

Melodia Newsletter

Fall 2005

Special Cultural Exchange

As it enters its third season, Melodia Women's Choir created an unusual international exchange this fall, working in a three-day intensive workshop with Maria Gamborg Helbekkmo of Norway. Since 1988, Helbekkmo has been the conductor of Voci Nobili, a woman's choir in Bergen that has won much acclaim for its musicality and vocal technique.

Joining with Melodia singers, producer Jennifer Clarke and conductor Cynthia Powell in a workshop in New York from September 24-26, Helbekkmo is sharing her artistry and experience in working with the women's choral repertoire. The project is described in an article on Vocal Area Network (www.van.org). The workshop is supported by the Royal Norwegian Consulate General in New York.



Singers with Style

Melodia singers come from cross-sections: of geography, nationality and day-to-day endeavors. From an accountant to journalist, lawyer, stage manager, architect, nonprofit administrator, and more, Melodia encompasses a wide world of diverse personalities.



While Melodia took a break over the summer, group members continued to create and perform. Joyce Tannian performed in the New York Fringe Festival, while Bora Yoon completed a summer residency at Dartington School of Music, England.

Tina Goldstein's vocal performance piece *Cause For Alarm*, was performed in midtown Manhattan. Becca Schack wrote the music for a dance piece entitled *Metal Factory*, choreographed by Thang Dao and performed at LaMama Theater...a few examples among many endeavors.



New Original Music

Allison Sniffin is composing a new commissioned work for Melodia Women's Choir, based on a setting of poems by 17th century Mexican poet, playwright and intellectual, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. Sniffin, a composer and multi-instrumentalist who sings with Meredith Monk, has previously arranged selections for Melodia. The Sor Juana composition, which Allison expects to be approximately 20 minutes in length, represents the first commissioned work by Melodia. The piece will be performed as a work-in-progress in Spring 2006.

Also in the works is a composition of a set of songs by Becca Schack for 2006/07. Becca, a singer with Melodia and a graduate of the Juilliard School, will also prepare a soundscape for the opening of the Fall 2005 program.

Celebrating Stravinsky

Wall to Wall Stravinsky will be a celebration of the 20th century Russian composer at Symphony Space on Manhattan's upper westside. Melodia Women's Choir will join the dozens of musicians and artists who will celebrate Igor Stravinsky's life and work with a performance of the rarely-heard *Four Russian Peasant Songs* for women's choir and four French horns. Curated by Symphony Space Artistic Director Isaiah Sheffer, Wall to Wall is a yearly tradition that honors a single musical genius in a 12-hour marathon. The event will be on Saturday, March 18, 2006, and is free to the public.



Twilight Coming Up

Twilight in the Garden of Dreams, Melodia's Fall 2005 Concert, offers a program of richly mystical compositions exploring evocative themes. One central work is Gustav Holst's *Seven Part Songs for Female Voices and Strings* – a beautiful setting of poems by Robert Bridges. The concert also features two pieces by Fanny Mendelssohn-Hensel, in recognition of the 200th anniversary of her birth, and works by Meredith Monk, Veljo Tormis, and others. The Concert is on Saturday November 19, at 8 p.m. at St. Peter's, 346 West 20th Street, Chelsea. For ticket reservations call 212-757-2945 or e-mail womenschoir@mindspring.com. You can purchase tickets online with a credit card at www.melodiawomenschoir.org after October 7.

Going to Merkin

Plans are underway for Melodia to perform a November 2006 concert at Merkin Concert Hall, according to founder and producer Jennifer Clarke. The hour-long concert will feature the world premiere performance a new work by Allison Sniffin (see separate article), for soprano, women's choir and chamber ensemble, and a selection of other choral works.



Conductors Convene

Cynthia Powell joined with 40 other conductors this summer at a conductors' retreat/symposium in the Maine woods, where ideas and experience were shared in intensive sessions on major works. Powell was one of only five women in the group of forty, and describes the workshop as "life-altering" and "not for the faint-hearted." The workshop culminated in a concert with a 40-piece orchestra, and featured guest pianist Lorin Hollander.



Top Honors

Artists with a wealth of experience and talent are now part of the new Advisory Committee of Melodia Women's Choir. The members include: Kathleen Chalfant, Broadway and film actress; Lauren Flanigan, soprano with the Metropolitan Opera and New York City Opera; Maria Gamborg Helbekkmo, conductor of *Voci Nobili* in Norway; Cynthia Hopkins, singer, songwriter and composer; Tania León, world-renowned composer and orchestral conductor; Meredith Monk, cutting-edge composer, choreographer and performer; and Kathleen Supové, contemporary pianist and musical inventor.

Donate to Melodia

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Melodia Women's Choir
c/o Jenny Clarke
446 West 47th Street, 1B
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Thank you!

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