

Boston City Singers
Jane Money, director

Harvard-Epworth United Methodist Church, Cambridge
Wednesday, June 25 & Thursday, June 26, 2014, 2:00 p.m.

Rainforest Chant

As taught to Boston City Singers by Ysaye Barmwell

From the Mbuti people of the Ituri Rain Forest, Zaire

Kuwa Furaha

Festive Alleluia

Agur Maria (Ave Maria)

Laudate pueri

Four Little Angels

Jim Papoulis (USA)

Lyn Williams (Australia)

Xabier Sarasola (Spain)

Felix Mendelssohn

Traditional Shaker, Sabbathday Lake, Maine

SONGS OF PEACE

May I Be An Instrument of Peace

As taught to Boston City Singers by Susan Robbins, Libana

Dona Nobis Pacem

Psalm 23

Wairua Tapu

Ko Matsushita (Japan)

Srul Irving Glick (Canada)

Ngapo Wehi (New Zealand, Maori)

FOLK MUSIC OF AFRICA, IRELAND, THE UNITED KINGDOM & JAMAICA

Rhythm Gamme Variation

World Rhythm Ensemble; Kimani Lumsden, *director*

My Lagan Love

Two Northumbrian Folksongs

Bring Me Little Water, Silvy

Vus Vet Zayn

Jamaican Folksongs

Senegalese Sabar Tradition, West Africa

Traditional Irish, arr. Michael Neaum (UK)

Traditional English, arr. Michael Neaum

Huddie Ledbetter (Lead Belly), arr. Moira Smiley

Yiddish folksong, arr. Stephen Hatfield (Canada)

arr. Kimani Lumsden

FOUR SOUTH-AFRICAN SONGS

Ipharadisi

Bonk'abaphandle

Qongqothwane "Click Song"

Usilethela Uxolo

As taught to Boston City Singers by South-African choirs, 2011–2012

Traditional Zulu hymn

Traditional Zulu

Traditional Xhosa

Xhosa

Program Notes

Rainforest Chant

Boston City Singers (BCS) learned the Mbuti chant evoking sounds of the rainforest at a workshop conducted by Dr. Ysaye Barnwell at Festival 500 in Newfoundland.

Kuwa Furah

Written for the Prelude Chorus of the Young People's Chorus of New York City, "Kuwa Furaha" is a song about joy. Jim Papoulis writes:

While working with children from Africa, I was reminded of the simple ways that children can find joy. It might be in a stick, in a smile, in a moment with some leaves. They had a beautiful way of showing joy—by simply tapping the heels of their hands together, followed by an upward reach to the sky and a slow, gentle fall of the hands to rest back down at their sides. I have incorporated this soft expression of joy into the song.

Papoulis composes, orchestrates, and conducts music for dance, film, ensembles, and choirs. His compositions are known for exploring new modes of musical communication by honoring and connecting classical and traditional forms with non-Western sounds.

Festive Alleluia

Lyn Williams is Australia's leading director of choirs for young people, having founded two internationally renowned choirs: Sydney Children's Choir, in 1989; and the national children's choir, Gondwana Voices, in 1997. Boston City Singers has enjoyed exchanges with both groups in Boston and Sydney.

Agur Maria (Ave Maria)

Xabier Sarasola is a Basque composer, violinist, and conductor. He sings in Orfeo Donostiarra, a choir dedicated to nurturing and preserving the tradition of Basque singing, and in the vocal group "Kea," dedicated to contemporary music. His music is published by CM-Ediciones Musicales.

Laudate pueri

Laudate pueri, the second of Mendelssohn's *Three Motets* for female chorus and organ, Op. 39, was completed in Rome on the last day of 1830, and published in Bonn.

*Praise ye the Lord, praise the name of the Lord.
Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and for evermore.*

Four Little Angels

BCS first learned *Four Little Angels* from Joel Cohen, founder of The Boston Camerata. From the songbook of Sister Mary Hazard, Sabbathday Lake, Maine, we perform this exuberant piece as a round.

May I Be An Instrument Of Peace

Taught to BCS by Susan Robbins, founder and artistic director of Libana, this simple round uses Arabic, Hebrew, and English greetings.

Dona Nobis Pacem

Japanese composer and conductor Ko Matsushita is the conductor of the World Youth Choir 2014, elected by the International Federation for Choral Music. His setting of *Dona Nobis Pacem* for three treble choirs was composed in 2005, for the International KODOMO Choir Festival in Kyoto.

Psalm 23

Srul Irving Glick was one of Canada's most prominent and prolific composers, having written in most major forms, including chamber, oratorio, orchestral, vocal, and choral. Commissioned for the Toronto Children's Chorus and Jean Ashworth Bartle, Psalm 23 is one movement of *Psalm Trilogy* for treble chorus and piano or string orchestra.

Wairua Tapu

A sacred song of praise, *Wairua Tapu* means "Holy Spirit." This work has come into the choral repertoire through the close working relationship enjoyed by the Wehi Whanau, led by Ngapo Wehi, and the New Zealand Youth Choir. BSC hosted the New Zealand Youth Choir in December 2013.

*Alight holy spirit, come to rest
Holy spirit from above
over all we hold dear,
give us your love.*

*Lay us down (as firewood), so all is right
Teaching us to hold firmly to the right.
Wash us, so that we may keep holding
Yours is the true glory.*

Rhythm Gamme Variation

The *sabar* is a traditional drum from the West-African nations of Senegal and Gambia. It is generally played with one hand and one stick. Used to communicate to other villages, the different rhythms correspond to phrases and could be heard for more than fifteen kilometers. *Sabar* drumming and dance are very much alive in Boston, home to some of the best West-African drummers in the world. **BCS is proud to bring you an example of this deeply rooted cultural form.**

My Lagan Love

My Lagan Love is set to a traditional Irish air, collected in 1903, in Donegal. Michael Neaum is the former principal accompanist of the English girl choir Cantamus and a superb arranger of treble-choir music.

Two Northumbrian Folk Songs

Maa Bonny Lad and *Keel Row* are two traditional Northumbrian songs. The first describes a haunting search for a young man lost at sea; the second evokes the life and work of the keelmen of Newcastle upon Tyne.

Bring Me Little Water, Silvy

Huddie Ledbetter (Lead Belly) was an American folk and blues musician, and multi-instrumentalist, notable for his strong vocals, virtuosity on the twelve-string guitar, and the songbook of folk standards he introduced. In *Bring Me Little Water, Silvy*, he recalls a working day under the hot summer sun. To communicate with each other, the men shouted back and forth, trading lines of a song, or casually improvising new words to a familiar tune. Lead Belly sang this shout to attract the attention of the water boy, who would ease the thirst of the workers. Moira Smiley works internationally as a composer-vocalist. Based in Los Angeles, she leads her vocal-band, Moira Smiley & VOOCO, travels the world as a soloist in early and traditional music, and creates new work with dance, theatre, and film.

Vus Vet Zayn

*From paper we will build a bridge
and we'll roll along back to our land.
What will be when the Messiah comes?
We'll gather roasted doves from the side of the road.*

Jamaican Folksongs

Some familiar and not-so-familiar Jamaican folksongs, which BCS shares in the aural tradition.

Ipharadisi

"This is our home, home of the holy, the place where we will rest."

Bonk'abaphandle

"All those who are outside"

Qongqothwane "Click Song"

*Diviner of the roadways - the knock knock beetle
It just passed by here - the knock knock beetle*

Usilethela Uxolo

Nelson Mandela, He Brings Us Peace was taught to BCS by Gobingca George Mxadana, director of the Imilonji KaNtu Choral Society, who visited Boston from Soweto in 2012.

– Jane Money