



THE LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE
AND SINFONIA ORCHESTRA
ROGER WAGNER, MUSIC DIRECTOR

SATURDAY EVENING, JANUARY 29, 1983 AT 8:30 PM
PREVIEW AT 7:30 PM BY ESTHER WACHTTELL

DOROTHY CHANDLER PAVILION

ONE WORLD IN SONG
THE ROBERT DE CORMIER FOLK SINGERS

ROBERT DE CORMIER, *Conductor*
NAT HORNE, *Musical Staging*
CORDROL CARR, *Assistant to Mr. Horne*
JANINE HANGER, *Pianist*
FLORA BENSON, *Costumer*

I —WILLIAM BILLINGS (1746-1800)

Modern Music
David's Lamentations and Assurance*
I Am The Rose of Sharon

II —STEPHEN FOSTER SUITE (1826-1864)

Ring de Banjo*
Gentle Annie*
Some Folks*
Laura Lee*
Camptown Races*

III —HEROES, LEGENDS & TALL TALES

John Henry*	Folk Song
Frankie & Johnny*	Folk Song
The Frozen Logger*	James Stevens

IV —WASN'T THAT A TIME?

(A Tribute To The Weavers)

INTERMISSION

V —SONGS AROUND THE WORLD

Cha Lu Chi Le Li La*	Kenya
Cuckoo*	Poland
Wailie, Wailie*	England
May There Always Be Sunshine*	Russia
Id-dem Mallida	Philippines
Israeli Medley*	Israel

VI —SONGS FROM BLACK AMERICA

(Work Songs, Blues & Spirituals)

* — Robert DeCormier Arrangements

The Los Angeles Master Chorale Association sponsors the Los Angeles Master Chorale and Sinfonia Orchestra. It does this through the generosity of its volunteer Board of Directors and all those who contribute to The Music Center Unified Fund of the Performing Arts Council. The Association's volunteer affiliate committees provide substantial support for its activities. These concerts are made possible, in part, through the sponsorship of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and the Los Angeles County Music and Performing Arts Commission, and through grants from the Cultural Affairs Department of the City of Los Angeles, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the California Arts Council.

PROGRAM NOTES

I **WILLIAM BILLINGS** (1746-1800) A picturesque figure, blind in one eye, with a withered arm, legs of an uneven length and a rasping voice that in singing became a bellow, Billings was a tanner by trade. But by every inclination he was a musician and he had a profound influence on early American musical life. As a composer his greatest enthusiasm was for his fuguing tunes. Of them he wrote: "...it is well known that there is more variety in one piece of fuguing music than in twenty pieces of plain song, for while the tones do most sweetly coincide and agree, the words are seemingly engaged in a musical warfare... and while each part is thus mutually striving for mastery, and sweetly contending for victory, the audience are most luxuriously entertained, and exceedingly delighted."

II **STEPHEN FOSTER SUITE** (1826-1864) Stephen Foster was as popular a songwriter in his time, as Irving Berlin or the Gershwins were in theirs, or as Stephen Sondheim is today. A notice in an 1854 edition of *The Musical World* claimed that "Old Folks at Home" had sold more than 130,000 copies.

Foster was much influenced by his own Irish heritage and "Gentle Annie" is an example of Foster's debt to Irish melody. He was also familiar with the "Italian" style and with the operas of Donizetti and Bellini. Many of his songs reflect this influence, particularly "Beautiful Dreamer" written during the last days of his life and published only after his death. But it was as a composer of minstrel songs that the young Foster made his initial success, establishing his fame in America and abroad. During his songwriting career he wrote more than twenty five of these "plantation melodies" as they were called. It is interesting to note, from today's perspective, that Foster's minstrel songs underwent many subtle changes during the decade in which most of them were composed. At first written in heavy dialect, he began to rely upon it less and less until his last minstrel songs were virtually dialect free. Today all of these songs are probably best performed without the use of dialect at all.

"Ring de Banjo," "Gentle Annie," "Some Folks," "Laura Lee" and "Camptown Races" offer a sampling of the variety of songs that Foster wrote.

III **HEROES, LEGENDS, & TALL TALES** One of the greatest heroes in American folklore is John Henry. The legend that surrounds him is traced to the drilling of the West Virginia Big Bend Tunnel on the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad in the 1870's. When the newly invented steam drill was brought to Big Bend it was natural to stage a contest between machine and man, and John Henry easily won by drilling two holes seven feet deep while the machine made only one nine feet deep. He probably did not really die from the efforts of his victory, as stated in the song, but later in one of the numerous tunnel cave-ins.

"Frankie and Johnny" is a legend based on many "boy-meets-girl, boy-jilts-girl, girl-takes-revenge" type songs, but the versions heard today probably stem from an actual incident that took place in St. Louis in 1899 between one Frankie Baker and her two-timing boyfriend.

"The Frozen Logger," by James Stevens, is a tall tale like that of Paul Bunyan. In fact, the character in this song could be one and the same.

IV **WASN'T THAT A TIME?** Ronnie Gilbert, Lee Hays, Fred Hellerman and Pete Seeger, "The Weavers," have made a dramatic and long lasting impact on American folk music. Their contribution to our musical heritage cannot easily be measured. On November 28, 1980, some few months before Lee Hays' death (August 1981), they held a reunion concert at Carnegie Hall in New York City and from that reunion a film was made *Wasn't That A Time?*, which will serve as a lasting testimonial to their rich and meaningful collaboration.

V **SONGS AROUND THE WORLD** In this brief survey of international folk songs we open with a Kenya greeting song introducing us all by name, moving on to Poland and a folksong from the repertoire of the Mazowsze Ensemble. From Somerset, England comes a song which has several versions in both Scotland and North America. Russia is represented by a contemporary song describing a young child's drawing. The Philippines offer a song based on an early tribal chant and in closing we sing three songs from the state of Israel, ending with "Havenu Shalom Aleichem" — "Peace Be With You."

VI **SONGS FROM BLACK AMERICA** The American melting pot of nationalities has provided us with a wonderful variety of folk cultures and songs. None, however, has had as strong an influence on both popular and serious music, at home and abroad, as the music of black Americans. The blues, work songs and spirituals have found their way into the consciousness of composers, from Dvorak to Gershwin, while jazz so firmly rooted in the black American experience, is played throughout the world.

THE ROBERT DeCORMIER FOLK SINGERS

an electrifying group of young artists, perform a staged program which combines the excitement of theatrical entertainment with outstanding musical artistry. The group consists of twelve superbly trained singers, who under Robert DeCormier's leadership, present a most unusual and rewarding musical experience.

Robert DeCormier, founder and director of the group, is well known as a versatile musician. An arranger, composer and performer, Mr. DeCormier is equally at home in the classical and popular fields. Former Director of Choral Activities at the famed Eastman School of Music, Mr. DeCormier is in his 13th year as Music Director for the New York Choral Society which has been called "The finest amateur choir in New York."

A graduate of the Juilliard School, he spent several years as conductor and arranger for Harry Belafonte. Mr. DeCormier also has extensive television credits, including work as Choral Director for the Ed Sullivan Show; Musical Director of the NET production of *Stage for Protest* which was based on plays by Shaw, Baldwin and Brecht; as well as Musical Director of *American Musical Heritage* series on CBS which received the Peabody Award.

As a composer, Robert DeCormier has

encompassed a wide spectrum of styles, from choral works to Broadway scores and four recorded albums of children's songs. His ballet score, *Rainbow 'Round My Shoulders*, is in the active repertoire of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre. Mr. DeCormier's latest choral works (available through Lawson-Gould Music Publishers) "Shout For Joy" and "Legacy" were premiered by the New York Choral Society at Carnegie Hall, to critical acclaim.

Mr. DeCormier's many arrangements have been recorded by the Mormon Tabernacle Choir with the New York Philharmonic and the Philadelphia Orchestra, among others. He has served on the New York State Council on the Arts, and for the last three years, has been a member of the Choral Panel of the National Endowment for the Arts.

NAT HORNE is the Artistic Director of The Nat Horne Musical Theatre & School, located on Theatre Row in New York City, which offers a training program in musical theatre disciplines.

Mr. Horne, a veteran of the Broadway musical stage, made his professional debut in the Broadway production of *Jamaica*, starring Lena Horne. Numerous other Broadway credits include: *Golden Boy*, *Ilya Darling*, *Finian's Rainbow*, *I'm Solomon*, *What Makes Sammy Run?*, *Hello, Dolly!*, and *Applause*.

His musical stagings have been seen by many theatregoers throughout the country, as he has choreographed many stock, regional and showcase productions, including *1776*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Purlie*, etc. More recently, Mr. Horne choreographed George Gershwin's *Girl Crazy* in Germany and this past season, choreographed the works of jazz composer-pianist, Eddie Bonnemere in Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center. Based on an arrangement of the folksong "Frankie and Johnny," by Robert DeCormier, Mr. Horne conceived, choreographed, and co-directed *The Legend of Frankie and Johnny*, which played in New York and toured from 1979 to 1981.

In recent years, Mr. Horne has concentrated on teaching and working with young dancers, encompassing the arts of singing and acting, as well as dancing. It is rare to find a musical on Broadway, or on tour, that does not have at least one performer who has studied with Nat Horne.

CORDROL CARR, Assistant-to-the-Choreographer, teaches basic jazz at the Nat Horne Musical Theatre and has been a member of Nat Horne's company, "Dancing Plus," for two years, performing in New York and on tour. Since 1981, Mr. Carr has been the dance captain for all Nat Horne productions. Along with his concert commitments, he was seen as "Jake" in *The Legend of Frankie and Johnny* and as "Man in Orange" in *It Ain't All Black and White*.

THE ROBERT DeCORMIER FOLK SINGERS

SOPRANOS

Sandra Marie Arida
Maureen Haley
Susan Whitenack

ALTOS

Claire Bennett
Louise Dobbs-DeCormier
Lucia Monahan

TENORS

David Dusing
Rick Scott
Arthur Williams

BASSES

Kevin Elliot
Brian Powell
Cliff Townsend