



# SFWE *Santa Fe Women's Ensemble*

## Spring Notes



April 2011

### From Our Board President

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Our 30<sup>th</sup> season is proving to be a remarkable year. We have already experienced a very successful caroling party at the Manitou Galleries in December and our four inspirational *Christmas Offering* concerts at Loretto Chapel were very well attended. Our distinguished commissioned composer, Stephen Paulus, joined us for opening night on December 11 to premiere his stunning *Two Andalusian Songs*, and he even personally recorded KHFM radio spots to promote our concerts!

Our plans for spring include a reunion for present and former singers and directors (who will participate in our June 5th *Spring Offering* concert), as well as the Ensemble's ongoing community and educational outreach to seniors and youth. You'll note in this newsletter other upcoming events we hope you will support.

My term as president of the board of the Ensemble will expire in May, although I will have one more year as a board member. Let me say that it has been a real honor

to serve this incredibly talented and committed group of singers. It has also been a pleasure to serve with the other members of the board and our many volunteers. I believe that the Ensemble's longevity can be attributed to the faithful and loving participation and support of all of its singers, volunteers and donors. Thanks to all of you for such a wonderful experience.

Gratefully,  
Keytha Jones,  
SFWE board president

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## Spring Offering ~ 2011

The Santa Fe Women's Ensemble will continue the celebration of our 30<sup>th</sup> season with our *Spring Offering* concert on Sunday, June 5, 2011, at 3:00 p.m. in First Presbyterian Church. This exciting program will be accompanied by harpist Rosalind Simpson, who played with the Ensemble for our first concert in 1981. Also joining the performance is favorite Santa Fe jazz musician Dave Anderson, on saxophone, and Bill Epstein, the Ensemble's piano accompanist. Director Linda Raney thoughtfully selected all of the music as it relates to the history of the Ensemble, either as an especially beloved commission or a piece

from the past that is significant to us.

The music will include three motets by Gabriel Fauré, *Ave Maria* by Francis Poulenc, and selections by Zoltan Kodaly and Bela Bartok. Past commissions and works written for the Ensemble that will be performed are *Gaude virgo gratiosa* from *Motets for the Lady* by Samuel Gordon; *Seasonal Dances* by Craig Russell; *The Storke* by Gerald Near; *Dreams* by Robert Jones; and *To make a prairie*, from *Three Poems* by *Emily Dickinson* by



Bill Epstein



Rosalind Simpson

Shanna Suzanne Mac Lean. The Ensemble will also premiere *The Circle* by Linda Rice Beck (please see the article about this latest commission on page 2).

The Ensemble will be joined by alumnae for our favorite African-American spirituals, as part of our weekend reunion of Ensemble members from our 30-year history.

Following the concert, there will be a reception for alumnae and concertgoers, in appreciation of their enthusiastic support.

### Our Concert

In First Presbyterian Church

Sunday, June 5,  
at 3 p.m.

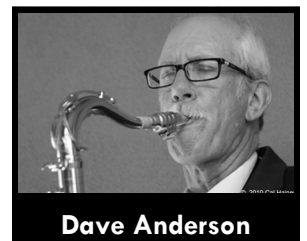
Reception to follow

#### Ticket Prices

General admission \$25  
Students \$10

Handicapped seating is available.

For tickets, call 954-4922.



Dave Anderson

## Thank you, Keytha and Jim!

In the four years that Keytha Jones has served as our board president—my entire tenure with the Santa Fe Women's Ensemble—we have seen both the board and the Ensemble immeasurably strengthened. Under Keytha's leadership, the board has grown both in size and closeness, and the Ensemble's financial position has become much stronger. Keytha has worked tirelessly for us; we have benefitted enormously from her efforts and from the clear vision and level head with which she has led us.

There simply are not words sufficient to express our gratitude to her, and to her supportive husband, Paul, and their daughter, Julie, for letting us have so much of her time. For such a tiny person, Keytha leaves some very big shoes to

fill. That's pretty daunting, and we're very glad that she will remain on our board for another year.

In addition to the change in the presidency, our beloved treasurer, Jim Beck, is rotating off after many years of service to the Ensemble. Jim has zealously watched our purse strings, ensuring our fiscal health and our ability to maintain our musical standards. We will miss Jim's good humor at future meetings; his departure will leave us in dire need of a male board member or two to give us a bit of "gender balance"! We thank Jim for his amazing work for us and wish him the very best in his "retirement."

—*Mary Mittnacht, board vice president, on behalf of the entire Women's Ensemble*

## Meet Evelyn Fox

Dr. Evelyn Fox, administrative director, is a born-and-reared Texan and an educated Tennessean who has now found a home in New Mexico. She holds bachelor's degrees in both education and computer science, a master's in computer science, and a doctorate in public administration.

Evelyn has taught computer science at the college level in both two-year and four-year institutions. She has also served in an educational administrative capacity as



Evelyn Fox

department chair for computer science, special assistant to the vice president of instruction, and director of computer services. Currently she serves as an adjunct professor of computer science for Central Texas College in Killeen, Texas, and teaches to service personnel around the world. In addition, she has been named to Who's Who for Women in Technology and is a professional web designer, maintaining web presences for several businesses in the United States.

Evelyn has always had a great love for choral music, having sung in community choruses all of her adult life. She and her husband, Albert, love to travel and are extremely proud of their two adult daughters, both of whom live in Florida.

## Spring 2011 Commission: *The Circle*

As part of the Santa Fe Women's Ensemble's 30<sup>th</sup>-season celebration, Linda Raney asked ensemble soprano and composer Linda Rice Beck to write something for the *Spring Offering* concert. Since this performance will also be an opportunity for former singers and directors to come together again, Dr. Raney specifically requested a cumulative piece for the Ensemble that would somehow tie our history together. When Linda B. (as she is known to the singers) tried to come up with ideas, she couldn't find a text that served the purpose, and she didn't feel that another *Ave Maria* or "regular" song

would really fit Linda Raney's request.

Her inspiration came early one morning when she kept thinking of a tradition that dates back to the Ensemble's founding in 1981. Before each concert, the members gather into a circle and join hands. Linda remarks, "It is a time to center and focus on the special bond we share, as well as on the music we are about to sing. We speak the names of special people in need, keeping them in our hearts as we sing, and sometimes we quietly dedicate a concert to someone. The circle is a time of warmth and closeness, of connection to each other."

Linda also recalled the poem "Tighten" (from a song sung by the Ensemble) by 13<sup>th</sup>-century mystic Hadewijch of Antwerp. In just 20 words this poem uses the symbol of the circle to illuminate the beautiful concept of letting go of the "world's things" in order for the circle to enlarge and "embrace all."

These two images helped Linda launch her ideas for the text and music about this profound experience that all Ensemble participants have shared. *The Circle* is dedicated to the Women's Ensemble and is Linda Beck's sixth piece composed for us.

### THANK YOU, JUDY POINT!

The SFWE was thrilled to receive a major donation from the Judy Point Charitable Foundation of Connecticut. Our board is considering how this gift can best be put to use, including possibly designating it as part of a special fund to ensure our ability to continue to commission new works.

We are so grateful to Judy Point and its trustees!

# Good Friday Concert

On April 22, 2011, at 5:30 p.m., the Santa Fe Women's Ensemble and First Presbyterian Church will present a Good Friday narrative and the stunning *Stabat Mater* by Dean Roush, accompanied by Dana Winograd, principal cellist of the Santa Fe Symphony and Chorus. The concert at First Presbyterian Church, 208 Grant Avenue, is by free-will offering. Please join us for this moving annual concert.



## A Time To Look Back

Anniversaries are always good times to reflect on years past. Here are just a few of the memories singers shared.

### The Beginning

Many singers commented on the very first concert. **Norma Bekowies** (1981-88, 1992, 2003-4): Our debut concert in December 1981 in Loretto Chapel was so exciting. Singing Britten's *Ceremony of Carols* with Rosalind on the harp was a wonderful experience. We were only nine singers strong! I remember that Handwoven Originals graciously lent us lovely ruanas to wear. Each one was different, and they blended beautifully, as we hoped our voices would!

**Rosalind Simpson** (harpist, 1981-present): I remember delivering my harp to the chapel and had my baby Catherine, age six months, with me, and didn't know how to handle moving the harp and observing the baby until the Loretto sister on duty stretched out her arms and asked if she could hold the baby while I took care of the harp. It was a touching gesture.

I remember it was a total surprise that [the first concert] was so well attended-standing room only-but folks didn't have much access to Loretto at that time and so they came to both hear the group and to see the chapel.

Sakina [von Briesen] had the lead in getting it all together then, for which she deserves credit.

**Anna Richards** (1981-3, mid 1990s): The first concert ... [was] magical!

### Favorite Performances

**Mickey Stegemann** (1980s): I felt blessed to be able to perform in the Loretto Chapel—every time was a spiritual experience. I remember one Christmas we were allowed to climb those magnificent stairs, one woman at a time, to sing from the choir loft. I'll never forget that!

**Susan Phillips** (1988-present): The highlight in Italy was singing our first concert in Poggio San Ercolano in a small village on the top of a mountain. We sang for a small church when the archbishop of Assisi was dedicating their new bells. They

### Il Vicino Day: Tuesday, April 26

Did you know that *vicino*, as in "Il Vicino," means "neighbor"? This wonderful neighborhood Italian restaurant—wonderful for its food and micro-brewed ales, as well as for its generosity—has once again invited the Women's Ensemble and our friends to a revenue-sharing day.

Please take your friends to Il Vicino, downtown at 321 W. San Francisco Street, for lunch, dinner and/or takeout on April 26. *Tell the staff that you're there on our behalf*, and this lovely "neighbor" will donate a portion of the proceeds to the Ensemble. Thanks—hope to see you there. As always, *grazie mille*, Il Vicino!



treated us like celebrities. I think only two of them spoke English and two of us spoke Italian—so sweet.

### Favorite Pieces

**Barbara Doern Drew** (1982-present): This is my 28<sup>th</sup> season with the Santa Fe Women's Ensemble, and fond memories, touching moments and favorite pieces abound! A piece that especially stands out is *Oh Child, May We Know You*, from Michael Mauldin's, *With This Child*. We sang it in 1990 in Loretto Chapel just after I had our first child, Lane, and again 18 months later at the American Harp Society National Convention in San Diego just after our daughter, Morgan, was born. The lyrics of the piece, written by Ensemble singer Lara Hill, are very profound and, to me, capture the awe of the arrival of these wondrous new beings into our lives. My eyes still fill with tears when I listen to this most inspirational piece.

**Ann Parks** (1981-2): *Rejoice in the Lamb*.

**Chris Keightley** (1985-86, 2006-present): I have lots of favorites, but if I had to pick one, I would choose Lloyd Pfausch's *Annunciation*, with Poulenc's *Ave Maria* a close second.

**Rosalind Simpson**: I think the hardest piece was the Paul Csonka—we did it only once. My favorite? Probably the Michael Mauldin because it was written for and by the group. And of course *Ceremony of Carols*. Christmas just isn't right without the *Ceremony of Carols*!

**Priscilla Zimmerman** (director 1984-88, singer 1990-92): The most significant music for me was the set entitled *Song of Survival* which included *Largo* from Dvorak's *New World Symphony*. Most of the music was transcribed by Margaret Dryburgh, a captive in a women's prison camp in Sumatra during World War II.

**Marty Noss Wilder** (1983–present) remembers that her mother, Ann Noss, narrated *Song of Survival*. "It had been originally performed by the prisoners at the camp, serving to boost morale, the music a salve to the hopeless souls there. I remember that it was a beautiful and touching concert, especially for me performing with my mom that Mother's Day."

## Looking Back (cont. from p. 3)

### Fun Times

**Marty Noss Wilder:** I remember lots of potluck gatherings in various backyards, kitchens and living rooms over the years, featuring several dishes that have become SFWE pot luck traditions, like Barbara's fantastic sherry cake.

**Mickey Stegemann:** I remember the wonderful potlucks and obtained a great recipe from Andrea Poole for a cold salad with cooked chicken, cellophane noodles and vegetables with a soy dressing. Just the thought of it makes me want to fix it!

**Julie Kirk** (1986-90 and 2004-present): When we were performing Pucini's *Suor Angelica*, Mom [Mickey] and I were driving to the performance dressed in our nuns' habits. Mom was blessing passing motorists!

**Susan Phillips:** [During a concert] I shot a Fishers' lozenge across the floor, and Sarah and I got tickled and almost totally lost it. Or the time when I had a serious hot flash and didn't come in at an important moment—Chris realized it and came in.

**Julie Kirk:** Mom and I were the first mother/daughter team. I have fond memories of singing duets together.

**Lynne Buchen** (1988-2006): It was very special for Elizabeth and me to be the second (and only other) mother-daughter team in the group. I especially loved the times that [Julie and Mickey] sang duets and the times that Elizabeth and I sang duets. How much prouder could a mom be?

### Serious Memories

**Laura Bank** (1996-2007): It was an evening during our winter concert season. Loretto Chapel was beautifully decorated. As we rehearsed the evening's offering of music, Lynne Buchen, without a word, walked to the rear doors of the chapel and opened them. Framed there, against the dark night, huge snowflakes floated down. Above, the stained glass glowed from some mysterious source of light. The beauty and tranquility of that moment stayed with us throughout the evening as we sang. The audience must have felt it as well because more than the usual number of listeners commented afterward that our music had prepared them for a holiday season of peace and joy.

**Marty Noss Wilder:** I remember Lynne Buchen coming in after a break during a rehearsal to announce that she'd just heard that the United States was bombing Bagdad, at the start of the

I know that when I no longer sing with SFWE I will look back and at first I will mourn—the loss of the process, the beautiful music, weekly rehearsals and the incredible women in my every day life, but I will also remember with profound fondness the years of creativity, challenges—not only to my personal musical skills, but the skills of the group—and the friendships that will continue throughout my lifetime.

—**Susan Phillips** (1988-93, 1995-present)

Persian Gulf War. Our rehearsal took on a somewhat somber note as we tried to remember that singing can be an act of radical action, bringing people together for peace and understanding, as well as for war.

**Susan Phillips:** After 9/11, a friend of mine told me he was talking with a group of kids at the junior high where he was a counselor. Their conversation was about what were the things they could count on. Music was what they could count on, and he thought of me and the SFWE and told me how important it is for us to keep singing.

### What Has the Women's Ensemble Meant to Us?

**Lynne Buchen:** I'm gratified that so very many of my SFWE friends from the past 20+ years are still some of my best friends.

**Gwen Gilligan** (1982 to present): I have thought that if I did not have Women's Ensemble over the years I would have had many times that I should have been in therapy—singing with the group has been therapy for me!

**Mickey Stegemann:** I know what a relief it was to get out of the house every Monday night and associate with some of the greatest women in my life.

**Susan Phillips:** In 20 years I have seen women come and go, board meetings, fundraisers and mailing parties. There have been career changes, children born, marriages, divorces, health scares, surgeries and death. When [my husband], Ransom, died, I had a hard time for months even practicing—every time I tried to sing I would cry. But going to rehearsals was/is life saving, nurturing and a constant for me. And all of it, "*LIFE*," played out in one small group.

*Please join us—past, present and future Women's Ensemble singers—for our June 5th concert, and help us make new memories!*

## Linda's Mayor's Award Speech

Congratulations to Dr. Linda Raney for being the recipient of the *2010 Mayor's Recognition Award for Excellence in the Arts* on October 21, 2010. Here are a few excerpts from her acceptance speech:

"It is through the arts that we are able to express our

deepest thoughts and feelings not only as *creators* of art, but also as *experiencers* of art.

"Through art we share with each other something as simple as



whether we like it or not, to something as complex as how it changes how we see the world.

"Do we always agree about what we like? Of course not, but this gives us the opportunity to grapple with hearing someone else's viewpoint.

"The arts give us opportu-

nities to exercise our 'flexibility muscles' and see beyond our interior world to the vast community outside of ourselves.

"The arts build up our community to be creative, vibrant and able to embrace the diversity and uniqueness that each of us adds to our Santa Fe."



Every nonprofit organization's dream is to sponsor an event that develops "staying power," attracting supporters year after year. We seem to have found a good one: our annual caroling party, with silent auction. It was our fourth year in a row with this very successful and fun event in December.

The party attracted around 100 people—a wonderful crowd! Food and drink were in delicious abundance, thanks to our fabulous caterer, Peas 'n' Pod. Everyone sang enthusiastically and enjoyed perusing our auction displays in the beautiful rooms of the Mani-

tau Galleries. The great thing about this party is that our guests have a lot of fun and get value for their money, while at the same time helping to provide major funding to the Ensemble through auction and ticket purchases.

We've said it before and we'll say it again: We are so very fortunate to have such a marvelous family of supporters. To our party- and concertgoers, our individual and auction donors, our friends at Manitou Galleries, and Peas 'n' Pod . . . many, many thanks!

And save the date for our 2011 bash on December 3rd!

## From Your Christmas Comment Cards

- "Beautiful music in an incredible setting."
- "The last piece with flute and piano was exquisite, as was the whole program!"
- "Gwen rocks!!"
- "Always my favorite Christmas experience."
- "Wouldn't miss it for all the world."
- "Beautiful clear tones, tight harmonies, angelic voices-bravo!!!"
- "The flute is a great accompaniment and addition. Instrumental interaction enlivens the experience—encore!"
- "It was really good. It kept me looking and I am 12 and loved it."

## Your favorite pieces:

1. *To Crown the Year*
2. *The Sun*
3. *A Serene Evening*
4. *Magnificat*
5. *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

## Christmas Concert Wrap-Up

Our 30<sup>th</sup>-anniversary *Christmas Offering* concerts started with a thrill on Saturday December 11. Mayor Coss and his wife, Carol Rose, were there, presenting the Ensemble with a proclamation commemorating our service to the community.

We were also honored to have in attendance, world-renowned composer Stephen Paulus, our commissioned composer for this special season. The Ensemble was very excited to perform the world premiere of his *Two Andalusian Songs*—stunning pieces that were the favorites of audience members and singers alike.

*The Sun* and *A Serene Evening* were magical settings of two poems from a poetry anthology from Moorish Spain translated into English by Cola Franzen, a renowned translator and dear friend of Ensemble soprano Mary Mittnacht.

The poems were celebratory of nature—brilliant sunshine, glorious evenings with "red wine" sunsets—perfect descriptions of our beautiful Santa Fe!

The concerts began with the *Procession* from Benjamin Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols*, the same music that began the very first concert of the Santa Fe Women's Ensemble in December 1981.

Since one of the important missions of the Ensemble has always been to commission new music, Linda Raney programmed the repertory around many of the Ensemble's commissions from past seasons. One of the favorites has been *Magnificat* by Lana Walter, a piece commissioned for the 2000 *Christmas Offering*. The concert continued with *Chester Carol* by Katherine Dienes (commissioned in 2002), which created a dreamlike atmosphere in the sonorous

acoustics of Loretto Chapel. Commissioned in 2007, *All This Night Shriill Chanticleer* and *The Falcon* by Samuel Gordon use the imagery of early English poetry to create extraordinary musical colors. The first half of the concert concluded with *Let There Be Joy* by Daniel Gawthrop, an exciting carol commissioned in 2005 for the Ensemble's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The second half of the program began with Stephen Paulus's wonderful commissioned pieces. It continued with *Every Stone Shall Cry* by Ensemble soprano Linda Rice Beck, commissioned in 2008, and the ever-popular *Carol of the Drum* by Katherine K. Davis. Next came an emotional moment for the women as they sang *A Musical Setting of "The Great Invocation"* by Shanna Suzanne Mac Lean—the very first Ensemble commission in

1982, composed by our first director. Who would have ever guessed that this commission would lead to such a legacy of new music? We have commissioned 27 pieces in our 30-year history, with our 28th to be premiered at our *Spring Offering* concert on June 5th.

The program finished with the lively and elegant *To Crown the Year* by John Ferguson, commissioned in 1997. This trio of pieces featured Charly Drobeck on flute and Bill Epstein on the piano. For the encore, the Ensemble sang Linda Beck's joyful carol *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*.

The program included much diversity and originality. In all, 10 of the 13 pieces on the program were commissions of the Ensemble—an extraordinary distinction!



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**Our Mission:**

The Santa Fe Women's Ensemble performs choral music from many centuries and cultures in innovative and inspiring concerts. The Ensemble promotes the recognition, appreciation and creation of women's choral repertoire through performance, recording and commissioning of new music, and furthers its community involvement through outreach and education. With an ongoing commitment to excellence, singers hone their musical skills with constant self-monitoring and evaluation by the director.

**CD and Mementos**

As part of our celebration of the SFWE's 30th anniversary, we have created some delightful mementos. Foremost is our new CD, *A Celebration of Song*, which is available at the Loretto Chapel Gift Shop, Frontier Frames and at our concerts. The CD features performances within the last five years of a mix of traditional favorites and new compositions, recorded live at our concerts. We are also offering sets of 10 beautiful note cards with our 30th-anniversary program angel, as well as hand-made New Mexican traditional tinwork ornaments by tin artist Richard Gabriel, Jr.

All items are available at our concerts or by contacting the SFWE at [info@sfwe.org](mailto:info@sfwe.org) or 954-4922. (Shipping prices will vary.)

Please support the SFWE with your purchases of these lovely items!



*A Celebration of Song* CD: \$15  
 Note cards: \$10  
 Flat ornament: \$10  
 Frame ornament: \$15

**Save these dates:**

- **SFWE Day at Il Vicino: April 26, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.**
- **Good Friday Concert: April 22 First Presbyterian Church, 5:30 p.m.**
- **Spring Concert: June 5 First Presbyterian Church, 3 p.m.**
- **2011 Caroling Party: December 3**
- **2011 Christmas Concerts: December 9, 11, 16, and 17**

**Keep Us In Mind**

The Santa Fe Women's Ensemble focuses its modest budget on the production of high-quality concerts. As ticket prices cover only a portion of the expenses, your contributions are a crucial part of the group's income. Your generosity is greatly appreciated by Linda Raney, the singers and the board of directors. We also encourage and value donations of your time and talents to assist us in all the details of our concert seasons. Donations to the Women's Ensemble are tax deductible and may be sent to: Santa Fe Women's Ensemble, PO Box 1142, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504-1142 or call us at (505) 954-4922.