

For Immediate Release
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Laitman's Songs in Concert Celebrating Artist Victor Raphael at USC Fisher Museum October 2009

Two art songs by acclaimed American composer **Lori Laitman** will be performed in a concert celebrating the work of artist **Victor Raphael**, in conjunction with the University of Southern California Fisher Museum retrospective *titled "Travels and Wanderings, 1979-2000."* Soprano **Julie Makerov**, accompanied by pianist **Victoria Kirsch**, will perform "*Nightfall*" and "*The Night Has a Thousand Eyes*" to poetry by Sara Teasdale and Francis Bourdillon. Both works were recorded on Laitman's first solo CD (**Mystery**, Albany Records, 2000). The October 15, 2009 concert, titled "**Songs in the Earth and Air**," will also feature composer **Thadeus Frazier Reed**, and will include operatic excerpts, readings and a selection of art songs which reflect on images of the sun, moon, stars, planets, earth and water.

Lori Laitman is one of America's most prolific and widely performed composers of vocal music. She has composed nearly 200 songs, setting the words of classical and contemporary poets from Emily Dickinson to Richard Wilbur. *"It is difficult to think of anyone before the public today who equals her exceptional gifts for embracing a poetic text and giving it new and deeper life through music."* (The Journal of Singing)

Laitman's new opera, *The Scarlet Letter*, premiered in 2008 to rave reviews. *"Composer Lori Laitman has written gorgeous music that works hand-in-glove with the words of librettist David Mason and underpins the very essence of this psychological-social drama...the few arias are at key moments and are stunningly effective."* (The Arkansas Democrat-Gazette). The opera, commissioned by The University of Central Arkansas, is based on Nathaniel Hawthorne's literary masterpiece, as adapted by award-winning poet David Mason. Mason and Laitman are continuing as collaborators on a new opera, based on Mason's verse novel, *Ludlow*. Currently they are working on *Vedem*, a Holocaust oratorio which tells the story of the boys at Terezín and their secret journal. *Vedem* was commissioned by Music of Remembrance and will premiere at Benaroya Hall in Seattle, WA on May 10, 2010.

Music of Remembrance also commissioned Laitman's song cycle *The Seed of Dream*, released on Naxos to critical acclaim. The cycle sets the poetry of Vilna Ghetto survivor

Abraham Sutzkever. Dr. Sharon Mabry, in *The Journal of Singing*, pronounced the work "*a masterpiece that should not be missed!*"

Since launching her career in 1991, Laitman's music has been performed frequently in the US and abroad. Some recent U.S. venues include The Frye Art Music and Benaroya Hall in Seattle, WA; The Kennedy Center and The Phillips Collection in Washington, DC; Weill Recital Hall and Merkin Hall in New York, NY; The Granada in Santa Barbara, CA and The USC Fisher Museum in Los Angeles, CA. Her discography also continues to grow, with releases on Albany Records, Naxos, Channel Classics and other labels, showcasing the talents of some of today's top musicians, among them Jennifer Check, Sari Gruber, Warren Jones, Maureen McKay, Robert McPherson, Lee Poulis, Barbara Quintiliani, Randall Scarlata and William Sharp. Laitman frequently travels to universities and festivals to present master classes on her music.

Within These Spaces, Laitman's latest solo CD released in May 2009, is receiving exceptional praise: "*This is music of depth and richness that connects with the soul.*" (American Record Guide); "*Her affinity for the voice...is beyond doubt...her songs represent outpourings of great beauty.*" (Fanfare Magazine). Gramophone Magazine called Laitman's ***Becoming a Redwood***: "*An extraordinarily impressive achievement...[which indicates] increasing evidence of a major talent. Lori Laitman's beautiful, sensitively crafted songs deserve to be performed widely.*" In a review of her 2000 release, *Mystery*, Opera News says: "*Composer Lori Laitman knows how to let the voice soar and explore...spinning lyrical neo-romantic vocal lines over shifting post-modern sonorities.*" A *Journal of Singing* review says of her 2003 album, ***Dreaming***: "*This is a stunning collection of widely varied songs by one of the finest art song composers on the scene today...Lori Laitman deservedly stands shoulder to shoulder with Ned Rorem for her uncommon sensitivity to text, her loving attention to the human voice and its capabilities, and her extraordinary palette of musical colors and gestures.*"

Laitman graduated magna cum laude from Yale College and received her Master of Music degree in flute performance from The Yale School of Music. Her recordings are available on her website, www.artsongs.com, as well as Amazon and iTunes. Laitman is represented by Jona Rapoport Artist Management.

Concert Details:

October 15, 2009, 7:30 pm, USC Fisher Museum of Art, University Park Campus, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA. Admission is free. For more information please visit www.usc.edu/visionsandvoices