

HARMONIUM SHARES WORDS OF WISDOM

November 21, 2005

Harmonium Choral Society will present their much-anticipated annual holiday concert at Church of the Redeemer in Morristown on Saturday, December 10th at 8pm and Sunday, December 11th at 3pm. The concert, *A Wreath of Wisdom*, is an eclectic program of music inspired by wise men and wise women. Artistic Director Dr. Anne Matlack remarks, "Whether we believe in the Christmas story or not, we can all find hope and healing in the age-old search for peace in a warring world, wisdom in our hearts, and signs of the divine among us."

Harmonium is well-known for its inspirational premieres of new choral pieces. This holiday concert continues the tradition with the world premiere of *A Suite for Christmas* for chorus and small instrumental ensemble, by New Jersey composer Michael D. Mendoza on text by Jabez L. Van Cleef. Dr. Mendoza, whose compositions have been sung by All State Choirs throughout the country, teaches choral music at the College of New Jersey. Madison resident Van Cleef has provided text for a number of works premiered by Harmonium, including last season's 25th anniversary commission *There Is No Age*.

There will be both traditional and contemporary English anthems by William Byrd, William Boyce, and Jonathan Dove; American works by Jane Marshall, Freeman Lewis and Z. Randall Stroope; a Sephardic folk song and some traditional gospel blues. The program opens with a chant composed by Dr. Matlack on text from the book of *Wisdom*. In addition to the *Bible*, words of wisdom come from Mother Teresa, Dorothy L. Sayers and Dante, among others.

The church is at 36 South Street in Morristown, NJ. General admission tickets will be available at the door for \$20, and \$15 for students and seniors. Discounts are available for individuals or groups who purchase at least one week in advance. The church is wheelchair accessible. Large print and braille programs will be made available if requested ahead of time. Access Harmonium's website at www.harmonium.org to purchase tickets online or call 973-538-6969 for more information.

Dr. Matlack has been Artistic Director of Harmonium Choral Society since 1987, and was named 2003 Outstanding Arts Professional by the Arts Council of the Morris Area. She is also choir director and organist at Grace Episcopal Church in Madison, where she directs a full program of children's and adult choirs, as well as the concert series, Grace Community Music.

Harmonium Choral Society itself was also named Outstanding Arts Organization in 1998 by the Arts Council of the Morris Area, dedicated to fostering community appreciation of choral music through concerts, education and outreach. "[Harmonium is] one of the best music ensembles of any kind. And above all that, it's the sense of sharing and enjoying that most comes through." [Robert Butts, Conductor, Baroque Orchestra of North Jersey, and *Classical New Jersey* critic, July 2003]

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