

Chopin

Very slow

Largo from "New World" Symphony

Dvorak

# PENINSULA WOMEN'S CHORUS

presents

# SONG OF SURVIVAL

Music in a  
Prison Camp

A Women's  
Vocal Orchestra

Dr. Patricia Hennings, Director

INTRODUCTION by prison camp survivor HELEN COLIJN

Six weeks after Pearl Harbor, Japan attacked the Dutch East Indies, a vast archipelago between Australia and Japan. On March 8, 1942, the Dutch colony capitulated. Japan began interning all white civilians who were nationals of the Netherlands or of other countries at war with Japan: whites had to be isolated from the native population as part of Japan's plan for a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. A hundred thousand white civilians were interned -- many for the duration of the occupation which was three-and-a-half years. Men's camps were separate from women's camps.

On South Sumatra was a camp for six hundred women and children. Three quarters of them were Dutch. One fourth were British and Australians shipwrecked on evacuation vessels from Singapore. Living conditions in this camp were very bad, yet the women formed a "vocal orchestra." Thirty women sang orchestral and piano music. The driving force behind this endeavor were Margaret Dryburgh, a Presbyterian missionary, and Norah Chambers, a graduate of the Royal Academy of Music in London.

From memory, Margaret Dryburgh wrote down pages and pages of music -- baroque to contemporary. Together the two women rearranged the scores for choral singing, condensing a fifteen-minute movement of a symphony into a five-minute choral work without losing a sense of balance and flow. Unless needed for vocal ease, the new scores remained faithful to the original keys.

The choice of syllables to be sung was Norah Chambers'. To keep the program a surprise for the other captives, she rehearsed the orchestra in a sooty shed behind the kitchen -- without as much as a pitch pipe for an aid.

When on December 27, 1943, the Largo of Dvořák's New World Symphony soared through the barracks, many internees wept. They had not expected so much beauty amid the hunger, the bedbugs, the rats, and the filth of the camp. The concert helped to renew the women's sense of human dignity, of being stronger than the enemy.

The mortality rate in the camp was high -- 37.1%. The concerts ceased when half the singers had died. One prisoner later said, "If it hadn't been for that music, I doubt I could have hung on. I hope Miss Dryburgh knew, before she died in that awful last camp, how much she gave us with her musical memory."

At war's end, camp survivors scattered across the world. In 1980, Antoinette Colijn Mayer, now living in Washington, D.C., donated her copybook containing 30 vocal orchestra arrangements to the Music Library of Stanford University. Here the manuscript was treated with preservatives and kept in a specially-made airtight box. So that the Library's Archive of Recorded Sound might have a tape for its collection, the Peninsula Women's Chorus, under the sponsorship of Foothill College, rehearsed vocal orchestra music during their first quarter of 1982 and gave three stirring concerts. That was the first time the music was performed since the war.

Now the Peninsula Women's Chorus is singing the vocal orchestra music again, and is happy to welcome to the May 7 concert nine of the original vocal orchestra members who came from near and far:

Conductor : Norah Chambers (England)

Second Sopranos : Sister Catharina (Indonesia)  
Alette Colijn Douglas (California)  
Antoinette Colijn Mayer (Washington, D.C.)  
Sigrid Stronck (The Netherlands)

First Altos : Betty Jeffrey (Australia)  
Audrey Owen (England)  
Mickey Syer (Australia)  
Flo Trotter Syer (Australia)

Introduction by Helen Colijn

I	Largo from "New World" Symphony	Antonín Dvořák
II	Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring Pastoral Symphony from "The Messiah"	Johann Sebastian Bach arr. by Myra Hess George Frideric Handel
III	Minuet in G	Ludwig van Beethoven
IV	Prelude No. 15, the "Raindrop" Waltz No. 15 Unfinished Symphony, First Movement	Frédéric Chopin Johannes Brahms Franz Schubert
V	Andante Cantabile Morning from "Peer Gynt Suite"	Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky Edvard Grieg
VI	Rêverie	Claude Debussy
VII	Humoresque Menuet à l'Antique	Antonín Dvořák Ignacy Jan Paderewski
VIII	Londonderry Air Country Gardens	Traditional arr. by Percy Grainger
IX	The Captive's Hymn (Sumatra, 1942)	Margaret Dryburgh

April 21, 1983	Thursday	7:45 p.m.	The Sequoias (by invitation only) 1400 Geary Boulevard, San Francisco
April 30, 1983	Saturday	8:00 p.m.	First Unitarian Church (donation) Franklin and Geary, San Francisco
May 7, 1983	Saturday	8:00 p.m.	St. Bede's Episcopal Church, 2650 Sand Hill Road, Menlo Park (invitation only)
May 11, 1983	Wednesday	7:30 p.m.	Grace Lutheran Church (donation) Waverley and Loma Verde, Palo Alto

PENINSULA WOMEN'S CHORUS

First Soprano: Colleen Baker, Laura Brown, Sue Casey, Deanna Dejan, Naoma Evans, Lorraine Hultquist, Leslie Keenan, Moira O'Hara, Lois Prior, Marcie Dendy, Carolyn Rutherford, Elizabeth Thompson

Second Soprano: Juanda Benson, Kathleen Benson, Ellen Burton, Jan Cummins, Joanne Hiratsuka, Carole Kennedy, Valera Lee, Andra Marynowski, Kathy Melonakos, Robin Petersen, Paula Schneider, Gail Schwettman, Bonnie Senko, Barbaranne Shepard, Carol Stevens, Kathie Underdal

First Alto: Susan Almquist, Loretta Ames, Dolores Baldauf, Dorothea Evans, Christina Gaines, Sue Irvine, Kathy Johnson, Barbara Lee, Mary Jo Lindes, Mary Lorey, Merrilyn Mecham, Mimi Patterson, Kathy Plock, Virginia Pollard, Betty Robison, Mary Shaw, Claire Taylor

Second Alto: Mary Ager, Anne Anderson, Alice Bailey, Anna Berman, Taffy Chrisman, Gladys Fiske, Sue Humphries, Sandra Jones, Katy Moore, Gerrie Roe, Lea Ryder, Elizabeth Scroggs, Natalie Shiras, Elizabeth Soreff, Dana Snodgrass, Barbara Sproat, Dolores Stevens, Joan Winsor

Rehearsal Accompanist: Artis Wodehouse

This evening we are asking you to listen to something quite new, we are sure - a choir of women's voices trying to reproduce some of the well-known music usually given by an orchestra or a pianist. The idea of making ourselves into a Vocal Orchestra came to us when songs were difficult to find and remember, and we longed to hear again some of the wonderful melodies and harmonies that uplifted our souls in days gone by. So we make our humble attempt to let you hear some of the masterpieces of the musical world as well as we can remember them -

Brusky

Country Garden  
(Hondachi) dance

THE CAPTIVE'S HYMN

Words and music by Margaret Dryburgh

Father, in captivity we would lift our prayer to Thee;  
Keep us ever in Thy love, grant that daily we may prove  
Those who place their trust in Thee more than conquerors may be.

Give us patience to endure, keep our hearts serene and pure;  
Grant us courage, charity, greater faith, humility,  
Readiness to own Thy will, be we free or captives still.

For our country we would pray, in this hour be Thou her stay;  
Pride and selfishness forgive, teach her by Thy law to live;  
By Thy grace may all men see that true greatness comes from Thee.

For our loved ones we would pray, be their guardian night and day;  
From all dangers keep them free, banish all anxiety;  
May they trust us to Thy care, know that Thou our pains doth share.

May the day of freedom dawn, peace and justice be reborn;  
Grant that nations loving Thee o'er the world may brothers be,  
Cleansed by suffering, know rebirth, see Thy Kingdom come on earth.

(written in concentration camp on Sumatra in 1942)

Sponsored by Foothill College  
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