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Ember Ensemble Celebrates 25th Anniversary

“Listening” is the theme of the 2019-20 choral concert season that kicks off on November 9th with a world premiere

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: New York, NY, October 22, 2019....The [Ember](#) Ensemble of Schola Cantorum on Hudson, founded in 1995 by Artistic Director, Deborah Simpkin King, Ph.D., has announced that it will launch its 25th anniversary season – *Listening* --on November 9th with a concert titled “Civil Discourse”. The performances will take place on Nov. 9th in NYC and Nov. 10th in South Orange, NJ.

Ember annually selects a socially relevant topic around which to construct a full season of concert programming. Of great concern currently – and, hence, the focus of Ember’s 2019-2020 season - is a perceived undercurrent of anger, even active confrontation in our society, seemingly avoidable if informed *listening* were to be employed. Is a return to civility, even in the context of disagreement, a viable alternative?

“I chose ***listening*** as the theme and title of our anniversary season because we believe it is at the heart of what is lacking and sorely needed in our world today,” says King. “Throughout the season, Ember will explore listening on multiple levels: listening to each other with civility; listening wisely to our own internal voices; listening for the discernment of truth in confusing times; listening respectfully to those on the fringes of society; listening to the earth and to the universe.”

As the first of three concerts in the season entitled *Listening*, “Civil Discourse” will initially provide the audience with very different forms of musical discourse demonstrated by Ember singers (echo vs statement and reaction, etc.), using them as a metaphor for spoken communication. Then, a choral arrangement of Mr. Rogers’ well-known theme song, “Won’t You be My Neighbor?” and a commissioned world premiere on Robert Frost’s poem, “Mending Wall,” combine to pose the question of who we choose to hear, and through what filters do we listen.

PROJECT : ENCORE and award-winning composer Bill Heigen is the composer of “Mending Wall,” to be premiered at the concert. In its East Coast premiere is composer John Muehleisen’s, “Singing Together.” Other selections include “All of Us,” by Craig Hella Johnson; “Unclouded Day” by Shawn Kirchner; “Pilgrim’s Hymn” by Stephen Paulus; and “Peace Song” by Tim Brent.

In addition, Ember will welcome members of Schola’s high school choral ensemble, the *Phoenix Singers*.

The Ember Ensemble will perform under the direction of Artistic Director and Conductor, Deborah Simpkin King, Ph.D. The concert will take place on **Saturday, November 9th** at 7 P.M. at St. John's in the Village Church, 218 W. 11th Street (at Waverly Place), NYC, and on **Sunday, November 10th** at 5 P.M. at Our Lady of Sorrows Church, 217 Prospect Street, South Orange, NJ.

[Tickets](#) for both concerts can be purchased in advance online for \$20, or at the door for \$25. Seniors/students, \$15; children 18 and under are free of charge. For more information go to www.EmberEnsemble.org or call 888-407-6002 Ext.5.

About Ember

[Ember](#) is the performing ensemble of [Schola Cantorum on Hudson](#), founded in 1995 by Deborah Simpkin King, Ph.D., as an independent nonprofit organization. Ember performs its entire concert season in Manhattan and in Northern NJ. Its unique programming features new music (largely by living composers) with a socially pertinent message. The internationally recognized new music initiative, [PROJECT : ENCORE™](#), was founded through Schola and the organization supports multi-pronged education and engagement programs in addition to its performing activities. Ember draws singers from eleven counties throughout New York and New Jersey. Schola is supported by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, the Marjorie Bunnell Foundation, and many other generous individuals, foundations and business partners.

About Deborah Simpkin King, Ph.D.

[Deborah Simpkin King, Ph.D.](#), is the Founder and Artistic Director of Ember, the vocal ensemble of Schola Cantorum on Hudson (Schola), and of PROJECT : ENCORE™. Dr. King chairs the New York Choral Consortium (NYCC) and serves as the Director of Music at the Presbyterian Church of Chatham Township in Chatham, NJ. As an ongoing columnist with ACDA's *The Choral Journal*, and host of public radio's *Sounds Choral*, Dr. King serves the music community worldwide. Known as a visionary conductor, educator and advocate of new music and the choral community, Dr. King is a frequent presenter at professional conferences and active as a guest conductor and teacher of master classes and choral workshops.

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