



## Program Notes

**Elijah Rock** is a wonderful Spiritual arrangement by the prolific composer, Jester Hairston. Like many of his spirituals, Hairston uses rhythmic variety, textural changes and dynamic contrasts to convey the overall feeling of joy due to the promise of freedom. Traditionally, it is believed that African-American spirituals have both a literal meaning and may also refer to the Abolitionist Movement and the underground railroad. *Elijah Rock* seems to be part of that tradition. While specific meanings behind the text may draw biblical references to Elijah and Moses and their roles as prophets providing sources of freedom, it is also possible that the reference to Moses is related to Harriet Tubman and her role as an abolitionist. Regardless of which message of freedom this song provides, it also serves as an important reminder of our American history.

**O Magnum Mysterium** is a polyphonic motet composed by Tomas Luis de Victoria in 1572 in Rome. It is a stunning example of the prevailing musical style during the Counter-Reformation, which called for a return to reverence and purity. Prior to this time there were many in the Catholic Church who felt that the music had become too secular and impure. There is a story that the Council of Trent was urged by the Pope to abolish polyphony in the church. Palestrina, Victoria's contemporary and teacher, is said to have asked for the opportunity to demonstrate that this style was not incompatible with a reverent spirit. Palestrina has thus been called the "savior of church music." The text is a Responsorial Psalm for Christmas Day.

*O magnum mysterium,  
et admirabile sacramentum,  
ut animalia viderent Dominum natum,  
jacentem in praesepio!  
Beata Virgo, cujus viscera  
meruerunt portare  
Dominum Christum.  
Alleluia.  
O great mystery,  
and wonderful sacrament,  
that animals should see the new-born Lord,  
lying in a manger!  
Blessed is the Virgin whose womb  
was worthy to bear  
Christ the Lord.  
Alleluia!*

**Goin' Home** is based upon the Largo from the Symphony No. 9 in E Minor "From the New World," popularly known as the *New World Symphony*. It was composed by Antonín Dvořák in 1893 during his visit to the United States from 1892 to 1895 and was adapted into a spiritual-like song by lyricist William Arms Fisher.

Our second composition by one of our members is **Blue**, by Morgan Morse. In addition to being a frequently heard soloist with the FCCC



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(most recently in *O What a Beautiful Morning*), Morgan is also a very advanced pianist. He has written a very beautiful, sophisticated and challenging piece.

Our most recent commission from Rob Hugh is **The Cliffs of Dooneen**, being given its world premiere here tonight! This beautiful song does not have a definitive origin or author. There is also disagreement as to the exact location of the Cliffs of Dooneen. Some say the cliffs are located in County Clare or County Kerry, overlooking the River Shannon. Others say the cliffs are located between Ballyunion and Beale in North Kerry. There are others who say the song does not indicate a specific location. The words represent poetic license, referring to the beauty and spirit of the Emerald Isle. Dooneen is thought to mean "little fort," which adds to the mystery of the song's geography. Wherever the cliffs may be, the song is a tribute to the beauty of Ireland and a poignant lyric about the longing for home.

Theologian Karl Barth once said, "When the angels sing for God, they sing Bach; but I am sure that when they sing for themselves, they sing Mozart - and God eavesdrops." There is no better work than **Ave Verum Corpus** to resonate Barth's sentiment. This compact, homophonic motet, set for chorus and strings, was composed on June 17th, 1791, within months of Mozart's passing. The words are taken from a 14th century Eucharistic prayer:

*Hail, true body  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
Who truly suffered, sacrificed  
on the Cross for man,  
From whose pierced side  
flowed water and blood,  
Be for us a foretaste (of Heaven)  
In the trial of death.*

Mozart's version of this well-known, sacred text is unique for its breadth of harmonic modulation and depth of emotion captured in a brief 46 bars. Despite his poor health in the last year of his life, Mozart also composed two operas (*La Clamenza de Tito* and *The Magic Flute*), the Clarinet Concerto, his final piano concerto and the unfinished Requiem in addition to *Ave Verum Corpus*. The work concludes with canonic entrances that overlap and flow as "water and blood," and a harmonic resolution that seems to portray the image of a soul passing from the body in death towards eternal life in Heaven.

**The Attic** is the first piece commissioned by the FCCC, from our 1996-1997 season. The process of supporting new music by living composers is important and exciting, and the FCCC has been privileged to be involved in many world premieres. Fifth grader Jenny Bemis, a former student of Rob Hugh, wrote the text of *The Attic*. It is an allegory, masterfully full of hidden meaning. The opening describes a dark, musty place where one might feel afraid. With the words "But then again, maybe.." the tempo and mood abruptly change to reflect a brighter outlook. Indeed, we discover there are myriad possibilities in attic. The message of Jenny's poem,



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complemented by Rob Hugh's music, is: don't be afraid to try new things, you just might be surprised at what you discover!

At the Silent Auction held at our annual Broadway concert in February we offer the opportunity to conduct the choir. This year's winner was Kevin M. Higgins, friend of the Wargo family, who has chosen the classic jazz standard, **Cheek To Cheek**, a song written by Irving Berlin for the Fred Astaire/Ginger Rogers movie *Top Hat* (1935). The choir listened to a Billie Holiday recording while studying the song. Thank you, Kevin!!

**Sansa Kroma** is based on Akan folklore from the tribes of Ghana. It is as well known among African children as *Twinkle, Twinkle* is in American culture. It recounts the story of an imaginary hawk, Sansa Kroma. One day Sansa Kroma was soaring high in the sky when she noticed a flock of orphaned eagle chicks. She hovered above them, then snatched them up and carried them back to her nest where she raised them as if they were her own. The moral of the song is, in African villages when a child is orphaned someone in the village, if not the whole village will provide for the child. During the apartheid period in South Africa, people used to flee their homes; some were forced to leave their children behind. These exiled sang Sansa Kroma because they held to the belief that their children would be cared for.

## Robert I. Hugh

Robert I. Hugh received a B.M. Ed. from the University of North Carolina-Greensboro. He received his Masters in music education/composition emphasis from the Hartt College of Music. He completed summer studies at the Kodaly Musical Training Institute and the Institute for Choral Music Education. He was selected to participate in the Fulbright-Hayes Group Projects Abroad program. The grant funded a summer in Kenya where he had an opportunity to study music with Kenyan composers. Rob received an Individual Artist Award in composition from the Connecticut Commission on the Arts. He returned to Kenya to continue his study of African choral music. As a songwriter/arranger, Rob has arranged and recorded over 250 original songs composed by children from kindergarten through twelfth grade. He has been commissioned to compose music for choirs of all ages. Rob's music has been performed throughout the United States, Canada and Europe. His choral music is published by Boosey & Hawkes, Hal Leonard and Colla Voce. He currently teaches vocal music at Wolcott Elementary School. In 1993 Rob was selected as West Hartford's Teacher of the Year.



## Fairfield County Children's Choir

P.O. Box 110588 Trumbull, CT 06611 • 203 414-4292 • www.SingFCCC.org

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Jon Noyes, Music Director & Founder presents  
17th Annual Spring Concert

# Celebrating Composers Past & Present

With Special Guest

Composer Robert I. Hugh

Saturday, May 12, 2012 at 7:00pm  
Norwalk Concert Hall • Norwalk, CT

For audition and ticket information, call



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### Special Guests

Robert I. Hugh – Guest Composer  
Kevin M. Higgins - Guest Conductor  
Leslie Dunnell - Flute

### FCCC Music Staff

Jon Noyes – Music Director & Founder, Chamber Singers Conductor  
Lisa Bettke – Chorale Conductor & Accompanist  
Kevin Cotellese – Concert Choir Conductor  
Cynthia Holberg – Chorus Conductor  
Todd Simmons - Accompanist

### FCCC Administrative Staff

Jon Noyes – Music Director & Founder  
Barbara Brauner – General Manager  
Alicen Masi – Assistant Choir Manager

For audition and ticket information, please contact us at:



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## Fairfield County Youth Choir

Siyahamba .....South African Freedom Song

Clear Water .....Robert I. Hugh

### Chorus

Art Thou Troubled? .....G. F. Handel

Can You Hear Me? .....Bob Chilcott

Once More to the Sea .....Robert I. Hugh

### Chorale

The Raggle Taggle Gypsies .....Scottish Folk Song, arr. Robert I. Hugh

Shenandoah .....American Folk Song, arr. Rollo Dilworth

Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel .....Spiritual, arr. Roger Emerson

### Concert Choir

O Mio Babbino Caro .....Giacomo Puccini, arr. Ed Lojeski

The Arrow and the Song .....Robert I. Hugh

Love The Little Things .....Raeann Fetcho

Elijah Rock .....Spiritual, arr. Jester Hairston

### Chamber Singers

O Magnum Mysterium .....Tomas Luis de Victoria

Goin' Home .....Antonín Dvořák

Blue .....Morgan Morse

The Cliffs of Dooneen .....Irish Folk Song, arr. Robert I. Hugh

### Combined Choirs

Ave Verum Corpus .....W.A. Mozart

The Attic .....Robert I. Hugh

Cheek To Cheek .....Irving Berlin

*Kevin M. Higgins, Guest Conductor*

Sansa Kroma .....West African Song, arr. Sandler

Siyahamba .....South African Freedom Song

*Thank you for attending our program and please join us again!!*



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The FCCC 17th Annual Spring Concert is entitled "Celebrating Composers Past & Present!" Tonight's theme focuses on a varied cast of composers - iconic ones from the past such as Mozart, Handel, T.L. Victoria, Dvorak & Puccini; those from the present such as our special guest, Robert Hugh (we will feature six of his pieces), as well as some of today's most well-known international talents such as Bob Chilcott & Rollo Dilworth; and we even celebrate two student composers from the FCCC, Morgan Morse & Raeann Fetcho!! Whether these composers have created in the historical styles of the Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic or Modern eras, or through the arrangement of timeless folk songs, we hope you will enjoy the performance!

**Siyahamba**, a South African freedom song, was originally sung in Afrikaans and was subsequently translated into Zulu by Thabo Mkize. It was later arranged for a Western four-voice setting and published in a songbook called *Freedom is Coming: Songs of Protest and Praise from South Africa*. Siyahamba has been very popular ever since. Tonight we sing it as our processional and recessional songs.

**Clear Water**, by our guest composer Rob Hugh, was commissioned by the FCCC in 2001 for the 350th Anniversary of the founding of the city of Norwalk, Connecticut and was performed as part of the festivities. It includes text by John Masefield and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

**Art Thou Troubled** is a da capo aria from George Frideric Handel's opera *Rodelinda*, written for the Royal Academy of Music in 1725 when Handel was living in London. To illustrate and emphasize the text, the FCCC Chorus will perform stylistic ornaments on the original melody when it returns at the end of the piece, "Art thou troubled? Music will calm thee."

Bob Chilcott is one of Britain's most active and celebrated choral composers. Beginning in music as a chorister himself, Chilcott sang in, and ultimately became a Choral Scholar for, the choir of King's College, Cambridge. He also sang as a member of the British vocal group *The King's Singers* from 1985 until 1997, when he decided to become a full-time composer. Bob Chilcott has published over 130 of his works through Oxford University Press and his music has been recorded by choirs all over the world. The FCCC performed under his baton in New Orleans in 2001 & 2009. In describing his inspiration for **Can You Hear Me?** Chilcott explains "I wrote this piece to include sign language, as I have always found it to be an incredibly sensitive and beautiful form of communication - it also served as a reminder to me to try to be open and aware of other people, and also of our surroundings."

Robert Hugh's, **Once More to the Sea**, is a buoyant, two-part sea chanty originally commissioned for the 2009 Inter-Elementary Choir for Dr. David Sklarz in honor of his retirement as Superintendent of the West Hartford Public Schools. This work incorporates lyrics from the anonymous poem, "A Season's Life," and will feature exciting performances on snare drum and tin whistle.

**The Raggle Taggle Gypsies** is loosely based on the execution of Scottish gypsy chief Johnny Faa, in 1624. Under James V of Scotland, all Egyptians



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(hence the name "gypsies") were ordered out of Scotland in 1540. There are many variants of this song in England, Scotland and America. As this version evolves, the "lady" abandons her life of luxury for the romantic freedom of the gypsies, eluding capture and living out her life in tranquility. The melody is accompanied by the piano in the style of a balladeer guitar accompaniment. (Robert I. Hugh)

**Shenandoah** is a traditional American folk song of uncertain origin, dating at least to the early 19th century. There are many interpretations of this song. One story tells of a pioneer's nostalgia for the Shenandoah River Valley in Virginia, or of a Confederate soldier in the American Civil War, dreaming of his country home in Virginia. The song is also associated with escaped slaves who sang the song in gratitude because the river allowed their scent to be lost. In this setting by Dr. Rollo Dilworth, accompanied by piano and flute, "Shenandoah" receives a fresh, gospel-flavored interpretation, with bluesy harmonies and a laid-back rhythmic groove.

**Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel** is set here in a spectacular arrangement by Roger Emerson. The African-American Spiritual represents a large portion of American music that provides the choral musician with a unique opportunity to experience great music and its connection to American history. The earliest "concert" performances of the spiritual date back to 1865 when the "Fisk Jubilee Singers" of Fisk University toured Europe and the United States to help raise funds for the school. This tour was met with enormous support and success and is largely responsible for the birth of this wonderful genre of music that is so popular today.

**O Mio Babbino Caro**, originally a soprano aria composed by the famous Giacomo Puccini for his opera *Gianni Schicchi*. Here arranger Ed Lojeski has scored this beautiful melody for both treble choir and SATB chorus. *O Mio Babbino Caro* is sung from the point of view of the daughter Lauretta, as she pleads with her father Gianni (O, my dear papa) to allow her to be with the man she loves, Rinuccio. Despite formerly forbidding this, Gianni is moved to agree to his daughter's wishes and even offers to help bring the couple together.

*Oh my dear papa, I love him, he is handsome, handsome.*

*I want to go to Porta Rossa \_to buy the ring!\_*

*Yes, yes, I want to go there!\_ And if my love were in vain, \_*

*I would go to the Ponte Vecchio \_and throw myself in the Arno!\_*

*I am anguished and tormented!\_ Oh God, I'd like to die!\_*

*Papa, have pity, have pity!\_ Papa, have pity, have pity!*

**The Arrow and the Song** was the third piece we commissioned for by Robert Hugh. He has used text from Longfellow's poems *The Arrow and the Song* and *The Day is Done*. Rob always finds wonderful texts and sets them in poignant ways that emphasize the meaning of the original.

A special highlight of tonight's program is the inclusion of two pieces written by present members of the FCCC. Raeann Fetcho, the composer and lyricist of **Love the Little Things**, is a sixth grader from Fairfield. Although still quite young, this is not the first choral piece of hers to be performed live in concert!