

B-R-I-D-G-E-S

PROGRAM NOTES by Rebecca Scott

OUR HOME TOWNS - We live in Central Jersey - near the mountains, near the Pinelands, near the shore, between the rivers, and on the plains. As diverse cultures move in and out of Jersey, it becomes dense and more complex, but richer, and more vital. Tonight we celebrate artistic expression – music, poetry, art, and dance - of a tiny portion of the many cultures that live here.

LENAPE CULTURE IN CENTRAL NEW JERSEY: We begin with the oldest culture that we know of from our area - the peaceful Lenape Indians who inhabited this area for thousands of years before Europeans arrived. Even before the Colonists arrive in Jersey, the Native Americans were decimated by diseases brought to them by explorers, sailors and soldiers. The Dutch and Swedes fought over the land, the English declared the land theirs and the Lenape dispersed to other areas now called Oklahoma, Canada and elsewhere. But some of their ancestors are still here and certainly their spirit - their love of our land, our animals, our birds and our sky, can still be felt.

Jean Thomas, Cantabile alto and Board of Trustees member says “I want to do this Lenape music because I live on property along the Millstone River where they had a trail to the clam beds. My response to living in Indian Territory is that I value the simple ways that accompany nature and enjoy the seasons in awe of creation. I live in the crossroads of the Revolution as well with a battlefield and encampment for Rochambeau, the first Somerset Courthouse was just down the hill, the first Queens College met at a home in Millstone. My church was a British hospital. New Jersey had a port of entry for immigrants in Perth Amboy soon after Ellis Island outgrew the need. I have a strong appreciation for the dedication and achievements of those that developed our land: Indians, farmers, educators, artisans, clergy, soldiers, canal diggers, merchants. There must have been some mighty strong women supporting and working along with the men who loved them.”

This Lenape song was composed by Brent Michael Davids as the first part of his *Native American Suite*, for chorus, glass flute, shaker, drum and bird “roars”, to honor his fellow Native Americans and keep their “songs” alive. Davids writes “*Native American Suite* was commissioned by the Dale Warland Singers and presents an interesting blend of Native American melodies, lyrics and rhythms, as well as some interesting jazz harmonies combined with chorus vocal effects.... It is a percussive suite of three traditional Native American songs including *Lenape song* (Delaware), *I Still Love You Yet (Apache “49” Song)*, and *Zuni Sunrise Song* (Pueblo). *Lenape Song* is festive, sung by many people together. As the group performs they bring themselves back into the community and the whole tribe into wellness.”

Brent Michael Davids is a member of the Stockbridge Mohican nation of American Indians. The Mohicans were related to the Lenape People of the Delaware River Valley. Davids is one of the few Native Americans composing today. He has composed for many professional chamber and choral groups, ballet companies and orchestras. Davids holds a B.M. degree in music composition from Northern Illinois University and an M.M. in music composition from Arizona State University and has pursued studies in American Indian religions. In addition to concert music, Davids writes music for films and has composed a new score for the 1920 American film *The Last of the Mohicans*. Davids' Mohican name is Blue Butterfly. He lives in Saint Paul, Minnesota and is an active participant with the First Nations

Composer Initiative. He has also served as Composer-in-Residence with the Native American Composers Apprenticeship Project.

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING: The Colonists fought over our land. In 1655, the Dutch conquered New Sweden, land that is now in Delaware, New Jersey and Pennsylvania and incorporated it into New Amsterdam. Throughout Central Jersey, can be seen historic Dutch houses, farmhouses and churches. The poem or hymn, *We Gather Together* first appeared in print in a 1626 collection of Dutch patriotic songs at a time when the Dutch were engaged in a war of national liberation against the Catholic King Philip II of Spain. Under this King, Dutch Protestants were forbidden to gather for worship. Surely this hymn, brought with them to the new country, gave the Dutch Colonists a sense of security and thanksgiving for their new found freedom. The modern English text was written by American musicologist Theodore Baker in 1894. *Come Ye Thankful People, Come* is a harvest hymn written in 1844 by Henry Alford (1810-1871) to the tune St. George's Windsor, by George Job Elvey (1816-2893). Although not of the same time period as the Dutch hymn, it represents in this program, the English religious groups, such as the Puritans and Quakers, who came to this country looking for freedom from religious tyranny.

COLCHESTER: *O twas a joyful sound to hear* (1735) was composed by William Tans'ur, born in Dunchurch, England, son of a laborer who taught psalmody and wrote 100 psalms, hymn tunes, anthems, a Te Deum and other material. His tune "Bangor" was popular in Scotland and is mentioned in Robert Burns' poem *The Ordination*. The text, Psalm 122, by Nicholas Brady and Nahum Tate, from their metrical version of the Psalms: *New Version of the Psalms of David* (1696). Choral singing in the colonies was brought from England by the Puritans who had a tradition of congregational singing of "plain" tunes. The melody normally appears in the tenor voice, with the other parts adhering closely to the tune's rhythm and phrase structure. The singing is straight-forward in manner without much subtlety. Later, when the organ was introduced, this singing declined and was taken over by trained singers and music more homophonic in nature. Colchester might have been one song that the colonists sang in their services here.

PSALM 100: Charles Edward Ives (1874–1954) was one of the first American composers to attain international fame. His music was regarded as truly original and was not often performed during his lifetime. Ives combined American popular music, band music and church music heard in his youth with his classical compositional training. He was among the first composers to experiment with polytonality and other new compositional techniques, leading the way for the next generation of composers. Ives studied composition with his father who encouraged experimentation. He became an organist at the age of 14. He entered Yale University in 1894 studying with Horatio Parker, composing choral and church music using hymn tunes and traditional songs and melodies of Stephen Foster. After graduation, Ives worked in the insurance business eventually setting up his own company and becoming financially successful. In his spare time he composed music and worked as an organist in Danbury, New Haven, Bloomfield, New Jersey, and New York City. His work in New Jersey was at the First Presbyterian Church in Bloomfield from May 1, 1898 to May 1, 1900. Old church calendars from the Bloomfield church report that Ives led a song service the third Sunday of each month from a *Psalmist Hymnal*, which may have been made up of his own settings of the Bible. Psalm 100 was composed in 1902, for adult and children's choir, with organ "ad lib" - meaning it could be used to support the voices, substitute for the children's choir in the second part, or play only the chimes. The basic key is C Major, which the young voices hold through-out the piece. The adult choir wavers up and down half steps as if trying to find its balance. It seems obvious to this listener that the children represent the innocent voices of heaven secure in their God, while the adults battle to stay afloat in a world of sin.

DVORAK: This past February, Cantabile sang for The Dvorak American Heritage Association at Bohemian National Hall on East 73rd Street in Manhattan, to present our newest commission from composer Dr. Eric Ewazen and songs of Dvorak in a program of music composed by Dvorak and his

students. Dr. Ewazen's teacher, Dr. Milton Babbitt, is only 3 degrees of separation from Dvorak himself - his teacher's- teacher's- teacher. Dvorak was brought to New York City in 1891 to teach at the new National Conservatory of Music of America by Mrs. Jeannette Thurber. He was sympathetic to American composition students and encouraged them to compose in a "new" style and not imitate European compositional style. One of his students at the Conservatory was African-American Henry Thacker Burleigh, who introduced Dvorak to spirituals. Tonight, we perform three pieces by Dvorak from his cycle of five called *In Nature, Opus 63*. *Oh, Here's a Day for Joyful Singing* will be sung in Czech. This gives singer and listener alike a true feeling for how the musical phrase is composed around the meaning of the words and the sounds of the syllables. Listen for how differently Dvorak sounds in Czech than in American English.

ESTI DAL: *Esti Dal (Evening Song)*, sung in Hungarian) by Zoltan Kodaly has been sung all over the world by many different choirs. The beautiful melody has melancholy words of longing for the motherland. Cantabile was invited to sing this song one spring at the Hungarian Institute of New Brunswick's spring festival. In spite of our American accent in the difficult Hungarian pronunciation, the listeners' eyes welled up with tears.

AAKASHBHARA: Elizabeth Verderosa, Cantabile alto and Board of Trustees member, sings the traditional Bengali tune *Aakashbhara Surya-tara*. This song was introduced to Cantabile by Robert Gupta, violinist from The Juilliard School. The poetry is by Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941). The translation, read by Kathleen Appleby, is by Robert Gupta.

TELL MY MA: This well-known Irish folk song is a perfect match for Irish step-dancing. Jon Washburn (b. 1942) is the award winning and distinguished Conductor and Artistic Director Canada's outstanding professional vocal ensemble, the 20-voice Vancouver Chamber Choir. He has premiered over 200 works by Canadian, American and European composers. He was named to the Order of Canada in 2001.

SWING LOW, SWEET CHARIOT/ALL NIGHT, ALL DAY: Jameson Marvin is Director of Choral Activities and Senior Lecturer on Music at Harvard University. He has combined two spirituals with words of hope for the slaves in their contemplation of freedom in their spiritual after-life. *All Night, All Day* was probably a "call and response" song. *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot* was composed sometime before 1862 by Wallis Willis, a Choctaw freedman of the original Indian Territory. Willis was inspired by the Red River, which reminded him of the Jordan River and of the prophet Elijah being taken to heaven by a chariot.

SEAL LULLABY AND MO LI HUA: Our performance of *The Seal Lullaby* honors the water heritage of New Jersey and the sailors, fishermen and Coast Guard who feed us and guard our famous shoreline. The sad poem is by Rudyard Kipling. *Mo Li Hua*, a Chinese folk song from Jiangsu Province honors another new immigrant community that has brought its diverse arts to New Jersey. Cantabile has performed with or for many of our neighbors in the diverse communities that make up Central Jersey, such as the Ukrainians from South Bound Brook and the Hungarians of New Brunswick. In Cantabile's concert on December 7, 2013, [Harmony of Two Cultures](#), we featured the *ZiZhu Ensemble* (Purple Bamboo) playing traditional instruments of China. Shaolin Liu is one of the founders of the ensemble and we welcome him back tonight to help accompany us on the erhu (2 -stringed Chinese violin) in *Mo Li Hua*.

TEND THEM WELL: Was composed by Ruth Scott Clark in 1964 when she lived in North Jersey with her husband and family, including daughter Rebecca Scott. With lyrics by Virginia Pace, it is a memorial hymn to the soldiers of the American Revolution and was performed at the Morristown Bi-Centennial Celebration in 1976 and published by the committee in both instrumental and choral versions. Mrs. Clark's works include a two volumes of songs, many choral works performed by Cantabile, instrumental pieces, two volumes of piano solos and a volume of poetry. She began her career as an art and music

teacher in Penn Township, Pennsylvania. An accomplished pianist, she also won many prizes for her artwork. She served as President of New Jersey Music Educators and was organist and choir director of several churches in New Jersey and Florida, throughout her distinguished career.

AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL: Was composed by Samuel Ward, (1882) with words by Katherine L. Bates, (1893). The arranger, Robert Page retired in 2012 from his position as Paul Mellon University Professor of Music and director of Choral Studies at the School of Music where he has been on the faculty since 1975. Maestro Page was active in New Jersey and Philadelphia in the 1970s preparing choruses for the Philadelphia Orchestra, directing the Mendelssohn Club and conducting the New Jersey All-State Chorus.

His long and distinguished career has been marked by accolades including: two Grammy Awards, the Prix Mondial de Montreux, the Grand Prix du Disque, and Pennsylvania's "Artist of the Year" award among many other awards.

NEW JERSEY POP MUSIC

Program Note by Emily Kaster:

New Jersey natives have reigned for years at the top of the pop charts, and may be a great source of pride for many who call this fair state home. One of the great crooners, Frank Sinatra, born in Hoboken, as the only child of Italian immigrants, started his singing career in his teens, first with pals from high school, and later as a singing waiter. Although not the first, and certainly not the last to perform this jazz standard, *Fly Me to the Moon* showcased Sinatra's swinging energy and warm vocals. Another group that got its start in high school, The Shirelles, was known for its innocent "school-girl" sound, which perfectly contrasted with the mature theme of the Brill-Building hit, *Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow*, written by Carole King and then-husband Gerry Goffin. The schoolmates from Passaic became the first all-girl group to have a #1 hit on the charts. Our final selection, *Bridge Over Troubled Waters*, earned Newark son, Paul Simon, one of many #1 hits as well as a Grammy for Record and Song of the Year in 1971. Written about providing comfort to someone in need, initially Simon considered the song to be too simple; it is this simplicity that helps give the song a universal appeal. This gospel-infused choral arrangement brings out the gospel sounds that first inspired Simon as he began writing his "little hymn."

