

Charis Chamber Voices
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Charis Chamber Voices presents Britten's *Ceremony of Carols & Songs of the Season*

Charis Chamber Voices will present *Carols & Lullabies*, featuring a program of traditional carols and seasonal choral works, including Benjamin Britten's celebrated *Ceremony of Carols* and a complimentary work by San Francisco composer Conrad Susa, *Carols and Lullabies: Christmas in the Southwest*.

Two performances are scheduled in area churches: on Sunday, December 7, at 4 p.m., at Bedford Presbyterian Church, Village Green, Bedford, NY, and on Saturday, December 13 at 8 p.m. at South Presbyterian Church, 343 Broadway, Dobbs Ferry, NY.

Charis, an auditioned chorus of 28 men and women from Westchester County, NY, was founded in 1994 by Susanne Peck. This is Charis's first season under the artistic direction of Vince Peterson, an accomplished choral director, pianist and composer. Charis is renowned for its diverse repertoire, unique blend of voices and captivating performances.

Britten (1913-1976) based his *Ceremony of Carols* on poetry and carols from the 15th and 16th centuries. He arranged them on a perilous North Atlantic crossing in 1942 aboard a Swedish cargo ship - a most unlikely setting for the lilting, joyous music that emerged on that five-week journey to the composer's native England. *Ceremony* debuted in 1943, and quickly achieved worldwide popularity. More than 40 years later, Susa (1935 -) was asked to write a choral work to pair with the Britton. After several years of "writhing in doubt," Susa wrote, he found inspiration in traditional carols from Spain, Puerto Rico and Mexico. The language of Britten's work is Middle English. Susa's *Carols and Lullabies* incorporates several Spanish dialects as well as English, and is accompanied by harp, guitar and marimba.

In addition to Britten and Susa, the concert will feature traditional carols spanning the 14th to 20th centuries, including the *Ding dong! Merrily on High*, *A Spotless Rose*, *Shepherd's Pipe Carol*, *Wexford Carol*, *This Christmas Night*, *I Wonder as I Wander*, *King Jesus Hath a Garden*, and *In the Bleak Midwinter*. The audience will be invited to join in singing popular carols as well.

The concerts will be followed by a mulled wine reception. Tickets are \$25; seniors and students, \$20. To purchase tickets, call 914-931-6575 or visit www.CharisVocals.com.