Chameleon Up Close Recital with soprano Mary Mackenzie & pianist Vivian Chang-Freiheit on Sunday, April 28

March 28, 2019 – Boston, MA – The Chameleon Arts Ensemble presents an Up Close recital featuring soprano Mary Mackenzie and pianist Vivian Chang-Freiheit, on Sunday, April 28, 2019, 4 PM, at Mary Norton Hall at Old South Church, 645 Boylston Street, Boston. The Boston Globe praised the duo: “their performance, was sensational, a fact the audience clearly appreciated.” The Boston Musical Intelligencer noted “[They] ranged brilliantly over a huge spectrum…this memorable performance was evocative, cathartic, and simply ravishing.”

Their program explores themes of life and love through Robert Schumann’s masterpiece Frauenliebe und –leben, Op. 42; Franz Schubert’s Gretchen am Spinnrade; Jake Heggie’s, The Deepest Desire for soprano, flute, and piano; Ralph Vaughan Williams’ Ten Blake Songs for soprano and oboe; and Kurt Weill’s Youkali. Flutist Deborah Boldin and oboist Nancy Dimock will join for the Heggie and Vaughan Williams.


ABOUT CHAMELEON UP CLOSE
Our recital series gives audiences members the opportunity to see and hear Chameleon’s superb artists in an informal and “up close” way. The Boston Musical Intelligencer praised “the artfully chosen works,” and hailed “the two stars treated us to a thrilling performance.” The performances take place at Mary Norton Hall on the second floor of Old South Church, transformed into an intimate cabaret setting with table seating. The programs are hosted by Artistic Director Deborah and feature our hallmark mix of classic, neglected and contemporary works.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM
The centerpiece of the program is Robert Schumann’s Frauenliebe und –leben (A Woman's Love and Life), Op. 42. It was composed in the summer of 1840 while Schumann was embroiled in his
courtship of Clara Wieck and involved in a ferocious legal battle with her father to gain permission to marry her. His personal circumstances undoubtedly influenced his choice of text – by Adelbert von Chamisso – and the cycle as a whole chronicles the course of a woman’s love, from their first meeting through engagement, marriage and motherhood, and ultimately, his death.

Looking at the theme from another vantage point is Jake Heggie’s poignant *The Deepest Desire: Four Meditations on Love for soprano, flute and piano*. The cycle was composed in 2002 and grew out of his opera *Dead Man Walking*, which dramatized the life of Sister Helen Prejean and her work to abolish the death penalty. Heggie notes “I really responded to her energy and to her message… about the human heart and the human spirit.” The term “deepest desire” refers to the core of Sister Helen’s spirituality, and the texts are her meditations on the intersections of love and faith, exploring her evolution from a simple nun to forceful activist.

*Ralph Vaughan Williams’ Ten Blake Songs for voice and oboe* were completed in January 1958. The cycle was intended for the film “*The Vision of William Blake*” but only eight songs were ultimately used, and Vaughan Williams died before a complete, first public performance took place. The spare scoring allows for an extraordinary level of poignancy, fragility, and transparency, and in three of the songs he dispenses with the oboe entirely. The poetry (*Blake’s Songs of Innocence and Experience*) traverses birth to death and the range of human experience.

The program opens with the “gold standard” of art song – self-contained dramas for voice and piano steeped in romantic philosophy – and *Franz Schubert’s* first masterpiece, *Gretchen am Spinnrade (Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel)*, D. 118. The song dates from 1814, when Schubert was only 17 years old, and perfectly captures Gretchen’s turbulent emotions and unrequited love. Finally, *Kurt Weill’s* magical *Youkali, Tango Habanera* was originally composed in 1934 as incidental music for the play *Marie Galante*. The lyrics were added in 1946 by Roger Fernay, and the evocative text explores a lost paradise of hope, love, and dreams.

**ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

Founded in 1998, *Chameleon Arts Ensemble* has distinguished itself as one of Boston’s finest, most versatile chamber ensembles. For 20 years, Chameleon and Artistic Director Deborah Boldin have consistently earned unqualified praise for integrating old and new repertoire into unexpected chamber music programs that are themselves works of art. *The Boston Globe* noted “The evening demonstrated once more what this group's stalwart supporters have always known: Chameleon is a local treasure.”

A passionate performer of art song and contemporary music, *soprano Mary Mackenzie* has worked with Pierre Boulez, John Harbison, Richard Danielpour, and James Primosch. She has appeared with the American Contemporary Music Ensemble, Ekmeles, the Da Capo Chamber Players, Fulcrum Point New Music Project, the Continuum Ensemble, Red Light New Music, the Talea Ensemble, and many others. Ms. Mackenzie is also active as a recitalist and has been a vocal fellow at SongFest and the Ravinia Steans Music Institute.

*Pianist Vivian Chang-Frieheit* made her solo debut with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra at the age of 16. She has performed in Alice Tully Hall, Weill Recital Hall, the 92nd Street Y, and the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and in venues throughout the United States and Europe. Ms. Chang-Frieheit has also collaborated and toured with singers in performances presented by the Marilyn Horne Foundation. She is a frequent guest artist with the Formosa Chamber Music Society at Carnegie Hall and Artist Faculty and Piano Department Lead of Summer Performing Arts with Juilliard in Geneva, Switzerland.
CALENDAR LISTINGS - CHAMELEON UP CLOSE RECITAL SERIES

Up Close 2: Mary Mackenzie, soprano & Vivian Chang-Freihheit, piano

Jake Heggie, *The Deepest Desire* for soprano, flute & piano
Kurt Weill, *Youkali*, *Tango Habanera*
Ralph Vaughan Williams, Ten Blake Songs for voice & oboe

Date/Time & Location: Sunday, April 28, 2019, 4 PM
Mary Norton Hall at Old South Church, 645 Boylston Street, Boston

The closest subway stops are Copley on the Green Line and Back Bay Station on the Orange Line. Old South Church is wheelchair accessible.

TICKETS: Individual tickets are $47 with $5 discounts for students & seniors. Cabaret-style seating.

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