

Spring 2009

*Peninsula*  
WOMEN'S CHORUS



*Les Sirènes*  
spring 2009 concerts

Martín Benvenuto, Artistic Director  
Susan Soehner, Accompanist

Saturday, May 16, 4 pm  
Saint Patrick's Seminary  
320 Middlefield Road  
Menlo Park

Sunday, May 17, 2:30 pm  
Mission Santa Clara  
500 El Camino Real  
Santa Clara





Let Evening Come, B. Holmes  
poem by Jane Kenyon (1947-1995)

Let the light of late afternoon  
shine through chinks in the barn, moving  
up the bales as the sun moves down.  
Let the cricket take up chafing  
As a woman takes up her needles  
and her yarn. Let evening come.  
Let dew collect on the hoe abandoned  
in long grass. Let the stars appear  
and the moon disclose her silver horn.  
Let the fox go back to its sandy den.  
Let the wind die down. Let the shed  
go black inside. Let evening come.  
To the bottle in the ditch, to the scoop  
in the oats, to air in the lung  
let evening come.  
Let it come, as it will, and don't  
be afraid. God does not leave us  
comfortless, so let evening come.

Song of Perfect Propriety, C. Barnett  
poem by Dorothy Parker (1893-1967)

Oh, I should like to ride the seas,  
A roaring buccaneer;  
A cutlass banging at my knees,  
A dirk behind my ear.  
And when my captives' chains would clank  
I'd howl with glee and drink  
And then fling out the quivering plank  
And watch the beggars sink.  
  
I'd like to straddle gory decks,  
And dig in laden sands,  
And know the feel of throbbing necks  
Between my knotted hands.  
Oh, I should like to strut and curse  
Among my blackguard crew . . .  
But I am writing little verse,  
As little ladies do.  
  
Oh, I should like to dance and laugh  
And pose and preen and sway,  
And rip the hearts of men in half,  
And toss the bits away.  
I'd like to view the reeling years  
Through unastonished eyes,  
And dip my finger-tips in tears,  
And give my smiles for sighs.  
  
I'd stroll beyond the ancient bounds,  
And tap at fastened gates,  
And hear the prettiest of sounds, —  
The clink of shattered fates.  
My slaves I'd like to bind with thongs  
That cut and burn and chill . . .  
But I am writing little songs,  
As little ladies will.

Regina angelorum, P. Kostiainen

Regina angelorum,	<i>Queen of the angels,</i>
Regina patriarchum,	<i>Queen of the patriarchs,</i>
Regina prophetarum,	<i>Queen of the prophets,</i>
Regina martyrum,	<i>Queen of the martyrs,</i>
Regina apostolorum	<i>Queen of the apostles,</i>
Regina virginum,	<i>Queen of virgins,</i>
Regina confessorum,	<i>Queen of the pious,</i>
Regina sanctorum omnium,	<i>Queen of all that is holy,</i>
Ora pro nobis. Amen	<i>Pray for us. Amen.</i>

Suvementiivid, V. Tormis

words by Aleksander Suuman, translation by Ritva Poom

1. Põuailm (Dry Weather)

Lämbe põuailm, endiselt on lämbe põuailm. Teerajal sisiseb rästik. Tulesambad kahel pool pleekinud päikest. Alla surub vaikus oma raske kämbla. Korstnasuits on kartulipõllul.	<i>Sultry rainless day, once again a sultry rainless day. Pathway where hisses the viper. Pillars flaming either side faded the sunshine. Down presses silence with its palm so heavy Chimney smoke on fields of potatoes.</i>
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2. Äike (Thunderstorm)

Tõusis üle metsa karurkarva pilv. Piksekihvad puusse löi, raksus terve ilm. Raius rahehoog ja vihma kallas kapaga. Nõnda kestis . . . Siis veel seenevihma sadas . . . Sündis vikerkaar.	<i>Rising over forest brownish-hued a cloud. Spike of lightning striking trees, shattered all the world. Cast a spate of hail, then pouring rain in bucketfuls. Thusly lasted . . . Then a misty rain afalling . . . Then a rainbow born.</i>
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3. Suveöö (Summer Night)

Istub suveöö mu kõvale õuel ja kõneleb: Vaata udu hainamaal. Vaata kirjut kaera. Kuala rukkirääku.	<i>Sits the summer eve outside by me talking low murmuring: See now misty fields of hay. See now dappled oatgrains. Hear now crackling corncrake.</i>
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Jaakobin pojat (*The sons of Jacob*), P. Kostiainen

*Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher,  
Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, and Benjamin. The sons of Jacob.*

Aglepta, A. Mellnäs

Småland 19th century, Swedish trollproverbs by Bengt of Klintberg

To leave an enemy without an answer,  
Say these words to him:  
"Aglaria pidhol garia ananus qepta,"  
and blow in his direction;  
then he will not know which way he is headed  
and cannot answer you.

Les sirènes, L. Boulanger, poem by Charles Grandmougin (1850-1930)

Nous somme la beauté qui charme les plus forts, Les fleurs tremblantes de l'écume Et de la brume. Nos baisers fugitifs sont le rêve des morts! Parmi nos chevelures blondes L'eau miroite en larmes d'argent. Nos regards à l'éclat changeant Sont verts et bleus comme les ondes. Avec un bruit pareil Aux délicats frissons Des moissons Nous voltigeons Sans avoir d'ailes. Nous cherchons de tendres vainqueurs. Nous sommes les sœurs immortelles Offertes aux désirs de vos terrestres coeurs.	<i>We are the loveliness that enchants the strongest men, The trembling flowers of the sea-foam And the mist. Our fleeting kisses are the dream of the dead! Amidst our blonde tresses Water glistens in silver tears. Our glances in the flickering brilliance Are green and blue like the waves. With a sound like The delicate shivers Of the harvests, We hover Without wings. We are seeking tender conquerors. We are the immortal sisters Offered to the desires of your earthly hearts.</i>
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Oblivion, C. Grases

The text is a juxtaposition of the first verse of the "Dies irae" from the Latin Requiem Mass and "Proverbios y Cantares XLVI" by Spanish poet Antonio Machado (1875-1939)

Dies irae, dies illa Solvat seclum in favilla Teste David cum sybilla.  Anoche soñé que oía a Dios gritando ¡alerta! Luego era Dios quien dormía. Y yo gritaba: ¡Despierta!	<i>Day of wrath, that day the world dissolves in ashes, as foretold by David and the sybil.  Last night I dreamed that I heard God screaming, "Be alert!" Then it was God who slept. And I screamed, "Wake up!"</i>
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Petites Voix, F. Poulenc, poems by Madeleine Ley (1901-1981)

1. La petite fille sage (The Good Little Girl)

La petite fille sage est rentrée de l'école avec son panier. Elle a mis sur la table les assiettes et les verres lourds— Et puis ell' s'est lavée à la pompe de la cour sans mouiller son tablier. Et si le petit frère dort dans son petit lit cage, ell' va s'asseoir sur la pierre usée pour voir l'étoile du soir.	<i>The good little girl has returned from school with her bookbag. She has set the table with the dishes and the heavy glasses— And then she has washed up at the water pump in the yard without splashing her apron. And if her little brother is sleeping in his little crib, she goes to sit on the worn stone step to watch the evening star.</i>
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2. Le chien perdu (The Lost Dog)

Qui es-tu, inconnu? Qui es-tu, chien perdu? Tu rêves, tu sommeilles: peut-être voudrais-tu que je te gratte là, derrière les oreilles, doux chien couché sur le trottoir qui lève vers mon oeil ton regard blanc et noir?	<i>Who are you, stranger? Who are you, lost dog? You are dreaming, sleeping; maybe you would like for me to pet you there, behind your ears, sweet dog lying on the sidewalk who lifts your black and white expression to meet my gaze.</i>
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3. En rentrant de l'école (Coming Home From School)

En rentrant de l'école par un chemin perdu j'ai rencontré la lune, derrière les bois noirs. Elle était ronde et claire et brillante dans l'air . . . En rentrant de l'école par un chemin perdu, avez-vous entendu la chouette qui vole et le doux rossignol?	<i>Coming home from school on a lost road I encountered the moon behind the black woods. It was round and bright, and glistened in the sky . . . Coming home from school on a lost road, have you heard the flying owl and the sweet nightingale?</i>
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4. Le petit garçon malade (The Little Sick Boy)

Le petit garçon malade ne veut plus regarder les images. Il ferme ses yeux las; Il laisse ses mains chaudes traîner sur le drap. Sa mère ouvre la fenêtre et le rideau blanc se balance sur la rue un soir de mai. Il entend jouer les autres qui sautent à cloche pied en criant sur le trottoir. Alors il tourne la tête et pleure en silence dans son petit bras plié.	<i>The little sick boy no longer wants to look at pictures. He shuts his eyes; He lets his cold hands trail over the sheet. His mother opens the window and the white curtain billows over the street into the May evening. He hears other children playing hopscotch and shouting on the sidewalk. At that he turns his head away and weeps silently into the crook of his little arm.</i>
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5. Le Hérisson (The Hedgehog)

Quand papa trouve un hérisson il l'apporte à la maison On lui donne du lait tiède dans le fond d'une assiette. Il ne veut pas se dérouler lorsqu'il entend parler . . . mais si nous quittons la cuisine il montre sa tête maligne. Et si je me tais un instant je l'entends boire doucement.	<i>When papa finds a hedgehog he brings it to the house We give it warm milk in the bottom of a dish. It doesn't want to unroll while it hears talking . . . but if we leave the kitchen, out comes its mischievous head. And if I remain silent for a bit I hear him lightly lapping.</i>
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Martes, J. Gregorio, Spanish proverb

Martes ni de tu casa te apartes, ni te cases, ni te embarques.	<i>On Tuesdays neither leave your house, nor get married, nor embark on a journey.</i>
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Duerme Negrito, A Yupanqui, arr. E. Solé

Duerme, duerme negrito,  
que tu mama e'ta en  
el campo negrito.  
Drume, drume mobila.  
Te va a traé'  
codonise para tí,  
Te va a traé'  
fruta fre'ca para tí,  
Te va a traé'  
ca'ne de ce'do para tí,  
Te va a traé'  
mucha' cosa' para tí.  
Y si negro  
no se duerme,  
viene e' diablo blanco  
y zás  
le come la patica  
chica bú,  
apura, chica bú!  
Trabajando duramente,  
trabajando si,  
trabajando y no le pagan,  
trabajando si,  
trabajando y va tosiendo,  
trabajando si,  
p'al negrito chiquitito,  
p'al negrito si.

*Sleep, sleep little black one,  
your mama is in the  
fields, little one.  
Sleep, sleep little one.  
She's going to bring  
quail for you,  
she's going to bring  
fresh fruit for you,  
she's going to bring  
pork for you,  
she's going to bring  
many things for you.  
And if the black one  
doesn't go to sleep,  
the white devil will come  
and zap!  
he'll eat your little foot,  
chica bú;  
hurry, chica bú!  
She's working hard,  
working, yes,  
working and they don't pay her,  
working, yes,  
working and she's coughing,  
working, yes,  
for her sweet little black one,  
for her little one, yes.*

Doña Ubensa, C. Echenique, arr. L. Cangiano and M. Benvenuto

Ando llorando pa'dentro  
aunque me ría p'ajuera;  
así tengo yo que vivir  
esperando a que me muera.

*I'm crying inside,  
though I'm laughin' outside;  
that's how I have to live  
waiting to die*

Le doy ventaja a los vientos  
porque no puedo volar,  
hasta que agarro mi caja  
y la empiezo a bagupear

*I give advantage to the winds  
because I cannot fly  
until I grab my drum  
and I begin to beat it*

Mi raza reza qué pedirá  
allá en el monte de caridad.  
No tiene tiempo, ya no do más.  
Reza que reza. ¿Porqué sera?

*My people pray for alms  
there in the mountain of charity.  
They don't have time, they are tired.  
They pray to pray. Why is that?*

Ayes sonoros de pedregal,  
piedra por piedra el viento va,  
borrando huellas a mi dolor,  
silencio puro es mi corazón

*"Ayes" resounding over the stony ground,  
stone by stone the wind blows,  
erasing footprints to my sorrow,  
instilling pure silence in my heart.*

Me persigno por si acaso  
no vaya que Dios exista  
y me llevé p'al infierno  
con todas mis ovejitas.

*I am tormented by the possibility  
that God doesn't exist,  
and I carried all my little sheep  
off into hell.*

No sé si habrá otro mundo  
donde las almas suspiran.  
Yo vivo sobre la tierra  
trabajando todo el día

*I don't know if there is an after-world  
where souls sigh.  
I live on this earth  
working all day long.*

Cape Breton Lullaby, K. Leslie, arr. S. Calvert

Driftwood is burning blue, wild walk the wall shadows.  
Night winds go riding by, riding by the lochie meadows.  
On to the ring of day flows Mira's stream, singing:  
*Caidil gu la laddie, sleep the stars away.*

Far on Beinn Bhreagh's side wander the lost lammies.  
Here, there, and ev'rywhere, ev'rywhere their troubled mummies  
find them and fold them deep, fold them to sleep, singing:  
*Caidil gu la laddie, sleep the moon away.*

Daddy is on the bay. He'll keep the pot brewin'.  
Keep all from tumblin' down, tumblin' down to rack and ruin.  
Pray, Mary, send him home safe from the foam singing:  
*Caidil gu la laddie, sleep the dark away.*

## Peninsula Women's Chorus Members

### Soprano I

Stephanie Batties  
Mardie Daul  
Kathryn Feetham  
Ciara Karski  
MaryLouise Meckler  
Mercidita Navarro  
Hana Packard  
Kyle Sofman  
Judy Sweet  
Tricia Tani  
Mary Tusa

### Soprano II

Sara Asher  
Vicki Brown  
Beatrice Fanning  
Yenyi Fu  
Elise Kent  
Stacey Lewis  
Andra Marynowski  
Robin Mulgannon  
Eithne Pardini  
Rachel Rubin

### Alto I

Sarah Etheredge  
Cathleen Kalcic  
Betsy Landergren  
Kathy MacLaury  
Roselena Martinez  
Kathy Plock  
Gail Schwettman  
Deanne Tucker  
Marsha Wells

### Alto II

Anne Anderson  
Tricia Baldwin  
Lisa Collart  
May Goodreau  
Lynne Haynes-Tucker  
Elena Melendez  
Martha Morgan  
Gerri Roe  
Hoai-Thu Truong  
Barbara Zoeller

Visit our website at  
[www.pwchorus.org](http://www.pwchorus.org)



**Les Sirènes:** *Enchantments, incantations, cautions, superstitions. . .*

**Enchantments. . .** In our program, “Les Sirènes,” we weave a musical tapestry of seduction, spell, and warning, exploring the intersection between beauty and danger that embodies the mystique of the sirens of Greek mythology. LILI BOULANGER (1893-1918) composed our titular work, “Les Sirènes” (The Mermaids), at age 18, but she had already been composing for several years. At the age of five, Lili was studying keyboard and harmony at the Conservatoire and, by the age of sixteen, she had decided to devote herself to musical composition. It is believed that she took inspiration for “Les Sirènes” from Debussy’s work, “La sirène” (from his *Nocturnes* for orchestra), borrowing his opening harp motif as the basis for the left-hand ostinato (recurring) pattern in the piano accompaniment. Lili’s sirens are beautiful, deadly enchantresses—“immortal sisters” and “trembling flowers of sea-foam and mist. . . seeking tender conquerors.” Two years after composing this remarkable vocal work, Lili realized her goal of winning the prestigious Prix de Rome competition—the first woman to do so. Five years later, at the age of 24, after a lifetime of suffering frail health, Lili Boulanger died from the debilitating Crohn’s disease. The body of work she left us in her too short career shows a command of choral writing, text setting, and orchestration that ranks her among top composers of her time.

**Incantations. . .** ARNE MELLNÄS’s (1933- 2002) “Aglepta” is based on a nineteenth century Swedish invocation and presents an innovative relationship between text and music. Phonetic fragments of the five words introduced by the speaker, “Aglaria pidhol garia ananus qepta,” are woven in a succession of pitches and random sounds: shouts, chants, and whispers. The result is a wash of tonal color in which the words are almost indistinguishable until the ending soprano and alto contrapuntal duet. In this work, Mellnäs exhibits his skill as technical innovator and avant-garde stylist. “Aglepta” was chosen as a compulsory piece at a children’s choir competition in Sweden in 1970. It stirred up much controversy for its unorthodoxy and was dropped from the competition. The well-known Finnish group, Tapiola Children’s Choir, chose to go ahead and premier the piece at the competition to such acclaim that “Aglepta” is now considered a landmark composition for treble voice.

**Cautions. . .** In “Oblivion,” Venezuelan composer, CRISTIÁN GRASES, using traditional and aleatory techniques, interweaves two texts: the first verse of *Dies Irae* from the Latin Requiem Mass and Proverb 46 by Spanish poet Antonio Machado. In his poem, Machado describes a dream sequence which juxtaposes a sleeping world—an allegorical drifting away from connection to the Divinity (a threat of the inevitable return to ashes)—and a sleeping God who might sometimes seem to forget our plight. “Alerta!” (Be alert!), we warn each other. “Despierta!” (Wake up!), we implore. In the closing chant, we are left in an impassioned dream or limbo where we fight against darkness and the threat of oblivion.

Born in Caracas in 1973, Cristián Grases started his musical studies at 11 years old in music theory, harmony, counterpoint, history, and piano. His education also included choral and instrumental performance and studies in composition and choral and orchestral conducting. In 2001, Grases finished his master’s degree with honors in choral conducting with María Guinand and Alberto Grau at Simón Bolívar University in Venezuela, and is a DMA student at the University of Miami.

**Superstitions. . .** We are pleased to premier “Martes” (Tuesday) by Bay Area composer, JOSEPH GREGORIO. In a non-stop, rollicking study in counterpoint and syncopation, Gregorio sets to music the old Spanish proverb of cautionary suspicion about avoiding certain activities on a given Tuesday. In Spain and Latin America, Tuesday is considered unlucky—much like our superstitions surrounding Friday the thirteenth. In these countries, many cautionary folk phrases exist, such as, “En martes ni te cases, ni te embarques, ni de tu casa te apartes” (“Don’t get married, go on a trip, or stray far from home on a Tuesday”). Some suggest this superstition dates to the 1200s, when a now-obscure Spanish king was defeated by the Moors on a Tuesday. But the superstition could also be linked to the Spanish name for Tuesday—*Martes*—which is derived from Mars, the Roman war god, associated in folk tradition with death. One of our own, Beatrice Fanning has commissioned this piece to celebrate her 20 years with the PWC. Congratulations, Bea!

A native of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, Joseph Gregorio began his study of composition as an undergraduate at Cornell University. Gregorio also holds an MM in composition from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and an MM in choral conducting from Yale University. His music has been performed all over the United States and abroad by numerous soloists and ensembles. Gregorio is presently a professor of music theory and musicianship at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

Local composer and PWC friend, BRIAN HOLMES, completed his setting of JANE KENYON’s poem “Let Evening Come” shortly before her death from cancer in 1995. The text’s soothing repetition and Holmes’s gentle, hymn-like melody moves the song beyond a contemplation of death to serve as a spiritual tonic. Kenyon has said that her childhood solitude growing up in the rural Midwest helped form the rich interior world and connection to nature that contributed to her growth as a poet. Her poems have a quiet strength and she described them as “short, intense, musical cries of the spirit”—a means for connecting with the spiritual and natural world and dealing with all that life throws at one. Kenyon’s struggles with depression and illness are reflected in the tone of many of her works. “Let Evening Come,” written for a close friend who was dying from cancer, reflects Kenyon’s belief that poems conveying sadness or addressing difficult issues can somehow give strength, uplift, and console.

CAROL BARNETT’s music has been called audacious and engaging. Inspired by Dorothy Parker’s feisty poem, Barnett selected “Song of Perfect Propriety” for the Cornell University Women’s Chorus as part of a project titled “No Whining, No Flowers,” for which several women composers were commissioned to set texts by women poets. In her vocal direction, Ms. Barnett instructs us to be lusty, unpredictable, and. . . a bit dangerous. We are pleased to include Ms. Barnett’s work as we celebrate American women composers and poets. Ms. Barnett studied composition, piano, and flute at the University of Minnesota and she currently teaches at Augsburg College in Minneapolis.

DOROTHY PARKER (1893-1967) was one of the most accomplished and successful feminist literary writers in women’s history. Working as a columnist for *Vanity Fair* and the *New Yorker* magazines and as a successful Hollywood screenplay writer, Parker received literary acclaim for her satirical wit and her works which often encouraged women to move away from repressive Victorian ideals. In keeping with this philosophy, her poem, “Song of Perfect Propriety,” alternates between a more modern take on the gentler sex as swashbuckling, strutting, cursing pirates plundering the hearts of men and the more traditional fate of “writing little verse as little ladies do.” As evidenced here, Dorothy Parker is known for her caustic, dry wit. Attributed to her is the well-known verse: “Men seldom make passes/At girls that wear glasses” and she had suggested as her epitaph: “Excuse my dust.”

FRANCIS POULENC (1899-1963), one of the most important French composers of the early twentieth century, developed his own personal musical language. Writing in many different musical genres (ballet, opera, piano, chamber music), he successfully incorporated lightness, wistfulness, and humor into his work. In 1936, after the sudden death of a good friend, Poulenc was moved to begin composing choral music. "Petites Voix," completed that same year, is made up of five short pieces for three-part treble voices set to Madeleine Ley's charming poems by the same title. Like musical sepia-tinted snapshots, we have a glimpse at simple childhood pastimes. "La petite fille sage" (The Good Little Girl) describes an afternoon in a little girl's life, returning home from school and taking care of her chores, ending the day gazing at the stars above. "Le chien perdu" (The Lost Dog) is a dialogue between a curious child and a stray dog found sleeping on the sidewalk. "En rentrant de l'école" (Returning Home from School) describes some surprising discoveries made on the darkening, wooded path home, such as the spooky call of the night owl and nightingale. "Le petit garçon malade" (The Little Sick Boy) is full of the melancholy of being stuck, sick in bed on a beautiful spring day while hearing one's friends play outside. We finish with "Le hérisson" (The Hedgehog), the lively tale of a father who one day brings home a shy, wild pet much to the amusement of his children who attempt to befriend it with a saucer of warm milk.

## 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, performed on National Public Radio and appeared on television both nationally and internationally.

Arthur Rackham (1867-1939), *The Rhinemaidens Ask for the Ring*, detail



### MARTÍN BENVENUTO, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Martín Benvenuto has established himself as one of the leading treble choir conductors in the San Francisco Bay Area. A native of Buenos Aires, Argentina, he has been artistic director of the Peninsula Women's Chorus (PWC) since 2003. Active as a clinician, panelist, and guest conductor, Benvenuto also serves on the faculty of the Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir, and is artistic director of WomenSing.

Recognized for his exacting technique, compelling presence, and a passion for drawing the finest choral tone, Benvenuto's repertoire is extensive, including great landmarks of the treble repertoire as well as works by living composers. His choirs are dedicated to commissioning new works from leading composers such as Libby Larsen, Chen Yi, Stacy Garrop, Charles Griffin, Cristián Grases, Brian Holmes, and David Conte.

His choirs have earned high marks in international competitions in Argentina, South Africa, Canada, Hungary, and Spain. Of particular note is third prize awarded to the PWC at the Béla Bartók International Choir Competition, one of the most competitive and prestigious in the European circuit. Benvenuto highly values artistic collaborations: his choirs have collaborated with Veljo Tormis, Joseph Jennings, Karmina Silec, Charles Bruffy, California Shakespeare Theater, the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus, and the Golden Gate Men's Chorus.

Benvenuto has prepared choirs for organizations such as the San Francisco Opera, the Oakland East Bay Symphony, the Redwood Symphony, and the Kronos Quartet, and for works such as Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, Monteverdi's *Vespers*, Britten's *St. Nicholas*, Mahler's *Third Symphony*, Holst's *The Planets*, Stravinsky's *Mass*, and Orff's *Carmina Burana*.

An accomplished singer as well, Benvenuto has appeared as a tenor soloist in Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass*, Vivaldi's *Magnificat*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Bach's *Cantata BWV 61*, Beethoven's *Mass in C*, Ramirez's *Misa Criolla*, and others. As a member of the Westminster Symphonic Choir, he sang with the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra and Los Angeles Philharmonic under the batons of Kurt Masur, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Helmuth Rilling, Esa-Pekka Salonen and Joseph Flummerfelt.

Benvenuto holds a DMA in choral conducting from Boston University, where he studied with Ann Howard Jones and the late Robert Shaw. He earned his master's degree from Westminster Choir College, majoring both in Choral Conducting and Voice Performance and Pedagogy, studying under Joseph Flummerfelt, Elem Eley and Julia Kemp. His undergraduate degrees in choral conducting and composition are from the Universidad Católica Argentina.

### 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 and the Peninsula Women's Chorus.

## Acknowledgments

**A special thanks to members of the Peninsula Women's Chorus Auxiliary whose help is greatly appreciated:**

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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](mailto:info@pwchorus.org).

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

Cristián Grases; Joseph Gregorio; Mark Hanson; Stan Ng and the Media Center, Palo Alto; Elena Sharkova; Mary Stoddard; Matt Vaska

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Whereas the human spirit is elevated to a broader understanding of itself through study and performance in the aesthetic arts;

*and*

Whereas serious cutbacks in funding and support have steadily eroded state institutions and their programs throughout the country:

*Be it resolved that all citizens of the United States actively voice their affirmative and collective support for necessary funding at the local, state, and national levels of education and government to ensure the survival of arts programs for this and future generations.*

## A special thank you to our donors

The Peninsula Women's Chorus gratefully acknowledges donations received between April 15, 2008 and April 15, 2009. Donations received after the publication deadline will be acknowledged in the next program.

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*Please let us know if you would like to be added to our mailing list to receive season brochures, postcards, and newsletters.*

*Forms are available in the lobby or you can give us your mailing information through our website at [www.pwchorus.org](http://www.pwchorus.org).*

## PWC Available on Compact Disc

### **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 caeli* 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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# Peninsula Women's Chorus – Spring 2009 Survey

**Complete and return this survey at the concert  
and you will be entered in our drawing for  
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**Enjoy your personal music anywhere. Makes a great graduation gift.**

Visit the Peninsula Women's Chorus website after Monday, May 18<sup>th</sup> for the winner's name - [www.pwchorus.org](http://www.pwchorus.org)

This concert marks the end of our 2008-2009 season. Your feedback is important to us as we continue to develop our repertoire and concert planning for the future. We greatly appreciate your support and for taking the time to communicate with us directly by completing this survey.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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\*\*\*\*\*

**1. For future concerts, what schedule would be your first choice, then second choice?**

	<u>First choice</u>	<u>Second choice</u>	<u>Time(s) not likely to attend</u>
Monday – Thursday Evening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friday Evening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Saturday Afternoon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**2. Do you have a preference for the venue at which you attend PWC concerts? What venue would be your first, then second choice?**

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St. Patrick's Seminary, Menlo Park	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
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**Do you have other venue suggestions for us?** \_\_\_\_\_







Artwork, front and back covers:  
Victor Mottez, French, 1809-1897,  
*Ulysse et les sirènes* (details)