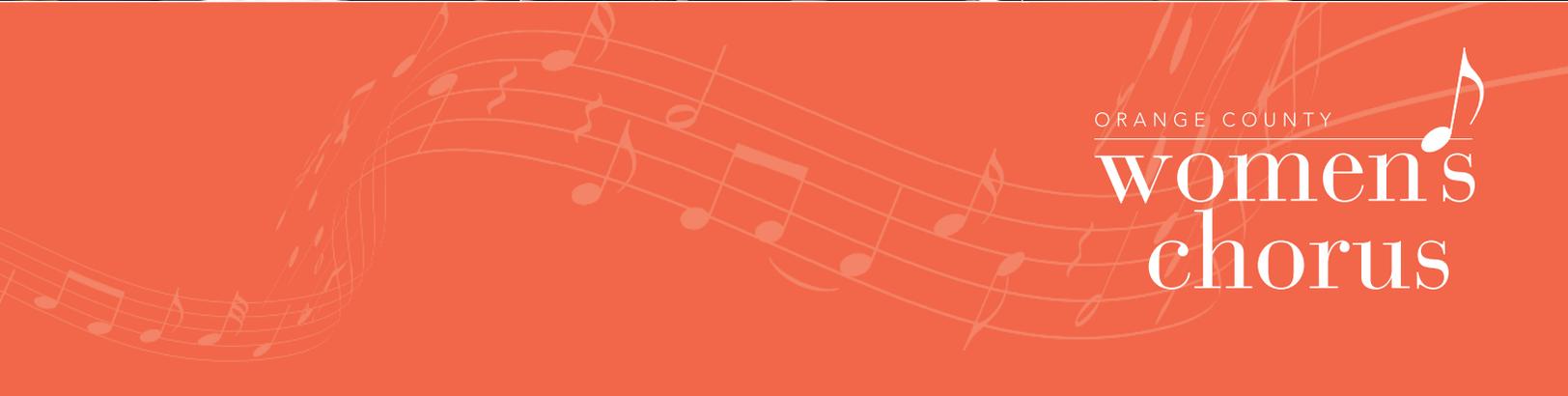


Orange County Women's Chorus

ELIZA RUBENSTEIN, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

American Choral Directors' Association
Western Division Conference

Pioneer Center for the Performing Arts
Reno, Nevada | March 2, 2012



ORANGE COUNTY

women's
chorus

PROGRAM

TRADITIONAL BULGARIAN,
ARR. PHILIP KUTEV (1903-1982)

Dragana i Slaveya
("Dragana and the Nightingale")

R. MURRAY SCHAFER (B. 1933)

Snowforms

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872-1958)

Magnificat

Deborah Winsor Williams, *mezzo-soprano*

Johanna Borenstein, *flute*

Janelle Tag, *piano*



TRADITIONAL BULGARIAN, ARR. PHILIP KUTEV (1903-1982)

Dragana i Slaveya (“Dragana and the Nightingale”)

In 1975, Swiss ethnomusicologist and record producer Marcel Cellier released an album entitled *Le Mystère des Voix Bulgares* (“The Mystery of Bulgarian Voices”), featuring the Bulgarian State Radio and Television Female Vocal Choir performing the traditional songs of their homeland. By the mid-1980s, the infectious rhythms of the music and the distinctive, overtone-rich sound of the choir had captivated audiences throughout Europe and the United States, and successive albums and concert tours guaranteed that this once shrouded choral tradition would have an enduring place in the musical world.

“Dragana i Slaveya,” a folk tune arranged by Philip Kutev, who founded and conducted the Bulgarian State Radio and Television Female Vocal Choir, tells of a singing contest between a girl and a nightingale; its modal harmonies and catchy 11/16 meter give it an earthy and affecting Eastern-European flavor.

*Dragana sedi v gradina,
mome Dragano, Dragano,
v gradina, pod byal trendafil
gergef shie, pesen pee.
Nad neya slavey govori:
“Ya pey, da se nadpyavame:
ako li me ti nadpeesh,
krihtsata mi shte otrejesh,
ako li te az nadpeya,
kosata ti shte otreja.”*

*Dragana nadpya slaveya;
slavey si ya jalno moli:
“Krachkata mi da otrejesh,
krihtsata mi ne otryazvay
drebnii piltsi swm izmwtil.”
“Slaveyche le, pilentse le,
neshta nishto da ti reja,
mene mi stiga hvalbata,
che swm slaveya nadpyala.”*

Dragana sits in a garden,
maiden Dragana, Dragana,
in a garden, under a white rose
embroidering and singing a song.
Above her a nightingale says:
“Come on, sing, and let us outsing each other:
if you outsing me,
you can cut my wings,
and if I outsing you,
I will cut your hair.”

Dragana outsings the nightingale;
the nightingale pleads with her:
“Cut my legs,
but don’t cut my wings –
I have just hatched chicks.”
“Dear nightingale, dearest bird,
I don’t want to cut anything –
it is enough for me
that I outsang a nightingale.”

R. MURRAY SCHAFER (b. 1933)

Snowforms

Yehudi Menuhin called R. Murray Schafer “a dynamic power whose manifold personal expressions and aspirations are in total accord with the urgent needs and dreams of humanity today” – a compelling endorsement of a compelling musical personality. Raised in Toronto and educated for a stretch overseas, Schafer has devoted a great deal of his career to exploring “acoustic ecology” and weaving environmental consciousness into his compositions, and he lives now on the Ontario farm that inspired, in part, his 1982 soundscape “Snowforms”: “Often on a winter day,” he writes, “I have broken off from other work to study the snow from my farmhouse window, and it is the memory of these forms which has suggested most of the continuous horizon of ‘Snowforms.’”

The text of the work consists solely of nine Inuit words describing different sorts of snow, and the graphically-notated score – visually beautiful in its own right, with white lines and shapes drifting across a wide aqua-blue landscape – invites the singers to glide from pitch to pitch, varying their dynamic with the width of the line and, at times, breaking free of their section-mates to evoke the snow as it falls, accumulates, and captivates.

<i>apingaut</i>	first snow fall
<i>mauyak</i>	soft snow
<i>qanit</i>	falling snow
<i>sitidlorak</i>	hard snow
<i>akelrorak</i>	newly drifted snow
<i>pokaktok</i>	snow like salt
<i>anio</i>	snow for melting into water
<i>tiltuktortok</i>	snow beaten down
<i>aput</i>	snow spread out



RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872-1958)

Magnificat

Deborah Winsor
Williams
mezzo-soprano

Johanna Borenstein
flute

Janelle Tag
piano

“Perhaps the strangest moment in history”: that’s how Vaughan Williams scholar Michael Kennedy describes the Annunciation, the Biblical account of the angel Gabriel’s surprise announcement to the virgin Mary that she has been chosen to bear the son of God. Ralph Vaughan Williams, in his 1932 *Magnificat* (originally composed for mezzo-soprano, solo flute, women’s chorus, and orchestra, but plenty satisfying in its arrangement for mezzo-soprano, flute, chorus, and piano), captures that strangeness – and all its attendant mood swings – in a work of astounding beauty, profound intelligence, and spiritual heft. The chorus sings the words of the angel, delivering the stunning news to Mary (portrayed by the mezzo-soprano) and offering comfort and comment, Greek chorus-style; the flute, as the Holy Spirit, winds its mystical way among the other musical lines.

Musically, the *Magnificat* gives us whiffs of Holst, the Impressionists, and even Messiaen; textually, the inspiration is vintage Vaughan Williams, as he recombines and repurposes the standard liturgical *Magnificat* with passages from the Gospel of Luke (as he wrote in a letter to Holst, he wanted “to lift the words out of the smug atmosphere that had settled down on them from being sung at evening service for so long”). The unmistakable, if sometimes unsettling, sensuality of the work is confirmed by Ursula Vaughan Williams, the composer’s wife, who said that her husband “thought of the flute as the disembodied, visiting spirit and the alto solo as the voice of the young girl yielding to her lover for the first time.” At once hypnotic and erotic, innocent and impossibly wise, the *Magnificat* is a small-scale masterpiece that deserves a wider audience.

Chorus

Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.
The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.
Therefore that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

Solo

My soul doth magnify the Lord.
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my savior.
For he hath regarded the low estate
of his handmaiden:
For, behold, from henceforth, all generations
shall call me blessed.

Chorus

Hail, Mary full of grace,
the Lord is with thee.

Blessed art thou among women.

For he that is mighty hath done to me great things;
and holy is his name.

And his mercy is on them that fear him
from generation to generation.
He hath shewed strength with his arm:
He hath scattered the proud in the imagination
of their hearts.
He hath put down the mighty from their seats,
and exalted them of low degree.
He hath filled the hungry with good things:
and the rich he hath sent empty away.
He hath holpen his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy;
as he spake to our fathers,
to Abraham and his seed forever.

Chorus

Fear not, Mary, thou hast found favor with God.
Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son,
and shalt call his name Jesus.
He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest:
And he shall reign for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Solo

Behold the handmaid of the Lord: Be it unto me according to thy word.

Chorus

Hail, Mary full of grace: Hail.

Notes by Eliza Rubenstein

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of thy glory;
Glory be to thee, O Lord most high.



THE ORANGE COUNTY WOMEN'S CHORUS

Eliza Rubenstein, Artistic Director

Janelle Tag, Accompanist

Sarah Hughes and Megan Schuller-Donoff, Conducting Interns

Kathy Baldasari
engineer

Marjorie Beale
university fundraiser

Carolyn Boyd
emerita professor of history

Janet Bratton
engineer

Yoko Bulman
mother of twins

Mary Jo Carpenter
medical sales representative

Joelle Casteix
abuse survivor advocate/spokesperson

Lisa Claborne
preschool teacher

Lisa De Blauw
Disneyland talent coordinator

Areli De La Torre
college music student

Laura Feja
airport planner

Ashley Hamrick
photographer

Allison Hieger
arts educator

Sarah Hughes
graduate music student

Mary Langsdorf
retired financial officer

Kathy Lyttle
fifth-grade teacher

Carole Mintzer
nonprofit program evaluator

Patricia Morgan
anthropologist

Amy Osajima
aircraft-design company administrator

Ellen Quandahl
professor of rhetoric and writing studies

Sarah Roby
science teacher

Lisa Roetzel
university honors program coordinator

Megan Schuller-Donoff
music teacher

Laurie Soderberg
perioperative clinical nurse specialist

Rachel Sosta
professor of English

Jenny Spence
singer

Stephanie Streja
choral director

Barbara van Gaasbeek
retired environmental builder

Rachel Vo
social-work case manager

Mary Watson-Bruce
retired gerontologist

Jessica Wong
medical marketing editor

Jenna Yokoyama
property manager

The Orange County Women's Chorus began in 1997 with eight enterprising women in an Irvine living room, and has grown into a 35-voice ensemble known for giving high-quality performances of creative, ambitious repertoire.

Led by founding director Raymond Egan until 2000 and by Eliza Rubenstein since then, the OCWC has performed in many of southern California's best-known venues, at the 2004 Western Division Conference of the American Choral Directors' Association, and in collaboration with artists and ensembles ranging from a ballet troupe to a gospel choir. Recent concert programs have included "Shakespeare's Sisters" (settings of texts by Shakespeare and his often-forgotten female contemporaries), "Sing It, Sister!: Six Centuries of 'Girl Groups,'" and "You Can't Sing That!" (banned books set to music). The chorus has commissioned and/or premiered nearly twenty compositions and arrangements, and in 2007 the OCWC became one of the only community choruses in the nation ever to perform Olivier Messiaen's *Three Little Liturgies of the Divine Presence*.

We're especially proud of our conducting internship program, which to date has offered paid year-long positions to seven young women entering the field of choral conducting. Our interns participate not only in the rehearsing and conducting of the chorus, but also in the marketing, fundraising, and administrative tasks of operating a non-profit musical organization.

All of us involved with the Orange County Women's Chorus are delighted and honored to be participating in the 2012 ACDA Western Division Conference.





ELIZA RUBENSTEIN announced to her family at age four that she needed to take violin lessons so that she could “play on street corners for money” when she grew up; that career dream never panned out, but she went on to study choral conducting and English literature at Oberlin College before moving to southern California to earn her master’s degree in conducting from UC-Irvine. Besides her work with the OCWC, she is the Director of Choral and Vocal Activities at Orange Coast College and the Artistic Director of the Long Beach Chorale and Chamber Orchestra, and she serves on the board of the California chapter of the American Choral Directors’ Association as chair of women’s choir repertoire and standards. The *Orange County Register* has praised Eliza’s “expert direction,” and the *Long Beach Gazette* has said that “Rubenstein is the real deal ... Musically and technically, she has it all.”

Eliza is a former animal-shelter administrator and dog trainer, and the co-author of *The Adoption Option: Choosing and Raising the Rescue Dog for You*. In 2006 she presented a seminar entitled “Sit! Stay! Sing!: What Choral Conductors Can Learn from Dog Trainers” at the ACDA’s Western Division Conference. She shares her home with a beagle mix named Frances and a grey cat named Wilbur; in her spare time, she writes a feminist baseball blog and nurtures an unhealthy passion for the St. Louis Cardinals.

JANELLE TAG was born in Seoul, South Korea, but has lived most of her professional life in the United States. She began her piano studies at age 7; at the age of 15, she won her first piano competition and was given the honor of performing with the Saddleback Symphony Orchestra. Janelle holds Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in piano performance from CSU-Fullerton, where she studied with renowned Argentinian pianist Eduardo Delgado. Janelle is an active teacher and performer – both as a soloist and a collaborative pianist – in and around Orange County, a staff accompanist and vocal coach at Orange Coast College, and a board member for the Music Teachers’ Association of California.



DEBORAH WINSOR WILLIAMS has sung to both local and international audiences to great acclaim. Her most recent solo performances have included Verdi’s *Requiem*, Haydn’s *Lord Nelson Mass*, Mozart’s *Coronation Mass* and *Requiem*, Bach’s *Christmas Oratorio*, Handel’s *Messiah*, and Gwyneth Walker’s *Magnificat*. Debbie’s extensive repertoire has featured solo performances in Vivaldi’s *Gloria*, Haydn’s *Paukenmesse*, Brahms’s *Alto Rhapsody*, Bach’s *Magnificat*, Mahler’s *Symphony No. 2*, and Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 9*, with ensembles including the William Hall Chorale, the Long Beach Chorale and Chamber Orchestra, and the California Master Chorale. She toured Europe singing Maurice Duruflé’s *Requiem* with the orchestra of Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, and performed in the West Coast premiere of John Rutter’s *Magnificat*. Besides performing, Debbie is passionate about arts education, and has devoted much of her professional career to introducing young people to the joys of classical music.

JOHANNA BORENSTEIN is a chamber musician and an orchestral player. She has performed with the Hawaii Ballet, San Diego Symphony, San Diego Opera, Santa Monica Symphony, Rio Hondo Symphony, Asian-American Symphony, Debut Symphony Orchestra, Stockton Symphony, and the daKah Hip-Hip Orchestra. A graduate of the Colburn School of Music in Los Angeles, Johanna has soloed and performed extensively with the Colburn Symphony Orchestra, including performances at Los Angeles’s Disney Hall and Zipper Hall. She has also performed at New York’s Carnegie Hall and Jordan Hall in Boston. Johanna earned a Bachelor of Music degree at the Hartt School of Music, a Master’s Degree from the San Francisco Conservatory, and a Performance Certificate from the Colburn School of Music. Her mentors have included renowned flutists Jim Walker, Tim Day, and John Wion.



We offer our deepest thanks to the ACDA Western Division for extending this invitation to us; to the Pioneer Center for the Performing Arts for hosting us; to Carol Garner for our program design; to Luisa Gulley and Julie Fischer for our photographs; to Rev. William Wells and the staff and congregation of Newport Harbor Lutheran Church for our beautiful rehearsal space; to our generous donors for helping us thrive for 14 years; to Arts Orange County and the Orange County Community Foundation for their ongoing sponsorship; to our dedicated Board of Directors for their vision, their commitment to our mission, and all they do behind the scenes to make our performances possible; to our many volunteers for their indispensable support; and to our families and friends for enabling and encouraging our singing habit.

The OCWC welcomes talented new members! We rehearse on Tuesday evenings in Newport Beach, California. If you or someone you know would like to audition for the OCWC, please contact us at info@ocwomenschorus.org.



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