

PRESS RELEASE

Seattle Pro Musica

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Run through May 17, 2003

Seattle Pro Musica

Karen P. Thomas, conductor

Presents

Venice and the East

Cross-cultural sacred music from Venice, the Middle East & Asia

This cross-cultural concert presents music from Venice, the Middle East and Asia – focusing on Venice and its position as a conduit for the connection of Eastern and Western cultures. Included in the concert is magnificent music by Monteverdi and Gabrieli for multiple choirs, brass and organ, showcasing the glorious tradition of Venetian Baroque *cori spezzati* (divided choirs). In the glorious acoustic of St. James Cathedral, the audience will be surrounded by antiphonal music from all corners of the cathedral. The concert also features a mixture of traditional and contemporary music by living composers from the Middle East and Asia, including Chen Yi (China), Naji Hakim (Lebanon), Se Enkhbayer (Inner Mongolia) and Franghiz Ali-Sade (Azerbaijan).

Friday, May 16, 2003 • 8:15 pm
Saturday, May 17, 2003 • 8:00 pm

St. James Cathedral • 804 9th Avenue, Seattle

General: \$18 advanced purchase reserved passes - \$21 at the door
Seniors: \$13 advanced purchase reserved passes - pay as able at the door
Student: \$10 advanced purchase reserved passes - pay as able at the door

Call (206) 781-2766 for tickets
or order online at www.seattlepromusica.org

These performances are supported, in part, by the Corporate Council for the Arts, the Allen Foundation for Music, the Nesholm Family Foundation, the Seattle, King County and Washington State Arts Commissions, Standing Ovation and Classical KING FM 98.1.

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Presenting music which spans the globe from Italy to China, these concerts focus on Venice and its historical position as a trade center to the Middle and Far East, linking these cultures to Central Europe and the Mediterranean. The concert will feature music by Venetian composers and composers from those countries which have historically been connected to Venice via trade routes: the Middle East, Central Asia and East Asia. The music included in the concert ranges from the 13th century to the present, signifying the importance of Venice as a conduit for the connection of Eastern and Western cultures through the centuries.

The concert centers on music for choir, brass and organ – this combination representing the richest flowering of the Venetian polychoral style of the 16th century, and being especially well-suited to the acoustic of St. James Cathedral. Works by Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643), Giovanni Gabrieli (1556-1612) and Heinrich Schütz (1585-1672), all of whom worked in Venice, will showcase the *cori spezzati* (divided choirs) style of vocal and brass choirs, which will be performed antiphonally from various locations in the cathedral, as they were intended to be performed at the famous Cathedral of San Marco in Venice. Included are Schütz's magnificent *Allelujah, Lobet den Herren* for four antiphonal choirs, Gabrieli's *Exultet* for three antiphonal choirs, and Monteverdi's *Beatus vir*, and *Lauda Jerusalem* from the famous *Vespers of 1610*.

Connecting to Central and East Asia, the concert will also feature a mixture of traditional and contemporary music from countries which have been historically linked to Venice as a trade center. Included are both historical music and new works by living composers from the Middle East and Asia. Traditional songs from Georgia and China will compliment new works for organ by Naji Hakim

(Lebanon) and Franghiz Ali-Sade (Azerbaijan), and new works for choir by Se Enkhbayer (Inner Mongolia), Victor Paranjoti (India) and Roupen Shakarian (a Seattle composer of Armenian heritage who was raised in Egypt).

The performances take place May 16 and 17, 2003, at Seattle's St. James Cathedral. Nationally renowned for its superb acoustic, St. James Cathedral has a long history of supporting efforts for world peace and cultural understanding, and has been active in reaching across cultural and religious barriers to form significant relationships with other religious communities in the Pacific Northwest.

Seattle Pro Musica has a history of exploring and presenting music of various cultures, including music of the Balkan countries, Russia and Latin America, as well as Western European and American music. The themes of peace, reconciliation and cross-cultural exploration have been a major element of Seattle Pro Musica presentations during the last decade, in which the following programs have received enthusiastic audience responses, critical acclaim, and broad media coverage in the Puget Sound area: *War and Reconciliation* (1995), *Reconciliation for The Balkans - A Concert for Peace In The New Millennium* (2000), *Peace in Our Time – Music on the Theme of Peace* (2002).

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