

Saturday, April 5, 2008, 8pm
Zellerbach Hall

Sweet Honey in the Rock

Indaba

(West Coast Premiere)

featuring

Sweet Honey in the Rock

Ysaye Maria Barnwell, Nitanju Bolade Casel, Aisha Kahlil,
Carol Maillard, Louise Robinson, Shirley Childress Saxton

Pacific Mozart Ensemble

Dr. Lynne Morrow, *music director*

Oakland School of the Arts Youth Choir

Melanie DeMore, *guest conductor*

with

Ravi Abcarian *bass*
Valerie L. Brown *vocal soloist*
Ginitta Glass *djembe*
Savannah Harris *drums*
Trente Morant *piano, keyboards, vocal soloist*
Rosetta Saunders *djembe, dun dun*

Cal Performances' 2007–2008 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo Bank.

PROGRAM

Sweet Honey in the Rock

INTERMISSION

Indaba

(West Coast Premiere)

Indaba Prayer

Sweet Honey in the Rock

Indaba

Everyone

Member of the World Community

OSA Youth Chorus

Soloist Chastity Hinson

Trio CyLena Granger, Shynell Blanson,
Chastity Hinson

Rapper Genesis Sanchez

Questions

OSA Youth Chorus

Soloist Destiny Cornett

Spoken Word Genesis Sanchez

Vision for Tomorrow

Pacific Mozart Ensemble

Soloists Lark Coryell, Angie Doctor, Cindy Lau,
Kim Keeton, Alexis Jensen

Vocal Percussion Greg Lee and John Stenzel

Get Along

Soloists Valerie L. Brown, Trente Morant

Daughter Shynell Blanson

Son Merzell Williams

Keyboard Kymry Esainko

Joy in the Morning

Everyone

Soloist CyLena Granger

Indaba

Indaba (in-dä 'bä') is a Zulu word from South Africa meaning to bring together the right people...at the right time...to ask the right questions...in order to arrive at the right answers. It is an invitation to gather for the telling of our stories.

This *Indaba* is a choral work composed by the members of Sweet Honey in the Rock in 2005. It was commissioned by the Washington Performing Arts Society for the Men and Women of the Gospel and the Children of the Gospel in Washington, D.C., in celebration of its 40th anniversary and its work in bringing art and community together. The work, in seven movements, is a musical dialogue between youth and their elders. It begins with a "Prayer," performed by Sweet Honey, asking that the community be blessed with children. The prayer is followed by an affirmation from the elders to the youth that "We Believe in You." The youth then affirm that though they may be young, they understand that they are each a "Members

of the World Community" and then raise the "Questions" that all youth raise. The teenagers in dialogue with their parents try to figure out whether it is possible for them to "Get Along," particularly as they try to share their "Vision of Tomorrow." The entire community (including the audience) is invited to come together in the final song celebrating "Joy in the Morning."

The music of *Indaba* represents the diversity of the African-American community and combines a full spectrum of musical styles of from the Sweet Honey pallet, including the traditional long meter hymn form of Black congregations, "classical" choral forms set against rhythms from the African Diaspora, choral jazz, rap and gospel.

Sweet Honey thanks you for being part of the *Indaba* community and for participating in this evening's dialogue.

Enjoy!

Pacific Mozart Ensemble

Richard Grant, *artistic director*
Lynne Morrow, *music director*
Kymry Esainko, *accompanist*

Soprano

Lorna Baird
Becca Burrington
Josie Diaz
Angie Doctor
Kathie Longinotti
Mari Marjamaa
Amelie Mel de Fontenay

Alto

Valerie Brown
Annette Cayot
Lark Coryell
Elisabeth Eliassen
Polly Winograd Ikonen
Alexis Lane Jensen
Kim Keeton
Claudia Landivar
Cindy Lau
Gretchen Nicholson
Peggy Rock
Antonia Van Becker

Tenor

Doug Boyd
Victor Floyd
Eric Freeman
Bryan Matheson
Larry Moore
John Paddock
Larry Rose
Ben Scott
Kevin Smith

Bass

Steve Bicknese
Tom Carpender
Kymry Esainko
Dale Engle
Jim Hale
Gene Hern
Don Kelley
Greg Lee
Jeremy Litwin
John Stenzel
Jeff Watts

Oakland School for the Arts Youth Choir

Letia Nichols, *head of the vocal program*
Branice McKenzie, *conductor*
Melanie DeMore, *guest conductor*

Soprano

Amber Long
Anna Chernock
Cecilia Garner
Debriana Cannon
Destiny Cornett
India Harris
Kylah Webster
Miranda Buddington
Phan Tran

Alto

Chetina Hunter
Shynell Blanson
Tiana Young
CyLena Granger

Tenor

Anais Kane
Merkell Williams
Eiji Miura
Sukay Sow
Briana Lovelace
Jenese Brewer
Chastity Hinson

Baritone

Kevon Towner

Spoken Word

Genesis Sanchez

About the Artists

Founded by Bernice Johnson Reagon in 1973 at the D.C. Black Repertory Theater Company, **Sweet Honey in the Rock**, internationally renowned a *cappella* ensemble, has been a vital and innovative presence in the music culture of Washington, D.C., and in communities of conscience around the world. Now in her fourth decade, the Grammy Award-winning ensemble moves forward, following Bernice Johnson Reagon's retirement in February 2004, continuing the legacy begun 35 years ago.

From Psalm 81:16 comes the promise to a people of being fed by honey out of the rock. *Honey*: an ancient substance, sweet and nurturing. *Rock*: an elemental strength, enduring the winds of time. The metaphor of *sweet honey in the rock* captures completely these African-American women, whose repertoire is steeped in the sacred music of the Black church, the clarion calls of the civil rights movement, and songs of the struggle for justice everywhere.

Rooted in a deeply held commitment to create music out of the rich textures of African-American legacy and traditions, Sweet Honey in the Rock possesses a stunning vocal prowess that captures the complex sounds of blues, spirituals, traditional gospel hymns, rap, reggae, African chants, hip-hop, ancient lullabies and jazz improvisation. Sweet Honey's collective voice, occasionally accompanied by hand percussion instruments, produces a sound filled with soulful harmonies and intricate rhythms.

In the best and in the hardest of times, Sweet Honey in the Rock has come in song to communities across the United States and around the world, raising her voice in hope, love, justice, peace and resistance. Sweet Honey invites her audiences to open their minds and hearts and think about who we are and what we do to one another and to our fellow creatures on this planet.

Sweet Honey in the Rock is Ysaye Maria Barnwell, Nitaju Bolade Casel, Aisha Kahlil, Carol Maillard, Louise Robinson and Shirley Childress Saxton. The group's latest release, *Experience...101*, was honored with a Grammy Award nomination this year.



Dr. Ysaye M. Barnwell is a native New Yorker now living in Washington, D.C., where, since 1979, she has performed with the internationally acclaimed a *cappella* quintet, Sweet Honey in the Rock. She appears

as a vocalist and/or instrumentalist on more than 25 recordings with Sweet Honey and other artists. Dr. Barnwell spends much of her time off stage as a master teacher and clinician in cultural performance theory and voice production. Her workshop, *Building a Vocal Community: Singing in the African American Tradition*, has been conducted all over the United States, Great Britain and Australia, making her work in the field a real source of inspiration for her performances on stage.

While her 15-year study of the violin beginning at age two was the foundation of her musical career, Dr. Barnwell holds bachelor and master of science degrees in speech pathology, a doctor of philosophy in cranio-facial studies and a master of science in public health. She was, for 12 years, a professor at the College of Dentistry at Howard University, and in addition administered and implemented community health projects.

Dr. Barnwell is a commissioned composer and arranger who has worked on numerous and varied dance, choral, film, video, theater and recording projects. In addition to these endeavors, Dr. Barnwell is an actress whose credits include voice-over narrations and appearances on both television and big screen film and video. She has authored two children's book, *No Mirrors in My Nana's House*, illustrated by Synthia Saint James, and *We Are One*, illustrated by Brian Pinkney (for release in March 2008); compiled and edited *Continuum: The First Songbook of Sweet Honey in the Rock*; produced the 25th anniversary CD of Sweet Honey in the Rock, *...twenty-five...*, and is the featured storyteller and singer on her release *Um Hmm*, a feast of African-American stories, poems and songs for young audiences.



Nitaju Bolade Casel first came to Sweet Honey in the Rock after four years of studying, performing and cultural organizing in Dakar, Senegal, where she co-founded, with Marie Guinier, ADEA (Artistes des

Echanges Africaines). Dedicated to the exchange of ideas and services between African of the diaspora, ADEA worked in alliance with local artists, the National Council of Negro Women, the National Theatre Daniel Sorano, the University of Dakar, Air Afrique radio (O.R.T.S.) and television programming, the Schomberg Center for Research and Development, and the late Dr. Ewart Guinier of Harvard University. Ms. Casel has brought the improvisational rhythms of hip-hop and jazz to Sweet Honey in the Rock's palette since her arrival in 1985. She is currently co-director, with her sister, Aisha Kahlil, of First World Productions, a cultural and educational organization in the performance arts. Ms. Casel made her film debut appearance in *Beloved*, directed by Jonathan Demme.



Aisha Kahlil joined the group in 1981. As an experienced jazz vocalist and African dance and song artist, she has moved Sweet Honey in the Rock into new territory in improvisation. She is Sweet Honey in the Rock's strongest blues singer. In 1994, CASA (Contemporary A Cappella Society of America) named Ms. Kahlil as best soloist in a *cappella* music for her performance of "See See Rider" and "Fulani Chant." Some of the group's most innovative and experimental work occurs in the performance other compositions, including "Fulani Chant" and "Wodaabe Nights." "Wodaabe Nights" was included in the sound score for the

About the Artists

1998 PBS film series *Africans in America*, produced by WGBH-TV. "Fulani Chant" was included in *Climb Against the Odds* benefit recording for Breast Cancer Funds and the film score for *Down in the Delta*, directed by Maya Angelou. Recently added to her acting credits is her debut appearance in *Beloved*, directed by Jonathan Demme. Ms. Kahlil composed the closing song for the American Bible Society video featuring Sweet Honey in the Rock. She also composed and performed original music for the film *Freedom Song*, starring Danny Glover and directed by Phil Robinson with music by Sweet Honey in the Rock and James Horner, and appeared with Sweet Honey in the Rock as guest artist on the TNT special *A Tribute to Joni Mitchell*. She is currently at work on a recording project featuring her original compositions and arrangements.



Carol Maillard was born and raised in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and attended Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., where she studied violin and theater. She began her performance career at the D.C. Black

Repertory Theater as a member of the professional company. Carol has worked extensively both on and off Broadway, in many national and international tours, on TV and in film. She has produced, written and recorded with Sweet Honey in the Rock and other well known artists. Her arrangement of "Motherless Child" is featured in the film *The Visit* and the documentary film on Dorothy Height, *We Are Not Vanishing*. She is a published writer and lives in New York City with her son, Jordan. She is a founding member of Sweet Honey in the Rock. *SGMKJ!*



Louise Robinson is a native New Yorker who began her relationship with music in the children's choir at church. She went on to play the accordion and concert bass, later joining the all-city orchestra and the citywide chorus. She studied music while attending the High School of Music and Art in New York. She graduated from Howard University in Washington, D.C., with a bachelor of fine arts degree.

Ms. Robinson's first professional job was with the Arena Stage's company, Living Stage. She then moved on to join Robert Hook's newly formed acting ensemble at the D.C. Black Repertory Company. It was there that she, along with Mie, Carol Maillard and Bernice Reagon, formed the *a cappella* quartet, *Sweet Honey in the Rock*.

Ms. Robinson moved back to New York several years later to resume her acting career, and performed both on- and off-Broadway in such productions as *Reggae*, *Tintypes*, *I'm Getting My Act Together and Taking It on the Road*, *Ain't Misbehavin'* and *Little Shop of Horrors*.



Shirley Childress Saxton is a veteran professional Sign Language interpreter having learned American Sign Language from her Deaf parents. She has 25 years of experience providing Sign interpreting services in a wide range of life situations including education, employment, legal, medical and performing arts/music. Shirley conducts master workshops on Sign interpreting music. She holds a bachelor's degree in deaf education and is a certified member of the Registry of Interpreters of the Deaf, Inc., which

published a tribute to her in an article entitled, "Shirley Childress Johnson, the Mother of Songs Sung in ASL." She has been recognized for her interpreting work and services to the community by awards from Deaf advocacy organizations including Women Unlimited, Deafpride, Inc. and the Silent Mission at Shiloh Baptist Church in Washington, D.C. She has authored three writings on her experiences as a child of Deaf adults (C.O.D.A.) and her work as a Sign Language interpreter that can be found in the following publications: *We Who Believe in Freedom: Sweet Honey in the Rock...Still on the Journey*, *Continuum: The First Song Book of Sweet Honey in the Rock* and *Souls of My Sister: Black Women Break Their Silence, Tell Their Stories, and Heal Their Spirit*.

Founded in 1980 by Artistic Director Richard Grant, the **Pacific Mozart Ensemble** (PME) delivers passionate, expert and engaging choral performances of music from Brahms to Brubeck to the Beach Boys. Over the years, PME has grown to fill an important role in the cultural life of the San Francisco Bay Area, presenting courageous and innovative programs of many works that have never been performed in concert settings. In 2005, the group's 25th anniversary season, PME named Dr. Lynne Morrow as the group's Music Director.

PME is perhaps best known for its collaborations with contemporary composers and artists, including John Adams, Dave Brubeck, David Lang, Meredith Monk, the American Bach Soloists, Berkeley Symphony Orchestra, the Oakland-East Bay Symphony and many others. PME was nominated for a "Best Choral Performance" Grammy Award in 2006 for the Harmonia Mundi recording of Bernstein's Mass with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester under the direction of Kent Nagano.

PME made its Carnegie Hall debut in November 2005, representing choral music for Meredith Monk's 40th anniversary celebration; selections of those performances were broadcast on WNYC radio. In 2006, members of PME appeared in local concerts by "indie" rocker Sufjan Stevens and avant garde composer and musician John Zorn. PME was a featured performer at the 2007 Green Center Festival at Sonoma State University, presenting its multimedia concert program, *A*

Story of Freedom: An Evening of Spirituals. The ensemble has made three European tours and numerous recordings.

PME annually presents a season of three concert programs in various locations around the Bay Area; these concerts often include collaborations with other music institutions. The 2007–2008 season will include performances of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Napa Valley Symphony in April 2008. PME closes each season with its highly popular A Cappella Jazz & Pop concerts, which showcase members of the choir in small and large groups performing sophisticated, original arrangements of a wide variety of musical styles.

Dr. Lynne Morrow was named Music Director of PME in 2005, the ensemble's 25th anniversary season. Dr. Morrow had previously served as vocal coach and then Assistant Music Director of PME from 1988 to 1997. In 2005, Dr. Morrow, along with PME Artistic Director Richard Grant, prepared the chorus for the Berlin performance and recording of Bernstein's Mass with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester under the direction of Kent Nagano; this Harmonia Mundi recording went on to receive a 2006 Grammy Award nomination for Best Choral Performance.

Dr. Morrow teaches at Sonoma State University, where she directs the vocal and opera/music theater programs, and also serves as Music Director of the Oakland-East Bay Symphony Chorus. Dr. Morrow received her DMA in opera coaching and choral conducting from Indiana University-Bloomington.

In fall 2003, Dr. Morrow helped to found Quantum Opera Theatre, which seeks to broaden the formal and stylistic links between opera and musical theater by working with composers on new works and hopes to provide an environment to workshop new musical theater each year. She is also the host for the Stern Grove Music Festival.

The **Oakland School for the Arts Youth Choir** is composed of Vocal Emphasis high school students at Oakland School for the Arts (OSA). Oakland School for the Arts is a pre-professional Arts Academy with an intense college-preparatory curriculum in downtown Oakland. A charter

middle and high school, OSA will be moving into the Oakland Fox Theatre in fall 2008.

The vocal department at OSA is an award-winning department and is demand for performance throughout the Bay Area. The choirs of OSA are known for their varied repertoire that includes everything from a South African freedom song to a Chopin prelude, from singing *a cappella* to shaking the rafters with a gospel classic. Oakland School for the Arts is on the move, and you will witness that as you listen to the OSA Youth Choir.

Singer-songwriter **Melanie DeMore** has a remarkable voice, weaving the fibers of African-American folk music with soulful ballads, spirituals and her own original music. Ms. DeMore beautifully brings her audience together through her music and commentary. She has toured extensively, singing at festivals, universities, in coffee houses and concert halls. Her recordings *Share My Song* and *Come Follow Me* are both heartfelt collections of her music.

In addition to her solo work, Ms. DeMore facilitates vocal workshops for professional and community-based choral groups and has taught her program, *Sound Awareness*, in schools, prisons and youth organizations in the United States, Canada, Cuba and New Zealand. Ms. DeMore was a California Artist in Residence with the Oakland Youth Chorus for 10 years and has received an award from the Music Educators National Conference for her work with young singers and artists. She is on the music faculty at St. Paul's School in Oakland, where she teaches *a cappella* singing. Ms. DeMore is also a founding member of the Grammy Award-nominated, critically acclaimed vocal ensemble Linda Tillery and the Cultural Heritage Choir, a group that tours extensively in the United States and abroad.

Ms. DeMore traces her interest in music to her parents who started one of the first Black theater groups in Alaska in the early 1960s. Ms. DeMore majored in music at Incarnate Word University in San Antonio, Texas, and later worked as a studio musician, was a member of a melodrama company, sang in an all women's Black *a cappella* group, Scintilla, sang for commercials, and wrote music for the theater.

About the Artists

Ms. DeMore describes her music as “in the African-American folk tradition of Odetta,” to whom she has often been compared, noting, “I have a very, very, very low voice.” She has shared the stage with numerous artists including Buffy Saint Marie, John Prine, Josh White, Jr., Laura Nyro, Sweet Honey in the Rock and Pete Seeger.

Valerie L. Brown is a music minister, professional vocalist, arranger, composer and producer. Her musical career spans four decades, from her formative years singing in the church, to being honored as “Best Female Vocalist in the Army” during a tour of duty in the late 1970s, to her contributions to the “Womyn’s Music” movement (as “Satko”) and direction of VOICES: Lesbian Choral Ensemble. Ms. Brown has performed in venues as diverse as the Santa Rita Prison, the Monterey Jazz Festival and Carnegie Hall.

Ms. Brown earned a bachelor’s degree in computer science from San Francisco State University, with a minor in voice from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. She worked for 13 years in the corporate banking world with Wells Fargo in their Electronic Banking and Loss Prevention departments, and spent five years as a Registered Representative and Senior Associate with WMA Securities, Inc. and the National Association of Securities Dealers.

As a disability rights activist, Ms. Brown participated in successful litigation for the enforcement of ADA statutes. She worked with the Bay Area Outreach & Recreational Program, coaching wheelchair basketball and soccer in their Youth Sports Program, and was a member of the silver-medal U.S. Women’s Wheelchair Basketball team in the 1992 Paralympics in Barcelona, Spain.

The year 2001 marked a period of clarity and transformation for Ms. Brown. She left the corporate world to devote time to personal spiritual development and explore ministry in music. Along the path, Dominion *a cappella* ensemble was born. Dominion is an ensemble of individuals who not only can sing, but also can testify about life’s struggles and how each of them overcame them to sing rich harmonies and transform audiences.

In addition to her work with Dominion, Ms. Brown is the Choir Director for Unity Palo Alto Community Church, Creative Arts Minister/ Vice-Chair of OneLife Institute, sings with the Grammy Award-nominated Pacific Mozart Ensemble and is a co-founder of blak&brown Productions. Ms. Brown is a member of the Recording Academy SF Chapter and American Choral Directors Association.

Trente Morant has been a Bay Area resident for over 20 years, and has become very much in demand as a conductor, arranger, accompanist and performer.

For five years, Mr. Morant toured the country as performer-lecturer specializing in music from the Harlem Renaissance, and served as musical director in many theaters in the New York tri-state area for productions of *West Side Story*, *Candide*, *Barnum*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Music Man*, *Shenandoah*, *Pippin*, *Chicago*, *Hair*, *Funny Girl*, *Trial by Jury*, *Sugar* and *Robber Bridegroom*.

Mr. Morant worked with the Oakland Youth Chorus for 19 years and conducted the chorus in performances or workshops with Bobby McFerrin, Charlie Haden, Nancy Wilson, Ed Kelly, Keith Terry, Dance Brigade, Linda Tillery, Jon Hendricks, Pete Seeger and Voicestra. He also took the chorus on tour to New York, New Orleans, Jamaica, Canada and Japan.

Other credits include conducting at the Monterey and San Francisco Jazz Festivals, *Carmina Burana* with the Oakland Ballet, *Porgy and Bess* and the Bernstein Mass with East Bay Symphony conducted by Michael Morgan, and “the leading player” in *Pippin* with Alameda Civic Light Opera.

For the last two summers, Mr. Morant served as vocal director at the Woodminster Theater for productions of *Oklahoma!*, *Hello Dolly*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Ragtime*, *The King and I*, *Beauty and the Beast* and *West Side Story*.