

Rising Moon

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For Immediate Release

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Cantabile Youth Singers Use Composing Skills to Set Third-Graders' Poetry to Music

Kids' work performed by Peninsula Women's Chorus

Palo Alto, CA. May XX, 2008. When third-graders at Escuela Popular in San Jose wrote their haiku, little did they realize their work would end up being sung in concert by an adult choir – thanks to the music compositional skills of some other kids barely older than themselves.

It's a story that reveals the broad reach of networking across a variety of Peninsula arts organizations.

Earlier in the year, Tapestry for the Arts, an outreach group that brings arts into the schools, sent Laura Oliver to teach poetry at Escuela Popular, a San Jose elementary school. The class of third-graders quickly caught on to the rules of haiku, a traditional Japanese poetry form.

Martin Benvenuto, artistic director of the Peninsula Women's Chorus, contacted local composer Karen Linford and invited her to set some of the poems to music and to collaborate with the Cantabile Youth Singers. Linford is a former high school choir director, and a member of the Cantabile Youth Singers staff.

When Linford brought the idea to members of the Cantabile senior choir, mostly middle school and high school students, "the kids just ran with it and turned out some really striking work," she said.

The Cantabile kids wrote piano and vocal parts for the Escuela Popular poems. One young woman even wrote a four-part choral composition. A flurry of creative effort resulted in four pieces that went into the program of the Peninsula Women's Chorus at their May 17 and 18 concerts in Menlo Park and Palo Alto.

The Escuela Popular students' poems chosen for the PWC concert were

The Nickel Moon, a poem by Christian Giovanni Reyes Monares, Jr., with music by Cantabile singer Laura Wise.

Nature, a poem by Xitalli Yamileett Martinez, with music by Tal Peleg. Peleg is an exchange student from Israel, who will be with the Cantabile Youth Singers until he returns home at the end of the school year.

The Big Shy Moon, a poem by a girl named Dulce, with music by Cantabile student Miriam Helmy. (Dulce's last name is still being traced, as she moved to Mexico shortly before her work was performed.)

Karen Linford herself wrote the music for *Wind Songs*, set to a poem by Renee Broussard.

It's a story of diversity – kids from Mexico, Israel, San Jose, and elsewhere on the Peninsula working with poetry teachers, composers, children's and adult choirs to create songs whose words and music had no existence whatsoever a few short months ago.

Kudos to the Cantabile Youth Choir for setting kids' words to kids' music – and performed by an award-winning adult choir.

Performing “Beyond their Years” – and Auditions

The young Cantabile singers are no strangers to challenge, with the young performers stepping up to perform beyond their years in many ways, both in classes and onstage. Over the past few years, Cantabile has become the youth chorus of choice for adult performing organizations in the greater Bay Area. Opera San Jose, Symphony Silicon Valley, Fremont Opera, and West Bay Opera, to name a few, regularly request Cantabile Youth Singers to participate in their performances.

Cantabile Youth Singers is led by Elena Sharkova, Artistic Director and conductor of the Ensemble and Vocalise senior choirs. Shane Troll is the conductor for the Intermediate choir, and Darva Campbell is the Preparatory choir conductor.

The next auditions for Cantabile Youth Singers will be held on June 7, 2008 at Foothills Congregational Church, 461 Orange Avenue in Los Altos. Auditions are noncompetitive and can be arranged by calling the CYS office at (650) 424-1410, ext.71 or emailing info@cantabile.org. Complete audition information is available at www.cantabile.org (enter the youth singers portal).

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