



**2008-2009
Season**

**Bach, Brahms &
Schnittke: The Sacred
Imagination**

November 15, 2008

**Chestnuts Roasting:
A Secession Holiday
Concert**

December 5, 2008

(Un)Lucky in Love

February 13 & 14, 2009

**World Premiere of
Testimony of Witnesses**

March 22, 2009

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Boston Secession Rings in Holiday Season With
*Chestnuts Roasting: A Secession Holiday Concert***

BOSTON, MA – November 12, 2008 – Professional choral ensemble Boston Secession rings in the holiday season on Friday, December 5 with ***Chestnuts Roasting: A Secession Holiday Concert***, a joyous seasonal celebration overflowing with favorite choral chestnuts. The concert combines traditional holiday pieces with an eclectic repertoire of contemporary works.

Carols and hymns spanning five centuries will be spiced up, Secession-style, with a sprinkling of parodies by P.D.Q. Bach and Tom Lehrer. Compositions by Poulenc (*Four Motets for Christmas*), Lauridsen (*O Magnum Mysterium*), and Sweelinck (*Hodie Christus Natus Est*) will join beloved seasonal favorites, including *Carol of the Bells* and Distler's *Lo, How a Rose e'er Blooming*.

This year's holiday concert features the uniquely blended sound of the entire Boston Secession chorus performing a mix of ensemble and solo pieces. The ensemble includes soloists Jessica Cooper, soprano, and Martin Near, countertenor, both well-known to Boston music lovers. The audience is invited to sing along with Secession for a few traditional Christmas hymns and carols, including Irving Berlin's *White Christmas* and *Silent Night*, and Mel Tormé's *The Christmas Song (Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire...)*, as well as well-known selections from Handel's *Messiah*.

Boston Secession is a professional choral ensemble founded in 1996 by Jane Ring Frank as a showcase for the breadth and depth of choral music. Ring Frank is also Conductor of Philovox (publishing house E.C. Schirmer's resident professional recording chorus), Resident Scholar at the Women's Studies Research Center at Brandeis University, Minister of Music at the First Congregational Church in Winchester, and Conductor of the Concord Women's Chorus. Now in its twelfth season, Secession has earned a reputation

as "...a polished, finely blended chamber choir" (Allan Kozinn, *The New York Times*) and an "...extraordinary chorus, notable for its beautiful balance [and] musical surety." (David Perkins, *The Boston Globe*).

Boston Secession has produced two professional recordings, including *Surprised by Beauty: Minimalism in Choral Music*, released in 2008, featuring compositions by Gavin Bryars, Arvo Pärt, Ruth Lomon, and William Duckworth, with a bonus track by William Walker. Writing for *The Arts Fuse*, reviewer Caldwell Titcomb observed of *Surprised by Beauty*, "The Secession chorus under Ring Frank's direction is marvelous. There are a few brief vocal solos, but for most of the time we get a wonderfully homogeneous and completely blended sonority."

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For photos visit: <http://www.bostonsecession.org/page.cfm?pageid=5872>

Boston Secession's 2008 - 2009 Season

Bach, Brahms & Schnittke: The Sacred Imagination

Saturday, November 15, 2008 • 8 pm

First Church in Cambridge, Congregational

11 Garden Street, Harvard Square

Chestnuts Roasting: A Secession Holiday Concert

Friday, December 5, 2008 • 8 pm

Old South Church, Copley Square

(Un)Lucky in Love

Friday, February 13 & Saturday, February 14, 2008 • 8 pm

Margaret Jewett Hall

First Church in Cambridge, Congregational

11 Garden Street, Harvard Square

Testimony of Witnesses

Sunday, March 22, 2008 • 3 pm

Sanders Theatre, Harvard University

45 Quincy Street, Cambridge

About Boston Secession

Boston Secession is a professional choral ensemble comprised of 25 voices, with a repertoire ranging from medieval chant to contemporary classical music.

Founded in 1996 by Conductor and Artistic Director Jane Ring Frank, Boston Secession has garnered critical acclaim for its uniquely blended and transparent sound. David Perkins of the *Boston Globe* called Secession an “extraordinary chorus, notable for its beautiful balance, musical surety, and English-styled straight-toned singing” (March, 2008), while Tom Garvey of the *Hub Review* praised the ensemble for its “lushly transparent singing conducted with intelligence and wit” (February, 2007).

Boston Secession performs four times annually, with thematic programs exploring topics ranging from the enduring influence of George Frideric Handel to expressions of passion and sensuality in choral music. Secession concerts frequently feature premieres of new choral music. The ensemble's annual alternative Valentine's Day concert, *(Un)Lucky in Love*, which takes a lighthearted look at the vicissitudes of love, has sold out for many years.

In the spring of 2009, Boston Secession will premiere *Testimony of Witnesses*, a new multilingual oratorio based on the poetry of Holocaust victims and survivors by Secession's composer-in-residence Ruth Lomon. *Testimony of Witnesses* is a concert-length work scored for chorus, orchestra, and soloists. Lomon's provocative and hauntingly beautiful settings illuminate the personal experience of seventeen poets, whose texts – in seven languages – reflect the truly international impact of the Holocaust and the variety of individuals and communities that were forever changed by it.

In the spring of 2008, Boston Secession released its second professional CD recording, *Surprised by Beauty: Minimalism in Choral Music*, featuring compositions by Gavin Bryars, Arvo Pärt, Ruth Lomon, and William Duckworth. Secession's first recording, *Afterlife: German Choral Meditations on Mortality*, was praised by the *American Record Guide*, which noted that the ensemble is "a very fine one, well blended and excellently in tune. Their performances of often quite difficult music are assured and musical."

Boston Secession was founded on the belief that vocal music is a uniquely powerful way to share intellectual ideas and has the power, above all arts, to create community. Its mission is to create, through its superlative performances, a deeper connection between the audience and the performers.

So, why the name Boston Secession?

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. Now the common practice for all art galleries, the Secessionists' approach modernized the presentation of art forever. Inspired by the original Secession, Jane Ring Frank founded Boston Secession in 1996 as a professional studio for modern vocal performance, bringing classical music to "eye level."

About Jane Ring Frank, Conductor and Artistic Director

Boston Secession's Conductor and Artistic Director, Jane Ring Frank, has earned a reputation for her orchestral command of ensemble, her acute sense of intonation and sound coloring, her relentlessly scholarly preparation, and her sparkling sense of humor. The result, in the words of Thomas Garvey of the *Hub Review*, is "lushly transparent singing conducted with intelligence and wit."

Ring Frank founded Boston Secession in 1996 on the program of Gustav Klimt's Vienna Secession of a hundred years ago: bringing uncompromising art and innovation to the people through public performances. Ring Frank and her 25-member vocal art ensemble achieve this goal through rich, uniquely-themed programs and exquisitely realized music.

Ring Frank has conducted and produced two CDs with Boston Secession. *Afterlife: German Choral Meditations on Mortality* features the works of Distler, Brahms, Bach, and Ruth Lomon, Secession's composer-in-residence. This debut disc has received critical acclaim for its outstanding performance quality. Ring Frank and Boston Secession recently recorded a second CD, *Surprised by Beauty: Minimalism in Choral Music*, which features works by Lomon, Arvo Pärt, Gavin Bryars, and William Duckworth.

In addition to her Secession Artistic Director responsibilities, Ring Frank is Conductor of Philovox, publishing house E.C. Schirmer's resident professional recording chorus. She is a Resident Scholar at the Women's Studies Research Center at Brandeis University, Minister of Music at the First Congregational Church in Winchester, and Conductor of the Concord Women's Chorus, a 50-voice ensemble.

An accomplished pianist and conductor, Ring Frank started her career in Los Angeles as assistant to Professor Frank Pooler, an important choral innovator known for championing new music and experimental performance techniques. With degrees in accompanying and conducting, Ring Frank began her professional career as associate conductor of the 70-voice University Choir, staff pianist, lecturer, and musical director/conductor for the Department of Theatre Arts at California State University, Long Beach.

Ring Frank moved to Boston in 1991 to conduct at Harvard University. From 1998–2003, Frank was Director of Chapel Music at the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, where she worked extensively with Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Bishop Emeritus of Cape Town, South Africa. Ring Frank has toured Vienna, Austria, Munich, Prague, Stockholm, Poland and the United States extensively as a guest lecturer, choral/instrumental conductor, and pianist.