



PRESS RELEASE

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Boston Secession Announces 2008 – 2009 Concert Season

*Season Culminates with World Premiere of Testimony of Witnesses
by Boston Secession's Composer-in-Residence Ruth Lomon*

BOSTON, MA – August 8, 2008 – Boston Secession, a 25-member professional choral ensemble led by Jane Ring Frank, Conductor and Artistic Director, will perform four concerts during the 2008 – 2009 concert season. Recognized by Allan Kozinn of the *The New York Times* as a “finely blended chamber choir,” Boston Secession has earned a reputation for offering consistently outstanding performances of wide-ranging repertoire.

2008-2009 Season

**Bach, Brahms & Schnittke:
The Sacred Imagination**

November 15, 2008

**Chestnuts Roasting:
A Secession Holiday Concert**

December 5, 2008

(Un)Lucky in Love

February 13 & 14, 2009

**World Premiere of
Testimony of Witnesses**

March 22, 2009

The season begins on November 15th with **Bach, Brahms & Schnittke: The Sacred Imagination**. Here, two canonical masterworks, Bach's *Lobet den Herrn alle Heiden* and Brahms' *O Heiland, reiss die Himmel auf*, are joined by an impassioned 20th century triumph, Alfred Schnittke's *Requiem*, in a concert that explores the breathtaking range of sacred German choral music.

On December 5th, Boston Secession presents **Chestnuts Roasting: A Secession Holiday Concert**. Favorite choral chestnuts, including carols and hymns spanning five centuries, will be spiced up with a sprinkling of parodies by P.D.Q. Bach and Tom Lehrer. The concert will also offer an opportunity for the audience to join Secession in singing a selection of top tunes from Handel's *Messiah*.

Boston Secession offers its perennially popular alternative Valentine celebration, **(Un)Lucky in Love**, on February 13th and 14th. Featured Secession artists celebrate the vicissitudes of love with works by Stephen Sondheim, Leonard Bernstein, Goldrich & Heisler, and Jason Robert Brown, in an intimate concert of solos, duets, and small ensembles.

Boston Secession's season will conclude on March 22nd with the world premiere of *Testimony of Witnesses*, an oratorio based on the poetry of Holocaust victims and survivors by Secession's Composer-in-Residence Ruth Lomon. For this concert, Secession's ensemble will be joined by guest soloists Jayne West (soprano), Pamela Dellal (mezzo-soprano), and Frank Kelley (tenor). In *Testimony of Witnesses*, scored for chorus, orchestra, and soloists, Lomon's hauntingly beautiful settings illuminate the personal experience of eighteen writers. The texts – in Hebrew, French, German, Italian, Polish, English and Yiddish – reflect the deeply personal impact of the Holocaust for these artists, as well as the sweeping international repercussions of one of the defining events of the last century.

Boston Secession is a professional choral ensemble founded in 1996 by Jane Ring Frank as a showcase for the breadth and depth of professional choral music. Ring Frank is also Conductor of Philovox (publishing house E.C. Schirmer's resident professional recording chorus), Resident Scholar at the Women's Studies Research Center at Brandeis University, Minister of Music at the First Congregational Church in Winchester, and Conductor of the Concord Women's Chorus.

Looking forward to the season ahead, Ring Frank observed, "I'm very pleased, as always, to have an opportunity to work with some of Boston's finest singers in the coming year. This is an ensemble that does not shy away from performing difficult pieces, but we also have a lot of fun. We love to surprise our audience with humor, and try to make the concert experience meaningful and moving for newcomers and long-time choral music devotees alike."

Boston Secession has produced two professional recordings. *Surprised by Beauty: Minimalism in Choral Music*, released in 2008, features compositions by Gavin Bryars, Arvo Pärt, Ruth Lomon, and William Duckworth, and includes bonus tracks by William Walker. Writing for *The Arts Fuse*, reviewer Caldwell Titcomb observed, "The Secession chorus under Ring Frank's direction is marvelous. There are a few brief vocal solos, but for most of the time we get a wonderfully homogeneous and completely blended sonority." In response to Secession's debut CD, *Afterlife, German Choral Meditations on Mortality*, the *American Record Guide* noted that the ensemble is "a very fine one, well blended and excellently in tune. Their performances of often quite difficult music are assured and musical."

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For photos visit: <http://www.bostonsecession.org/page.cfm?pageid=5872>

Boston Secession's 2008 - 2009 Season Details

Subscriptions to *Boston Secession's* 2008 - 2009 season are currently available through the *Boston Secession* website (www.bostonsecession.org) or by calling 617-499-4860. Subscriptions range from \$135 to \$150, and tickets to individual concerts start at \$25. The subscription package includes:

Bach, Brahms & Schnittke: The Sacred Imagination

Saturday, November 15, 2008 • 8 pm

First Church in Cambridge, Congregational
11 Garden Street, Harvard Square

Chestnuts Roasting: A Secession Holiday Concert

Friday, December 5, 2008 • 8 pm

Old South Church, Copley Square

(Un)Lucky in Love

Friday, February 13 & Saturday, February 14, 2008 • 8 pm

Margaret Jewett Hall
First Church in Cambridge, Congregational
11 Garden Street, Harvard Square

Testimony of Witnesses

Sunday, March 22, 2008 • 3 pm

Sanders Theatre, Harvard University
45 Quincy Street, Cambridge

In addition to savings on the price of tickets, subscriber benefits include two guest passes per subscription, free parking for Boston Secession's Cambridge concerts, and preferred seating at all four concerts.

About Boston Secession

Boston Secession is a professional choral ensemble comprised of 25 voices, with a repertoire ranging from medieval chant to contemporary classical music.

Founded in 1996 by Conductor and Artistic Director Jane Ring Frank, Boston Secession has garnered critical acclaim for its uniquely blended and transparent sound. David Perkins of the *Boston Globe* called Secession an "extraordinary chorus, notable for its beautiful balance, musical surety, and English-styled straight-toned singing" (March, 2008), while

Tom Garvey of the *Hub Review* praised the ensemble for its “lushly transparent singing conducted with intelligence and wit” (February, 2007).

Boston Secession performs four times annually, with thematic programs exploring topics ranging from the enduring influence of George Frideric Handel to expressions of passion and sensuality in choral music. Secession concerts frequently feature premieres of new choral music. The ensemble’s annual alternative Valentine’s Day concert, *(Un)Lucky in Love*, which takes a lighthearted look at the vicissitudes of love, has sold out for many years.

In the spring of 2009, Boston Secession will premiere *Testimony of Witnesses*, a new multilingual oratorio based on the poetry of Holocaust victims and survivors by Secession’s composer-in-residence Ruth Lomon. *Testimony of Witnesses* is a concert-length work scored for chorus, orchestra, and soloists. Lomon's provocative and hauntingly beautiful settings illuminate the personal experience of seventeen poets, whose texts – in seven languages – reflect the truly international impact of the Holocaust and the variety of individuals and communities that were forever changed by it.

In the spring of 2008, Boston Secession released its second professional CD recording, *Surprised by Beauty: Minimalism in Choral Music*, featuring compositions by Gavin Bryars, Arvo Pärt, Ruth Lomon, and William Duckworth. Secession’s first recording, *Afterlife: German Choral Meditations on Mortality*, was praised by the *American Record Guide*, which noted that the ensemble is “a very fine one, well blended and excellently in tune. Their performances of often quite difficult music are assured and musical.”

Boston Secession was founded on the belief that vocal music is a uniquely powerful way to share intellectual ideas and has the power, above all arts, to create community. Its mission is to create, through its superlative performances, a deeper connection between the audience and the performers.

So, why the name Boston Secession?

One hundred years ago, Austrian painter Gustav Klimt’s artist’s co-operative, the Vienna Secession, created a sensation by displaying paintings at eye level for the first time. Now the common practice for all art galleries, the Secessionists’ approach modernized the presentation of art forever. Inspired by the original Secession, Jane Ring Frank founded Boston Secession in 1996 as a professional studio for modern vocal performance, bringing classical music to “eye level.”

About Jane Ring Frank, Conductor and Artistic Director

Boston Secession’s Conductor and Artistic Director, Jane Ring Frank, has earned a reputation for her orchestral command of ensemble, her acute sense of intonation and sound coloring, her relentlessly scholarly preparation, and her sparkling sense of humor. The result, in the words of Thomas Garvey of the *Hub Review*, is “lushly transparent singing conducted with intelligence and wit.”

Ring Frank founded Boston Secession in 1996 on the program of Gustav Klimt's Vienna Secession of a hundred years ago: bringing uncompromising art and innovation to the people through public performances. Ring Frank and her 25-member vocal art ensemble achieve this goal through rich, uniquely-themed programs and exquisitely realized music.

Ring Frank has conducted and produced two CDs with Boston Secession. *Afterlife: German Choral Meditations on Mortality* features the works of Distler, Brahms, Bach, and Ruth Lomon, Secession’s composer-in-residence. This debut disc has received critical acclaim for its outstanding performance quality. Ring Frank and Boston Secession recently recorded a second CD, *Surprised by Beauty: Minimalism in Choral Music*, which features works by Lomon, Arvo Pärt, Gavin Bryars, and William Duckworth.

In addition to her Secession Artistic Director responsibilities, Ring Frank is Conductor of Philovox, publishing house E.C. Schirmer's resident professional recording chorus. She is a Resident Scholar at the Women's Studies Research Center at Brandeis University, a faculty member at Emerson College, Minister of Music at the First Congregational Church in Winchester, and Conductor of the Concord Women's Chorus, a 50-voice ensemble.

An accomplished pianist and conductor, Ring Frank started her career in Los Angeles as assistant to Professor Frank Pooler, an important choral innovator known for championing new music and experimental performance techniques. With degrees in accompanying and conducting, Ring Frank began her professional career as associate conductor of the 70-voice University Choir, staff pianist, lecturer, and musical director/conductor for the Department of Theatre Arts at California State University, Long Beach.

Ring Frank moved to Boston in 1991 to conduct at Harvard University. From 1998–2003, Frank was Director of Chapel Music at the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, where she worked extensively with Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Bishop Emeritus of Cape Town, South Africa. Ring Frank has toured Vienna, Austria, Munich, Prague, Stockholm, Poland and the United States extensively as a guest lecturer, choral/instrumental conductor, and pianist.

About Ruth Lomon, Composer-in-Residence

Composer Ruth Lomon was born in Montreal, Canada in 1930. Her prolific and distinguished composing career spans five decades, and includes not only composing, but private teaching, research, and active membership and service in a wide variety of professional associations and academic settings. She is currently Composer/Resident Scholar at the Women's Studies Research Center, Brandeis University, and Composer-in-Residence for Boston Secession.

Ruth Lomon's new multilingual oratorio, *Testimony of Witnesses*, is based on the poetry of Holocaust victims and survivors. The concert-length work is scored for chorus, orchestra, and soloists. The texts — in Hebrew, French, German, Italian, Polish, English, and Yiddish — represent the personal experience of sixteen survivors and victims, including ten individual women and children, and reflect the international impact of the Holocaust and the variety of individuals and communities that were forever changed by it. Ms. Lomon received a grant from the Hadassah International Research Center (now the Hadassah Brandeis Institute) for the completion of *Testimony of Witnesses*.

As a composer, she has been honored with numerous awards and fellowships, including the Bunting/Harvard fellowship (1995-96) and a MacDowell/Norlin fellowship, and has over thirty commissions and artistic collaborations to her credit. Ms. Lomon has also received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New Mexico Arts Division, the New England Foundation for the Arts, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Helene Wurlitzer Foundation and the Yaddo foundation.

As a fellow of the Bunting Institute, Ms. Lomon composed *Songs of Remembrance*, a song cycle on poems of the Holocaust. This hour-length work was premiered at the John Knowles Paine Concert Hall, Harvard University, and has since had numerous performances including the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C., the Bremerhaven Memorial Museum, Germany (Nov. '07), and the IAWM Congress in London, UK (July '99). In 2001 she also received the Chicago Professional Musicians Award for the tenth song of the cycle, which is set for mezzo soprano, English horn and piano.

In 1997, Ms. Lomon was commissioned by the Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra to compose a trumpet concerto, *Odyssey*, for Charles Schlueter, then principal trumpet of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, which was premiered in 1998 under the direction of Gisele Ben-Dor. Ms. Lomon's *Requiem* for full chorus and soprano solo accompanied by brass and woodwinds was premiered in Boston in 1997 by Coro Allegro, David Hodgkins, conductor.

In addition to her career in composing and teaching, Ruth Lomon is a distinguished pianist. She made her piano debut with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra in 1949, at the age of 18 while earning her Licentiate of Music at McGill University. Ruth concertized from 1971-1983 with the two-piano team Lomon and Wenglin in concerts of standard repertoire and specializing in the music of women composers. Ms. Lomon has performed her own works as a soloist internationally.

Ms. Lomon attended le Conservatoire de Quebec and McGill University. She continued her studies with Frances Judd Cooke at the New England Conservatory of Music and, later, with Witold Lutoslawski at Dartington College, England.