



PRESS RELEASE

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## Boston Secession Announces 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season Featuring Reprise of Debut Season Program, New Commissions

*“The Music of Ideas” theme covers mysticism, minimalist masterworks and English language concert featuring commissions by Byron Adams, Ruth Lomon, Scott Wheeler*

**BOSTON, MA – September 1, 2006** – In 1997, Jane Ring Frank founded a new professional choral group in Boston as a workshop for pushing the boundaries of programming and performance in choral music. Today—30-plus “revolutionary” [*Boston Globe*] concert programs and one acclaimed CD later—*Boston Secession* announces the group’s 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary season. According to artistic director Ring Frank, this special season “celebrates Secession’s core mission: superlative performances of nine centuries of music organized in programming about *The Music of Ideas*.”

*Boston Secession* opens in November with a reprise from its first season. **Altered States: Mysticism in Music** studies various musical expressions of spiritual connection to the divine, with composers as divergent as Orlando di Lasso and Pauline Oliveros. *Secession*’s second major concert—**Surprised by Beauty: Minimalism in Choral Music** in March, 2007—features rare live performances of minimalist masterworks by William Duckworth, Arvo Pärt and Gavin Bryars. “We expect audiences to be surprised that modern music—some of it composed as recently as last year—can be this beautiful,” said Ring Frank.

And for the ensemble’s closing concert—**Mother Tongue: The Music and Meter of the English Language** in April, 2007—Ring Frank marks the ensemble’s 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary by premiering three commissioned pieces. Two local composers—Ruth Lomon, *Secession*’s Composer-in-Residence, and internationally acclaimed Scott Wheeler—join West Coast composer Byron Adams in setting classic British and American poetic texts.

### 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 10<sup>th</sup> Anniv. Season

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**

## **Boston Secession's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season Details**

*Boston Secession* 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary season subscriptions are \$99 (a \$31 discount off the single ticket price) for all three season concerts plus tickets to *Secession's* repeat sell-out **(Un)Lucky in Love** alternative Valentine's concert. Tickets are currently on sale through the *Boston Secession* website ([www.bostonsecession.org](http://www.bostonsecession.org)) or by calling 617-499-4860. All concerts take place at First Church in Cambridge, Congregational (11 Garden Street, Harvard Square, Cambridge) and begin at 8 p.m. The four-program subscription package includes:

### ***Altered States: Mysticism in Music*** - Friday, November 17, 2006

Recalling its inaugural season, *Boston Secession* repeats this special concert program honoring the ritual of vocalizing to connect with the sacred. Traversing a wide range of religious traditions and compositional techniques, this program features Benjamin Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb*, as well as works by Pauline Oliveros, Orlando di Lasso, George Crumb and others.

(Special guest artist: Heinrich Christensen, organ)

### ***(Un)Lucky in Love: An Alternative Valentine's Concert*** - Friday, February 2, 2007

Featured *Secession* artists—in solos, duets and small ensembles—make light of loves lost, found and otherwise engaged. Featuring works by Donizetti, Mozart, P.D.Q. Bach, Bernstein and others.

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

This concert explores the hidden depth and profound beauty of minimalism: an important modern compositional technique exploiting simple repeating patterns to create rich vocal textures. The evening features significant choral masterworks of minimalism rarely performed live: William Duckworth's *Southern Harmony* [1981], a choral work based on 19<sup>th</sup> century shape-note hymns, Arvo Pärt's *The Beatitudes* [1990] and Gavin Bryars' *And so ended Kant's travelling in this world* [1997]. Also featured this evening: the premier of "Transport," a movement from *Secession's* composer-in-residence Ruth Lomon's oratorio-in-progress *Testimony of Witnesses*.

(Special guest artist: Heinrich Christensen, organ)

### ***Mother Tongue: The Music and Meter of the English Language*** - Friday, April 27, 2007 *Premiering Three 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commissions*

*Boston Secession* explores the pitfalls, pratfalls and pleasantries of setting the English language to music—from Handel and Purcell to Gilbert and Sullivan. And as a special addition to this concert, *Secession* has commissioned three composers—Byron Adams, Ruth Lomon (*Secession's* Composer-in-Residence) and Scott Wheeler—to write choral pieces setting English texts.

## About *Boston Secession's* 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season Commission Composers

**Dr. Byron Adams** earned a Bachelor of Music Degree, *magna cum laude*, from Jacksonville University, studying piano with Mary Lou Wesley Krosnick and composition with Gurney Kennedy. He received a Master of Music degree from the University of Southern California, where his principal composition teacher was Morten Lauridsen. He was awarded his doctoral degree from Cornell University, studying composition with Karel Husa and musicology with William W. Austin. Adams has had performances of his music in Europe, such as at the 26<sup>th</sup> "Warsaw Autumn" International Festival of Contemporary Music, the Leith Hill Festival in England, the Conservatoire Americain in Fontainebleau, France, and the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra. A recipient of numerous awards and grants, Adams' music has been performed in America by such institutions as The West Virginia Symphony, the Syracuse Symphony, Cantori New York, Chamber Music Palisades, Pacific Serenades, the new music ensemble Xtet, and at the Colburn School String Orchestra. His most recent commissions were the *Variationis achemisticae*, a major chamber music work for flute, viola, 'cello and piano commissioned by Chamber Music Palisades, and *Le Jardin Proveçcal*, for flute, oboe, harpsichord and 'cello which was commissioned by Pacific Serenades.

Byron Adams's scholarly work was recognized in 1985 when he was awarded the first Ralph Vaughan Williams Research Fellowship. He has published widely on the subject of English music of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, speaking on this topic over the BBC and at three National Meetings of the American Musicological Society. He is co-editor of *Vaughan Williams Essays*, and has contributed four entries to the revised edition of the New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians. In 2000, the American Musicological Society bestowed the Philip Brett Award on Adams for his work on British music. He was recently named scholar-in-residence for the 2007 Bard Music Festival, "Elgar and His World."

Editions BIM, E.C. Schirmer, Southern Music Co., Earthsongs, Encore Music and Yelton Rhodes all publish music by Byron Adams. Recorded performances of his music are available on the Orion Master Recordings, Skylark, and Mark record labels. Adams is Professor of Composition and Musicology in the Music Department of the University of California, Riverside.

**Ruth Lomon (Boston Secession's Composer-in-Residence)** is a composer of orchestral, choral, chamber music, song cycles, solo compositions and works for multi media. She has received commissions from the Massachusetts Council on the Arts, the New Mexico Arts, National Endowment for the Arts, New England Arts, Boston Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra, Dinosaur Annex, ALEA III, Boston Secession and awards from the Jory Foundation, American Music Center, Miriam Gideon Award for Composition, Thanks be to Grandmother Winifred Foundation; fellowships from MacDowell/Norlin, Yaddo, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Helene Wurlitzer Foundation, and the Bunting Institute/Harvard.

Since 1998 Ms. Lomon has been Composer/Resident Scholar at the Women's Studies Research Center, Brandeis University. She is presently composing an oratorio, *Testimony of Witnesses*, for vocal soloists, chorus and orchestra. She is the recipient of a grant from the Hadassah International Research Center for completion of this work. She was commissioned by the Pro Arte Chamber Ensemble to compose a trumpet concerto, *Odyssey*, for Charles Schlueter, principal trumpet of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. This work was premiered in 1998.

Her *Requiem* for full chorus and soprano solo accompanied by brass and woodwinds was premiered in Boston (1997) by Coro Allegro, David Hodgkins, Artistic Director. During 1995-96, Ms. Lomon was a fellow of the Bunting Institute, Radcliffe/Harvard where she 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. in April '98, and the IAWM Congress in London, England, in July '99 where she received the Miriam Gideon Composition award for this work. 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.

A native of Montreal, Canada, Ruth 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.

**Scott Wheeler** studied at Amherst College, the New England Conservatory and Brandeis University (PhD 1984); his principal teachers included Arthur Berger, Lewis Spratlan and Malcolm Peyton. He pursued further study at the Tanglewood Music Center (with Olivier Messiaen), the Dartington School (with Peter Maxwell Davies) and privately with Virgil Thomson. In 1975 he co-founded Dinosaur Annex, a chamber ensemble devoted to the performance of contemporary music; he became the group's sole artistic director in 1982. The ensemble has given the US premières of works by composers such as Davies, Judith Weir, Philip Grange, Poul Ruders and Anthony Powers. In 1989 Wheeler joined the music department at Emerson College, Boston, where he has also worked as a music director in the theatre department. His honours include a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship (1988-89), a fellowship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters (1994) and the Stoeger Award from the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center (1999).

Scott Wheeler's music has been commissioned and performed by the orchestras of Minnesota, Houston, Toledo and Indianapolis, as well as by New York City Opera, soprano Renée Fleming, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra of Boston, and the Newport Music Festival. His opera *Democracy: An American Comedy*, on a libretto of Romulus Linney, was commissioned by the Washington National Opera and premiered by them in January of 2005. A CD of Scott Wheeler's works featuring the Gramercy Trio and friends is a recent release on the Newport Classic label.

Wheeler's awards and commissions include the Guggenheim Foundation, the Fromm Foundation, Tanglewood, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Massachusetts Artist Foundation, Yaddo, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and the MacDowell Colony, as well as the Stoeger Prize for excellence in chamber music from the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. His work can be heard on GM Recordings, Northeastern Records, Palexa and Koch International. Scott Wheeler has taught at New England Conservatory, Brandeis University, and Emerson College in Boston, where he is Artistic Director of Dinosaur Annex Music Ensemble. As a conductor, Wheeler has premiered over a hundred new works, as well as the Boston premieres of works by Poul Ruders, Scott Lindroth, Judith Weir, Peter Maxwell Davies, Philip Grange: his conducted recordings of recent works appear on the CRI, Capstone and Newport Classic labels.

### **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](http://www.bostonsecession.org) or call 617-499-4860.

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