



Program Notes

The setting by Franz Biebl (1906-2001) has enjoyed wide success in the United States for over twenty years. Its genesis can be traced back to the long tradition of community singing in Germany where professional guilds, private companies, public offices and the like often sponsored choirs to foster a spirit of camaraderie. In 1964 in Bavaria a local fireman asked Biebl, his church's music director, to write a song for his brigade of singing fireman. His "little piece" found its way to the San Francisco-based choir Chanticleer which has popularized it throughout the world.

Closer To Free, the hit song by the BoDeans, is also the theme song (and name-sake) for an annual fundraiser at Smilow Cancer Hospital at Yale/New Haven Hospital. The Smilow Cancer Hospital approach to patient care allows the patients to receive the highest level of care, thus making them "closer to free" from their disease. In November, 2012, the Chamber Singers recorded a new version of the song for a television commercial to be aired in January!

Dodi Li is in the style of a lively Israeli dance, with a text from the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) book Song of Solomon (Song of Songs 2:16, 3:6, 4:9, 4:16).

*Dodi li va'ani lo My beloved is mine and I am his,
Haroe Bashoshanim The shepherd grazing his flock among the lilies.
Mizot ola Min Hamidbar Who is this who goes up from the
M'kuleret Mor Ul' vona Wilderness perfumed with myrrh and frankincense.
Libavtini Achoti kala You have captivated my heart, my chosen sister and bride.
Uri Tsafon Uvoi Tei man. Awake North Wind and come South Wind.*

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.

'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime is considered to be Canada's oldest Christmas carol. Also known as "The Huron Carol," this hymn was written in 1643 by Jean de Brébeuf, a Jesuit missionary serving at Sainte-Marie among the Huron Native American people. The song's original Huron title, *Jesous Ahatonhia (Jesus, He is Born)*, is indicative of the native language of the Huron or Wendat people living around Georgian Bay in the southern province of Ontario. Brébeuf based the hymn on the traditional French melody *Une Jeune Pucelle (A Young Maid)*. The English text uses imagery that was familiar in the early 20th century and derived from Huron religious concepts. Instead of the traditional nativity story, Jesus is born in a "lodge of broken bark" instead of a manger; visited by hunters and chiefs instead of wise men who bring "gifts of fox and beaver pelt" instead of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

The beautiful Italian song **Gesu Bambino** combines original music with the well-known carol, *O Come, All Ye Faithful*. Written in 1917, this song has been performed by Luciano Pavarotti, Kathleen Battle, Andrea Bocelli and many others.



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When You Believe is the hit song from the movie, *The Prince of Egypt*. The FCCC was included in the first live performance of this piece when, in 1997, we were invited to join with the Connecticut Grand Opera in a program they called "An Operatic Tribute to Broadway." The composer, Stephen Schwartz was in residence for the project. The translation of the Hebrew section is:

*I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously.
Who is like You, oh Lord, among the celestial.
Who is like You, majestic in holiness.
In your love, You lead the people You redeemed.
I will sing (Ashira).*

The FCCC Board of Directors and Staff

wish you all the very best of this joyous season.

Thank you for attending our program

and please join us again!!



Special Guests

Leslie Dunnell - Flute
Morgan Morse – Bass Guitar
Mark Rudolph – Guitar
Chuck Saber - Percussion

FCCC Music Staff

Jon Noyes – Music Director & Founder, Chamber Singers Conductor
Lisa Bettke – Chorale Conductor & Accompanist
Kevin Cotellese – Concert Choir Conductor
Cynthia Holberg – Chorus Conductor
Dr. Heather Hamilton – Accompanist

FCCC Administrative Staff

Jon Noyes – Music Director & Founder
Barbara Brauner – General Manager
Alicen Gachi – Assistant Choir Manager

For audition and ticket information, please contact us at:



Fairfield County Children's Choir

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Fairfield County Children's Choir

Jon Noyes, Music Director & Founder
presents our 18th Anniversary Winter Concert

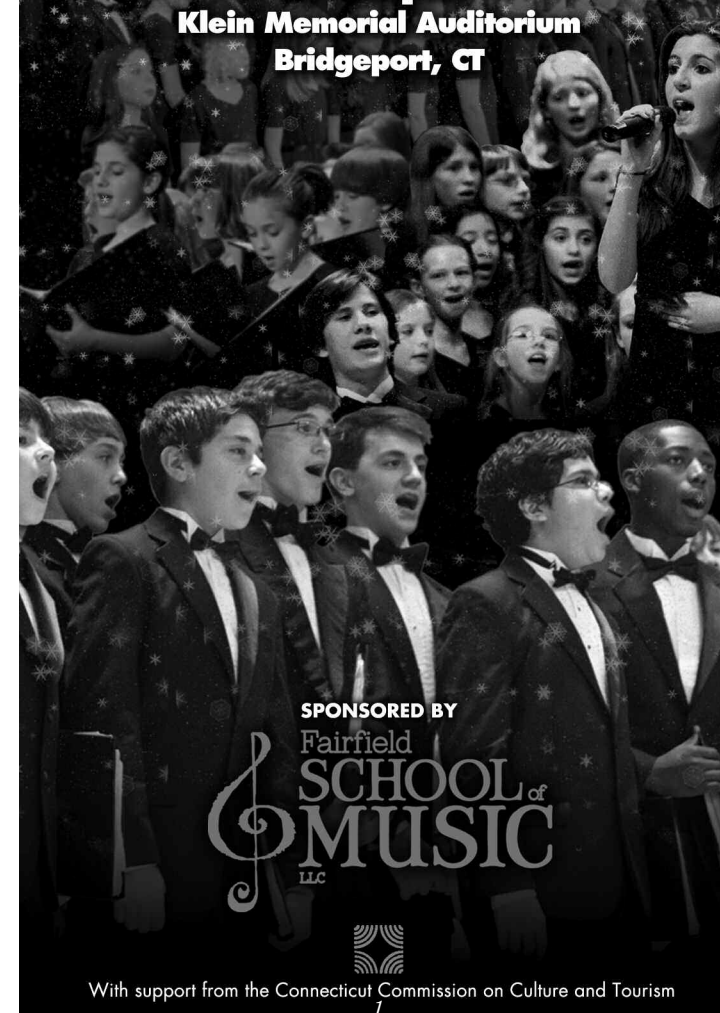


Angels Sing

Sunday December 2, 2012

3:00pm

Klein Memorial Auditorium
Bridgeport, CT



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Fairfield County Children's Choir

Jon Noyes, Music Director & Founder presents

18th Annual Winter Concert

Angels Sing

Sunday, December 2, 2012 3:00pm

The Klein Memorial Auditorium • Bridgeport, CT

Fairfield County Youth Choir

Masters in This HallWilliam Morris, arr. Catherine Bennett
TottoyoCristian Grases

Chorus

Hine Ma TovAllan E. Naplan
Three Moravian Carolsarr. Phyllis Tate
The Birch Treearr. Mary Ellen Junda

Chorale

Hine Ma Tovarr. Henry Leck
PeaceRuth Dwyer and Martin L. Ellis
Jingle Bell SwingDavid J. Elliott

Concert Choir

Al Shlosa D'varimAllan E. Naplan
I Saw Three ShipsEnglish Carol, arr. Alinda B. Couper
For the Beauty of the EarthJohn Rutter

Chamber Singers

Angels' CarolJohn Rutter
Ave Maria (*Angelus Domini*)Franz Biebl
Closer To FreeKurt Neumann and Sam Llanas

Combined Choirs

Dodi LiNira Chen
Angels We Have Heard On HighFrench Carol, arr. Noyes
'Twas in the Moon of WintertimeHuron Carol, arr. Antony Baldwin
Gesu BambinoPietro Yon
When You Believe – from "The Prince of Egypt"Stephen Schwartz



Program Notes

Welcome to the Fairfield County Children's Choir's Eighteenth Annual Winter Concert! Today's program features classic holiday selections, including many that refer to angels. We also include various thematic threads such as multiple compositions by John Rutter and Allan E. Naplan and a wonderful set of Jewish pieces, including two different settings of the *Hine Ma Tov* text. This concert also features the debut of the newest member of our music staff, Dr. Heather Hamilton. And of course, we will have nearly three hundred angelic voices on stage! Thank you for joining us in this most musical season of the year.

Masters in this Hall is arranged by Catherine Bennet for three voices and is a modern adaptation of the Christmas Carol written by William Morris in the mid 19th century. Morris chose an early French dance tune from the early 18th century for his text, giving the piece a neo-Renaissance quality. While keeping the original character of the piece, Bennett adds quite a bit of variety within the original verse-chorus form. There is a robust baritone soli feature in the first verse, a canon for three voices in later verses and a descant that is added to the final chorus. "Noel sing we clear!"

In July 2012 the FCCC Chamber Singers attended the Golden Gate Choral Festival in California where we heard the eminent conductor Maria Guinand conduct **Tottoyo**, composed by Venezuelan composer Cristian Grases. Both the conductor and composer are involved in El Sistema, a publicly financed community music education program in Venezuela which involves children from underserved communities in youth orchestras. José Antonio Abreu, the founder of the program that is now being replicated around the world, began with this philosophy:

"Music has to be recognized as an agent of social development, in the highest sense because it transmits the highest values - solidarity, harmony, mutual compassion. And it has the ability to unite an entire community, and to express sublime feelings."

The story of *Tottoyo* describes a brief scene: "Tottoyo is a young child who likes to play outside. When it is time to come in, his mother calls him from the door, but Tottoyo does not want to come in. Instead he wants to stay out playing. At the end of the song his mother calls him more forcefully, which makes him hide behind a bush."

Hine Ma Tov is an original composition in a traditional Jewish Klezmer style. The Hebrew text, from Psalm 133, conveys a wonderful message of brotherhood, along with the appeal of the lively music which cleverly shifts between major and minor. The syncopation of the "lai lai lai" refrain may inspire you to sing and clap along!

*Behold, how good it is
For brethren to dwell together in peace.*



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Three Moravian Carols is a song cycle of traditional Czech folk melodies set by composer-arranger Phyllis Tate. Moravia is a historical region in the east of the Czech Republic, together with Bohemia and Czech Silesia. It takes its name from the Morava River, which rises in the northwest of the region. Phyllis Tate's well-crafted arrangement for unison singing and piano revives these time-honored Christmas carols with music evocative of old Eastern European culture and style.

The Birch Tree (*Beriozka*) is a traditional melody from Russia, also known in Russian folklore as *Moist Mother Earth*. Tchaikovsky included this popular folk-song in the last movement of his Symphony No. 4 in F minor. The haunting melody of the "balalaika" recalls the sound of wind passing through bare branches, and the transformation of the branch into a flute reflects the poignant loss and change expressed by nature in the passing of the seasons. Dr. Mary Ellen Junda originally arranged this beautiful setting of The Birch Tree for unison voices, flute and dulcimer.

The second setting of **Hine Ma Tov** (from Psalm 133) in today's concert is by Henry Leck who will be the guest conductor of the Chamber Singers when they travel to Hawaii next summer. Listen for devices such as countermelody, descant and canon which give variation and keep things interesting.

The text in **Peace** uses the Hebrew word 'Shalom' meaning peace, partnered with the Latin text, 'Pax aeterna,' *peace eternal*. The lyrics speak of the desire to develop a vibrant world of peace, kindness and friendship for the next generation of youth. As can happen when a generation matures, our youth often feel bombarded with the negative impact of hate and anger in the world. This comes at a time when, in their optimism, our youth truly seek a world of peaceful cohabitation. When faced with such conflict, the universal language of music allows the singer to express difficult emotions in difficult times.

Jingle Bell Swing is one of several holiday songs that make up Christmas Lites, a jazz suite commissioned by the Glen Ellyn Children's Chorus from Illinois. This arrangement by David Elliot really does swing, but the catch is - it's in 5/4!

Al Shlosa D'varim is a lyrical setting of the popular maxim from Pirkei Avot (Jewish morality laws). The text translated means *"The world is sustained by three things; by truth, by justice, and by peace."* Though written in the form of a partner song, the text dictates one continuous statement. This approach is aided by the lyrical phrasing of the two counter melodies. Using the universal language of music, Al Shlosa D'varim conveys this important and universal theme through its beautiful simplicity.

I Saw Three Ships, a traditional English carol possibly from Derbyshire, is from the 17th century. The reference to three ships is thought to originate in the three ships that bore the purported relics of the Biblical magi to Cologne Cathedral in the 12th century. Using six of the nine verses published in William Sandys's



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"Christmas Carols, Ancient and Modern" from 1833, Couper alternates between unison verses and solo verses with choral harmonic accompaniment. In addition, she adds a brief instrumental interlude between each verse and instrumental support throughout. While creating variety through vocal texture changes, and a dance-like instrumental accompaniment, Couper successfully manages to maintain the original character of this popular Christmas Carol.

For the Beauty of the Earth is one of John Rutter's most beloved pieces of music and is performed frequently by choruses around the world. In it, he demonstrates an exceptional ability to write a lyric melody with soaring lines while maintaining a simple sensibility that makes it accessible to performers and audiences alike. The words that Rutter chose are from Folliot S. Pierpont's hymn of the same name. It seems that Rutter considers this in his own composition. Like a hymn, Rutter uses the same melody for all four verses and includes a descant and key change in the final verse. In the first verse, the chorus sings in unison, establishing the melody that will continue through the rest of the song. In verse two, the soprano performs the melody while the alto is given a countermelody that uses imitative compositional techniques. Then in verse three he turns this idea around, having the alto perform the melody while the soprano sings in counterpoint. Verse four, the final verse, is set much like a final hymn verse. Along with a key change, the melody is performed by the lower voice parts, in this case the alto, while the soprano has the descant. All of these elements come together giving listener and performer a wonderful illustration of the text's theme, "This our joyful hymn of praise."

This afternoon's concert includes two pieces by contemporary English composer John Rutter (b. 1945). His stunning **Angels' Carol** proclaims the Christmas story as told by the angels. It illustrates Rutter's sense of legato melodic line and his stunning harmonies. "Have you heard the sound of the angel voices?"

The sacred Latin text, **Ave Maria**, has inspired many composers to write in their most beautiful and sublime musical language. The most well known of the Marian prayers, it is primarily found as an antiphon for the Fourth Sunday in Advent, although it has other liturgical applications throughout the year, both devotional and penitential. This text often includes the *Angelus* (Latin for "angel"), a Christian devotion in memory of the Incarnation.

*Holy Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee,
Blessed art thou among women, And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,
Now and at the hour of our death. Amen.*

*The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary,
And she conceived by the power of Holy Spirit.
Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done unto me according to your Word.
And the Word was made flesh. And dwelt among us.*