



## **FOR DECMEBER-JANUARY RELEASE (event dates 1/27/17 & 1/29/17)**

### **Hudson Chorale Winter Concert – *Variations on a Text***

Hudson Chorale, the area's largest mixed voice chorus, will begin its 2016-2017 season with a concert program to be performed on both **Friday, January 27 at 8:00 pm** and **Sunday, January 29 at 3:00 pm**. Aptly entitled ***Variations on a Text***, it explores how the same sacred verses were interpreted musically by composers from different eras (spanning the Renaissance to the present day), cultures and countries. There is no better place to experience a concert of great sacred music than the magnificent and inspirational **Queen of the Apostles Chapel at Maryknoll, 55 Ryder Road, Ossining, NY**.

This is **Hudson Chorale's**-second season under the direction of **Ira Spaulding**, the Chorale's **Music Director/Conductor**. "I love to program concerts such as this one," says Spaulding. "Why? Because I love both uniformity and individuality. When you hear the same text (uniformity) set by multiple composers in different styles (individuality), you can't help but marvel at the differences they have brought out of the same words! These are also the reasons I love choral music: each individual voice contributing in its own way yet singing uniformly within sections." Maestro Spaulding has a 36-year career of performing, conducting and teaching conducting master classes in more than 60 countries all over the world, and currently holds the position of Professor of Vocal and Choral Music at City College of New York. Hudson Chorale is pleased to be the beneficiary of his experience and artistic vision.

The program will include diverse and contrasting settings of four texts: the ***Ave Maria*** by **Tomás Luis de Victoria, Javier Busto, Igor Stravinsky, Jaakko Mäntyjärvi, Giuseppe Verdi, John Rutter, and Franz Biebl**; the ***Te Deum*** of **Benjamin Britten** and **Franz Joseph Haydn**; a version of ***O Magnum Mysterium*** by **Francis Poulenc** and another by **Tomás Luis de Victoria**; and, **Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina's *Sicut Cervus*** in Latin coupled with **Herbert Howells' *Like As the Hart Desireth the Waterbrook***, the same text in English. For the audience's additional enjoyment, highly accomplished organist **David Baranowski**, who also serves as **Hudson Chorale's** accompanist, will play two litanies composed for organ from the French Romantic Period: **Jehan Alain's *Litanies*** and **Marcel Dupré's *Cortège et Litanie***. The concert can be compared to a 12-course meal where no two flavors are alike, but all are delicious in their own unique ways.

The ***Ave Maria*** (1572) by **Tomás Luis de Victoria**, Spain's most famous 16th century composer, is a gem of simplicity and an example of one of several composers who set that text to music more than once. Also Spanish and from the Basque region, **Javier Busto** wrote a version of the ***Ave Maria*** (1949) that is also simply structured yet demands great emotionality and technical skills to be executed properly. Russian-born,

and one of the US's most famous immigrants, **Igor Stravinsky** is often argued to be the most important and influential composer of the 20th century. His *Ave Maria* (1934) is a perfect example of neoclassicism in its simplicity: only 35 measures in length, devoid of dynamic markings, totally homophonic, and closes with a single *Amen*. Finnish composer **Jaakko Mäntyjärvi** (Men-tea-year-vee), born in 1963, is the youngest of the living composers on the program. His *Ave Maria* (1991) distinguishes itself by employing *parlando* (speaking the text) by the women and the singing of the text by the male voices. **Giuseppe Verdi's** setting (1889), composed in the last decade of his life, is an *a cappella* piece based upon the use of his aptly-named *enigmatic* scale which defies description as it ascends and descends through unconventional key changes. Of the four *Ave Maria's* that he composed, this is without doubt his most unusual and will take you outside of your usual Verdi experience. The English composer, conductor, editor and arranger **John Rutter** (born in 1945) is one of the most acclaimed British choral composers alive today. Rutter's *Ave Maria* (2006) has a tranquil character suitable to the text and is the only one being performed that does not end with an *Amen*. The final piece in the collection is by 20th century German composer **Franz Biebl**. Considered to be his best work, his *Ave Maria* (1985) was made popular by the male choral ensemble Chanticleer. While Rutter chose a substitute for the classic *Amen* ending, Biebl devotes a full four measures to that universally recognized conclusion to prayer.

**Benjamin Britten**, considered the most important composer to come along in England since Henry Purcell more than 200 years earlier, composed two *Te Deum*, one of which will be featured: the *Festival Te Deum* (1944). Using an English text, it is marked by constantly changing rhythms, dramatic dynamic contrasts, a peaceful conclusion and a very demanding organ accompaniment that will masterfully be handled by Baranowski. Representing the *classical* period in music, **Joseph Haydn's** *Te Deum* (1764) is an exuberant and lively nine minutes of excitement, ending with a joyful fugue that will fill the entire auditorium with sound.

French composer **Francis Poulenc** is, without doubt, one of the most important composers of *French Chanson* in the 20th century. His setting of *O Magnum Mysterium* (1952) is part of a group of four motets for Christmas which, from the first chords, depict the beauty and shifts in harmony that can only be Poulenc. **Tomás Luis de Victoria's** setting of the same text (1572) brings us back to another music period in time where we hear imitation between the voice parts which alternates with unison singing until a final, joyful *Alleluia* is reached. Both versions find their origin in the text of a simple Gregorian chant.

Italian Renaissance composer **Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina**, a master of polyphony, is well known for his setting of the text *Sicut Cervus* (1584). This short motet is technically perfect with a changing musical theme for each section of text. *Like as the Hart Desireth the Waterbrooks* (1971), the English translation of the same text set by Palestrina, was beautifully crafted as an anthem by the English composer **Herbert Howells**. The piece has wonderfully long phrases, sung at times by the men of the chorus and at other times by the women, with sensuous chords supplied by the accompanying organ. A short soprano solo at the end seems to descend from the heavens, leading us literally into "the presence of God!"

Following the concert, the audience is invited to an informal reception to meet and chat with the conductor, accompanist and chorus members while enjoying some delicious refreshments, a long-standing Hudson Chorale tradition. Ticket Prices: Advance Sale-

\$25; Door-\$30; Students-\$10. Advanced Sale tickets can be purchased on-line at [www.HudsonChorale.org](http://www.HudsonChorale.org) by calling **1-800-838-3006**. Handicap parking is available at the venue. For additional chorus or event information, visit the chorus website or call (914) 462-3212.