

Cantigas Women's Choir presents
VOIX DES FEMMES

Joan Isaacs Litman, Director
with Ashley Horne and Erasmia Voukelatos
Gregory Eaton, Organ

All Saints Church, Hoboken, NJ
Friday, May 11, 2007

Church of the Holy Apostles, New York, NY
Saturday, May 19, 2007

Prelude: Choral, *from Quatre Pièces* Joseph Jongen (1873-1953)
Gregory Eaton, Organ

Cantique de Jean Racine Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Messe Basse Gabriel Fauré
Frances Marsh, Mezzo Soprano

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Sonate (Troisième) pour violon et piano Claude Debussy (1862-1918)
I. Allegro vivo
II. Intermède: Fantasque et léger
III. Finale: Très animé

Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso, Opus 28 Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)

Ashley Horne, Violin
Erasmia Voukelatos, Piano

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INTERMISSION

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Litanies à la Vierge Noire.....Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

Panis Angelicus.....César Franck (1822-1890)
Shaylin Schundler, Soprano

Je le Vous Diray Pierre Certon (1510-1572)

Mon Cœur Se Recommande à Vous.....Orlando di Lasso (c.1532-1594)

Poetry Recitation: SoufflesBirago Diop (1906-1989)
Suellen Newman (May 11)
Isabelle Monaco (May 19)

Breaths.....Ysaye Barnwell

I Am Sixteen Going on Seventeen Richard Rodgers (1902-1979)
Oscar Hammerstein II (1895-1960)
Ally Legregin, Soloist (May 11 only)
Winner of the 2007 Cantigas Young Women's Vocal Competition

Barcarole Jacques Offenbach (1819-1880), arr. F. Núñez

PROGRAM NOTES AND TRANSLATIONS

Cantique de Jean Racine: French musician and composer Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924) wrote and won first prize for this hymn while in his final year of schooling at the Ecole Niedermeyer in Paris. One of Fauré's most widely-performed compositions, the piece is the musical setting of a prayer by seventeenth century dramatist Jean Racine:

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.

Messe Basse: Fauré's Low (Shorter) Mass is the polished form of an earlier work, the Fisherman's Mass, written for the widows and orphans of deceased fisherman:

Kyrie: Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy.

Sanctus: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

Benedictus: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Agnus Dei: Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, grant us peace.

Litanies à la Vierge Noire: Francis Poulenc (1899-1963) wrote the Litanies in 1936, at a pivotal time in both his own life and the history of twentieth century France. Following the traumatic death of a close friend, Poulenc had returned to the Catholic Church and made a retreat to Notre-Dame de Roc-Amadour, to whom the Litanies are dedicated. At the same time, a dark shadow was falling across Europe. At the piece's climax, the singers implore Mary for help, recalling her role in other significant moments of French history. The anguish of the appeal was to be prophetic, given France's imminent fall to the Third Reich in May of 1940:

Lord, have mercy on us. Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Jesus Christ, hear us. Jesus Christ, grant our prayers. God the Father, our creator, have mercy on us. God the Son, our redeemer, have mercy on us. God the Holy Spirit, sanctifier, have mercy on us. Holy Trinity, one God, have mercy on us. Holy Virgin Mary, pray for us. Virgin, Queen and Patron, pray for us. Virgin, whom Zacchaeus the publican made us know and love, pray for us. Queen of the shire which Saint Martial consecrated and at which he celebrated his holy mysteries, Queen, before whom Saint Louis knelt to pray for the good fortune of France, pray for us. Queen, to whom Roland consecrated his sword, pray for us. Queen, whose banner won the battles, pray for us. Queen, whose hand delivered the captives, pray for us. Our Lady, whose pilgrimage is blessed with special favors, Our Lady, whom impiety and hatred have often sought to destroy, Our Lady, whom the peoples visit as in former times, pray for us. Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, pardon us. Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, grant our prayers. Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Our Lady, pray for us, that we may be worthy of Jesus Christ.

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.*

Je le Vous Diray: Parisian composer Pierre Certon (1510-1572) wrote masses, motets and witty chansons such as this popular choral work. The sung English translation by Russell Robinson is perhaps a little less cruel than the original text, which is more accurately translated here:

La, la, la, I don't dare, I don't dare, I don't dare tell it . . . I'll tell it to you! There's a man in our village who is jealous of his wife. He's not jealous without reason—he's been cuckolded by everyone! La, la, la . . . He's not jealous without reason, but he's also not at all good looking. He prepares to go to market, and if he takes her with him, everything goes wrong. La, la, la . . . I'll tell it to you!

Mon Cœur Se Recommande à Vous: Orlando di Lasso (c.1532-1594) was born in what is now Belgium, studied in Italy, and settled in Germany. He is credited with over two thousand vocal works in Latin, French, Italian and German, including this short choral work for treble voices:

I offer to you my heart, so full of longing and agony. At least, in spite of those who are jealous, let us say what farewells we can. My lips, which used to know how to smile and tell charming stories, now only curse those who have banished me from your eyes.

Breaths: In this setting of “Souffles,” a poem by Senegalese poet Birago Diop (1906-1989), Ysaye Barnwell of the *a cappella* ensemble Sweet Honey in the Rock beckons us into remembrance of “the ancestor’s breath” through music, 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 this crowd. The dead have a pact with the living.

Barcarole: Taken from Act IV of *Les Contes d'Hoffman*, this barcarole by Jacques Offenbach (1819-1880) is set in the Grand Canal in Venice. The famous beauty Guilietta is giving a party, and sings of love with Nicklausse:

Beautiful night, oh night of love, smile on our pleasures. Night, sweeter than the day! Oh beautiful night of love! Time flies, and without returning carries away our expressions of love, far from this happy oasis. Burning zephyrs, embrace us with your caresses! Give us your kisses. Ah!

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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 has appeared 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 completed in 2007. She is a founder and Music Director Emerita of Mustard Seed School in Hoboken, New Jersey.

Erasmia Voukelatos, Piano, 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 currently teaches piano and early elementary music, and is on the piano faculty at the United Nations International School. She enjoys collaborating with her husband, violinist Ashley Horne, and together they have founded My Music Garden, a music enrichment program for schools. Ms. Voukelatos 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, Ilannet Parisca, Claire Pedulla, Emily Petrick, Amanda Pickering, Cinthia Santos, Shaylin Schundler, Julie Sloane, Ulrike Talkenberg, Carla Wills

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

Alto: Katie Almroth, *Melanie Best, Rachel Chang, Ginger Donnan, Jan Gallagher, Silja Jaaskelainen, Frances Marsh, Rebecca Nichols, Florence Pape, Nancy Pedulla, Debbie Rothman, M e g S i m m o n s , Eileen Vanderheyden, Deborah Wenger

* Cantigas Board Members

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.

Shaylin Schundler, Soprano, is a freshman at Montclair Kimberley Academy, where she sings in the choir and recently appeared in the school production of *Cabaret*. A resident of Jersey City, New Jersey, Shaylin has studied voice with Laurel Unwin and—together with her mother Lynn—is in her first season with Cantigas.

GUEST ARTISTS:

Gregory Eaton, Organ, is Director of Music and Organist of St. Ann and the Holy Trinity Church, Brooklyn Heights, since 1993. At St. Ann's he plays the landmark E.M. Skinner organ of 1925, and can be heard most weeks of the year in the church's organ recital every Wednesday at 1:10 pm. He also serves as sub-dean of the Brooklyn Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. From 1984 to 2006, he served as Lecturer in Church Music of the General Theological Seminary. Prior to St. Ann's, Mr. Eaton served on the music staff of Trinity Church, Wall Street, and as Director of Music at Church of the Epiphany in Manhattan. In addition to his church music activities, Mr. Eaton is also, with David Hurd, one of the co-founders of Chelsea Winds recorder ensemble, and an occasional composer of both sacred and secular music.

Ashley Horne, Violin, is a native of Los Angeles and has appeared as a soloist and chamber musician around the world. A graduate of the Juilliard School, he has performed regularly with the American Symphony Orchestra, Brooklyn Philharmonic, Bard Festival Orchestra, Philharmonia Virtuosi and Westchester Symphony and he is a member of the hit Broadway musical *The Producers*. Filmgoers can see Mr. Horne in Eddie Murphy's *Coming to America*.

Ally Legregin, winner of the 2007 Cantigas Young Women's Vocal Competition, is a sophomore at Montclair Kimberley Academy. Ally participated in Action Theatre Conservatory's Teen NYC Showcases in 2004 and 2005, and was a student and frequent vocal soloist at Broadway Bound Theatrical and Dance Center. Ally appeared this year in her school's production of *Cabaret* and last year in *Little Shop of Horrors*. She was accepted three years in a row into NJPAC's Young Artist Institute for vocal training program and is a member of her school's select choir, The Mastersingers.

Isabelle Monaco is a native Parisian who has been living in the United States and teaching French for sixteen years.

Suellen Newman writes: The poem "Souffles" has offered me much comfort over the years. I am honored to have been asked to read it, and dedicate the poem to those who may also be remembering departed loved ones.

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Many thanks . . .

- to the congregations of All Saints' Episcopal Parish, Hoboken, the Rev. Geoffrey B. Curtiss, Rector, and Anahi Galante, Parish Administrator; and Church of the Holy Apostles, New York City, the Rev. William A. Greenlaw, Rector, John M. Ruiz, Operations Manager, for the use of their sanctuaries
- to French language coaches Catharine Baldwin, Anne Hy and Isabelle Monaco
- to James B. Isaacs, Jr. and Richard Lee for helping us contextualize our program's works
- to The Office for ad book printing services, to Angelika Fuellemann and Jennifer Marsh for ad book design and layout, and to all the Cantigas members who so faithfully solicited or placed ads
- to Mustard Seed School for our weekly rehearsal space
- and to Amelia Pargellis, who serves faithfully as administrative assistant each week

Cantigas Spring Outreach: A percentage of our spring concerts' proceeds will be donated to **The Street Haven Women's Choir**, a choir based in Toronto, Canada, whose purpose is to support destitute women who live or receive services at Street Haven Center and Shelter in

downtown Toronto. Founded by Geoffrey Butler, Music Director of All Saints Roman Catholic Church and Artistic Director of the Toronto Choral Society, the choir is now in its sixth season. The choir's selections range from Mozart to folk music and, in addition to many cameo appearances, they perform annually with the renowned Toronto Choral Society. Cantigas is honored to support the work of the The Street Haven Women's Choir.

Past Outreaches:

Ashiané Women's Services, Iran (2005); New Orleans Children's Choir, New Orleans, LA (2006)

Program cover design by Carolyn Hoberman; program layout by Meg Simmons.

Cantigas Women's Choir, Hoboken, New Jersey

To learn more about the choir and to view our concert calendar visit www.cantigas.net