

Iberians traveling to Italy in order to study music and to further their religious training. De Cristo's music displays considerable charm, as can be heard in the delightful motet *Quaeramus cum pastoribus*. Especially notable is the lilting setting of the words, *Noe, Noe* found at the center of the motet.

**Antoine Brumel** (c.1460-1512) was a distinguished French composer who was active at the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, and, later in his career, at the chapel of the Duke of Ferrara. He was of the same generation as Josquin and Johannes Ockeghem, the composers who best reflect the musical transition from Medieval period to the Renaissance. Brumel's *Noe, Noe* is striking not only for its lightness of spirit, but also for the remarkable skill that the composer demonstrates. Much of the time each vocal line is in close imitation with its neighbor—almost as if they are chasing each other!

*Das neugeborne Kindelein*

by **Dietrich Buxtehude** (1637-1707)

Dietrich Buxtehude was one of the most important German musicians in the generation before Johann Sebastian Bach. He was one of the most famous and well respected organists of his day, and many musicians made the journey to the northern town of Lübeck in order to meet and to study with him. Bach himself was reputed to have made the journey on foot from Arnstadt, a distance of some 250 miles! Buxtehude was also famous for his series of *Abendmusik* concerts given each Sunday afternoon in the Marienkirche during the Advent season, perhaps the first example of a concert series in musical history. The motet *Das neugeborne Kindelein* is typical of the sort of vocal music that Buxtehude composed. At the start of the piece a lively *ritornello* is heard in the strings; this recurs throughout the work, providing the chief unifying element. The text is pious and very personal, and the subsequent musical depiction altogether charming.

*O Magnum Mysterium*

by **Morten Lauridsen** (b. 1943)

For centuries, composers have been inspired by the beautiful *O Magnum Mysterium* text depicting the birth of the new-born King amongst the lowly animals and shepherds. This affirmation of God's grace to the meek and the adoration of the Blessed Virgin are celebrated in my setting through a quiet song of profound inner joy. —**Morten Lauridsen**

The original choral version of *O Magnum Mysterium* was commissioned by Marshall Rutter in honor of his wife, Terry Knowles, and premiered December 18, 1994 by the Los Angeles Master Chorale, conducted by Paul Salamunovich, at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in Los Angeles. The version for voice and piano was premiered on November 22, 1999 by soprano Jama Laurent with the composer at the piano.

## **Traditional arr. Clarice Assad**

*An International Holiday Medley*

When I was thinking about the program for this season's holiday concerts, I wanted very much to combine tradition with something fresh and new. I decided to use the first half as the traditional, in which I could showcase the orchestra's outstanding talent and our unique way with Bach, and leave the second half open for something novel. At the very end of the program comes this medley combining the choir, our phenomenal soloist, and the orchestra to conclude a wonderful and festive evening.

I wanted to incorporate folk songs from all over the world. Not only is my orchestra extremely international, but so is the entire Bay Area.

I grew up hearing *Gesu Bambino* in Italy. On Christmas Eve, tons of people would gather in the local piazzas and sing this song over and over again. Even though the weather was warm, there was always a guy there in full Santa regalia doing his best. . .and I thought he was the real thing.

I also wanted to include in this medley some fantastic Hanukkah celebration music that I have come to love. I find it very, very personal and soulful. I respond strongly to rhythm-based music and the rhythms of *Drey Dreydeleh* are especially uplifting. I chose *Mary's Little Boy Child* for the same reason. The Caribbean beat that runs throughout this tune is so much fun.

My favorite holiday song is, and always has been, *Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas*. It makes me cry every time. In choosing these songs from all these different countries, I wasn't even thinking about including the U.S. but I did it because I wanted to have that song.

Our Featured Composer this season, Clarice Assad, agreed to transcribe and arrange all of these wonderful tunes. You may already be aware of her talents in the area of arranging as she created most of the arrangements for my own holiday album, *Merry: A Holiday Journey*. Finding the music and then working on making this a comprehensive, flowing, moving and fun experience was her challenge. No surprise to me, she met that challenge brilliantly.

Perhaps you will hear something from your heritage or childhood—or perhaps this music will all be new to you. Either way, what you will hear this evening is totally unique. There is no other medley of these particular songs written for this particular ensemble of players and soloists. It was created specifically for us, for these concerts, and ultimately. . .for you. ❖

—**Music Director, Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg**