



PRESS RELEASE
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**Boston Secession's 10th Anniversary Season Opening Concert—
“Altered States: Mysticism in Music”—Features WGBH's Ellen
Kushner as Narrator**

*Award Winning “Sound & Spirit” Radio Show Host to Narrate Nov. 17th Program
Presenting Spiritual Journey—From Darkness to Light—through Music Drawn from
Nine Centuries: from Hildegard of Bingen (b. 1098) to the Beatles*

BOSTON, MA – November 1, 2006 – Boston Secession begins its tenth anniversary season with “Altered States: Mysticism in Music,” continuing the professional chorus’s commitment to thematic concerts about “the music of ideas.” This first concert takes place on Friday, November 17th, and features WGBH on-air personality Ellen Kushner as narrator. Through the power of music and the spoken word, Kushner and Secession artistic director Jane Ring Frank will guide the audience through an eclectic collection of texts and vocal compositions from nine centuries, all aimed at exploring questions of the transcendental experience of the divine.

With hundreds of thousands of listeners on over 100 radio stations in the U.S. and Canada, Kushner is “the perfect partner for the intellectual and spiritual journey that this concert represents,” says Ring Frank. Kushner’s “Sound & Spirit” has been hailed by Bill Moyers as “the best program on public radio bar none.” “We’re privileged to collaborate with Ellen,” says Ring Frank. “Her sensitivity to music and the human spirit illuminates her writing and her superlative radio program.” In her first classical music concert appearance in Boston, Kushner and Secession present a philosophical and spiritual journey that has inspired music from composers as diverse as Pauline Oliveros, Hildegard von Bingen, Gustav Holst, William Billings, Benjamin Britten and the Beatles.

DATE, TIME & TICKETS: One performance only: Friday, November 17, 2006, at First Church in Cambridge (11 Garden Street, Harvard Square; T-stop: Harvard Square). Tickets: \$30 in advance, \$35 at the door (students and seniors \$10 in advance or at the door). Tickets are available at all BosTix locations, on the Web at www.bostonsecession.org or by calling 617-499-4860.

Special Appearance

September 29, 2006
Celebrating Broadway's Best
Benefit for Cambridge Housing
Assistance Fund (CHAF)

Opening Gala

October 14, 2006
Berlin On the Charles
Cabaret Benefit with Nancy
Armstrong

**2006-2007
10th Anniv. Season
“The Music of Ideas”**

November 17, 2006
**Altered States: Mysticism in
Music**

February 2, 2007
(Un)Lucky In Love Alternative
Valentine Concert

March 16, 2007
**Surprised by Beauty:
Minimalism in Choral Music**

April 27, 2007
**Mother Tongue: The Music
and Meter of the English
Language**

CONCERT PROGRAM: ALTERED STATES: MYSTICISM IN MUSIC

I. DARK

[*not this*] Gustav Holst (1874-1934) – Selections from *Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda*, Op. 26

[*dark night of the soul*] Francis Poulenc (1899-1963) - Selections from *Un soir de neige* (1944)

[*piercing the veil*] Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) – Selections from *Three Shakespeare Songs* (1951)

[*equanimity*] Paul McCartney (b. 1942) and John Lennon (1940-1980), Arr. August Watters - *Let It Be* (1968)

[*mystery*] Orland di Lasso (1532-94) - Selections from *Prophetia Sibyllarum* (15--)

[*exorcism*] Pauline Oliveros (b.1932) – Selections from *Sonic Meditation VII* (1971-74)

[*transformation*] Egil Hovland (b. 1924) – *Saul* (1972)

II. LIGHT

[*rapture*] Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179) - Selections from *Symphonia armonie celestium revelationem* (ca. 1140-50)

[*ecstasy*] Augusta Holmès (1847-1903) - *Une vision de Sainte Thérèse* (date unknown)

[*divination*] - William Billings (1746-1800) - *I Heard a Voice from Heaven*

[*purity*] Virgil Thomson (1896-1989) - Selections from *Four Saints in Three Acts* (1928)

[*a song from bedlam*] Benjamin Britten (1913-1976) and Christopher Smart (1722-1771) - *Rejoice in the Lamb*, Op. 30 (1943)

ABOUT ELLEN KUSHNER AND HER "SOUND & SPIRIT" RADIO PROGRAM

Ellen Kushner is a novelist, performer and public radio personality who unites her talents as host of WGBH Radio's remarkable series, *Sound & Spirit*. A weekly series of hour-long radio programs produced by WGBH Radio Boston and distributed by Public Radio International, *Sound & Spirit* explores the human spirit through music and ideas. Bringing an intellectual openness, a keen ear, a lush voice and a genuine enthusiasm to each show, Kushner has deftly crafted *Sound & Spirit* into what Bill Moyers calls "the best program on public radio bar none." *Sound & Spirit* weaves history, myth, and spiritual traditions together with music to take listeners on a journey around the world and through the ages.



Kushner grew up in Cleveland, Ohio, and studied anthropology and the arts at Bryn Mawr College and Barnard College. She worked as a fiction editor for New York publishing houses and later as a freelancer. She relocated to Boston and joined WGBH Radio in 1987, creating the eclectic music mix of *NightAir*, keeping overnight audiences entertained with an unusual blend of classical and contemporary music. On Sunday afternoons she hosted *Caravan*. Kushner's national radio debut came when she was cast as the irreverent host of the *Nakamichi International Music Series* of classical concert music. Kushner then created three award-winning Jewish radio specials for PRI that quickly became listener favorites. In April 1996, Kushner and her team first launched *Sound & Spirit* on the national airwaves. Produced at WGBH in Boston, and distributed by PRI, *Sound & Spirit* airs on over 100 stations, and has won awards for its excellence in writing, content and production.

Kushner is also a highly praised fiction writer. Her first novel, *Swordspoint*, is considered the progenitor of the "mannerpunk" school of fantasy. It was followed by *Thomas the Rhymer*, winner of the Mythopoeic and the World Fantasy Awards, and *The Fall of the Kings* (co-written with Delia Sherman). Her new novel, *The Privilege of the Sword*, was published by Bantam Books in Summer 2006. Ellen Kushner's children's story *The Golden Dreydl: a Klezmer 'Nutcracker' for Chanukah*, which she performs live with Shirim Klezmer Orchestra, is available on CD from Rykodisc. It will be published as a children's book by Charlesbridge Press in Fall 2007. For Rykodisc she also created *Welcoming Children Into the World*, a collection of music based on the *Sound & Spirit* show of that name. Her adult performance piece, *Esther: the Feast of Masks*, tours the U.S.

A popular speaker, Kushner lectures and gives readings around the country at a variety of venues, from synagogue pulpits to speculative fiction conventions. She has taught writing at the prestigious Clarion Writers' Workshop and elsewhere. She has served on the board of the Boston Early Music Festival, and is currently Vice President of the Interstitial Arts Foundation, an organization dedicated to breaking down genre barriers, which she helped to found.

[Photo credit: Michael Benveniste/MCFI] For more information: www.EllenKushner.com or <http://www.wgbh.org/pages/pri/spirit/index.html>

ABOUT JANE RING FRANK, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

In the world of choral music making, Jane Ring Frank is a conductor’s conductor. Her orchestral command of ensemble, her acute sense of intonation and sound coloring, her relentlessly scholarly preparation and her sparkling sense of humor come together to create a unique choral concert experience—for performers and audiences alike.

An accomplished pianist and conductor, Ring Frank started her career at California State University/Long Beach as associate conductor of the 70-voice University Choir, staff pianist, lecturer, and musical director/conductor for the Department of Theatre Arts there. Ring Frank also worked as a *repetiteur* with professional opera companies in Los Angeles, including the Los Angeles Music Center Opera and the Long Beach Opera Company.

Ring Frank moved to Boston in 1991 to conduct at Harvard University. Five years later she founded Boston Secession. In addition to her artistic director responsibilities with Boston Secession, Ring Frank is currently 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, Director of Music at the First Congregational Church in Winchester, and Conductor of the 50-voice Concord Women’s Chorus.

ABOUT BOSTON SECESSION

Hailed as “revitalizing the concert experience” (*Boston Magazine*), *Boston Secession* delivers performances of music from nine centuries with surpassing excellence, forging connections between music and the wider sphere of cultural life: art, politics, philosophy, religion, sexuality.

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. This modernized the presentation of fine art forever by removing the barrier between art and audience.

Inspired by the original Secession, Jane Ring Frank founded *Boston Secession* in 1996 as a laboratory for modernizing professional vocal performance. Her goal: bringing the audience more deeply into the music. First, Ring Frank helps the audience “hear the music, not the chorus” by creating a uniquely transparent sound, achieved through application of typically orchestral technique to her ensemble of professional singers.

Blending individual voices into a tightly-tuned, unified sound, *Secession* produces an aural effect “so precise”—according to Richard Dyer of *The Boston Globe*—“[it makes] the ears ring.” Ring Frank then puts this unique sound to work in creative thematic programs that take the concert experience further. Listening through the music, *Secession’s* audiences directly experience the ideas and the cultural connections embedded in the sound.

For more information about *Boston Secession*, or to purchase the debut CD *Afterlife*, visit www.bostonsecession.org or call 617-499-4860.

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