

## Program Notes:

Friday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019 PRE CONCERT TALK 7:30pm

With Ronald Martin and Dr. Peter Reczek

### ***Surge Virgo*** - Isabella Leonarda (b.1620-1704)

Composer and nun, Isabella Leonarda came from a prominent family in Novara, Italy. After entering the convent at age 16, she began composing motets and continued with many other sacred works. She is best known as the first woman ever to compose and publish instrumental music, a particularly unusual accomplishment for a nun. *Surge Virgo* is a motet with continuo accompaniment relatively typical of the mid-seventeenth century. The opening section functions as a ritornello, lending a rounded sense of structure to the work. It is full of word-painting common in the Baroque, such as rising melodic lines on "surge" ("arise").

**The Freudig Singers of Western New York** is an auditioned chorus dedicated to exploring choral music in its many forms, both traditional and non-traditional, and spreading the joy of the choral art to widely diverse audiences. Freudig combines elements from many periods and genres in innovative and unexpected ways to create interesting and exciting programs for its listeners. The chorus encourages and pursues composition of new choral works, artistic collaboration with other groups, and participation of singers of all ages. Founded in 1984 by Dr. Kathleen Keenan-Takagi, Freudig Singers of Western New York has benefited from the leadership of Roland E. Martin since 1999. The group has presented concerts in a variety of venues throughout Western New York, partnering with children's choirs, talented high school choristers and the area's finest instrumentalists

### ***The Bird of Dawning*** - Roland Martin (b.1955)

*The Bird of Dawning* takes its poetry from the first scene of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. It was written as a Christmas gift for mezzo-soprano Denise Blackmore in 2000. The violin's fluttering represent the bird, heard far-off at the beginning and end of the piece. As it becomes nearer and more active, it ushers in the singer's first words. The two play rather independently until they come together in ecstatic flight at the words "... so hallowed and so gracious is the time."

### ***Trio Sonata #1 in G major*** - Giovanni Battista Pergolesi (Domenico Gallo) (b.1710-1736)

If the first movement of this sonata sounds familiar, it may be that you know it from Stravinsky's ballet *Pulcinella*, for which Stravinsky adapted this movement. *Pulcinella* is based entirely on music of Pergolesi, or rather, what Stravinsky and others believed to be Pergolesi's music. In fact, this sonata, and the other eleven in the set, is by Domenico Gallo (1730-1768). Following a brief slow movement in e minor, the last movement is a loosely-constructed fugue, charming to the last bar.

**Unless Acted Upon** (2011) by Buffalo composer Caroline Mallonee is a sound representation of Newton's First Law of Motion: A body at rest tends to stay at rest unless acted upon by an external, unbalanced force. A body in motion tends to stay in motion unless acted upon by an external, unbalanced force. This piece explores several ways in which forces can affect a body in motion: friction slows a moving object, gravity makes something fall, pushing makes objects go faster, bouncing objects bounce, and a magnetic force draws objects together. The first section, Newton's Cradle, serves as a prelude. A

Newton's Cradle consists of an odd number of spheres; when one ball is pulled backward and released, the ball on the opposite side moves upon impact.

The piece was commissioned by the Walden School for Firebird Ensemble; it has since been played in Carnegie Hall by the Da Capo Chamber Players, by faculty members at the Bennington Chamber Music Conference, by the Guerrilla Composers Guild at the Hot Air Music Festival in San Francisco, and by members of the New York Philharmonic on their CONTACT! New Music Series at National Sawdust.

**nun ist aber der einzelne Ton beziehungslos (2018)** for solo theorbo

Ruth Wiesenfeld (b.1972)

**The single tone however is unrelated** *Commissioned by Paul Simini*

With the publication of De Revolutionibus in 1543, Copernicus completely overturned a view of the structure of the universe that existed for over 1000 years. His heliocentric (sun centered) system set the stage for modern astronomy and can also be credited as the very beginning of modern data-driven science.

But, Copernicus was a theoretical scientist. He gathered very little data of his own but relied heavily on existing star charts and calendar observations in developing his great theory.

About 50 years after Copernicus' death, the great German mathematician and astronomer, Johannes Kepler, using updated scientific equipment, was able to prove Copernicus' structure for the universe and discover his three great laws of planetary motion. These laws set the stage for his observations that became known as the "*Music of the Spheres*."

For Kepler, the heavenly motions were *nothing but a continuous song for several voices, perceived not by the ear, but by the intellect*. He found that the angular velocities of planets closely correspond to musical intervals. When he compared the extremes for combined pairs of planets, the results yielded the intervals of a complete scale.

Commissioned by Paul Simini to incorporate the ideas of Kepler's outstanding mind into a piece of music I was intrigued by the obsessiveness with which Kepler pursued the force of his vision even in the face of repeated failures and personal tragedies. Thus rather than his musical theories I will put Kepler's restless quest for the discovery of the divine plan of creation into the focus of my musical work.

The piece will come into being in close collaboration with theorbist Warner Iversen. He will immerse himself in the proportions, relations and vibratory patterns of the single intervals, unearthing their complexities and particularities. His performance will resemble the journey through an acoustic universe full of meaning, strange correspondences and grand harmonies.

(quotes from *Harmonia Mundi* by Johannes Kepler).

**Vinko Globokar's *Toucher*** is about the juxtaposition of situations, but is ultimately about one's focus. It is the story of Galileo Galilei and the invention of the telescope, as influenced by Bertolt Brecht's play. The music is set with French text. This is the first juxtaposition, because Brecht's play is in German. The French title translates as "to touch". The composer, Vinko Globokar, matches thirteen

French vowels to seven instruments. Each vowel is matched by a specific sound. The next contrast is between a very fluid and elongated language, juxtaposed with instruments that have a relatively short decay. These vowels and matching sounds are presented at the beginning of the performance. After the initial presentation of the vowels, there are six different scenes influenced by the play, but the scenes are not presented in chronological order. Each scene presents a contrast between people, ideas, or concepts. In between the scenes are interludes, which are two different rhythmic lines presented at the same time on a single instrument. A relationship to the telescope and the concept of focusing is presented throughout the arch of the presentation by adjusting the volume of the voice compared to the volume of the percussion instruments. Initially, the voice is at equal volume to the percussion instruments. In the second scene, the voice is softer than the percussion, and in the third scene the voice is silent. The fourth scene is also silent, and then returns to matching volumes by the sixth scene. Throughout the performance the performer announces who will speak before the text, along with occasional stage directions.

Translations are by Stephen Solook, with additional help from Tiffany Du Mouchelle and Marianne Vallet-Sandre. On the slides, Jupiter is presented in three stages: the first photograph on record, an unfocused picture of Jupiter with its four moons, and a combination of the most up-to-date pictures available of Jupiter with its four moons. Galileo discovered the moons of Jupiter with the telescope.