

For Immediate Release

***AND IF THE SONG BE WORTH A SMILE* – A NEW CD RELEASED ON THE
PENTATONE CLASSICS LABEL – FEATURES THE WORKS OF SIX LIVING
AMERICAN COMPOSERS**

**SOPRANO LISA DELAN, WITH SUSANNE MENTZER, MATT HAIMOVITZ
AND KRISTIN PANKONIN, PERFORM THE ART SONGS OF BOLCOM, GETTY,
HEGGIE, GARNER, CORIGLIANO, AND WOLF,
MANY OF WHICH ARE RECORDED HERE FOR THE FIRST TIME**

Soprano Lisa Delan, accompanied by pianist Kristin Pankonin and joined by mezzo-soprano Susanne Mentzer and cellist Matt Haimovitz, offer a rich and varied collection of art songs by living American composers entitled *AND IF THE SONG BE WORTH A SMILE* (PTC 5186 099).

This CD pays tribute to the American art song, a form which has grown in popularity and stature in recent years. *AND IF THE SONG BE WORTH A SMILE*, in the SACD format, includes works by William Bolcom, John Corigliano, David Garner, Gordon Getty, Jake Heggie and Luna Pearl Woolf, many recorded here for the first time. Some of the songs were written expressly for Ms. Delan, who collaborated on their artistic conception. This is the recording debut of all of the songs, except for those by William Bolcom and Jake Heggie.

The contents of the CD are as follows:

AND IF THE SONG BE WORTH A SMILE

**Lisa Delan, soprano,
Kristin Pankonin, piano**

William Bolcom (b.1938) - Four Cabaret Songs

Gordon Getty (b.1933) - Poor Peter

Jake Heggie (b.1961) - Four Songs

David Garner (b.1954) - Annettes-Lieder

John Corigliano (b.1938) - Two Cabaret Songs

Luna Pearl Woolf (b.1973) - Odas de Todo el Mundo

About the Composers and Their Pieces (Based on program notes by Clifford Cranna)

William Bolcom

William Bolcom (named 2007 Composer of the Year by the prestigious publication *Musical America*), leads the way with four selections from his well known, two-volume set of “Cabaret Songs” (1977-85), originally written for his wife, mezzo-soprano Joan Morris. The savvy lyrics are by the late playwright and librettist Arnold Weinstein (1927-2005), who collaborated with Bolcom on his operas *McTeague*, *A View from the Bridge*, and *A Wedding*. Many of these cabaret songs evoke the complex emotional terrain inhabited by the modern liberated woman, à la “Sex in the City.” In the delightfully sensual “Amor,” a pleased-with-herself beauty (rather like a languid version of Musetta in *La Bohème*) gloats at the wide admiration her irresistible charms inspire. “Oh, Close the Curtain” is a boozy, conflicted and wistful recollection of a wild, posh party. By contrast, “Waitin” affords a quiet moment of hope and faith in the simple style of a gospel song. An awkward scene of morning after regrets following a night of so-so sex unfolds in “Toothbrush Time.”

Gordon Getty

Noted San Francisco composer Gordon Getty (honored as an Outstanding American Composer at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in 1986) offers his set of songs, “Poor Peter” (March 2008). Getty conjures a vision of Merrie Olde England through the crystalline prism of his crisp, uncluttered modern sound, beginning with the delicately shifting chromatics of “Where is My Lady?” A wry twist on an old-fashioned English dancing song, “Tune the Fiddle” offers some clever rhythmic surprises, while “The Ballad of Poor Peter” is a halting, enigmatically haunting beggar’s plea. Its final stanza provides the title for this recoding: “And if the song be worth a tear/Or yet a smile/Then grant Poor Peter but a penny”

Jake Heggie

Jake Heggie, another San Franciscan, was catapulted to prominence with the phenomenal success of his first opera, *Dead Man Walking*, premiered at San Francisco Opera in 2000, but his career as a successful songwriter was well under way years earlier, as he found friendly collaborators among many well known American singers. Arching

lyricism characterizes “My true love hath my heart” (1996), inspired by the lovely simplicity of an Elizabethan poem by Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586). Originally a solo song with cello and piano accompaniment, it is heard here in the composer’s own arrangement for vocal duet, featuring acclaimed mezzo-soprano Susanne Mentzer, a frequent performer at the Metropolitan Opera and major houses internationally, along with Israeli-born, Harvard trained cellist Matt Haimovitz, who is currently Professor of Cello at the Schulich School of Music at McGill University in Montréal, Quebec. Heggie’s “Three Folk Songs” (1994), arrangements of familiar American tunes, were originally created for famed mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade. The first, “Barb’ry Allen,” gives the familiar plaintive ballad fresh eloquence. An expressive piano part underscores the heartfelt pining of “He’s Gone Away,” and the near-nonsensical chatterings of “The Leather-Winged Bat” are dressed in cheekily sparkling accompaniment figures.

David Garner

“Annettes-Lieder,” by David Garner, are songs commissioned and premiered by Mimi Ruiz in 1986. Professor Garner has taught at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music since 1979, and was the 1997 recipient of the George Sarlo Family Foundation Outstanding Professor Award. His wide-ranging and multifaceted output spanning the past two decades includes vocal chamber music in Spanish, Catalan, German, Renaissance Italian, Modern Greek and Japanese. Scored for piano and cello accompaniment (again featuring Mr. Haimovitz), “Annettes-Lieder” treat poems by the gifted German writer Annette von Droste-Hülshoff (1797- 1848), whose deep religious conviction infuses her works. In “Im Grase” (In the Meadow), Garner’s gently floating figures create a lilting reverie mingling thoughts of natural beauty with spiritual longing. Jagged cross-rhythms underscore the turbulent outpouring of “Am Turm” (On the Tower), as Ms. Droste-Hülshoff gives voice to a sheltered 19th-Century woman’s fervid cry for the wild adventures then reserved to men. By contrast, a gentle rustling quality gives peaceful tranquility to “Der Weiher” (The Pond).

John Corigliano

John Corigliano’s preeminence among living American composers has been confirmed by numerous honors, including several Grammy Awards, a Pulitzer Prize for his *Symphony No.2* (2001), a Grawemeyer Award for his *Symphony No.1* (1991), an Academy Award for his score to Francois Girard’s 1997 film *The Red Violin*, and the designation as *Musical America’s* first-ever Composer of the Year in 1994. His opera *The Ghosts of Versailles*, commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera (1991), has met with huge success. His ventures into the world of cabaret songs, delving into the subject matter of modern classical music itself, are heard here, with witty texts by his longtime partner Mark Adamo, composer of the frequently performed opera *Little Women* (1998). “Dodecaphonia” or “They Call Her Twelve-Tone Rose” (1997)—originally composed for the same team represented by the songs that begin this album, William Bolcom and Joan Morris—cleverly pokes fun at the 20th-Century German atonal or “twelve-tone” school of composition championed by Arnold Schoenberg and Anton Webern (can you spot the “tone row”?) and finds time to lampoon the endless repetitions of modern minimalist composers as well. “Marvelous Invention” (2001) has some fun imagining a stylish woman on the telephone rhapsodizing about the (supposed) delights of her new

iPod-style music player, rattling off a modern “Who’s Who” of performers and composers (including Corigliano himself, of course).

Luna Pearl Woolf

A composer whose distinctive new voice has won wide recognition across North America and Europe, Luna Pearl Woolf holds degrees in composition from Harvard University (1996) and Smith College (2002). She received the Ellen Taaffe Zwilich Prize from the International League of Women Composers in 1993, and the Settie Lehman Fatman Prize for composition in large form from Smith College in 2002. She and her husband, this recording’s cellist Matt Haimovitz, whom she met at Harvard, work to bring classical music to a younger, hipper audience. “Odas de Todo el Mundo” (Odes for Everyone), commissioned by Lisa Delan, sets an evocative poem by the great Chilean poet Pablo Neruda (1904-1973). Woolf captures the wide-ranging moods of the poem, mixing spicy Latin dance rhythms, dry insouciance and pensive melancholy.

About the Artists

Lisa Delan

American soprano Lisa Delan has won acclaim as an outstanding interpreter of a vast repertoire. She is recognized for her versatility and breadth of accomplishment in opera, song and recording. Ms. Delan’s interpretive and technical skill in art song brought her to the finals of the 1999 Naumberg International Vocal Competition. Other recognition came from singing the title role in the world premiere of Gordon Getty’s *Joan and the Bells* in 1998, a role she has since reprised in France, Germany, the U.S. and Russia, and in the 2002 recording for PentaTone Classics. Critics have praised her depiction of Joan of Arc as “beautifully sung” (*International Record Review*), and “refreshingly unpretentious” (*Gramophone Magazine*). Lisa Delan has performed on some of the world’s leading concert stages including Lincoln Center, the Auditorio Nacional in Madrid, the Moscow Conservatory, and in special appearance at Windsor Castle. Her festival appearances include the Bad Kissingen Festival in Germany, the Colmar Festival in France and the Rachmaninoff Festival in Novgorod, Russia, the Festival del Sole in Napa Valley, California, and at the Tuscan Sun Festival in Cortona, Italy. As a recital artist, her repertoire encompasses from the Baroque to the contemporary and she is privileged to collaborate with composers whose musical lives are still works in progress: Ms. Delan has performed and recorded the music of William Bolcom, John Corigliano, David Garner, Gordon Getty, Jake Heggie and Luna Pearl Woolf, among others.

Matt Haimovitz

Matt Haimovitz (born 1970) is an Israeli-born cellist now based in the United States and Canada. He is known not only for his outstanding technical and musical skill, but also for his highly unusual concert career and repertoire choices. He mainly plays a cello made by Matteo Goffriller in 1710. Matt is married to composer Luna Pearl Woolf. They have a daughter, who was born in 2007. Haimovitz began to study the cello at the age of seven with Gabor Rejto in California. In 1983, Haimovitz took up his studies with Leonard Rose at The Juilliard School. Rose described Haimovitz as “probably the

greatest talent I have ever taught,” praising his “ravishingly beautiful tone” and “unusual sense of style and musical sensitivity.” After graduating from Harvard University in 1996, Haimovitz became dissatisfied with the traditional career path of a modern classical musician. He began exploring non-standard classical and non-classical repertoire more intensively, and began a program of concerts in unusual venues. A 2002 North American tour that attracted international attention saw Haimovitz performing J. S. Bach’s cello suites in night clubs, restaurants and other highly untraditional venues in a wide variety of towns and cities across the United States. This was followed in 2003 by Haimovitz’s Anthem tour, in which he brought a variety of American compositions to a similar variety of audiences, including his interpretation of Jimi Hendrix’s famous improvisational rendition of “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

Susanne Mentzer

Introduced to opera as a teenaged usher in Santa Fe, New Mexico, American Susanne Mentzer has become one of today’s foremost mezzo-sopranos. She has appeared with great opera companies and orchestras in North America and Europe, as well as the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, and on tour to Japan with the Metropolitan Opera. Her extensive discography includes *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Idomeneo*, *Don Giovanni*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Il Turco in Italia* and *Anna Bolena* (together with Joan Sutherland). In addition to her active performance career Ms. Mentzer has an interest in the development of young singers. She is Professor of Voice at Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music and continues her distinguished tenure on the faculty of the Aspen Music Festival and School.

Kristin Pankonin

Pianist Kristin Pankonin performs regularly in San Francisco and the Bay Area and has appeared in recital in New York, Hawaii and many cities in Europe. She studied at the Music Academy of the West as a scholarship student and received fellowships to study at the Jarvis Conservatory in Napa. She holds a Master of Music degree and a Bachelor of Arts degree in International Relations. Ms. Pankonin currently serves as vocal coach and accompanist at Mills College and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. She has accompanied many master classes, including those of Anna Moffo, Régine Crespin and Thomas Hampson.

-=-=-=-=- END -=-=-=-=-

NOT FOR PUBLICATION:

**For additional information, CDs, interview access, or photographs, please contact
Nancy Shear Arts Services, Press Representatives,
at 212/496-9418 or sheararts@nancyshear.com**