

Cappella SF

RAGNAR BOHLIN ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



Timeless

Ten Centuries of Music

DE 3553



TIMELESS

Ten Centuries of Music

CAPPELLA SF – RAGNAR BOHLIN, CONDUCTOR

VON BINGEN: Columba aspexit ♦ **MACHAUT:** Sanctus from *Messe de Notre Dame*
GESUALDO: Itene o miei sospiri ♦ **SCHÜTZ:** Ich bin ein rechter Weinstock
ISAAC/PRAETORIUS/BACH: Innsbruck-triptyche ♦ **RHEINBERGER:** Drei Geistliche
Gesänge (Morgenlied, Hymne, Abendlied) ♦ **NORMAN:** Jordens oro viker
Shepherds of Bethlehem, arr. Kastalsky ♦ **BRITTEN:** Chorale after an Old French Carol
PÄRT: ...Which was the son of... ♦ **TICHEL:** Earth Song (4:00) ♦ **GJEILO:** Veni Sancte
Spiritus* ♦ **WHITACRE:** Leonardo Dreams of His Flying Machine ♦ **SHAKER SONG:**
Lay Me Low

*World premiere recording

Total Playing Time: 69:16

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1. **HILDEGARD VON BINGEN:** Columba aspexit (4:35)
2. **GUILLAUME DE MACHAUT:** Sanctus from *Messe de Notre Dame* (3:37)
3. **CARLO GESUALDO:** Itene, O miei sospiri (3:16)
4. **HEINRICH SCHÜTZ:** Ich bin ein rechter Weinstock (4:20)
5. **ISAAC/PRAETORIUS/BACH:** Innsbruck-triptyche (2:35)
JOSEPH RHEINBERGER: Drei Geistliche Gesänge (11:13)
 6. Morgenlied (5:24)
 7. Hymne (2:32)
 8. Abendlied (3:17)
9. **LUDVIG NORMAN:** Jordens oro viker (4:55)
10. Shepherds of Bethlehem, arr. Alexander Kastalsky (1:29)
11. **BENJAMIN BRITTEN:** Chorale after an Old French Carol (4:24)
12. **ARVO PÄRT:** ...Which was the son of... (6:46)
13. **FRANK TICHELI:** Earth Song (4:00)
14. **OLA GJEILO:** Veni Sancte Spiritus (6:07) ♦ ♣
15. **ERIC WHITACRE:** Leonardo Dreams of His Flying Machine (7:55)
16. Shaker song: Lay Me Low (4:04)

♦ Soloist: Cheryl Cain, soprano

♣ World premiere recording

Total Playing Time: 69:16

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RAGNAR BOHLIN, CONDUCTOR

CONDUCTOR'S PREFACE:

Since time immemorial human beings have celebrated the mystery of life by singing together. The development that started in Europe one thousand years ago, with singing in parts, is the root of our Western classical music tradition. From it arose polyphony, instrumental music and a wealth of genres, and all the riches of musical styles that we have today. This recording is an attempt to capture this exciting journey by presenting timeless choral masterpieces from the distant and more recent past, up to contemporary commissions.

—Ragnar Bohlin

PROGRAM NOTES

1. The Benedictine abbess **Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179)** remains the best-known and most influential woman of the medieval era: widely revered throughout Europe despite the misogynistic social norms of her day. She was an extraordinary polymath: a visionary Christian mystic, philosopher, naturalist, healer and writer—although her accomplishments in the genres of sacred literature and (especially) sacred music are the basis for her fame and reputation more than eight centuries later.

Modern ears—even those attuned to standard Gregorian chant—are immediately struck by the soaring melodic lines and ecstatic spiritual intensity of von Bingen's settings, mostly of her own sacred texts: antiphons, hymns, sequences and responsories—many of which were collected into a cycle called the *Symphonia armoniae celestium revelationum*. She believed there was no better way to express the original joy and beauty of paradise than music. ***Columba aspexit***, the piece heard in this recording, was written in the late twelfth century and is one of seven sequences from the *Symphonia*. Note this performance's use of drones—a frequent performance practice in Hildegard's day, consisting of long, sustained tones either played by instruments or (as in this recording) sung—adding a harmonic foundation to otherwise unaccompanied monophonic chant lines.

Columba aspexit
per cancellos fenestrae
ubi ante faciem eius
sudando sudavit balsamum
de lucido Maximino.

Calor solis exarsit
et in tenebras resplenduit
unde gemma surrexit
in edificatione templi
purissimi cor dis benivoli.

O pigmentari
qui estis in suavissima viriditate
hortorum regis,
ascendentes in altum
quando sanctum sacrificium
in arietibus perfecistis.

Inter vos fulget hic artifex,
paries templi,
qui desideravit alas aquile
osculando nutricem Sapientiam
in gloriosa fecunditate Ecclesie.

Ubi intercedis pro populo
qui tendit ad speculum lucis,
cui laus est in altis.

The dove peered in
through the lattices of the windows
where, before its face,
a balm exuded
from incandescent Maximilian.

The heat of the sun burned
dazzling into the gloom:
whence a jewel sprang forth
in the building of the temple
of the purest loving heart.

O Perfume-Makers,
you who are in the sweetest greenness
of the gardens of the King,
ascending on high

when you have completed the holy
sacrifice with the rams.

This builder shines among you,
the wall of the temple,
who longed for the wings of an eagle,
kissing his nurse Wisdom
in the glorious fecundity of the Church.

Where you intercede for the people
who stretch towards the mirror of light
to whom there is praise on high.

—*Translation and text thanks to "A Feather on the Breath of God: Sequences and Hymns by Abbess Hildegard von Bingen," Hyperion CDA66039*

2. Guillaume de Machaut (1300-1377)

is not only considered the fourteenth century's most important composer, but he was a noted cleric (a canon) and courtier, as well as one of the most influential poets of his day; Chaucer was one of his admirers. He was a leading exponent of the Ars Nova (New Art) movement that fostered a period of tremendous evolution in French music, most notably the firm establishment of polyphony in all forms of music and the incorporation of many fresh melodic, harmonic and instrumental innovations.

Machaut's **Messe de Notre Dame** is one of the supreme masterpieces of medieval music, as well as a pioneering effort of far-reaching importance to liturgical music practice. It was the earliest complete setting of the Ordinary of the Latin Mass (Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Agnus Dei) ascribed to a single composer. It's also the first Mass setting conceived as a stylistically cohesive unit: unquestionably a seminal influence upon successive generations of composers who devoted their finest efforts to settings of the Mass. The **Sanctus** setting heard here, like the work's other movements, draws from Gregorian chant.

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua. Osanna in excelsis. Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. Osanna in excelsis.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

3. During his lifetime, **Carlo Gesualdo di Venosa** (1566-1613) was far better known for his scandalous behavior than he was for his often "wild" and harmonically daring music. His brutal murder of his wife and her lover upon discovering them *in flagrante* gave rise to his "bad boy" reputation. After languishing

for centuries in obscurity, a twentieth-century resurgence of interest in him encompasses both his music and his moral notoriety, drawing parallels between them.

A composer of both sacred and secular vocal music, Gesualdo was particularly drawn to the madrigal: a popular secular genre of Renaissance-era Italian origin. His early efforts were fairly conventional by the standards of his day—but encroaching depression in his later years led to an increasingly experimental and idiosyncratic style: highly expressive and emotionally potent, but often morose and given to wild outbursts, with unprecedented harmonic shifts and profuse flights of chromaticism. "**Itene, O miei sospiri**" is a five-part piece from Book 5 of his madrigals, written in 1613, the year of the composer's death. Listen for the music's complex interplay of counterpoint and chromatic progressions, with rapid shifts in tempo and time signatures.

Itene, O miei sospiri
Precipitate il volo a lei
Che m'è cagion d'aspri martiri.
Ditele per pietà
Del mio gran duolo
Ch'or mai ella mi sia
Come bella, ancor pia
Che l'amaro mio pianto
Cangerò lieto in amoroso canto.

O my sighs, fly away to her
who is causing me bitter torment.
For pity's sake, tell her how I suffer.
If she is as merciful
as she is beautiful,
I shall cease my bitter lament
and sing a love song.

4. Most music historians consider **Heinrich Schütz** (1585-1672) to be the greatest German composer before J. S. Bach. Known chiefly for his sacred music, he composed for solo voices and choral pieces with instruments as well as a cappella choral works, and was one of the last composers of note to employ predominantly modal harmonies. A star student of the Italian master Giovanni Gabrieli (and later Monteverdi), his initially rather grand Venetian approach evolved in later life into a more austere and profound style.

This six-voice motet—***Ich bin ein rechter Weinstock***, setting John 15:1-5—illuminates the biblical metaphor of a garden to describe the relationship between God and Man. In the opening section, increasing numbers of voices enter seamlessly as if tracing the outline of a vast tree. Later, in the recapitulation of the opening motive, Schütz's intertwining melismatic lines depict the branches of the vine. The final section's dual themes—one depicting Christ's invitation to us and the

other his assurance to us—are bound together in such close imitation that the sense of *tactus*—time itself—is lost.

Ich bin ein rechter Weinstock,
mein Vater ein Weingärtner.
Einen jeglichen Reben an mir
der nicht Frucht bringet
wird er wegnehmen,
und einen jeglichen der da
Frucht bringet,
wird er reinigen
daß er mehr Frucht bringe.

Ich bin der Weinstock,
ihr seid die Reben;
bleibet in mir und ich in euch.
Gleich wie der Reben kann keiner Frucht
bringen von ihm selber
er bleibe denn am Weinstock,
also auch ihr nicht,
ihr bleibet denn in mir.

I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.

I am the vine; you are the branches.
Abide in me, and I will abide in you.
No branch can bear fruit alone; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you abide in me.

5. This three-section piece demonstrates the common practice in centuries past of composers recycling popular melodies from much earlier choral or folk traditions. With no copyright laws to stop them, composers could freely “borrow” or re-purpose such melodies with no thought given to what we would now consider proper attribution. The successive treatments heard here are by three prominent German composers spanning well over two centuries from the Renaissance through the Baroque periods. Presenting these songs in succession helps to trace the development of four-part harmony from music’s modal beginnings to the complex tonal language that culminated with Bach.

The first verse of this **Innsbruck-triptyche** is “Innsbruck ich muß dich lassen,” a song originally written in Old German by **Heinrich Isaac** (1450-1517) expressing sorrow at having to leave the city of Innsbruck. It remains unknown whether the melody was Isaac’s own or an existing tune. Whatever its origin, the piece became quite popular, and the Lutheran church adapted it as the hymn “O Welt, ich muss dich lassen” around a century later, in a setting by **Michael Praetorius** (1571-1621): the second verse of this triptych. The final verse is “Wer hat dich so geschlagen,” a chorale setting by the great master of choral harmonization **Johann**

Sebastian Bach (1685-1750): a version that appears in his *Saint Matthew Passion*.

Innsbruck ich muß dich lassen
ich far dohin mein strassen
in fremde landt do hin.
Mein freud ist mir genomen
die ich nit weiß bekummen
wo ich im elend bin.

Innsbruck, I must leave you;
I will go my way to foreign lands.
My joy was taken from me,
[And] thus I cannot achieve
when I am in misery.
(Old German text)

O Welt, ich muß dich lassen,
ich fahr dahin mein Straßen
ins ewig Vaterland.
Mein’ Geist will ich aufgeben,
dazu mein’ Leib und Leben
legen in Gottes gnäd’ge Hand.

O world, I must leave you,
I take the road
To the eternal native country.
I will give up my spirit,
Also my body and life
Up to God’s gracious hand.
(Anonymous text)

Wer hat dich so geschlagen,
Mein Heil, und dich mit Plagen

So übel zugericht?
Du bist ja nicht ein Sünder
Wie wir und unsre Kinder,
Von Missetaten weißt du nicht.

Who has stricken you so,
My Savior, and with torments
Laid such ill upon you?
For you are not a sinner
Like us and our own children.
You know nothing of evildoing.

Joseph Rheinberger (1839-1901) was quite the prodigy, serving as the organist for his parish church at the age of seven and composing his first Mass at eight. After completing his studies at the Munich Conservatory, he assumed a professorship there, a position he held for the rest of his life. While he composed prolifically in most genres, he remains best known for his masterful organ and choral works—though almost all of his output reveals tremendous compositional facility and nobility of style. He was also one of the most influential pedagogues of his day, having taught many talented young musicians from both Europe and America who went on to become famous—to include Engelbert Humperdinck, Richard Strauss, Horatio Parker and George Chadwick.

The ***Drei Geistliche Gesänge*** (Three Sacred Songs) heard here include “Morgenlied” (Morning Song), “Hymne” and “Abendlied” (Evening Song). The three songs were composed separately between 1858 and 1864 and published as a collection in 1873.

6. Morgenlied (1858)

Die Sterne sind erblichen
mit ihrem güldnen Schein,
bald ist die Nacht entwichen,
der Morgen dringt herein.

Noch waltet tiefes Schweigen
im Tal und über all.
Auf frischbetauten Zweigen
singt nur die Nachtigall.

Sie singet Lob und Ehre
dem hohen Herrn die Welt,
der über'm Land und Meere
die Hand des Segens hält.

Er hat die Nacht vertrieben,
ihr Kindlein fürchtet nichts;
stets kommt zu seinen Lieben
der Vater alles Lichts.

The stars' golden glow
has faded,
soon the night will be gone,
as morning advances.

Now deep silence reigns
in the valley and everywhere.
On branches fresh with dew
only the nightingale sings.

She sings praise and honor
to the world's exalted Lord,
who over land and sea
holds the hand of blessing.

He has banished the night;
fear nothing, little children.
The Father of all light
always comes to those he loves.

—August Heinrich Hoffman von Fallersleben
(1798-1874)

7. Hymne (1864)

Dein sind die Himmel, und dein ist die Erde;
Du hast der Welten Kreis,
Hast die Fülle der Erde fest begründet;
Gerechtigkeit und der Wahrheit Kraft
Sind die Pfeiler deines Thrones.

Yours are the heavens and yours also
the earth;
You have made the world,
And founded the abundance of earth;
Righteousness and justice
are the pillars of your kingdom.

—Psalm 89: 11, 14

8. Abendlied (1855)

Bleib bei uns, denn es will Abend werden,
Und der Tag hat sich geneiget.

Stay with us, for evening is coming,
and the day has drawn to a close.

—Luke 24: 29

9. Ludwig Norman (1831-1885) was a Swedish composer, pianist, conductor, pedagogue and critic who ranks alongside Franz Berwald and Adolf Fredrik Lindblad as one of the most important nineteenth-century Swedish symphonists. Upon returning to Sweden after completing his studies at the Leipzig Conservatory, he taught at the Royal Music Academy of Stockholm and became *kappellmeister* of the Swedish Opera—and is credited with raising performance standards there. In addition to his symphonies, he composed in most other genres. *Jordens oro viker* is a sacred motet scored for a cappella double choir, setting a short poem by Johan Olof Wallin (1779 – 1839), a noted Swedish clergyman, orator and poet who is remembered chiefly for his hymns.

Jordens oro viker för den frid som varar.
Grafven allt förlikar. Himlen allt förklarar.

The world's unrest subsides, peace is come to pass. All is one in the grave. Heaven reconciles all.

10. After completing his studies in composition and piano at the Moscow Conservatory, Russian composer and folklorist **Alexander Kastalsky** (1856-1926) became the piano professor and director of the Moscow Synodal Choir and its associated Moscow Synodal School: the primary teaching center for Russian Orthodox church music. Following the 1917 revolution, he was forced to switch his academic attention to the study of Russian folk music. ***Shepherds of Bethlehem***—performed here in Old Church Slavonic—remains one of his most often-performed settings.

Raduytesia, liudiye,
rodisia Spasitel! Raduysia!
Istinniy fsego mira,
Bog iskupitel.

Mi Tomu samovidtsi, svoim zreliokom
Pri grade Vifleyeme.
V vertepe glubokom.

Lezhit v yasleh na sene Otrochok malenkiy
tam I Matushka Yego
I Osip starenkiy.

Mi im poklonilisia, da domoy stupayem,
i shto tam videli fsem vam vozveshchayem.

Zdravstvuyte, raduytesia, veseli likuyte
a Hrista rozhdennago fse kupno praznuyte!

(transliteration from the original Church Slavonic)

Rejoice, O people,
the Savior is born! Rejoice!
This is the true God Himself,
The redeemer of the world.

We are witnesses of this, we have seen it
with our very own eyes in the city
of Bethlehem.

In a deep cavern a little baby lies
In a manger on the straw.
His mother is there with Him
And the venerable Joseph.

We paid homage to them and are
returning home,
proclaiming to you all that we have seen.

Rejoice, be glad, joyfully make merry!
Celebrate the newborn Christ all with
one accord!

11. Composer, conductor and pianist **Benjamin Britten** (1913-1976) was one of Great Britain's twentieth-century musical giants, having produced enduring masterpieces in many classical genres. He has been described as "a key figure

in the growth of British musical culture in the second half of the 20th century . . . his effect on everything from opera to the revitalization of music education [being] hard to overestimate."

Among the occasional commissions he accepted from the BBC is his ***Chorale after an Old French Carol***, which was first performed as part of a radio program entitled *A Poet's Christmas*, broadcast by the Home Service on Christmas Eve 1944. The chorale is based on a seventeenth-century French carol entitled *Romancero*. The text is by the poet W.H. Auden, then Britten's close friend and collaborator. The two had intended it to be part of a Christmas oratorio that was never completed. After the broadcast, the piece was neglected until Imogen Holst, daughter of Gustav Holst and Britten's musical assistant from 1952 to 1964, revived and performed it with her group, the Purcell Singers, in 1961.

Our Father, whose creative Will
Asked being for us all,
Confirm it that Thy Primal Love
May weave in us the freedom of
The actually deficient on
The justly actual.
Though written by Thy children with
A smudged and crooked line,
Thy Word is ever legible,
Thy Meaning unequivocal,

And for Thy Goodness even sin
Is valid as a sign.
Inflict Thy promises with each
Occasion of distress,
That from our incoherence we
May learn to put our trust in Thee,
And brutal fact persuade us to
Adventure, Art, and Peace.

12. As of this album's release, Estonian master **Arvo Pärt** (b. 1935) has been named the "most-performed living composer in the world" every year since 2010. Even while still a student at the Tallinn Conservatory in the 1960s, his aggressively modern and often politically provocative early compositions ran afoul of the Soviet cultural goons (who, inexplicably, awarded him a major prize as well). After a period of intense personal study of ancient music from Gregorian chant through the Renaissance, he developed a unique minimalist (and uniquely profound) style employing his own technique, known as "tintinnabulation" for its bell-like effect, characterized by the interplay of two voices in triadic harmony, creating music that Pärt himself described as "simultaneously static and in flux."

Which was the son of ... was written in 2000, at a time when his style was shifting from its earlier mathematical rigidity into something more organic: music that (in the words of his wife) had "started to

breathe." Maestro Bohlin describes this particular piece as having "the groove of a spiritual." The text presents Christ's long genealogical line of biblical descent all the way back to Adam, as presented in Luke 3: 23 – 38—which, in its repetitive simplicity, is a pure statement that we as people are the children of God. For the sake of brevity, the full English text—essentially an exhaustive list of Hebrew names—is restricted below to its beginning and end.

And Jesus himself began to be
about thirty years of age,
being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph,
which was the son of.....
which was the son of Seth,
which was the son of Adam,
which was the son of God.

13. Louisiana native **Frank Ticheli** (b. 1958) joined the faculty of the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music in 1991 and was Composer in Residence of the Pacific Symphony from 1991 to 1998. His music has been described by the *Los Angeles Times* as "optimistic and thoughtful," by *The New York Times* as "lean and muscular" and by the *Miami Herald* as "brilliantly effective."

Ticheli's ***Earth Song***, for a cappella chorus, is a powerful personal statement which

grew out of his growing disillusionment with the war in Iraq and expresses his personal longing for peace. This exquisite work is best described in his own words: "It was this longing [for peace] which engendered the poem's creation. . . I knew I had to write the poem myself, partly because it is not just a poem, but a prayer, a plea, a wish—a bid to find inner peace in a world that seems eternally bent on war and hatred. But also, the poem is a steadfast declaration of the power of music to heal. In the end, the speaker in the poem discovers that, through music, he is the embodiment of hope, peace, the song within the Song. Perhaps music has the power not only to nurture inner peace, but also to open hearts and ears in a world that desperately needs love and listening."

Sing, Be, Live, See.
This dark stormy hour,
The wind, it stirs.
The scorched Earth cries out in vain.
O war and power, you blind and blur.
The torn heart cries out in pain.
But music and singing have been my
refuge,
And music and singing shall be my light:
A light of song, shining strong,
Hallelujah! Hallelujah.
Through darkness and pain and strife,
I'll sing, I'll be, live, see. Peace.

14. It is the United States, his adopted country, that has influenced Norwegian-born composer **Ola Gjeilo** (b. 1978) the most. His unique style is distinctly contemporary, yet comfortably accessible, incorporating elements of the many genres to which he was exposed during his early upbringing—including classical, jazz, pop and folk. Gjeilo's many and varied sources of inspiration since then have merged with his earlier influences to produce music that is often described as cinematic and evocative, with a lush and harmonious sound.

In the Roman Catholic liturgy, **Veni Sancte Spiritus** is a sequence intended for the Masses of Pentecost. Musical settings of it abound, ranging from the great Renaissance masters to modern composers like Morten Lauridsen and Arvo Pärt. This luminous piece was composed for Cappella SF, and is presented here in its world premiere recording.

Veni Sancte Spiritus,
et emitte caelitus
lucis tuae radium.

Veni, pater pauperum,
veni, dator munerum,
veni, lumen cordium.

Consolatur optime,
dulcis hospes animae,
dulce refrigerium.

O lux, beatissima,
reple cordis intima
tuorum fidelium.

Lava quod es sordidum
riga quod est aridum,
sana quod est saucium.

Come, Holy Spirit,
send forth the heavenly
radiance of your light.

Come, father of the poor,
come, giver of gifts,
come, light of the heart.

Greatest comforter,
sweet guest of the soul,
sweet consolation.

O most blessed light,
fill the inmost heart
of your faithful.

Cleanse that which is unclean,
water that which is dry,
heal that which is wounded.

15. Although he has written in several different genres, Grammy-winning American composer **Eric Whitacre** (b. 1970) is best known for his startlingly original and stunningly beautiful choral music—as well

as for the “virtual choirs” he founded, incorporating vocal part submissions of his works via video from thousands of individual singers from around the world and blended into harmonious wholes for public listening and viewing online. **Leonardo Dreams of His Flying Machine**—one of Whitacre’s more surreally eclectic works—is best described by its creator:

“We started with a simple concept: what would it sound like if Leonardo da Vinci were dreaming? And more specifically, what kind of music would fill the mind of such a genius? The drama would tell the story of Leonardo being tormented by the calling of the air, tortured to such degree that his only recourse was to solve the riddle and figure out how to fly. We approached the piece as if we were writing an opera brève. Lyricist Charles Silvestri would supply me with draft after draft of revised ‘libretti’, and I in turn would show him the musical fragments I had written. He would then begin to mold the texts into beautiful phrases and gestures as if he were a Renaissance poet, and I constantly refined my music to match the ancient, elegant style of his words. I think in the end we achieved a fascinating balance, an exotic hybrid of old and new.”

I.
Leonardo Dreams of his Flying Machine...

Tormented by visions of flight and falling,
More wondrous and terrible each than
the last,
Master Leonardo imagines an engine
To carry a man up into the sun...

And as he’s dreaming the heavens
call him,
softly whispering their siren-song:
“Leonardo. Leonardo, vieni a volare.”
 (“Leonardo, Leonardo, come fly.”)
*L’uomo colle sua congegiate e grandiale,
facendo forza contro alla resistente aria.*
(A man with wings large enough and duly
connected might learn to overcome
the resistance of the air.)

II.
As the candles burn low he paces
and writes,
Releasing purchased pigeons one by one
Into the golden Tuscan sunrise...

And as he dreams, again the calling,
The very air itself gives voice:
“Leonardo. Leonardo, vieni a volare.”
 (“Leonardo, Leonardo, come fly.”)

Vicina all’elemento del fuoco...
(Close to the sphere of elemental fire...)
Scratching quill on crumpled paper,
Rete, canna, filo, carta.
(Net, cane, thread, paper.)
Images of wing and frame and fabric

fastened tightly.
...sulla suprema sottile aria.
(...in the highest and rarest atmosphere.)

III.
As the midnight watchtower tolls,
Over rooftop, street and dome,
The triumph of a human being ascending
In the dreaming of a mortal man.

Leonardo steels himself,
takes one last breath, and leaps...
"Leonardo, vieni a Volare!
Leonardo, Sognare!"
(*"Leonardo, come fly! Leonardo, Dream!"*)

—Charles Anthony Silvestri

16. The Shaker faith—which had its heyday in early nineteenth-century America—contributed greatly to early American culture and folklore. Perhaps the sect's most enduring artifact is its music, consisting mostly of unaccompanied single-line songs and hymns sung in unison during services—though they began to appear in four-part songbooks after the Civil War. Shaker songs—prized for their simplicity and lovely melodies—were thought of as spiritually inspired "gifts."

Accordingly, the "gift-song" ***Lay Me Low*** was "received" in 1838 by Addah Z. Potter, a member of the New Lebanon, New York,

Shaker community. The original song expresses—in modally descending notes—humble reverence before "Mother," referring to Mother Ann Lee (1736-1784), the founder of the Shaker movement, and whom the faithful regarded as the reincarnation of Jesus. Subsequent harmonized versions, like the one heard here, usually substitute "the Lord" for "Mother."

Lay me low, lay me low, lay me low, low,
Where the Lord can find me,
Where the Lord can own me,
Where the Lord can bless me.

—Notes by Lindsay Koob, with edited contributions from Meredith Riekse

Ragnar Bohlin founded the chamber choir Cappella SF and conducted its debut performance in February 2014, drawing a large audience. The group's first recording, *Light of Gold*, a Christmas CD, was released in 2015—and *Facing West: Choral Music of Conrad Susa and David Conte* followed in 2016. As Chorus Director for the San Francisco Symphony since 2007, Mr. Bohlin prepares the chorus for performances under internationally renowned conductors and has also conducted such pieces as Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Handel's *Messiah*, Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* and *Mass in B Minor*, and Poulenc's *Figure humaine*. His outstanding work has been



recognized with a Grammy Award for Best Choral Performance for Mahler's Symphony No. 8 with Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony.

Mr. Bohlin has worked frequently with the Swedish Radio Choir and in 2010 conducted them on their tour of the United States. He has also conducted the Ericson Cham-

ber Choir and the Opera Chorus of Stockholm. He was choirmaster of Stockholm's Maria Magdalena Church and appeared regularly on Swedish radio with the Maria Magdalena Motet Choir and The Maria Vocal Ensemble. Mr. Bohlin toured internationally with his Swedish choirs—the KFUM Chamber Choir, the Maria Magdalena Motet Choir and the Maria Vocal Ensemble—earning prizes in international competitions and such distinctions as the prestigious Johannes Norrby Medal in 2006 for expanding the frontiers of Swedish choral music making. In June 2010 he made his Carnegie Hall debut conducting Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem*. Guest conducting engagements have brought him to many

parts of the world, including the Sao Paulo Symphony in Brazil and the Malmö Symphony Orchestra in Sweden. In 2015 Bohlin made his debut with the Stavanger Symphony in Norway, conducted *Messiah* with the Edmonton Symphony in Canada and served as Guest Music Director for Chanticleer. Bohlin made his debut with the BBC Singers in January of 2018.

Mr. Bohlin studied conducting with Jorma Panula and the legendary choir director Eric Ericson, piano with Peter Feuchtwanger in London on a British Council scholarship, and singing with the great Swedish tenor Nicolai Gedda. Mr. Bohlin is also on the faculty of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.



Cappella SF is a professional chamber choir founded in 2013 by Artistic Director Ragnar Bohlin. Cappella SF was created to bring the magic of a cappella music from all stylistic periods to the San Francisco Bay Area and beyond in performances at the highest artistic level.

Members of the ensemble are veterans of the leading professional chorus groups of the San Francisco Bay Area, including Chanticleer, Philharmonia Baroque Chorale, American Bach Soloists and the choruses of San Francisco Symphony and San Francisco Opera. Its members teach, lead ensembles and appear as soloists throughout the Bay Area and beyond. The ensemble's San Francisco debut performance in February 2014 drew standing ovations from a capacity crowd. A recent reviewer writes, "... it sounded like a group of world-class singers vocalizing under the direction of a fanatical yet inspired director with the vision and skill to show the world the unlimited power of human voices when joined together in harmony."

In only four years, Cappella SF has presented a wide range of repertoire and styles, including world premieres of no less than eight new works.

Soprano

Jennifer Ashworth
Kelly Ballou
Cheryl Cain
Cara Gabrielson
Michele Kennedy
Crystal Kim
Elizabeth Kimble

Alto

Gail Nakano
Brielle Nelson
Leandra Ramm
Meghan Spyker
Nicole Takesono
Susan Thampi

Tenor

Mike Desnoyers
Elliott JG Encarnación
Samuel Faustine
Kevin Gibbs
Jonathon Hampton
Jimmy Kansau
Ryan Peterson

Bass

Jonathan Thomas
Daniel Brakefield
Peter Dennis
Clayton Moser
Chung-Wai Soong
Mark Sumner
Nick Volkert

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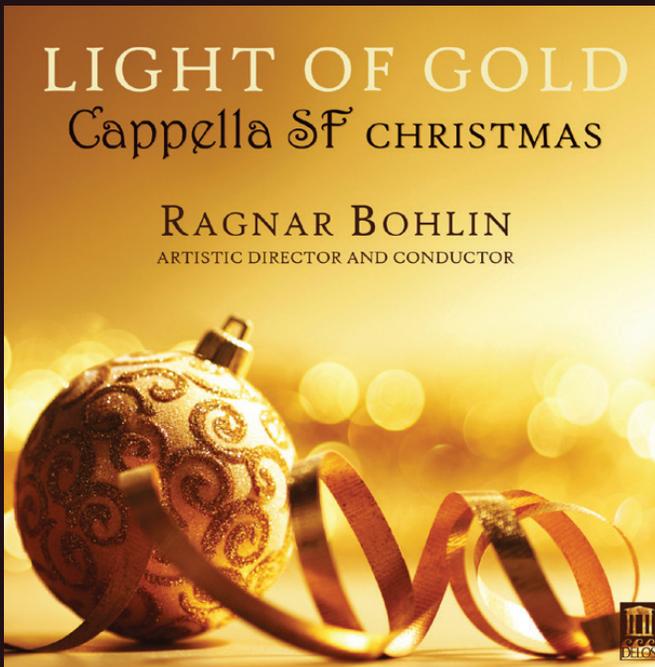
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LIGHT OF GOLD
Cappella SF CHRISTMAS

RAGNAR BOHLIN
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR

DE 3485

Light of Gold:
Cappella SF Christmas

DE 3524

Facing West:
Choral Music of Conrad Susa
and David Conte



FACING WEST

CHORAL MUSIC
OF Conrad Susa
AND David Conte

Cappella SF
Ragnar Bohlin, conductor

DE 3553