

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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SEATTLE PRO MUSICA
presents
SONG OF SONGS
Four World Premieres

May 14 and 15, 2010

Seattle Pro Musica presents SONG OF SONGS, a celebration of music and poetry, at St. James Cathedral on May 14 and 15. Featuring choral settings from many eras on the poetry from the **Song of Songs**, these concerts include **four world premieres** by composers Ivan Moody, Sheila Bristow, Harold Owen, and Karen P. Thomas.

The poetry and imagery of the Song of Songs has captured the imagination of composers for centuries, resulting in a dazzling array of breathtaking music.

Seattle Pro Musica performs traditional and contemporary settings in the original Hebrew, and in Latin and English.

Friday, May 14, 8:15 pm
Saturday, May 15, 8:00 pm
St. James Cathedral 9th & Marion, Seattle

Call 206.781.2766 for reserved passes, or order online at seattlepromusica.org

Reserved Passes: \$32 Prime / \$22 Reserved seating in advance.
\$25 suggested donation at the door. Student and Senior discounts available.

Seattle Pro Musica is a Resident Ensemble of St. James Cathedral

<< MORE INFORMATION ON PROGRAM AND COMPOSERS FOLLOWS >>

Seattle Pro Musica is pleased to present the **SONG OF SONGS** concerts on May 14 & 15, in conjunction with the month-long **SONG OF SONGS Festival** of music, poetry, and art. The Festival takes place at St. James Cathedral during the month of May 2010, and is a collaboration between Seattle Pro Musica, the Medieval Women's Choir, and the musicians of St. James Cathedral.

For some, the Song of Songs is simply a celebration of human love in splendid poetry. For others, it is an allegory of the love of God for the human soul. For still others, it is a cultic poem, with imagery drawn from the fertility rites of the ancient Middle East. The Song of Songs is a dramatic poem in which different voices are heard, a poem that moves from longing, to union, to loss, to discovery, as bride and bridegroom sing of the beauty of the beloved and the delights of love.

Seattle Pro Musica's **SONG OF SONGS** program embraces music from many different eras—from ancient Hebrew liturgical cantillation to Renaissance motets to new works of the 21st century. Most notable are the **world premieres of four new works**, composed especially for these concerts, by Ivan Moody, Sheila Bristow, Harold Owen, and Karen P. Thomas.

Internationally renowned composer and conductor **Ivan Moody** was born in London in 1964 and currently lives in Portugal. Eastern liturgical chant has had a profound influence on his music, as has the spirituality and liturgy of the Orthodox Church. Formerly with the choir of the Russian Orthodox Cathedral in London, he served as cantor in Greek and Bulgarian parishes in Lisbon until his ordination to the priesthood in 2007. His *Canticum Canticorum I*, written for the Hilliard Ensemble, was a great success and he subsequently wrote two other settings of texts from the Song of Songs (*Canticum Canticorum*.) In 2009 Seattle Pro Musica commissioned Moody to compose a fourth setting from Song of Songs, his first setting in Hebrew. The resulting ***Canticum Canticorum IV*** receives its world premiere on these concerts. The composer writes:

Canticum Canticorum IV is, as its name indicates, the fourth in a series of settings of words from the Song of Songs that I have composed over the years, beginning with a brief set for the Hilliard Ensemble, first performed by the Hilliard Ensemble in Vienna in 1987. That set was in Latin, the second in English, the third in Greek: it seems in retrospect natural that I should eventually come to set more of this extraordinary poetry in Hebrew. The opportunity came with a commission from Karen P. Thomas for her outstanding choir Seattle Pro Musica, and it afforded me ample scope to exploit the rich possibilities of the Hebrew languages in full choral textures.

Sheila Bristow, composer and pianist, is a coach/accompanist for Pacific Lutheran University and Tacoma Opera, and serves as Organist/Choirmaster for the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, Kenmore. The composer writes of her new work: “*Fair as a Dove*” is a setting of my own translation of a responsory from the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (matins service). This context—a liturgy infused with images from Marian theology and the Song of Songs—uses inflections drawn from plainsong and early music.”

Karen P. Thomas, Artistic Director and Conductor of Seattle Pro Musica, is active internationally as both a conductor and composer. Her compositions are performed internationally on a regular basis by groups such as The Hilliard Ensemble and her conducting has received critical praise for its “*integrity and high purpose...delivered with taste and impeccable musicianship.*” Two new works— *Yonati (O my dove)* and *You have ravished my heart*— were both composed for Seattle Pro Musica. *Yonati* receives its world premiere on these concerts, while *You have ravished my heart* was premiered by Seattle Pro Musica in March 2010 at the American Choral Directors Association NW Division Conference.

Harold Owen is former chairman of the Department of Composition at the University of Oregon School of Music. He has written a large number of compositions for chorus, orchestra, wind ensemble, and a variety of solos and chamber ensembles, both vocal and instrumental. This new setting of *The voice of my beloved* was composed for Seattle Pro Musica.

Also included on the program are *Song of Song* settings by Renaissance composers John Dunstable, Francisco Guerrero, Jacobus Clemens non Papa, and Thomas Tomkins. The mid-20th century is represented by the British composers William Walton and Edward Bairstow and the Canadian Healey Willan. The program also features works from the first decade of the 21st century by the American composer Stephen Paulus and Eleanor Daley of Canada.

Seattle Pro Musica’s 2009-2010 Season is supported in part by:

