

For Immediate Release

**YOUNG PEOPLE'S CHORUS OF NEW YORK CITY RELEASES *TRANSIENT GLORY II*—
A RECORDING OF 11 WORLD PREMIERES—ON JANUARY 8, 2007**

Works by Dominick Argento, Geoffrey Burgon, David Del Tredici, Tod Machover, Bright Sheng, Judith Weir, and Others are Included on this Vital Records CD

On January 8, the Young People's Chorus of New York City (YPC) and its Artistic Director and Conductor Francisco J. Núñez release their second recording of new works commissioned and premiered as part of their *Transient Glory* concert series. Entitled *Transient Glory II*, this recording on the Vital Records label comprises 11 compositions that were commissioned by or for the Young People's Chorus of New York City from Dominick Argento (*Orpheus*), Geoffrey Burgon (*Shirtless Stephen—and the Children's Crusade*), David Del Tredici (*Four Heartfelt Anthems*), Kevin James (*NYC Play Ground*), Benjamin Lees (*The Nervous Family*), Tod Machover (*I Dreamt a Dream*), Michael Nyman (*A Child View of Colour*), Jim Papoulis (*Panta Rheí*), Bright Sheng (*The Boatmen's Song*), Nils Vigeland (*Miracles*), and Judith Weir (*Little Tree*). Most of these composers had never before written for a children's chorus.

Joining the Young People's Chorus of NYC on this recording are the Perspectives and Extension Ensembles and YPC's longtime accompanist Jon Holden. Prior to the January 8 national retail release, the recording will be available exclusively from cdbaby.com and from the YPC Web site at www.ypc.org.

The YPC's first *Transient Glory* recording was released in 2003 and included seven world premiere compositions by Jenny Johnson (*The Smiling Eyes*), Elena Kats-Chernin (*Unlabelled*), Nora Kroll-Rosenbaum (*Two Songs by e.e. cummings*), Steven Mackey (*The Attic Which is Desire*), John Tavener (*Glory to God for this Transient Life*), Walter Thompson (*Colors 41402*), and Michael Torke (*Song of Ezekiel*), as well as a reduced orchestration of Claude Debussy's *La Damoiselle Elue* by Nils Vigeland. The recording won high praise on both sides of the Atlantic. *Classics Today* said: "this is an essential disc for fans of new choral music and for anyone who wants to experience the virtuoso capabilities of one of today's finest youth choirs," and *Gramophone* wrote: "Núñez's young singers offer supreme precision in both pitch and rhythm, making them a natural for any contemporary music, and their unrestrained enthusiasm in these works puts them several notches above many better-trained professionals who remain content just to get through the notes."

Transient Glory was initially created in 2001 by Francisco J. Núñez, first, to spotlight the children's chorus as a serious, and indeed glorious, instrument for making music during that fleeting period of time when a child's voice endows the music with a particular poignancy and innocence and, secondly, to enlarge the limited repertoire for children's voices with new and challenging music. Now six years later, almost all of the more than 50 pieces of music commissioned for *Transient Glory*, including all of the 11 compositions on this CD, are being published by Boosey & Hawkes, in cooperation with G. Schirmer and Chester Novello, so that other choirs throughout the world can sing this music, written specifically for children's voices by so many of today's most respected composers.

Transient Glory II Compositions:

Pulitzer prize-winning composer **Dominick Argento**, considered America's pre-eminent composer of lyric opera, wrote *Orpheus*—a five-minute, a cappella work and the first he's ever composed for young voices—to a poem by Sir Osbert Sitwell. Mr. Argento feels the poem is particularly appropriate for young people, as it evokes a vision of a peaceable kingdom Orpheus creates through his music. The adult in the poem is deaf and blind to the vision. It is only seen through the eyes and heard through the ears of the child in the poem. It was premiered by the Young People's Chorus of NYC at 92nd Street Y in 2003 and has been published by Boosey & Hawkes.

Geoffrey Burgon's *Shirtless Stephen and the Children's Crusade* is an eight-minute piece for youth chorus, piano and six percussionists, set to poems for a radio play about a children's crusade written by Peter Porters. Mr. Burgon thought the subject matter would be ideal for this commission, as it tells the story of the strength and resolve of the children in their crusade against the Devil by Shirtless Stephen, their leader. British-born Geoffrey Burgon has composed for many genres, including film, television, dance, and music for orchestras, chamber groups, choruses, and opera. It was premiered by the Young People's Chorus of NYC at 92nd Street Y in 2003 and has been published by Chester Music.

In composing the 17-minute *Four Heartfelt Anthems* in our post-9/11 world, Pulitzer Prize-winner **David Del Tredici** felt an urge to connect with—and even comfort—the younger generation of budding musicians. He also wanted to tell them of the joys of childhood (as he best remembered them). The first three movements—*Sabbath's Child*, *The Little Land* (from Robert Louis Stevensons's *A Child's Garden of Verses*), and *New England Primer's Alphabet* are sung a cappella, and in the fourth—*Highlands, Farewell*—the choir is joined by a soprano solo and piano. The last movement, *Highlands, Farewell*, set to the Robert Burns poem, particularly touches Mr. Del Tredici's heart, as he sees it as a passionate and reluctant farewell to childhood itself. Mr. Del Tredici, a Pulitzer Prize winner, has been called “the father of the Neo-Romantic movement in music,” for his rich musical voice of color, humor and sentiment.

He has received commissions from such major orchestras as the New York Philharmonic and the San Francisco Symphony to the NEA. The Young People's Chorus of NYC premiered *Four Heartfelt Anthems* in 2003; it was subsequently published by Boosey & Hawkes.

Kevin James wrote *NYC Play Ground* for youth chorus, brass quintet, percussion, and tape. It was drawn from submissions by children from the city's poorest and most underserved neighborhoods to the New York City Police Athletic League's "Keepin' It Real" poetry contest, and the taped portions include the voices of the poets themselves. The Police Athletic League commissioned Kevin James to write *NYC Play Ground for Transient Glory*. Kevin James was one of only four composers selected for the 1999 Meet The Composer/New Residencies program. His residency partnership with the Police Athletic League and the Coalition for the Homeless resulted in *Portraits*, a 95-minute multimedia "opera-lingua" on the theme of homelessness. *NYC Play Ground* grew out of these associations. It was premiered by the Young People's Chorus of NYC at the 92nd Street Y in 2003 and subsequently published by Boosey & Hawkes.

The Nervous Family is the first choral work for young people ever written by American composer **Benjamin Lees**. In researching a text, he decided that a one rooted in humor would be a natural medium for a young chorus. He had always admired the wit of English poet Edward Lear and found this poem about a nervous family, which even includes a dog, hilarious. Mr. Lees said that when he had written the last note of the piece he had a feeling of total exhilaration. "In my mind's eye," he said, "I already saw and heard the young choristers giggling with delight at this task." *The Nervous Family* was premiered by the Young People's Chorus of NYC at the Ethical Culture Society in April 2004 and subsequently published by Boosey & Hawkes.

Tod Machover is an American composer well known for breaking traditional artistic and cultural boundaries and offering innovative syntheses of acoustic and electronic sound. *I Dreamt A Dream!* is a setting for treble youth chorus and electronics of "The Angel" from William Blake's "Songs of Experience," in which two young people meet an angel and are utterly transformed, as is the angel by them. The drama is compact and the moods change abruptly, from calm reassurance to deep sorrow to conscious conviction to resigned regret, leaving the listener feeling as though awaking from an unsettling dream. *I Dreamt a Dream!* was premiered by the Young People's Chorus of NYC at the Ethical Culture Society in April 2004 and subsequently published by Boosey & Hawkes.

Michael Nyman wrote *A Child's View of Colour*, an eight-minute composition for youth chorus and string quintet to words by German cultural historian Walter Benjamin translated by Rodney Livingstone. It was written between 1914 and 1915 before Benjamin embraced Marxism and emphasizes the young person's receptive and spiritual approach to colour. Mr. Nyman believes this work may mark the starting point for a series of vocal works he would like to write for and about young people. Mr. Nyman has written for many genres, including opera, chamber music, and orchestras, even for a computer game, but perhaps his best-known work is the soundtrack to the film, *The Piano*, which illustrates his style, which though minimalist, is also accessible. The Young People's Chorus of NYC premiered the work at the 92nd Street Y in 2003; it was subsequently published by Chester Music.

Of Greek descent, **Jim Papoulis**, whose music combines contemporary and world sounds with traditional and futuristic styles, culled the text of *Panta Rhei* from the works of several Greek philosophers. Mr. Papoulis says that *Panta Rhei* is reflective of our current society and the choices we make individually and culturally as people in a constant state of flux, a situation that was also experienced by ancient cultures—the day-to-day pulls and tugs of desire, of nature, mood changes, thought changes, etc., over a lifetime—but that has become accelerated today. *Panta Rhei* was premiered by the Young People's Chorus of NYC at the Ethical Culture Society in April 2004 and subsequently published by Boosey & Hawkes.

Bright Sheng based *The Boatmen's Song*, a simple rhythmic towing song sung by Chinese boat-trackers, on a folk song from northern Shaanxi Province. Bright Sheng says he loves the song for its vivid reflection of the tempestuous turbulence of the river. By adding guiros (a hollowed-out gourd), handclapping, and emphasizing the nonsense words (originally to synchronize the movement of the boat hauling), he hoped to evoke the now-lost scene of hundreds of boatmen pulling large boats against the rage of the river—a hazardous task, he notes, which claimed thousands of lives through history. Born in Shanghai, Bright Sheng is an important leader in exploring and bridging musical traditions in works that transcend conventional aesthetic boundaries. For his work, Bright Sheng is a recipient of the coveted MacArthur Foundation fellowship, commonly known as the "Genius Award." *The Boatmen's Song* was premiered by the Young People's Chorus of NYC at the Ethical Culture Society in April 2004 and subsequently published by G. Schirmer.

The Young People's Chorus of NYC commissioned **Nils Vigeland** to write *Miracles* for the 2003 *Transient Glory* concert at the 92nd Street Y but was premiered by the Young People's Chorus of NYC at Carnegie Hall in 2002. Mr. Vigeland, who has composed more than a dozen works for YPC, wrote the words and music for *Miracles* simultaneously. It is scored for youth chorus, four-hand piano, and glockenspiel. Mr. Vigeland, originally a pianist, who later studied composition with Lukas Foss and Morton Feldman, is currently the chair of the composition department of the Manhattan School of Music. The Young People's Chorus won first prizes in

international choral competitions in Des Moines, Iowa, and Kathaumixw, British Columbia, singing works by Mr. Vigeland. *Miracles* has been published by Boosey & Hawkes.

A native of Scotland, **Judith Weir's** interests in narrative, folklore and theatre have found expression in a wide range of musical invention. She studied composition with John Tavener in London and Robin Holloway at Cambridge University and is known as one of Britain's most wide-ranging composers. In choosing the poetry for *Little Tree*, she knew the choristers would memorize the words and so she said, "I wanted them to have lovely and useful words, worth carrying around in their minds for a long time." She decided on three poems by e.e. cummings that speak of compassion (little tree), love (i carry your heart with me), and potential (now is a ship) and composed the music with no thought to difficulty. The last song, especially, calls for six-part singing. "It's not easy to bring off," she says, "but I have always had great confidence in this group of singers." *Little Tree* was premiered by the Young People's Chorus of NYC at the Ethical Culture Society in April 2004 and subsequently published by Chester Music.

The Young People's Chorus of New York City, which has distinguished itself as one of today's finest youth choruses, recently celebrated its 10th anniversary as an independent chorus with a gala, sold-out concert at Carnegie Hall. Originally founded by its artistic director Francisco J. Nunez in 1988 with a dual commitment to diversity and musical excellence, today the Young People's Chorus of NYC is composed of more than 1000 choristers through its core after-school program of 300 young people and hundreds more through its Satellite program in New York City schools. The chorus has won top honors in international choral competitions and acclaim for its performances on three continents, singing everywhere from Carnegie Hall and the White House to Smetana Hall in Prague, St. Martin in the Fields in London, and the Seventh World Symposium on Choral Music in Kyoto. The chorus returns to Japan in the summer of 2009 for a three-week, 15-city tour of the country, and this summer will travel to Graz, Austria, to participate in the 2008 Choir Olympics in Graz, Austria and to defend the two gold medals they won in the previous Choir Olympics in Bremen, Germany, in 2004. Currently, the Young People's Chorus of New York City can also be heard on the October release of Neil Young's *Chrome Dreams II*.

Born in New York City of Dominican descent, **Francisco J. Núñez** is a composer, conductor, a leading figure in music education, and a visionary, whose strongly held ideas have resulted in the critical, popular, and personal successes of the Young People's Chorus of New York City (YPC). He is often contacted by cities around the country for help in replicating the YPC success, and for his exemplary work with children, Mr. Núñez has been presented with numerous awards, such as the Child Champion award from Child magazine, a Liberty Award from the New York Post, a Luminary Award from Casita Maria and was named as one of the 100 Most Influential Hispanics by Hispanic Business magazine. As a composer, his

compositions and arrangements for choirs, orchestras, and solo instruments are inspired by a wide range of Latin cultures and musical idioms. As a conductor, Mr. Núñez also leads the University Glee Club of New York City, the New York University Singers, NYU Women's Chorus, and is active as a guest conductor and master teacher for choral workshops, demonstrations, and festivals nationwide.

Jon Holden, an active soloist, accompanist, musical director, and conductor, has been principal pianist for the Young People's Chorus of NYC since 1990, accompanying the ensemble in the preparation and world premiere of more than 50 new works. He has also accompanied the YPC for recordings, radio and television shows, hundreds of concerts and competitions here and abroad. Mr. Holden is, in addition, an instructor in the YPC's Satellite Schools program in New York City public schools. Mr. Holden holds several degrees, including a Ph.D from New York University, where he is a faculty member.

Transient Glory II

Young People's Chorus of New York City
 Francisco J. Núñez, Artistic Director/Conductor
 Perspectives Ensemble
 Extension Ensemble
 Jon Holden Pianist

Judith Weir

Little Tree *+

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|-------------------------------|------|
| 1. little tree | 2:34 |
| 2. i carry your heart with me | 2:45 |
| 3. now is a ship | 1:52 |

Tod Machover

I Dreamt a Dream *+ 3:22

Geoffrey Burgon

Shirtless Stephen (and the Children's Crusade) **+ 7:11
 Lila Newman, soprano solo

Nils Vigeland

Miracles *+ 2:23

Benjamin Lees

The Nervous Family *+ 7:02

Bright Sheng

The Boatmen's Song *+ 5:00

Jim Papoulis

Panta Rhei *+ 3:46

Kevin James

NYC Play Ground **+ 10:02

Eli Bunzel, soprano solo
Mitchell Schor, soprano solo
Sycial Mathai and Kyle Resnick, trumpets
Theo Primis, horn
Mike Boschen, trombone
Andrew Bove, tuba

Michael Nyman

A Child's View of Colour *+ 8:12

Dominick Argento

Orpheus **+ 4:45

David Del Tredici

Four Heartfelt Anthems *+

Sabbath's Child (proclamation)- text anonymous 2:37

The Little Land - (Barcarolle) words by Robert Louis Stevenson 6:07

Alphabet - (fuga) text from the New England Primer (1727) 3:12

Highlands Farewell (aria)- Words by Robert Burns 8:28

Emelia Hakes, soprano solo

**Live World Premiere

*Recorded live at Clinton Studios, NYC

+ Commissioned by or for YPC

If you have not received a copy of this recording and would like one for review, please email shumanpr@shumanassociates.net or fax 212-757-3005.