



The Peninsula Women's Chorus Presents "Les Sirènes"

For immediate release

March 23, 2009

Palo Alto, California - Fall under the spell of the Peninsula Women's Chorus (PWC) as they sing incantations, luring in listeners with their spring concert series "Les Sirènes." The lush title piece, "Les Sirènes," is a masterwork by early 20th century composer Lili Boulanger, who won the coveted Prix de Rome at the age of 19, the first woman to do so. The concert also premieres PWC's newly-commissioned piece, "Martes," by local composer Joseph Gregorio. In addition, the PWC continues its Landmark Series, celebrating innovative compositions for the treble voice, highlighting Arne Mellnäs' avant-garde "Aglepta." The program also includes Francis Poulenc's charming "Petites Voix" and Carol Barnett's amusing "Song of Perfect Propriety," among other choral delights. The concerts will take place on May 16th at St. Patrick's Seminary in Menlo Park, and on May 17th at Mission Santa Clara on the Santa Clara University campus.

The PWC-commissioned piece "Martes," from local composer Joseph Gregorio, is a setting of a Spanish proverb: On Tuesday, don't get married, don't go on a trip, and don't leave your house! Gregorio's rhythmic setting of this superstitious yet friendly advice fluctuates between self-righteousness, playfulness, and sincere warmth, culminating in a sonorous and insistent ending.

"Aglepta" is based on a 19th century Swedish invocation to drive away enemies. It pioneered an innovative relationship between text and music, with fragmented words used in an original succession of pitches and vocal effects, and reassembled only at the end of the piece, where the text is revealed in a magical duet of spoken voice and whisper. The piece was initially controversial—at its introduction as a compulsory piece in a 1970 children's chorus competition it was rejected by many participating choirs. However, the Tapolia Choir from Finland chose to give "Aglepta" its premier performance in the program, and the piece has become a landmark composition for treble voices ever since.

In "Oblivion," commissioned in 2007 by the Piedmont Choirs, Venezuelan composer Cristián Grases juxtaposes two texts: the first verse of the Dies Irae from the Latin Requiem Mass and Proverb 46 by Spanish poet Antonio Machado. In the latter, Machado describes a dream in which God shouts: "Be alert!" But then the poet realizes God too is sleeping, and shouts: "Wake up, God!" The piece ends with a soft but urgent plea to wake up.

Saturday, May 16, 2009, 4:00 p.m.

St. Patrick's Seminary
320 Middlefield Road, Menlo Park, CA 94025

Sunday, May 17, 2009, 2:30 p.m.

Mission Santa Clara, Santa Clara University
500 El Camino Real, Santa Clara, CA 95053

Tickets available through our website www.pwchorus.org
General Admission \$18 advance purchase or \$20 at concert
Student/Senior \$15 advance purchase or \$18 at concert

For more information, please visit www.pwchorus.org/concerts.html or call (650) 327-3095.

The Peninsula Women's Chorus (PWC) is a 50-voice non-profit 501c3 choir that performs challenging contemporary and classical music locally, nationally and abroad. It is considered the premier women's vocal ensemble in the San Francisco Bay Area. Founded in 1966, the PWC has made a significant impact on the emergence of women's choral music. The PWC is a two-time winner of Chorus America's prestigious ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming and has performed three times by invitation at the national American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) convention. The PWC has also won 3rd place in the 2006 Bela Bartok Choral Competition. Dr. Martín Benvenuto has directed the PWC since the fall of 2003.

For further information about the PWC, please visit our website at www.pwchorus.org.