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Biography: Naomi Irene Stephan 2017

Naomi Stephan's grew up in a Lutheran parsonage with a clergyman father and a musicologist, and organist mother in the shadows of Indiana University in Bloomington, IN (USA). Her curriculum at IU and the University of Illinois centered on German literature, voice and musicology, all of which inspired a passion for singing and scholarship. A few years later, she received a German Government Grant (DAAD) to the University of Düsseldorf to write a dissertation on the Lieder of Heinrich Heine set by Robert Schumann.

During that student period, Naomi also received two consecutive Fulbright scholarships for study of Lieder and sacred music earning a second B.A. in Voice from the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin, where she performed regularly. Her vocal background has included solo, ensemble, and choral media, including medieval, renaissance and baroque sacred music, as well as madrigals, oratorio, art song and pop.

After thirteen years as a professor/performer at Valparaiso University (IN), Naomi's musical and scholarly interest expanded to composing for women's choruses largely to poems by women and her own texts. Notable among Naomi's poets are four settings by Sue Carroll Moore, the first of which was **Spring Song**, the only piece by a woman composer (and poet) to be played at the Chorus America Convention in L.A. in 1993. Three other settings of Sue's poems followed: **Learn to Think Lizard**, **Our Promised Land (aka Well of Loneliness)**, and **Glimmering Girl** from Naomi's Requiem **Mater in Memoriam: For Irene**. Since then, Naomi has composed sacred and secular music for professional, community, church, and university choruses, often thanks to grants, commissions or blind competitions.

Naomi's style incorporates unusual combinations of voices and instruments, using neo-medieval, fugal, percussive, and rhythmic experimentation while maintaining a modal, tonal or harmonically-based foundation. Her compositions in English, German, Latin and without text, cover a wide range of themes: celebration of female sexuality in protest of female mutilations (**Ave Pudendum**), **Sing Out, Sing Out!** for international Aids Day in New York, to her requiem, **Mater** (SSAA and Chamber Ensemble, or SSAA and Piano), which treats the mother-daughter relationship based on Naomi's personal herstory, but maintaining a universal appeal.

Creating multiple settings of the same work is something Naomi enjoys, such as SSATB/SSAA, SSAA/SAA, or SSA/SAB, to ensure a greater appeal to church choirs or community choruses. After the East Coast premier of her requiem, Naomi received a \$5,000 Artist grant from the City of Ventura, CA, to produce and direct an expanded multi-media version of **Mater** with dance and art. In 2004 and 2011, Naomi received two awards from the Jihlava International Choral Competition, in 2004 with **Ave Maria** SATB (First Prize in Sacred Music) and again in 2011 with **Homage a Toi**, SSSAA (Honorable Mention), the latter a work for the Central Pennsylvania Womyn's Chorus for women refugees in the USA.

From 1999 on, first in California and then Germany, Naomi launched and directed four choruses, which featured her works and those of other composers and poets. Naomi is a member of IAWM (Int. Assoc. of Women in Music), and ASCAP. In Germany, she continues to

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