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Celebration of American Song Concert

Friday, June 3, at Payson Park Church in Belmont, MA

BELMONT, MA Payson Park Church (365 Belmont Street, Belmont 02478) in association with Rhythms of Peace, will present Celebration of American Song, a tuneful salute to American music, on Friday, June 3, at 7:30 P.M. in the church's Fellowship Hall. Continuing this year's Rhythms of Peace series which urges audience members to Think Globally and Listen Locally, the concert highlights the diversity and beauty of the American songbook. While admission to the event is free, there is a suggested minimum donation of \$10 for adults and \$5 for children, with proceeds benefiting the United Church of Christ's ongoing Sudan/Darfur Crisis Relief Fund, as well as the Payson Park Church music ministry. Refreshments will also be available for a small donation.

The acclaimed soprano Julia Madeson will perform American songs from the 19th and 20th centuries accompanied by Alla Vishnevetsky along with local guitarist Sam Hooper and percussionist Dennis Sullivan. Dorothy Johnson, alto soloist at Payson Park Church, will sing some of her favorite spirituals. The Payson Park Church Choir, under the direction of Terry Halco, Minister of Music, make their second Rhythms of Peace appearance this year. Finalists from the Berklee Women's Network are scheduled to perform new songs from their Mercy Corps - Sudan CD Song Project.

Ms. Madeson's professional career spans over 20 years and a variety of musical genres. A staff member at Berklee College of Music, she appeared recently in the New England Light Opera's revival of Sigmund Romberg and Oscar Hammerstein's *The New Moon*, and in March 2005 gave her cabaret debut at Jimmy Tingle's Off-Broadway Theatre in Somerville. Trained in Bel Canto at the Manhattan School of Music and in Tel Aviv, Julia's concerts and recitals throughout New England are presented under the auspices of her music company CelebrationSongs (www.celebrationsongs.com). She has appeared at venues from Carnegie Hall to the Longy School of Music. Ms. Madeson, a cousin of George and Ira Gershwin, especially enjoys performing their enduring melodies and timeless lyrics. This concert features a set of the Gershwins' songs, as well as selections from Ms. Madeson's original music.

Pianist Alla Vishnevetsky played and taught for over 25 years in her native Ukraine before moving to the United States. She is the piano accompanist at the Unitarian Universalist Church Wakefield, Massachusetts, as well as an

accompanist at Emerson College in Boston. For many years she was a piano instructor and accompanist at the Cherkassy Musical School in Cherkassy, Ukraine, where she appeared in the annual performances of the Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra.

Guitarist Sam Hooper's eponymous group recently completed an exciting four-month tour of Shanghai and Beijing, China and Okinawa, Japan. Critics have likened his guitar playing to Jimi Hendrix and Carlos Santana. Spellbinding in a solo/acoustic setting, Hooper has been showcased at Boston's NEMO, Nashville's 2NMC, Philadelphia's PMC music conferences, and The New England Songwriters Festival. Hooper's funky blues tune "I Won't Be Your Fool," and the hopeful ballad, "Help Me Out of the Dark," from his All Caught Up CD, have been heard by millions of viewers on the daytime TV dramas All My Children and The Young & The Restless.

Concert series producer and percussionist Dennis Sullivan has been tympanist of the Boston Classical Orchestra since 1980, and has toured and recorded with such groups as the Boston Pops, Boston Symphony, Metropolitan Opera and Handel and Haydn Society. A former faculty member of Berklee College of Music, Mr. Sullivan's musical career includes frequent performances in concert halls, musical theatres and on radio and television. He has also developed programs for Young Audiences, ethnomusicology and music therapy for schools and communities throughout New England.

Contralto Dorothy Johnson will be making one of her final area appearances in this concert, after serving for the past 25 years as the alto section leader/soloist in the Payson Park Church Choir. Soon to retire from New England, she has excelled as soloist in performances of the most demanding repertoire, including such works as Mozart's Requiem and Vespers, Beethoven's Mass in C, Vivaldi's Gloria, Bach's Magnificat, and Handel's Messiah.

Terry Halco is an active organist, pianist, and singer in the Boston area. An accomplished accompanist, he plays and sings regularly with the chamber chorus Musica Sacra, Chorus pro Musica and the choruses of the University of Massachusetts at Boston. Mr. Halco played piano and organ in the first complete recording of Johnny Johnson by Kurt Weill with Joel Cohen and members of the Boston Camerata, released on the Erato label. He has also recorded with Capella Alamire on the Titanic and Dorian labels.

The Payson Park Church Choir provides weekly musical programs for the church's services during the regular season. Special annual programs include Christmas, Easter and Holy Week as well as Hymn Sings and combined programs with other area churches. The Choir's members are dedicated professional and amateur singers with a common bond in musical fellowship. The Choir's recordings include In Dulci Jubilo, a collection of seasonal, liturgical songs.

The Payson Park Church is handicap accessible, and conveniently located on the MBTA Waverley bus line. For further information about the series, call the church office at 617-484-1542, or visit www.RPeace.org.

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