

Cantique de Jean Racine: French musician and composer Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924) composed and won first prize for this piece while in his final year of schooling at the Ecole Niedermeyer in Paris:

Word Most High, our sole hope, eternal day of the earth and the heavens: As we break the silence of the peaceful night, Divine Savior, cast your gaze upon us. Pour out upon us the fire of your powerful grace, that all hell might flee at the sound of your voice. Disperse the sleep which leads our languishing souls to stray from the path of righteousness. O Christ, show favor to your faithful people, who now gather together to praise you. Receive the songs they offer to your immortal glory, and may they come back laden with the gift of your grace.

Du Ring an Meinen Finger: Robert Schumann (1810-1856) wrote this piece, from the song cycle *Frauenliebe und Leben* (A Woman’s Love and Life), after falling in love with his future wife Clara Wieck, a young performer and composer whose father objected to their union.

Panis Angelicus: A famous addition to his three-voice Mass, this piece by César Franck (1822-1890) was written while the composer was serving as organist at St. Clotilde in Paris:

Bread of Angels, made the bread of men; the Bread of heaven puts an end to all symbols: a thing wonderful! The Lord becomes our food: poor, a servant, and humble.

Ani l’Dodi: While most of the Jewish population of Yemen, traceable to around the time of King Solomon, has long since immigrated to Israel, a remnant community and many aspects of Jewish culture endure on the peninsula. This Yemeni tune, transcribed and used with the permission and blessing of Elliot Z. Levine, provides a setting for its Hebrew lyric, the familiar canticle ascribed to King Solomon (Song of Songs 6:3, 5:1):

I am my beloved and my beloved is mine, who grazes among the roses. I have come to my garden, my sister, my bride; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my sugarcane with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, friends; drink abundantly, beloved ones.

La Rosa Enflorece: One of the most beautiful and well-known melodies of the Sephardic Jews, this song has as many variations and musical settings as there are Jewish communities of Spanish origin throughout the world:

The rose blooms in the month of May, but my soul is full of gloom, suffering in love. The nightingales sing, and are sighing of love; the passion will kill me, multiplying my pain. Come quickly my dove, come quickly to me; come quickly my soul, because I will die.

Somewhere, from *West Side Story*: Leonard Bernstein’s music and Stephen Sondheim’s lyrics together form this immortal expression of the hope of young love.

Breaths: In this echo of African ancestry, Ysaye Barnwell of the *a cappella* ensemble Sweet Honey in the Rock beckons us into remembrance of “the ancestor’s breath” through poetry, image and sounds:

Listen more often to things than to beings. ‘Tis the ancestors’ breath when the fire’s voice is heard; ‘tis the ancestors’ breath in the voice of the waters. Those who have died have never left. The dead are not under the earth. They are in the rustling trees, they are in the growing woods. They are in the crying grass, they are in the moaning rocks. The dead are not under the earth. . . . The dead have a pact with the living. They are in the woman’s breast, they are in the wailing child. They are with us in the home, they are with us in the crowd. The dead have a pact with the living.

95/96: At age 96, lyricist Emily Polk is a lifelong writer of poetry (and first cousin once removed to Cantigas Director Joan Litman!) currently living in Atascadero, California. Jazz musician Michael Fahie (age 30) agreed

that this text demanded to be set to music and composed these canons “on the house” on our behalf in early November. We hope this accidental collaboration will awaken us to the rich experience of our older neighbors:

Hey bees, come out of your hive, sit on your stingers and watch me jive, I’m full of life at ninety-five.
Hey bees, pick up your sticks, beat on your stingers and hear my licks, I’m ninety-six and full of tricks.
And I mean tricks at ninety-six. And I mean *mean* tricks! How’s that for kicks at ninety-six!

Take a Step honors the heroic example set by immigrant mothers caught between two worlds, anxious that their daughters benefit from opportunities in the new world without losing touch with the birthright of their ancestral culture. “Take a Step,” by Canadian composer Stephen Hatfield, is set in an immigrant neighborhood in Toronto. The composition maintains a discourse among various neighborhood women and the response of a young child. The song ends in the voice of the child, now an old woman in a wheelchair surveying the panorama of her street, her life pouring like a river through her memory. The melody of “Take a Step” was inspired by the Sarajevo lullaby “Morikos.”

Adiemus is the first movement of British composer Karl Jenkins’ 1995 composition *Songs of Sanctuary*. With invented words as lyrics, “Adiemus” is technically a vocalise. Our performance combines the vocal style of European classical music with the contrasting color of Jenkins’ intentional mimicking of a more “global” sound, sung by a small ensemble.

Bashana Haba’ah, by Israeli composer Nurit Hirsh, has been a well-loved song since it was first performed in 1969:

Next year, we will sit on the porch and count the soaring birds; children on vacation will play tag between the houses and the fields. You will see, you will see just how good it will be come next year.

Winter Night: Cantigas member Catharine Baldwin wrote the lyrics for this secular canon by Viennese composer Franz Josef Haydn (1732-1809).

To the Ploughboy: We close this evening’s performance with British composer Ralph Vaughan Williams’ (1872-1958) dressed up tribute to the ploughboy, a radiant, upbeat transformation of the simple folksong with which we opened our concert. In so doing, we remember that the world’s bounty is not equally shared, and many in the world do not experience the richness or relative comfort that we do. May the new year bring to each of us a greater sense of gratitude and a deeper commitment to work for peace and justice throughout the world.

Shalom, Insha’Allah.

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Cantigas Women’s Choir is a community-based choir in its fifth season under the artistic direction of Joan Isaacs Litman. The choir brings women together to explore the rich tradition of women’s singing and performs a broad spectrum of global music, both ancient and contemporary. The Cantigas Women’s Choir advocates through song for those whose hearts need to be uplifted and whose voices need to be heard. The choir appears annually with inmates at the Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women in Clinton, New Jersey, and has sung on behalf of cancer survivors in Bayonne, New Jersey. The Cantigas Women’s Choir supports the developing artistry of young musicians and frequently invites them to perform at Cantigas concerts.

Joan Isaacs Litman, Director, is a native of Los Angeles and has directed choirs in the New York metropolitan area for twenty-eight years. Her choirs have performed at Lincoln Center, the United Nations, Carnegie Hall, and the Kennedy Center, where they performed Elliot Goldenthal’s *Fire Water Paper: Vietnam Oratorio* with Seiji Ozawa and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Ms. Litman’s choir was featured at the Judith Clurman Choral Symposium at the Juilliard School in 2002. Ms. Litman has been a student of choral artistry

and conducting under Paul Salamunovich, Lenke Igo and Peter Erdei. She was the winner of the first Excellence in Teaching award from Westminster Choir College.

Ms. Litman is a member of the music faculty of the United Nations International School in Manhattan, where she directs the UNIS Mothers' Chorus and a children's choir. She is also a member of the summer faculty at the Kodaly Institute at Capital University, where she was recently the guest conductor for the Children's Choral Festival of World Music. Ms. Litman is the author of *Song Caravan: Songs of the Middle East*, which will be published in 2007. She is a founder and Music Director Emerita of Mustard Seed School in Hoboken, New Jersey.

Erasmia Voukelatos, Accompanist, is a Canadian pianist of Greek descent and has been active as a chamber and solo pianist, teacher, music director, and concert series presenter. Concerto appearances have included the Mozart Concerto in A Major (K. 488) and Haydn Concerto in D Major with the Canadian ensemble *Mercredi Musique*, as well as Bach's D Minor Keyboard Concerto, which was released on the CD *The Best of Brooklyn*. She loves to collaborate with her husband, violinist Ashley Horne, and has been accompanying Cantigas since its formation.

Soprano 1: Anne Christensen, Lynne Connell, Agnes Dimatteo, Angelika Fuellemann, Carolyn Hoberman, Margarita Leon, Claire Meyer, Lillian Meyer, Shelley Miller, Ilannet Parisca, Claire Pedulla, Emily Petrick, Ammandia Pickering, Kathia Roberts-Moore, Cinthia Santos, Shaylin Schundler, Julie Sloane, Ulrike Talkenberg, Caron Van Dyck, Carla Williams

Soprano 2: Catharine Baldwin, Kerry Benz, Becca Brasser, Karen Hansen, Meera Jaffrey, Lenore Jean Jones, Emily Litman, Judy McCaffery, Jennifer Marsh, Lisa Mason, Diane Oltarzewski, Shanna Pargellis, Caitlin Price, Sarah Rizza, Cynthia Sanford, Lynn Schundler, Ozgun Tasdemir

Alto: Katie Almroth, Melanie Best, Rachel Chang, Maria Anguera de Sojo, Ginger Donnan, Jan Gallagher, Rulande Henderson, Silja Jaaskelainen, Stella Kapur, Frances Marsh, Caroline Martin, Rebecca Nichols, Florence Pape, Nancy Pedulla, Debbie Rothman, Stephanie Santos, Meg Simmons, Eileen Vanderheyden, Deborah Wenger

Frances Marsh, Mezzo Soprano, graduated from Ithaca College with a B.F.A. in acting. She has sung with the St. Vincent Ferrer Choir in Manhattan and was a soloist in the Cantigas performance of Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* last spring. Ms. Marsh has studied voice with Phyllis Lynd, Carmela Altamura and Andrea Edith Moore. She is a stay-at-home mom with two children and is a creative memories consultant in Weehawken, New Jersey.

Lillian Meyer, Flute, currently studies with John Littlefield, and previously studied with Sharon Levin starting when she was eleven. Lillian's performances include Marathon Concerts with the Dieckow School of Music, the 2004 Bach Festival hosted by her alma mater, Mustard Seed School, and various events at her current school, The Spence School.

Shaylin Schundler, Soprano, has studied voice with Karen Paulson and Laurel Unwin and sang for four years in the Mustard Seed School chorus. She is a freshman at Montclair Kimberley Academy, where she sings in the choir and is currently a cast member of the school production of *Cabaret*.

Carla E. Williams, Soprano, is an experienced choral singer who has sung at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center and New Jersey Performing Arts Center with such acclaimed musicians as Valery Gergiev with the Kirov Orchestra and Louis Langree with the Mostly Mozart Orchestra, and was part of the chorus on the recording of the Philip Glass composition Symphony No. 5: Requiem, Bardo and Nirmanakaya. She lives in Hoboken with her two daughters.

GUEST ARTISTS:

Patricio Díaz, Fidula and Viola, was born in Madrid, Spain, where he studied violin and viola with Antonio Arias. He furthered his training with Alexander Babrovski and Feodor Drzhinn at the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow on scholarship from the government of the former Soviet Union. He graduated in 1991 from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst with an M.A. in Music Performance. Mr. Díaz currently resides in New York, where he performs with several orchestras and ensembles and is on the faculty of the United Nations International School.

Carlos Frías, Percussion, has been performing in the metropolitan area for a decade. Originally from the Dominican Republic, he is an experienced world musician appearing with several rock and Latin jazz bands. Mr. Frías currently performs with local groups as a drummer and percussionist.

Naoko Tajima, Violin, was born in Japan in 1996 and began violin lessons at the age of four with the Suzuki Method. Completing the Suzuki Method before turning six, Naoko gave her first solo recital in Japan in 2002. She is a student of Ann Setzer at the Juilliard School Pre-College Division and is a fifth grader at the United Nations International School. In August, Naoko was a semi-finalist in the international competition Il Piccolo Violino Magico in Portogruaro, Italy.

Yuki Tajima, Piano, was born in Japan and studied the violin and piano from the age of four. She studied piano as a student in Boston and in London. In addition to teaching piano, Ms. Tajima performs both as soloist and accompanist.

Program cover design by Jennifer Marsh; program layout by Meg Simmons.

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR . . .

BEAUTY ON EARTH AND IN THE HEAVENS

A little candy store in Hoboken
Annie the Cat
Argentina
Birds and beasts
Camp Fowler
Delaware County, New York, where the river begins
Grandma Marcia
The Heights
My family and all the things God gives me each day
My pigs, who make me laugh every day
Neighbors who insist that I literally take steps around Pershing Field at least three times a week!
The shelter of your love, Ross
South Africa, home to my loving family embracing a future of peace
Tatra Mountains

THOSE WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE

A mother who not only encouraged but insisted that I "Take a Step"
Fanny Larned Moss, 1853-1887
Friends who have enjoyed laughter and music and are now part of the angelic host rejoicing
Perry Lee (Jones) Cummings, April 16, 1916 - November 19, 2006
The Reverend Dr. A. H. Holthusen, my grandfather

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

All who actively care for the environment
All who support and encourage and inspire
Emily and Peter
Having finally gotten our checks and balances back
Gregarious, gorgeous, gifted girlfriends
Joel, Josiah, Marianna, Christian and Simon
Katharyn
Light of God and the brightest and farthest star
My husband Bill, who fills me with happiness
My young "Gift of God" who gives me the gift of joy every day
Seasonal Health: Staying true to nature's cures

UPCOMING PERFORMANCES:

Concert in conjunction with the choir of the United Synagogue of Hoboken
Presenting Sephardic repertoire and other treasured songs of Judaica, including the rock opera "Jonah" by
Ben Gruder
February 24 and 25 in Hoboken

Voix des Femmes: Choral Offerings of France
Featuring Ashley Horne and Erasmia Voukelatos
May 11 in Hoboken and May 19 in New York City

Cantigas Women's Choir, Hoboken, New Jersey
To learn more about the choir and to view our concert calendar, visit: www.cantigas.net