

Spring 2008

Peninsula
WOMEN'S CHORUS

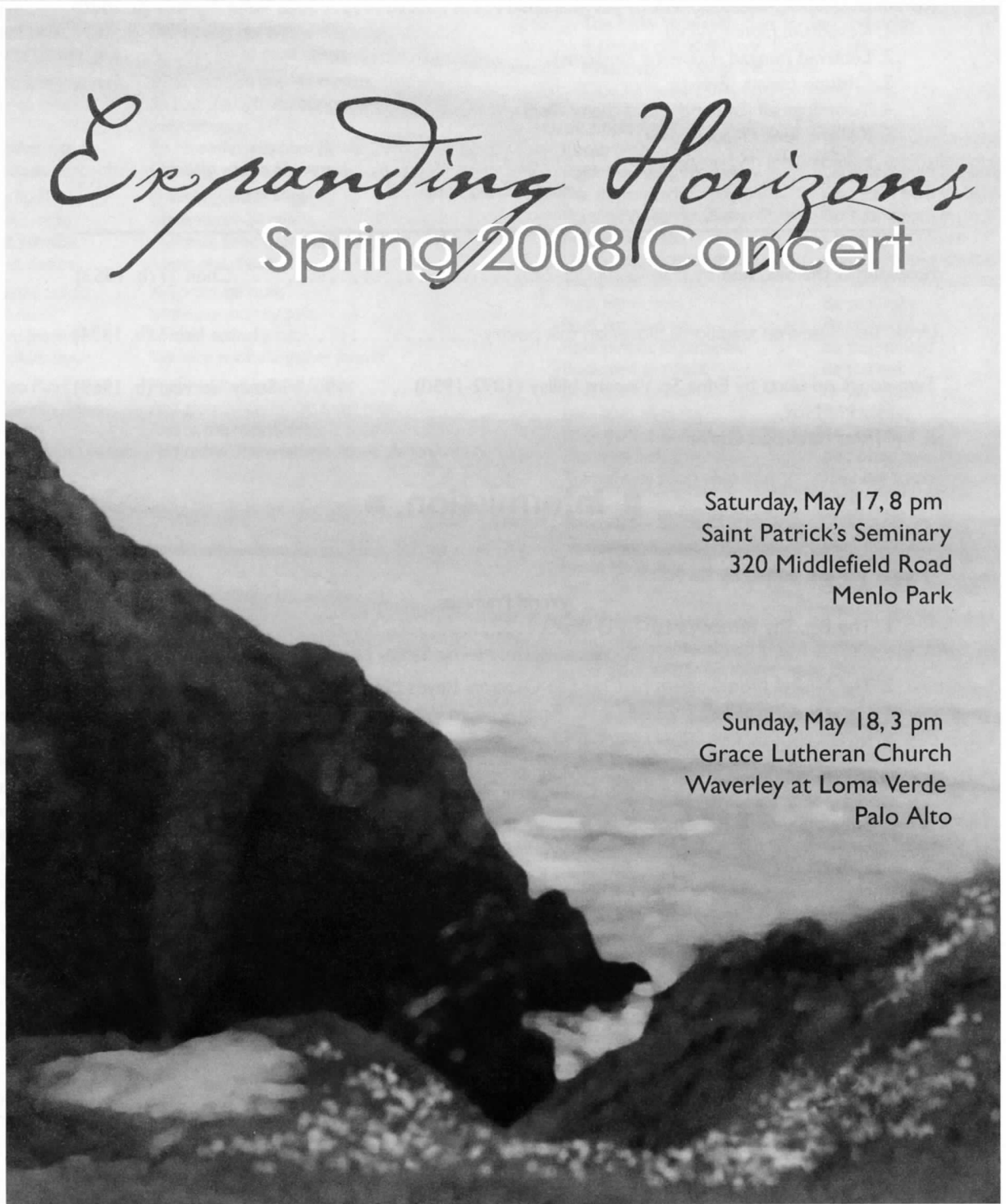
Marín Benvenuto
artistic director

Susan Soehner
accompanist

Expanding Horizons
Spring 2008 Concert

Saturday, May 17, 8 pm
Saint Patrick's Seminary
320 Middlefield Road
Menlo Park

Sunday, May 18, 3 pm
Grace Lutheran Church
Waverley at Loma Verde
Palo Alto



2005 2011792

■ program ■

Ave Maris Stella, chant ascribed to St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1152)
Soloists – Beatrice Fanning, Amy Hunn, Cathleen Kalcic

Ave Maris Stella Chan Ka Nin (b.1949)
Soloists – Bonnie Senko, Deanne Tucker

Kevadkillud (*Spring Sketches*), text by Jaan Kaplinski Veljo Tormis (b. 1930)

- 1. Kevadtuul (*Spring Wind*)
- 2. Lehtivad pungad (*Flowering Blossoms*)
- 3. Öhtune taevas (*Evening Sky*)
- 4. Toominga all (*Under the Bird-cherry Tree*)
- 5. Kollane leek (*Yellow Flame*)
- 6. Hilisdevadel (*In Late Spring*)

Soloist – Emily Jiang

*Looking at the Sea, text by Cao Cao (155-220) Chen Yi (b. 1953)

Urok, text based on traditional Slovenian folk poetry Lojze Lebič (b. 1934)

Two songs on texts by Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950) Stacy Garrop (b. 1969)

- Pity Me Not
- *Thou Famished Grave

■ intermission ■

*Haiku Stories, edited by Karen Linford

World Premiere

- 1. The Big, Shy Moon, poem by Dulce Miriam Helmy
soloists – Miriam Helmy, Stacey Lewis
- 2. The Nickel Moon, poem by Christian Giovanni Reyes Monares, Jr. Laura Wise
Piano – Laura Wise
- 3. Nature, poem by Xitlalli Yamileett Martinez Tal Peleg
Marimba – Kim Venaas

*Wind Songs, poem by Renée Broussard Karen Linford (b. 1967)

World Premiere

*Dos Cantos Ron Jeffers (b. 1943)

- Corazón de Espinas, poem by Eduardo Villalta
- Hay un Río, poem by Michael Espinoza

*Two selections from *This wonderful feeling* Joan Szymko (b. 1957)

- In my quiet place, poem by Marty Whitney
 - Purple, poem by Marty Whitney
- Marimba – Kim Venaas*

*Falling Rain, poem by Hannah de Kleer Brian Holmes (b. 1946)

*Rabbit Skunk, poem by Jennifer Brissman Brian Holmes

* commissioned by the Peninsula Women's Chorus

■ texts & translations ■

Ave Maris Stella, Chan Ka Nin

Ave, maris stella Dei Mater alma, Atque semper Virgo, Felix caeli porta.	<i>Hail, Star of the Sea, Loving Mother of God, And Virgin immortal, Heaven's blissful portal.</i>
Sumens illud Ave Gabrielis ore, Funda nos in pace, Mutans Evae nomen.	<i>Receiving that "Ave" From the mouth of Gabriel, Establish us in peace, Reversing the name of "Eva."</i>
Solve vincla reis, Profer lumen caecis, Mala nostra pelle, Bona cuncta posce.	<i>Break the chains of sinners, Bring light to the blind, Drive away our evils, And ask for all good things.</i>
Monstra te esse matrem, Sumat per te preces,	<i>Show that you are His mother, So that through you our prayers may be accepted</i>
Qui pro nobis natus Tulit esse tuus.	<i>By Him who was born for us, Choosing you as His vessel.</i>
Virgo singularis, Inter omnes mitis, Nos culpis solutos, Mites fac et castos.	<i>O incomparable Virgin, Meek above all others, Make us, freed from our faults, Meek and chaste.</i>
Vitam praesta puram, Iter para tutum, Ut videntes Jesum, Semper collaetemur.	<i>Keep our life pure, Make our journey safe, So that, seeing Jesus, We may rejoice together forever.</i>
Sit laus Deo Patri, Summo Christo decus, Spiritui Sancto Tribus honor unus. Amen.	<i>Praise be to God the Father, And glory to Christ the most High, And to the Holy Spirit, And to the Three be one honor. Amen.</i>

Kevadkillud (Spring Sketches), translation by Ritva Poom, Veljo Tormis

1. **Kevadtuul** (Spring Wind)

Sulavad tuules tuules kajakad ja kõik hääled Sulavad tuules tuules avarus meri	<i>Vanishing windwards windwards ocean gulls and all voices Vanishing windwards windwards measureless ocean</i>
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2. **Lehtivad pungad** (Flowering Blossoms)

Ees pingil raamat seljataga õunapuul lehtivad pungad	<i>Books waiting resting but behind me apple tree's flowering blossoms</i>
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3. **Õhtune taevas** (Evening Sky)

Pungades okste läbi paistab tohtu õhtune taevas	<i>Budding there through the branches gleaming massive the arc of the night sky</i>
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4. **Toominga all** (Under the Bird-cherry Tree)

Istuksin terve öö õites toominga all aga need sääsed	<i>I would sit all the eve 'neath the rowans abloom oh but these bugbites</i>
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5. **Kollane leek** (Yellow Flame)

Murdunud mõõgal näe lehvib kollane leek Päike lööb trummi	<i>Broken the swordflag now dances fiery the flame sun is a drummer</i>
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6. **Hiliskevadel** (In Late Spring)

Piip ammu kustus haopinul suigatas ätt Kägu veel kukub Kukku	<i>Pipe long since languished geezer on firewood now naps Cuckoo still calling Cuckoo</i>
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Looking at the Sea, Chen Yi

Up to the stony hill on eastern shore,
I am looking at the boundless sea.
The water is running calm,
And islands stand in between.
Tree on tree grows from peak to peak;
Grass on grass looks lush layer upon layer.
When the autumn wind blows drear and bleak;
The waves surge up greater and greater:
The sun by day, the moon by night,
Appear to rise up from the deep.
The Milky Way with stars looked so bright,
It comes out all the way from the sea.
How happy I feel at this scene!
Ode to the sea that symbolizes my ideal.

Urok, Lojze Lebič

Urok! Pojdi, raz mozg na kost Raz meso pojdi na meso Pojdi na dlako raz dlako Na zeleno trato Devet komolcev globoko v tla Tam pojdi na tulec Bodi bel al' bela, Bodi črn ali črna, Bodi pirhast ali pirhasta, Bodi rdeč ali rdeča, Bodi zelen al' zelena, Bodi gluha ali gluha, Bodi mutast ali mutasta, oj! Huda kri beži ti Ti imaš svoj strup nase vzeti Urok! Tam pojdi v tla devet komolcev Tam pojdi na tulec Huda kri beži ti, Bež urok beži!	<i>Urok! Go take it from the bone marrow Go take it from the flesh Go take it from the hair On the green plain Dig nine elbows deep in the ground Go to the end of the tap root Be you white Be you black Be you spotted Be you red Be you green Be you deaf Be you mute, oh! Bad blood runs in you You have taken venom upon yourself Urok! Go nine elbows deep into the ground Go to the end of the tap root Bad blood begone from you Begone, urok, begone!</i>
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Pity Me Not, Stacy Garrop

Pity me not because the light of day
At close of day no longer walks the sky;
Pity me not for beauties passed away
From field and thicket as the year goes by.
Pity me not the waning of the moon,
Or that the ebbing tide goes out to sea,
Or that a man's desire is hushed so soon,
and you no longer look with love on me.
This have I always known: Love is no more
Than the wide blossom which the wind assails,
Than the great tide that treads the shifting shore,
Strewing fresh wreckage gathered in the gales.
Pity me that the heart is slow to learn
What the swift mind beholds at every turn.

Thou Famished Grave, Stacy Garrop

Thou famished grave, I will not fill thee yet,
Roar though thou dost, I am too happy here;
Gnaw thine own sides, fast on; I have no fear
Of thy dark project, but my heart is set
On living - I have heroes to beget
Before I die; I will not come anear
Thy dismal jaws for many a splendid year;
Till I be old, I aim not to be eat.
I cannot starve thee out: I am thy prey
And thou shalt have me; but I dare defend
That I can stave thee off; and I dare say,
What with the life I lead, the force I spend,
I'll be but bones and jewels on that day,
And leave thee hungry even in the end.

Haiku Stories

1. The Big Shy Moon

The moon is like a big yellow banana,
but sometimes it's like a watermelon,
Green with little dots on it.
The moon is like a donut with sugar,
but sometimes it's like a great big plate!

2. The Nickel Moon

The moon is like a shiny nickel,
But sometimes it's like my heart.
The moon is like a white plate.
But sometimes it's like a diamond.

3. Nature

The bunny is white and cute.
The tree is green,
the river is blue.

Wind Songs, Karen Linford

Listen to the wind
singing in the trees.
Close your eyes and you can hear its secrets.
Swirling songs,
Songs of chasing crunchy crunchy leaves upon the busy streets!
Songs of blowing papers and hats high in the sky,
Wind Songs.
Close your eyes, and you can hear it sing.

Dos Cantos, Ron Jeffers

Corazón de Espinas

Hay un corazón que tiene espinas. *There's a heart that has thorns.*
Está diciendo que el amor duele. *It is saying that love hurts.*
Es de color verde *The color of it is green*
pero se llama corazón de espinas. *but it is called the heart of thorns.*

Hay un Río

Hay un río *There is a river*
que se mira como el cielo *that looks like the sky.*
Hay un cielo *There is a sky*
que se mira como el río *that looks like the river*
donde los sapos viven. *where frogs live.*
El río sueña. *The river dreams.*
El río sueña *The river dreams*
que personas van a nadar en ella. *about people swimming in her.*

In my quiet place, Joan Szymko

In my quiet place everything is quiet.
Quiet as a butterfly on silent wings.
Quiet as a leaf falling through the air.
Quiet makes me feel like I am the only one on earth.
The first to find this wonderful feeling inside me.

Purple Night, Joan Szymko

Purple as a purple sky on a Sunday night.
Purple as a dark purple dress.
A purple dress on a purple night, a purple world
and a purple bird in flight.

Falling Rain, Brian Holmes

I am the rain
I want to rain
I want to fall
and dance
upon the roofs
and little hills
Let me be free
Let me be free
Let me fall
Let me fall
Let me rain!

Rabbit Skunk, Brian Holmes

Rabbit Rabbit Rabbit come out of your hole
Skipity scopity skipity scop skipity scopity
hop hop hop come out come out
little rabbit come out Come Out.
Please I will grant you a wish for a fish
a million bugs for a great big hug.
Okay, I'll come out. SPRAY
ehew, gross, a skunk
oh man, now I have to soak in
tomato juice.

■ pwc chorus members ■

First Soprano

Stephanie Batties
Mardie Daul
Renee Evans
Kathryn Feetham
MaryLouise Meckler
Mercidita Navarro
Kyle Sofman
Lorena Soulodre
Judy Sweet
Tricia Tani
Josephine Taubert
Mary Tusa

Second Soprano

Sara Asher
Vicki Brown
Penny Er
Beatrice Fanning
Yenyi Fu
Carolyn Hayes
Amy Hunn
Elise Kent
Stacey Lewis
Andra Marynowski
Carole McCreery
Robin Mulgannon
Kyoko Oishi
Barbara Pforzheimer
Bonnie Senko

First Alto

Sarah Etheredge
Ann Hillesland
Emily Jiang
Cathleen Kalcic
Betsy Landergren
Kathy MacLaury
Roselena Martinez
Joanne Hiratsuka Petersen
Kathy Plock
Jan Schonhaut
Gail Schwettman
Maria Timatkova
Deanne Tucker
Marsha Wells

Second Alto

Anne Anderson
Joan Angelopoulos
Tricia Baldwin
Grace Chen
Lisa Collart
Beverly Colquhoun
May Goodreau
Lynne Haynes-Tucker
Valerie Hornstein
Sue Irvine
Martha Morgan
Gerri Roe

■ program notes ■

poetry & music project

In spring 1999, Peninsula Women's Chorus artistic director Patricia Hennings had a dream—of poets working with school children to help them write poetry that would be set to music for the Chorus. When PWC alumna Mary Lorey read about this dream in a PWC newsletter, she and her family immediately offered their financial support, and the dream became a reality. By summer 1999, PWC had contracted with California Poets in the Schools (CPITS), the largest writers-in-the-schools program in the nation. CPITS poet/teachers worked with five PWC members who were teachers in Bay Area schools to plan an exciting and productive fall semester of poetry writing by 390 students in 17 classrooms. Composers Ron Jeffers, Joan Szymko, and Brian Holmes delighted in the works of the young poets and chose some of their poems as the lyrics for the music presented here.

PWC is excited to continue our dream of nurturing fine arts education in our local schools. In collaboration with Tapestry Arts of San Jose (whose poetry residency at Escuela Popular was funded in part by a grant from the City of San Jose and the California Arts Council), we premier "Wind Songs," music by Karen Linford, former interim director of Cantabile Youth Singers of Los Altos, set to a poem by student Renée Broussard of Escuela Popular in San Jose. Expanding on the original project, we are delighted to also present "Haiku Stories," the work of young student composers and poets who have collaborated in the creative process to produce musical works as well as poetry. Under the direction of Ms. Linford, Cantabile students Miriam Helmy, Laura Wise, and Tal Peleg composed music to poetry by third graders Dulce, Christian Giovanni Reyes Monares, Jr., and Xitlalli Yamilett Martinez of Escuela Popular. These three poets worked under the guidance of teacher Laura Oliver. Continuing our theme of springtime and nature, PWC is proud to foster the work of these budding young artists.

young poets' biographies

Jennifer Brissman ("Rabbit Skunk"), a junior at San Mateo high school, is thrilled to see the poem she wrote in 3rd grade performed by the Peninsula Women's Chorus. Since then, Jennifer has been performing in musical theater and wishes to pursue it in college. Recently, Jennifer appeared as Maria in *West Side Story* at San Mateo High School. She has performed throughout the Bay Area with companies such as TheatreWorks in Mountain View, and Broadway By the Bay in San Mateo.

Hannah de Kleer wrote her poem "Falling Rain" in 2000 while a 5th grade student at Springer School in Mountain View. Hannah is currently a first-year undergraduate student at the University of Chicago. She is an active violist on campus, playing in the University Symphony Orchestra and in various chamber ensembles. She also studies privately with Michael Hall and recently performed a recital of music by Hummel, Hindemith, and Bartók. Academically, although undecided on a major, Hannah enjoys studying linguistics and foreign languages and hopes to pursue studies in music theory and musicology.

Eduardo Villalta ("Corazón de Espinas") is a junior at San Mateo High School.

Michael Espinoza ("Hay un Rio") and **Marty Whitney** ("In My Quiet Place," "Purple Night") no longer reside in the Bay Area.

young composers' biographies

Miriam Helmy is a freshman at Gunn High School and has been singing since she learned how to talk. She loves to tell stories through songs, poems, and books—or just about anything she can come up with—and loves writing them and illustrating them even more. Miriam's favorite musical artist is Imogen Heap, and her favorite graphic artist is Hiromu Arakawa. She loves Arabic music and Japanese graphic novels. She has only started writing down her songs this year.

Laura Wise is 16 years old and a junior at Mountain View High School. This is her sixth season with the Cantabile Youth Singers, and she appeared with them at their 2005 Carnegie Hall debut. Laura enjoys performing, especially opera, and has sung with Opera San José, West Bay Opera, and Peninsula Teen Opera. Also, she took part in the Washington National Opera's Institute for Young Singers during the summer of 2007. She has played the piano since she was six and is working on a set of pieces for the instrument.

Tal Peleg is 13 years old and was born in Israel. He lives with his parents, Alex and Mor, and his sisters, Adi and Yael, and attends Gideon Hausner Jewish Day School. Tal has always been fascinated with music. He started playing the piano and composing music when he was in second grade. Tal started singing in the school choir in third grade and in 2006 he joined Bat-Shir choir in Israel. He has been singing in Cantabile Youth Choir since September 2007. Tal likes to compose classical music. Sometimes, it is the music that comes to his mind and he writes it down. Other times, he thinks about topics from his every-day life, such as Torah studies and his sister's nursery rhymes, and they inspire him to compose music.

composers' and poets' biographies

A native of China, **Chen Yi** was born into a family of doctors with a strong interest in music. She began violin and piano studies at the age of three. When the Cultural Revolution overtook China in the 1960s, she was sent into the countryside for two years of forced labor and took her instrument along. When the school system was restored in 1977, Chen enrolled in the Beijing Central Conservatory, where she studied composition. In 1983, Chen composed the first Chinese viola concerto (*Xian Shi*) and in 1986, she became the first woman in China to receive the degree of master of arts in composition. In 1986, Chen came to the United States to further her musical studies. In 1993, she received a doctor of musical arts, with distinction, from Columbia University. In the same year, Dr. Chen was appointed, through the Meet the Composer New Residencies program, to a three-year term as composer-in-residence for the Women's Philharmonic, Chanticleer, and the Aptos Creative Arts Program, all located in the greater Bay Area. Dr. Chen has received numerous awards, prizes and fellowships, including the Lili Boulanger Award, the Adventurous Programming Award from ASCAP (for Music From China), the Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Chen Yi has built a world-wide reputation with her ability to fuse Eastern and Western cultures musically. With "Looking at the Sea," Chen sets the poetry of the ancient military warlord, **Cao Cao** (155-220 AD), and mirrors the elegance and emotion of the poem with lilting melodic lines clothed in close-knit harmonies. She ends with a prayer-like homophonic "ode to the sea that symbolizes my ideal."

Besides being a brilliant political strategist, Cao Cao had a deep interest in literature and sought to express himself in writing. His work, and that of his sons, changed the style of poetry of the time—a famous era known as the Jian'an period when these "military poets" re-shaped Chinese literature to be heroic, emotionally impassioned and characterized by a directness and simple purity of language.

Lojze Lebič was born in 1934 in Prevalje, Carinthia (Slovenia). He studied archeology at the University of Ljubljana and conducting at the Academy of Music. Later Lebič established himself as a conductor of various chamber choirs and won numerous awards for his work. Moving towards composition, Lebič developed his own style balancing his interests in modern music and traditional folk music and culture.

In "Urok," Lebič fuses the traditional with modern with his use of repetitious chanting in short, motivic patterns punctuated with stones or sticks. Here, we revisit our primal connection to nature and the earth. Lebič also uses a variety of avant garde choral techniques connecting the three incantations against swelling, snakebite, and disease from the opening soaring folk chant to musical improvisation with sharp cries and eerie wailing.

The text of "Urok" is based on traditional Slovenian folk poetry. The words, which perhaps in the distant past held deep magic for those who uttered them, have become incorporated into a game in which children take on the role of *uroki* (little wizards), chanting spells to protect against evil. Using sticks and stones to enhance the magic, they cast the spell "Urok" to rid the body of venom and disease—to remove evil from the innermost part of the body, the bone marrow, the bone, the flesh, and finally, to take it out through the hair. Once the "bad blood" has been effectively eliminated, "Urok" is invoked to bury it "nine elbows deep into the ground."

Stacy Garrop has received several awards including the 2006/2007 Detroit Symphony Orchestra's Elaine Lebenbom Memorial Award, Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble's 2006/07 Harvey Gaul Competition, 2005 Raymond and Beverly Sackler Music Composition Prize, 2005 and 2001 Barlow Endowment commissions, and a 2002 Artists Fellowship Award from the Illinois Arts Council. Dr. Garrop was composer-in-residence of Chicago's Music in the Loft chamber music series in 2004/05 and again in 2006. Her works have been performed by the Minnesota Orchestra, Illinois Symphony Orchestra, Civic Orchestra of Chicago, Omaha Symphony, Charleston Symphony Orchestra, Amarillo Symphony, Artaria Quartet, Biava Quartet, Enso Quartet, Callisto Ensemble, ICE, Lincoln Trio, Orion Ensemble, Chicago a cappella, Princeton Singers, and Volti. She has attended residences at the Aspen Music Festival, Atlantic Center for the Arts, Banff Centre for the Arts, MacDowell Colony, Millay Colony, Ragdale Foundation, Wellesley Composers Conference, and Yaddo. Theodore Presser Company and Hildegard Publishing Company have published her works. Dr. Garrop is an associate professor in composition at the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University. For more information, please visit her website at www.garrop.com.

Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950) is well known for her sonnets, many of which have death and loss of love as their theme. Growing up in Camden, Maine, with its beautiful stretches of seacoast, Millay also took much of her inspiration from nature. In "Pity Me Not," written in 1923, Millay compares the ever-changing forces of nature with the passing of love: ". . . the waning of the moon. . . the ebbing tide. . . nor that a man's desire is hushed so soon, and you no longer look with love on me." Ms. Garrop's stark, disjointed opening chords immediately set the mood and continue under the melancholy lyric. Interestingly, the poem was written at a relatively happy time of her life—Millay had found love and a measure of success in her writing, having just won the Pulitzer Prize for poetry, the first woman to be awarded this honor.

With "Thou Famished Grave" (1939), Millay thumbs her nose at death: "I will not fill thee yet. . . gnaw thine own sides, fast on, fast on, my heart is set on living. . ." (here Garrop emphasizes the defiance and instructs the musicians to sing as if dancing fearlessly). We might suppose the inspiration for this work was Millay's own recurring battles with illness throughout her life and her troubles arose from the intensity with which she lived and worked. In the end, by the age of 58, Millay had "spent her force." She leaves us with this epitaph:

*My candle burns at both ends;
It will not last the night;
But ah, my foes, and oh, my friends—
It gives a lovely light!*

Karen Linford's career has included varied experiences as a singer, conductor, and composer. Ms. Linford received her undergraduate training in music education from Chico State University, where she studied under Dr. Sharon Paul and was recognized for her work in music and composition. She received a master of music degree in choral conducting from the University of Oregon in Eugene and has also taken courses in conducting from Helmuth Rilling, Charlene Archibeque, and Ralph Allwood. She was a member of the Oregon Bach Festival Choir for five years and has been a mezzo-soprano soloist with the University of Oregon Symphony, the Central Oregon Symphony, and the Sunriver Music Festival. Her numerous teaching experiences have included high school (Acalanes HS and Carlmont HS), children's chorus (Cantabile Youth Singers and Contra-Costa Children's Chorus), and adult choirs (Peninsula Women's Chorus). In the spring of 2005 and 2006, she was commissioned to work with several Bay Area schools, setting music to the poems of 4th and 5th graders. Her piece "High Flight" (Santa Barbara Music Publishing Company) was recently performed at the American Choral Directors Association Southwestern Division Convention.

Ron Jeffers has achieved musical renown in four different areas of accomplishment: as a teacher, a choral conductor, a composer, and a publisher. For many years he was Director of Choral Activities at Oregon State University, and also taught at the University of Choral Directing in Corvallis, Oregon. He recently retired from both of those academic positions, and now devotes himself full time to managing earthsongs, a company based in Corvallis and co-founded by Mr. Jeffers that publishes choral music from other cultures in their original languages. In 1998, earthsongs celebrated its tenth anniversary with the introduction of three new pieces from Inner Mongolia. Mr. Jeffers was able to work directly with the conductor of the Mongolian Choir while he was visiting Eugene, Oregon, to ensure an authentic interpretation of the works. The Chorus has featured a number of Mr. Jeffers's compositions in recent years. Two of his works can be heard on PWC's *Songs of the Spirit* CD: "Whitman Credo" (text excerpted from Walt Whitman's *Song of Myself*) and "Indian Singing" (text from poems by Gail Tremblay). The Chorus has also been privileged to have Mr. Jeffers lead two workshops, where he focused on techniques for learning and interpreting music from other cultures and taught the Chorus how to strengthen choral ensemble.

Joan Szymko has spent much of her professional career in the Pacific Northwest as a conductor, composer, arranger, and teacher. She has over 25 years of experience conducting women's choirs in Seattle and Portland, where she now lives and works. Abundant lyricism, rhythmic intensity, and a deep respect for language are hallmarks of Ms. Szymko's diverse and distinctive choral writing. She has also written chamber music, music for modern dance, and two full-length musicals. Several of her choral works are available through Santa Barbara Music Publishing, Treble Clef Music Press, and Yelton Rhodes Music. She has been a resident composer with Do Jump! Movement Theater since 1995 and has toured extensively with them including runs on Broadway (2000), the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. (2001, 2007) and at the Geffen Playhouse in Los Angeles (2001). Ms. Szymko's debut CD recording of compositions, *Openings*, published by Virga Records, is available by visiting her website at www.joanszymko.com.

Brian Holmes was born in Washington D.C. in 1946. He graduated from Pomona College and earned a PhD in experimental low temperature physics from Boston University. He is now a professor of physics at San Jose State University, and is active as a free-lance horn player. While in Boston, Mr. Holmes studied horn with Harry Shapiro and played in the Cambridge Symphonic Brass Quintet. As a composer, he often writes for solo voice and chorus. He has also composed numerous songs, song cycles, choral works, and instrumental works, including a concerto for toy piano and orchestra. Several works have been recorded by the Peninsula Women's Chorus and by the Stanford University Chorale. Mr. Holmes's interests in physics and music overlap. He does research on the physics of musical instruments and has occasionally composed music related to science. His "Updike's Science," for example, is a set of six songs about science, composed to humorous poems of John Updike. He has also lectured on the physics of musical instruments at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Oberlin College, Cornell University, Brown University, Boston University, Boston College, Pomona College, the American Association of Physics Teachers, the American Physical Society, and the Acoustical Society of America.

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and

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to provide outstanding choral music
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artists' biographies

THE PENINSULA WOMEN'S CHORUS

The Peninsula Women's Chorus, established in 1966, is a leader in a resurgence in women's choirs specializing in choral masterpieces. The PWC is known for its adventurous programming, seeking out music written specifically for women, and frequently commissioning new works. The singers are selected by audition and share an enthusiasm for challenging repertoire sung in original languages. Among PWC honors are third prize in the 2006 Béla Bartók 22nd International Choir Competition, women's division, in Debrecen, Hungary; two Chorus America/ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming (2003 and 1999); second place, 2000 Margaret Hillis award for Choral Excellence, and second prize at the 1994 Tallinn International Choral Competition in Estonia. The chorus has made three appearances at ACDA National Conventions --- first in 1987, singing a feature concert of the vocal orchestra music from the film, *Song of Survival*, and presenting music for women's voices in a special interest session of music by Kirke Mechem; in 1993, presenting a traditional choral program; and most recently in March of 2001, presenting a contemporary tour de force before more than 6,000 choral directors to great acclaim. In addition, the chorus performed as a continental founding choir at the AmericaFest World Festival of Women's Singing in Seattle in July of 2001. In the summer of 2003, the PWC participated, as one of four choirs representing the United States, in Festival 500: Sharing the Voices, an international festival of choral music in St. John's, Newfoundland. In addition to extensive performing throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, the chorus has competed in international competitions, has performed on National Public Radio and has appeared on television both nationally and internationally.

MARTÍN BENVENUTO, artistic director

Martín Benvenuto is a native of Buenos Aires, Argentina, where he received his Licenciado en Musica degrees in choral conducting and composition. As chair of the Music Department at St. Patrick's School in Buenos Aires, he led a graded choral program that earned prizes at competitions and toured nationally and internationally. Benvenuto earned his master's degree from Westminster Choir College, majoring in both choral conducting and voice performance and pedagogy. As a member of Westminster Symphonic Choir, he has sung under the batons of Kurt Masur, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Helmuth Rilling, and Esa-Pekka Salonen. He is currently a DMA candidate in choral conducting at Boston University, where he was an assistant to Dr. Ann Howard Jones for the Women's Chorale, Repertory Chorus, Chamber Chorus, and Symphonic Chorus. Benvenuto has studied conducting under Antonio Russo, Nestor Andrenacci, Eric Ericson, Joseph Flummerfelt, Josep Prats, Robert Sund, Ann Howard Jones, and the late Robert Shaw, and has led church music programs and community choruses both in this country and his native Argentina. Also active as a clinician, panelist, and guest conductor, Benvenuto is on the faculty of Piedmont Choirs and artistic director for WomenSing. Benvenuto was appointed permanent artistic director of the PWC in February 2004 after having served as interim artistic director during the fall of 2003.

SUSAN SOEHNER, accompanist

Susan Soehner joined PWC in the fall of 2005. She is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music, where she earned an MM in piano performance and literature. She also holds a BME in voice and a BM in piano performance from the University of Wisconsin. Prior to moving to the Bay Area in 1998, Susan was director of education and Suzuki piano instructor at the Bermuda Conservatory of Music and served as assistant professor/staff accompanist at Finger Lakes Community College in Canandaigua, New York. Susan also accompanies Chorissima, the recording and touring group of the San Francisco Girls Chorus, and is the accompanist for the Oakland Symphony Chorus.

KIM VENAAS, percussionist

Kim Venaas, son of a big band and "stride" piano player, has been a marimbist for 30 years with orchestral, commercial and recording experience. An experienced conductor, composer and arranger, Venaas is a longtime collaborator with the PWC, playing with the group for the first time in 1970 while he was still in high school. Mr. Venaas holds a degree in conducting and musical performance from San Francisco State University. He has worked with Ernst Bacon, Carmen Dragon, and Denis de Coteau, and conducted at venues ranging from Davies Symphony Hall to the Monterey Jazz Festival. Venaas and his Hollywood-style big band, the Black Tie Orchestra, have graced the silver screen in the film "Swing" (2004) with Jacqueline Bisset and Jonathan Winters; they are featured on the award-winning soundtrack. He is also conductor of the 60-piece California Pops Orchestra, the nation's only all-request symphony orchestra.

CANTABILE YOUTH SINGERS

Founded in 1994 by Artistic Director, Signe Boyer, now under the artistic leadership of Elena Sharkova, Cantabile provides the highest quality choral music experience for young singers. Its curriculum is designed with an emphasis on vocal training, music theory, combined choral and instrumental performance and an exceptional variety of traditional, modern, and commissioned music.

Over the past few years, Cantabile has become the youth chorus of choice for adult performing organizations in the greater bay area. Opera San Jose, Symphony Silicon Valley, Fremont Opera and West Bay Opera, to name a few, regularly request Cantabile Youth Singers to participate in their performances.

Cantabile Youth Singers operates four graduated choir levels which serve children ages 6-18 from the Peninsula through the South Bay. Additionally, its singers participate in quarterly training workshops as well as weekend and weeklong retreats. Workshops and retreats include vocal training, movement and dance, diction and language coaching, training in theory, music reading skills, interpretation, deportment and history. All workshops are led by staff and guest artists.

In addition to presenting annual winter and spring concerts, Cantabile singers perform throughout the community and tour nationally and internationally.

■ acknowledgments ■

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Frankie Anderson
Jose Arocha
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Signe Boyer
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AUXILIARY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The PWC depends upon community volunteers to help at concerts by selling tickets and CDs, ushering, and assisting with concert setup. If you are interested in getting involved, please telephone (650)327-3095 or send an email to info@pwchorus.org.

Special thanks also to the following for their in-kind contributions:

Fr. Gerald Brown, St. Patrick's Seminary; Golden Gate Men's Chorus, Joseph Jennings, director; Rev. Dr. Kerr, Interim Pastor, Grace Lutheran Church, Palo Alto; Rev. Matthew Smuts, Grace Lutheran Church, Palo Alto; Lottha Lindqvist; Rick English Pictures; salesforce.com; Ilana Sharaun; Matt Vaska; David Townley

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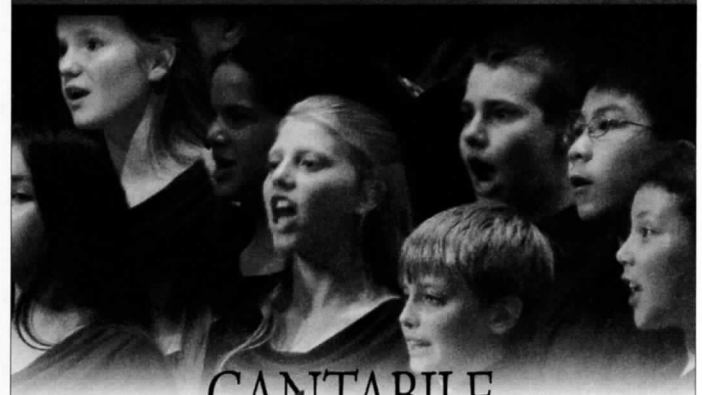
Auditions are in August by appointment only, or other dates by arrangement. Rehearsals are Monday evenings in Palo Alto.

For more information or to schedule an audition,
 call: 650-327-3095,
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 Artistic Director

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WINTER PATTERNS

This holiday-themed CD takes its name from the evocative choral landscapes of Estonian composer Veljo Tormis's *Talvemustrid* (*Winter Patterns*). Other highlights include Daniel Pinkham's lively and popular *Christmas Cantata*, Hildegard von Bingen's meditative *O Vivens Fons*, two remarkable settings of the *Ave Maria* text by Joan Szymko and Rebecca Clarke, the post-minimalist *Agnus Dei* by Charles Griffin, and Francis Poulenc's stunning *Litanies à la Vierge Noire*. Also featured is the fiery and intense "Suite" *de Lorca* by modern Finnish composer Einojuhani Rautavaara. Selections from William Mathias's joyous *Salvator Mundi*, *A Carol Sequence* and a multilingual arrangement of the immortal *Silent Night* close the CD on the perfect seasonal note.

EARTHTONES

EarthTones pays tribute to the PWC's late director Patty Hennings's infectious love of music and life. It is the fulfillment of her vision for a CD of the PWC's twentieth-century repertoire that transports the listener and inspires the soul with "earth sounds." The CD opens with the blossoming sunrise of Libby Larsen's *Psalm 121*. Also included are Gwyneth Walker's *I Thank You God*; H. Garrett Phillips's mesmerizing *Odysseus and the Sirens*; Libby Larsen's powerful *I Just Lightning*; the avant-garde tone picture *Urok* by Slovenian composer Lojze Lebič; and Patty Hennings's own arrangement of the American folk song, *Shenandoah*.

This CD made possible in part by a grant from The Peery Foundation.

CAROLS and LULLABIES

The PWC's second Christmas CD has a Latin beat. Conrad Susa's festive *Carols and Lullabies, Christmas in the Southwest* is the title work. The CD is rounded out with the *Missa Brevis* of Canadian composer Ramona Luengen, contemporary Hungarian composer József Karai's *Hodie Christus natus est*, two selections from *The Place of the Blest* by American icon Randall Thompson, the soaring *O Regem coeli* of Tomás Luis de Victoria, and San Francisco composer David Conte's delightful *Christmas Intrada*. A must-have addition to your holiday collection!

SONGS of the SPIRIT

Songs of the Spirit features inspirational music ranging from the vocal orchestra arrangements of the documentary film *Song of Survival* to the scintillating contemporary works of Ron Jeffers and Lou Harrison. For those who have requested a recording of Dvořák's powerful *Largo*, Johansson's shimmering *Examine me*, R. Murray Schafer's exotic *Snowforms*, or the PWC's favorite *Shenandoah*, this CD is for you!

This CD made possible in part by a grant from The Peery Foundation

ALLELUIA PSALLAT

Music for the yuletide, this CD features some of PWC's best-loved Christmas music, including pieces by Hildegard von Bingen, Benjamin Britten, and Kirke Mechem.

TREASURES

The PWC's first CD includes innovative works by contemporary composers Libby Larsen, Michael Cleveland, David Conte, Nancy Telfer, and Knut Nystedt, and a nod to the Western tradition with works by Victoria and Holst.

These CDs can be purchased at today's performance.



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