

.LISA RAINFORD

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Nov 25, 2009 **.ANNUAL CONCERT HELPS FEED THE HUNGRY**

Cantores Celestes Women's Choir's latest offering, Embracing the Light - a musical journey from darkness to light, is a concert two years in the making, according to Director Kelly Galbraith. Featuring the work of Emmy-nominated British film composer Sarah Class and Antonio Vivaldi's Gloria RV 580, the choir will be performing some of the world's most beautiful choral music by Rachmaninov and Paul Halley, Dec. 5 at Runnymede United Church.

"It's not your traditional Christmas concert," said Galbraith. "There are so many choirs, so many events on at the same time. You try to find your own little niche, to give audiences something they'll enjoy."

The concert boasts three North American premieres by Class, said Galbraith. It's a fusion of three different musical styles. Tracking down the music proved challenging, a labour-intensive process, which began with an initial query. Contacting the publisher, Galbraith learned that the music she was after was out of print. Then, she contacted the composer, who said she couldn't find the music. Galbraith's next lead was the director and then conductor. Once she had the handwritten scores, she had to hire someone to write the instrumental score. It was a lot of work, but worth it in the end.

"I know people will love it. It's about embracing the light," said Galbraith. "I'm really excited about it."

Embracing the Light presents three of Class's "richly evocative" compositions from her best selling album, Aurora that reached the top five in the UK following its release. LumiÃre combines influences from church chant and symphonic writing while echoing contemporary acts like Adiemus and Enya; Cudoviti Mir (A Beautiful Peace) and In My Dreams showcases Class' spiritual themes. The choir will be accompanied by pianist Ellen Meyer, organist William O'Meara, the Emperor String Quartet and will include special guest appearances by flautist Samantha Chang and Valerie Cowie on trumpet.

Since its inception in 1989, Cantores Celestes has donated more than \$25,000 to local charities. The not-for-profit group will be donating \$1,000 to Second Harvest. Second Harvest provides meals to children in breakfast programs, women fleeing abusive situations, seniors on fixed incomes and people new to Toronto. One thousand dollars will provide 2,000 meals, said Galbraith.

"You just have to open the newspapers to find out about all the people who are struggling to make ends meet, especially in the holiday season. You associate the holiday season with good food. It's important to think of those less fortunate," she said. "The money will have a definite impact."

The concert takes place at Runnymede United Church, 432 Runnymede Rd. at 8 p.m. Admission is \$20 (no reserved seating).