Program Notes

This setting of Panis Angelicus, from his Messe Solonnelle, was composed by Cesar Franck in 1872 while he was professor of organ at the Paris Conservatoire. The text is the sixth stanza of the hymn Savoir Solomnon by St. Thomas Aquinas.

Bread of angels becomes bread of men.
The bread of heaven given for us in the end.
O marvelous thing was partakers of the Lord.
Poor one, meek and humble.

Angels We Have Heard On High is a well-known French carol. For this arrangement, the harmonization was borrowed in part from a Vienna Boy’s Choir recording and from the Pilgrim Hymnal. It is an excellent teaching piece for the development of part-singing, which includes three types of harmony: parallel thirds, contrary motion and counterpoint.

Go Tell It on the Mountain is a beloved African American spiritual that many people from all ethnic backgrounds can remember singing as a child. Set for younger treble voices by Ruth Dwyer and Judith Waller, our performance of this accessible arrangement will incorporate authentic improvisations by some of FCCC’s most experienced singers.

In 1955, the husband and wife song-writing team of Sy Miller & Jill Jackson wrote this song, which brought them unexpected fame. Let There Be Peace on Earth appeals for a world peace that begins within each person. The song was printed in major songbooks and widely recorded by celebrities. It has been performed for premiers, presidents, and popes and in countless concerts and religious services.

Believe it or not, Jingle Bells, one of the most famous American winter songs, was originally written for Thanksgiving! The author and composer was James Pierpont, who composed the song in 1857 for children celebrating his Boston Sunday School Thanksgiving. The song was so popular that it was repeated at Christmas. Part of our Mission Statement is as follows: “The FCCC believes not only that all people can sing, but that all people need to sing, and is committed to promoting singing throughout our culture.” In addition, the International Federation for Choral Music has proclaimed the second Sunday in December to be “The International Day of Choral Singing.” Last year over one million people around the world participated. Therefore, we now invite our audience to join the choir on our finale, Jingle Bells.
Welcome to the Fairfield County Children’s Choir’s Seventeenth Annual Winter Concert! Today’s program features selections from the standard children’s choir repertoire, seasonal selections and the debut of the newest member of our conducting staff, Cynthia Holberg. Our program also features the amazing talents of the composers of the FCCC! Thank you for joining us in this musical season of the year.

We open today’s concert with the well-known Alleluia by the English composer William Boyce (1711–1779) who served as Master of the King’s Music. This three-part canon creates a rich, polyphonic cathedral-like quality that we are sure will lift your spirits.

The Holly and the Ivy is a centuries-old English nativity carol which has been transformed by its journey through the generations. This particular version was first collected by the renowned folk music cellist Cecil Sharp and later adapted by Benjamin Britten (1913–1976) who composed a modern piano arrangement for the ancient melody. Tonight’s performance will debut an arrangement created by Ms. Holberg for the Fairfield County Youth Chorale.

O Come, O Come Emmanuel is a French Carol, arranged by Noyes. Benjamin Britten (1913–1976) who composed a modern piano arrangement for the ancient melody. Tonight’s performance will debut an arrangement created by Ms. Holberg for the Fairfield County Youth Chorale.

The Gospel Train is an African-American spiritual that invites all of us to “get on board” with its driving rhythm, three-part harmony and persistent message of hope. First performed in 1907, Bussaha Ha’aba’ah is a lyrical song written by Nurit Hirsch, a highly regarded composer, a conductor and I count the birches desiring to manifest all its freedom.

O Beshana Haba’ah is a Chassidic round known as a ‘higrai’, a song to inspire worshippers during a service. The word Ha’aba’ah has no specific meaning. In the Chassidic tradition the music usually begins slowly, growing in excitement and speed until it concludes nearly in a frenzy.

Written between 1544 and 1551, Scenes from Goethe’s Faust has been described as the height of composer Robert Schumann’s accomplishments in the realm of dramatic music. Schumann’s music suggests the struggle between good and evil at the heart of Goethe’s work, as well as Faust’s tumultuous search for enlightenment and romance. Schumann’s lyrical, interior musical language produced some of the most beautiful and moving melodies ever written, always quintessentially Romantic, always striving for the ideal, in nature, humanity and human love.

Join us in the joy of this very special musical celebration with members of the Fairfield County Youth Chorale and the Fairfield County Children’s Choir! Thank you for joining us in this most musical season of the year.