

For immediate release

Ottawa Choral Society

The Latin Mass meets the Maasai – majestically – in David Fanshawe's exultant 'African Sanctus'



Dominion-Chalmers United Church
Friday, October 21, 8:00 pm

Matthew Larkin, conductor
Maghan McPhee, operatic soprano
Rebecca Abbott, pop soprano
Piano, electric guitar, bass, percussion quartet, electronic tape

Special Guests, Baobab Youth Drummers - Kathy Armstrong, director

Arguably, most of the great journeys in history have been conducted on foot. It is a tempo conducive to great discoveries. In an historic pilgrimage during which he collected music that captures the mystical essence of Africa itself, visionary composer David Fanshawe joins history's greatest wanderers, and the journeying Magi themselves, and documents his spiritual journey in his transcendent *African Sanctus*.

Fanshawe's odyssey is at the burnished heart of the composer's glorious *African Sanctus*. It is a work that fuses the songs and rhythms of the land he walked with the Anglican tradition of his musical homeland. We enter Africa to witness village life along the Nile where the composer spent many years recording the elemental, shattering sounds of its peoples. Bringing classical artists and rock musicians together, the composer beckons us into the heart of Africa, decoding its rich tapestry of life and allowing us glimpses of this unknown continent's eternal ceremonies – the Imam's

sunrise call to prayer, an Egyptian wedding ceremony, the holy moment of a Sudanese child's birth that invokes the memory of another holy birth...

Latin and Arabic, Christian and Muslim, Rock and Classical, Acoustic and Electronic, Ancient and Modern, chorus and soloist, the work's recurring theme of **Two becoming One** is

poignantly captured in the aleatoric chanting of the Latin Mass set against the mesmerizing recitation of the Koran by boys at a Prayer School. It is a juxtaposition that expressively reveals the musical relationship between Mohammed and Jesus Christ and erases the boundaries between continents and cultures.

Rock and classical musicians, together with Fanshawe's own recordings of the tribal ceremonies he witnessed, and the words of the inspiring personalities he encountered on his journeys, provide a deeply authentic and thrilling backdrop for the masterpiece that has played such a profound role in redefining for the western world the **Idea of Africa**.

To open the concert, we welcome our young guests, Ottawa's **Baobab Youth Drummers** who have drummed and danced alongside the children of Africa in Ghana and are fulfilling Fanshawe's vision of a future where people of all ages and cultures are learning to live in harmony.

Two brilliant young Canadian sopranos, Maghan McPhee, and Rebecca Abbott, make their debuts with the Ottawa Choral Society this evening as the Operatic soprano and the Pop soprano.

Tickets: \$30 reserved; \$25 general; \$23 seniors; students \$10; children 12 and under free.

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At the Door

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