

# Voyage to the Americas

## Cantigas Women's Choir

Joan Isaacs Litman, Director  
Erasmia Voukelatos, Accompanist

Saint Joseph Roman Catholic Church, Hoboken, N.J.  
Saturday, May 20, 2006, 7:30pm

- Bird Song** ..... Cahuilla  
*Morongo Reservation, Banning, California*
- Cantigas de la Virgin Maria** ..... Alfonso X, el Sabio, King of Spain (1221-1284)  
**Cantiga 100 "Esta é de loor"** ..... *Castilla*  
**Cantiga 166 "Santa Maria"**  
Patricio Díaz, Fídula  
Luke Notary, Dumbek
- Alabado** ..... anonymous  
*Road to San Luis Obispo*
- Cantate Domino** ..... Rupert Lang (b. 1948)  
*Vancouver, British Columbia*  
Becca Brassler, Carolyn Hoberman and Frances Marsh, Soloists  
Erasmia Voukelatos, Synthesizer
- Ojibwa Lullaby** ..... traditional  
*Lake Huron, Northern Shore*
- Lullaby** ..... Gian-Carlo Menotti (b. 1911)  
Carolyn Hoberman, Mezzo Soprano *New York City*
- Dirait-On** ..... Morten Lauridsen (b. 1943)  
Patricio Díaz, Viola *Los Angeles*  
Wendy Eaton, Sign Interpretation
- Gloria Tibi** ..... Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990)  
Kimberly Perry, Bongos *New York City*
- Simple Song** ..... Leonard Bernstein  
Carla Williams, Soprano
- Noche Con Luna** ..... anonymous  
*Santiago del Estero, Argentina*
- Las Amarillas** ..... Traditional Mexican, arr. Stephen Hatfield *Huastec, Mexico*

**O Xote Das Meninas**.....Luis Gonzaga (1912-1990)  
*Recife, Brazil*  
Catharine Baldwin, Melanie Best, Leah Holton and Caitlin Price, Meninas  
Cassie Hinnen, Frances Marsh, Luke Notary,  
Kimberly Perry and Deborah Wenger, Percussion  
Orlando Hernandez, Accordion

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**INTERMISSION**

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**Pleasure It Is**..... Daniel Pinkham (b. 1923)  
Patricio Díaz, Viola *Albany, New York*

**Simple Gifts**..... Shaker song, arr. Aaron Copland (1900-1990)  
*Poland Springs, Maine*

**Mountain Song/Kentucky Woman**..... Holly Near, arr. J. David Moore  
*Kentucky*

**Circus Band** ..... Charles E. Ives (1874-1954)  
*New Haven, Connecticut*

**I Got Rhythm**.....George Gershwin (1898-1937)  
*New York*

**Somewhere over the Rainbow** .....Harold Arlen (1905-1986)  
Madeline Stern, Soloist *Kansas*  
Winner of the Cantigas Young Women's Vocal Competition

**Three Preludes**.....George Gershwin  
Cristina Altamura, Piano

**I Am His Child**.....Moses Hogan (1957-2003)  
*New Orleans*

**Praise His Holy Name** .....Keith Hampton (b.??)  
*Chicago*

*Many thanks to the congregations of St. Luke's Lutheran Church, New York, and St. Paul Lutheran Church, Jersey City, for the use of their sanctuaries; to the congregation of St. Paul for providing the reception following Sunday's performance; to Ann Ryan, stage manager; to the Cantigas Board of Directors for their leadership and tireless effort in preparation for this concert and throughout the year; to Mustard Seed School for our weekly rehearsal space; and to Amelia Pargellis, who serves faithfully as administrative assistant each week.*

## PROGRAM NOTES AND TRANSLATIONS

The selection of repertoire for *Voyage to the Americas* was conceived to draw the listener's attention to musical moments in the history of the Americas and to free the imagination of the listener to journey where it might. While the organization of selections was not intended to be chronological, there is nonetheless an inevitable positioning which sets the early pieces of this evening's performance in a chronological context. The Choir processes to the music of the Old World, from Castilla (present-day Spain). These songs, the Cantigas of Alfonso X, el Sabio, are our signature pieces, and the genre of imaginative song from which our choir derives its name. It is under the influence of Spanish music in the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries that we will make the journey across the Atlantic with explorers, conquistadors, missionaries and colonists. Its echo will be heard right up to the present day in the folk music of Mexico, the dance forms of the Andes, and in the evensong of the California Missions.

And yet, the first music heard this evening must be the voices of the ones for whom these lands were already home, the first Americans. Invisibly, they call for our attention. These voices will be heard again in the lullaby of Ojibway, one of the largest Native American populations in Canada, and in the quiet strains of *Noche con Luna*, the indigenous voice of the Andes.

There is a geographic location assigned to and associated with each piece in tonight's program. Sometimes the chosen location is historic, such as the single remaining community of Shakers, at the Sabbathday Community in Poland Springs, Maine. Other times, the location is the birthplace of the composer, and still other times it is the location of a first performance. One piece's setting is imaginary, but draws the heart to a home in Kansas.

### The Cantigas of Alfonso X, el Sabio:

**Cantiga 100:** *Holy Mary of the Daystar, show us and guide us to God's way. By thy light, guide the lost who understand their guilt. Let them flee from pride, from that which they should have seen, and should not have done* (summary translation).

**Cantiga 166:** This cantiga recounts the tale of a repentant man who makes a long pilgrimage on foot to Salas in return for deliverance from five years of aches and illness. The only pain that lingers is that of his feet, sore from walking.

**Alabado:** *Lift your heart in joy in the divine sacrament. Where God is veiled, comforting and sustaining the soul.*

The text for Rupert Lang's **Cantate Domino** come from Psalm 149: *Sing to the Lord a new song: let his praise be in the assembly of saints. Let Israel rejoice in their Maker, and let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.*

**Lullaby** comes from the musical drama "The Consul" by Gian-Carlo Menotti. Set in an Eastern European city, it tells the story of a young family yearning for freedom from oppression. It was first performed in New York.

**Dirait-On** (So They Say) is a musical setting of the poem, originally in French by German poet Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926): *Abandon surrounding abandon, Tenderness touching tenderness . . . Your oneness endlessly caresses itself, so they say; self-caressing though its own clear reflection, thus you invent the theme of Narcissus fulfilled.*

Composer Morten Lauridsen was born in Colfax, Washington in 1943. A long-time professor and Chair of the Department of Composition at University of Southern California, he has been Composer in Residence of the Los Angeles Master Chorale since 1994.

**Gloria Tibi** and **Simple Song** are among the most frequently performed pieces from Bernstein's controversial theater piece, *Mass*, premiered in 1971. The text of Gloria Tibi is from the Liturgy of the Roman Mass, sung in Latin: *Glory to you. Glory to the Father, glory to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. We praise you, we adore you, we glorify you, we bless you. Glory to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Glory!*

**Noche Con Luna** is a traditional dance form associated with Santiago del Estero, Argentina, and the land that extends to Chile and Bolivia. It represents an interesting fusion of the metrical structure of the Spanish colonists with the melodic and poetic tradition of the indigenous peoples who live at the foothills of the Andes.

Translation: *Moonlight by night, sunlight by day, where does this vidala come from? The road is long, the giant cactus stands alone. Sing no more, my heart.* (The *vidala* is a song/dance form of Northwest Argentina.)

**Las Amarillas** is the relentlessly energetic *huapango*, a dance of the Huastec region of Mexico. In this song, a trace of the old world is beautifully preserved. The lyrics “de las costas de guerrero” ride on a melody of Moorish Spain. This melody was played by Patricio Díaz as a prelude to the Cantigas, symbolizing the melody’s journey from the Old World to the new.

Translation: *The yellow calandras fly from the cactus; no longer will the cardinals sing happily to the song na na, to the song na no, because the trees on the hillside have not come back to life for that the calandras will either sing or crush their nests. You are small and beautiful and I love you just the way you are. You are like a little rose from the coast of Guerrero. Everybody has their own farewell, but there’s none like this one: Four times five is twenty-one, three times seven is twenty-one.*

**O Xote Das Meninas** (The Girls’ Song) is based on a well-loved song by Brazilian folksinger Luiz Gonzaga, and was arranged for the Amasong Chorus by Deborah Skydell in Champaign, Illinois. Kevin Garcia created the Bairo for our percussion ensemble.

Translation, Solo: *When the mandacaru blooms in the drought it’s a sign that rain has arrived in the countryside. When a girl tires of dolls it’s a sign that love has arrived in her heart. Dressed in high socks, she no longer wants low-heeled shoes. Wearing a tight belt, she no longer wants to wear a simple shift.*

Chorus: *She only wants, she only thinks of love. From early morning, already in make-up, she lives only with longing, daydreaming.*

Solo: *Her father takes his sick daughter to the doctor. “She won’t eat or study, she doesn’t sleep, she doesn’t want anything.” But the doctor doesn’t bother to examine her. Calling the father to his side, he says in a whisper: “The sickness is her age and for such a girl there is not a single remedy in all of medicine.”*

**Pleasure It Is**, by American composer Daniel Pinkham, was composed as the first movement of a sacred song cycle by the Albany Pro Musica, Albany, New York.

**Simple Gifts**: Although there is only a tiny remnant of the Shaker community remaining in the United States, this hymn will be enjoyed long into the future because of Aaron Copland’s famous setting and his use of the same melody in *Appalachian Spring*, which has placed the tune at the heart of twentieth century orchestral literature.

**Mountain Song/Kentucky Woman**: An Appalachian woman laments the destruction of her mountain by powerful strip miners and vows that it will not be taken away from her.

**Circus Band** echoes the musical childhood of Charles Ives in Danbury Connecticut. His father was an innovative musical leader in the community and a band leader for the Union Army during the Civil War. Like his father, Charles Ives was fascinated by the sound of one melody played against another, the sound of a marching band spread around the town square, and the distortion created by listening to a band while trailing it from behind. Ives’ experimentation with sound was sealed early in his compositions. Written in the early 1890s, “The Circus Band” marks a memory of an event that few of today’s youth would appreciate, but the childhood fascination which Ives experienced might just as well have occurred up the hill in Jersey City. As recalled by Cantigas member Cynthia Sanford, “My husband’s great Aunt Marnie grew up in Jersey City and remembered vividly the circus parade up Palisade Avenue. She gave me a photo of elephants walking on Palisade Avenue circa 1910.”

George Gershwin (**I Got Rhythm, Three Preludes**) was born Jacob Gershowitz in 1898 in Brooklyn, New York to Russian Jewish parents. He wrote most of his vocal and theatrical works together with his older brother, lyricist Ira Gershwin (1896-1983). George Gershwin composed popular songs, Broadway musicals and works for the classical concert hall. His Broadway show *Girl Crazy* (1930), introduced the standard “I Got Rhythm,” and his show *Of Thee I Sing* (1931) was the first musical comedy to win a Pulitzer Prize.

**Praise His Holy Name**, composed by Keith Hampton of Chicago, has become the “best selling” gospel piece for American choirs, a fitting tribute to the love of gospel music and its place in the heart of choral music in the United States.

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**Cantigas Women’s Choir** is a community-based choir in its fourth season under the artistic direction of Joan Isaacs Litman. The choir brings women together to explore the rich tradition of women’s singing and performs

a broad spectrum of global music, both ancient and contemporary. The Cantigas Women's Choir advocates through song for those whose hearts need to be uplifted and whose voices need to be heard. The choir appears annually with inmates at the Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women in Clinton, New Jersey, and has sung on behalf of cancer survivors in Bayonne, New Jersey. The Cantigas Women's Choir supports the developing artistry of young musicians and frequently invites them to perform at Cantigas concerts.

**Joan Isaacs Litman, Director**, is a native of Los Angeles and has directed choirs in the New York metropolitan area for twenty-seven years. Ms. Litman's choirs have performed at Lincoln Center, the United Nations, Carnegie Hall, and the Kennedy Center, where they performed Elliot Goldenthal's *Fire Water Paper: Vietnam Oratorio* with Seiji Ozawa and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Ms. Litman's choir was featured at the Judith Clurman Choral Symposium at the Juilliard School in 2002. Ms. Litman has been a student of choral artistry and conducting under Paul Salamunovich, Lenke Igo and Peter Erdei. She was the winner of the first "Excellence in Teaching" award from Westminster Choir College.

Ms. Litman is a member of the music faculty of the United Nations International School in Manhattan, where she directs the UNIS Mothers' Chorus and a children's choir. She is also a member of the summer faculty at the Kodaly Institute at Capital University, where she was recently the guest conductor for the Children's Choral Festival of World Music. Ms. Litman is the author of *Song Caravan: Songs of the Middle East*, which will be published in 2007. She is a founder and Music Director Emerita of Mustard Seed School in Hoboken, New Jersey.

**Erasmia Voukelatos, Accompanist**, is a Canadian pianist of Greek descent and has been active as a chamber and solo pianist, teacher, music director, and concert series presenter. Concerto appearances have included the Mozart Concerto in A Major (K. 488) and Haydn Concerto in D Major with the Canadian ensemble *Mercredi Musique*, as well as Bach's D Minor Keyboard Concerto, which was released on the CD *The Best of Brooklyn*. She loves to collaborate with her husband, violinist Ashley Horne, and has been accompanying Cantigas since its formation.

**Soprano 1:** Anne Christensen, Lynne Connell, Agnes Dimatteo, Angelika Fuelleman, Katie Harbaugh, Cassie Hinnen, Claire Meyer, Lillian Meyer, Shelley Miller, Ilannet Parisca, Cinthia Santos, Julie Sloane, Ulrike Talkenberg, Caron Van Dyck, Carla Williams, Gabrielle Wise

**Soprano 2:** Catharine Baldwin, Becca Brasser, Kerriann Foley, Katherine Gilman, Karen Hansen, Carolyn Hoberman, Leah Holton, Meera Jaffrey, Lenore Jean Jones, Jennifer Marsh, Lisa Mason, Diane Oltarzewski, Shanna Pargellis, Caitlin Price, Sarah Rizza, Cynthia Sanford, Cathy Sova

**Alto:** Katie Almroth, Melanie Best, Rachel Chang, Wendy Eaton, Jan Gallagher, Silja Jaaskelainen, Emily Litman, Frances Marsh, Caroline Martin, Rebecca Nichols, Florence Pape, Nancy Pedulla, Debbie Rothman, Stephanie Santos, Meg Simmons, Eileen Vanderheyden, Deborah Wenger

**Catharine Baldwin, Choreographer**, has been teaching at The Hudson School for sixteen years, where she founded Extravaganza, a summer stock theater company for kids, and has written and adapted nine plays for young performers.

**Wendy Eaton, Sign Interpreter**, has been signing artistically for fifteen years. She acquired Signed English in college and interpreted for two years. Since then, she has signed to music at churches, in community shows, at conferences, and at the Urbana Missions Conference before twenty thousand people. Wendy and her husband Mike have three delightful children and live in the Heights of Jersey City. Her first book, *Nice Girls Don't: Honest Talk About Female Sexual Addiction*, will be published by InterVarsity Press later this year.

**Carolyn Hoberman, Mezzo Soprano**, has a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Virginia Commonwealth University. She lives in New York City working as a graphic designer and business owner. She and her husband, inventor Chuck Hoberman, founded a toy company based his inventions. In 2003, through the inspiration of their daughter, Dorothy, Carolyn joined the United Nations International School Mother's Chorus and last year, Cantigas. She studies voice technique with Jennifer Smolos. Previous performance experience has been limited to numerous live television appearances on the QVC shopping channel.

**Carla E. Williams, Soprano**, is an experienced choral singer who has sung at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center

and New Jersey Performing Arts Center with such acclaimed musicians as Valery Gergiev with the Kirov Orchestra and Louis Langree with the Mostly Mozart Orchestra, and was part of the chorus on the recording of the Philip Glass composition Symphony No. 5: Requiem, Bardo and Nirmanakaya. She lives in Hoboken with her two daughters.

**GUEST ARTISTS:**

**Cristina Altamura, Pianist**, has given solo performances in Carnegie Hall and Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center. Outside the United States, she has toured extensively—including giving performances in Italy, Spain and Israel—and has held the unique position of Principal Soloist of the State Philharmonic of Bacau, Romania. Ms. Altamura holds a Bachelor's degree from the Mannes College of Music, and has studied with eminent piano professors while on a Fulbright Fellowship to Italy and with Robert Abramson of the Juilliard School.

**Patricio Díaz, Fídula and Viola**, was born in Madrid, Spain, where he studied violin and viola with Antonio Arias. He furthered his training with Alexander Babrovski and Feodor Drzhinn at the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow on scholarship from the government of the former Soviet Union. He graduated in 1991 from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst with an M.A. in Music Performance. Mr. Díaz currently resides in New York, where he is an active performer with the Brooklyn Philharmonic, Queens Symphony Orchestra, American Classical Orchestra, Staten Island Symphony Orchestra, Amadeus Ensemble, Concert Royal, Dreiden Ensemble, Baroque Across the River, and Duo Cervantes de Alcalá de Henares. Mr. Díaz is on the faculty of the United Nations International School.

**Orlando Hernandez, Accordion**, is Puerto Rican and a long time resident of Hoboken. He teaches Spanish and Latin American Literature at the City College of New York.

**Kimberly Perry, Percussion**, has played with several bands in the New York City area since attending The Collective, a drum school in New York City. As a teacher at Mustard Seed School, Kimberly enjoys spreading the passion of rhythm to others, and she was part of a working team for the Willie Mae Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls, where she worked on sponsorship and drum instruction to support the camp. Prior to that, she fundraised and volunteered at Portland's Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls. For more information, go to [www.kpdrummergirl.com](http://www.kpdrummergirl.com).

**Madeline Stern, Soprano**, has been singing for as long as she can remember. Now almost fourteen, she has played numerous roles in various school and summer camp musicals including Mrs. Potts in "Beauty and the Beast," Mrs. Banks in "Mary Poppins" and the Narrator in "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat." Madeline's parents both work in the theatre, her mother a general manager and her father a conductor/arranger. She lives in Manhattan where she will enter the ninth grade next fall at the LaGuardia High School for the Performing Arts.

Program cover design by Carolyn Hoberman; program layout by Meg Simmons.

Taqsim on “De las costas de guerrero” Sevilla

**Cantigas Women's Choir, Hoboken, New Jersey**

To learn more about the choir and to view our concert calendar visit:

*[www.cantigas.net](http://www.cantigas.net)*