MACDOWELL CLUB OF MILWAUKEE

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LOCAL ARTIST TO PREMIERE AWARD-WINNING COMPOSER'S SONGS

What: Centennial Concert
When: 2:30 Sunday afternoon, 19 April 2009
Where: St. Joseph Center, 1501 South Layton Boulevard, Milwaukee

Milwaukee, WI – Milwaukee mezzo-soprano **Leslie Fitzwater** will sing the world premiere of a song cycle written expressly for her by Milwaukee composer/pianist **Paula Foley Tillen.** It will be the featured work on the April 19th program presented by the MacDowell Club of Milwaukee as part of its season-long centennial celebration. Entitled *Everything I Love is Near at Hand*, the composition uses the poems of Appleton's **Ellen Kort**, Wisconsin's first Poet Laureate (2000-2004), which convey her deep affection for Wisconsin and reflect the life her grandmother led as a settler here two generations ago. Fitzwater, one of the area's favorite leading ladies, most recently starred in *I DO, I DO* at the Skylight and in Theatre Gigante's *The Beggar's Opera*. She is also a member of the highly acclaimed vocal ensemble, *Milwaukee Choral Artists*.

Accompanist, composer-in-residence and a founding member of the *Milwaukee Choral Artists*, Tillen has acted as music director for many of the area's theatre companies and, for 11 years, served in that capacity for *ComedySportz*. She is an adjunct faculty member at Milwaukee Pius XI High School where she directs the women's chamber choir, is staff accompanist and piano pedagogue. She also serves as director of music at Southminster Presbyterian Church in Waukesha and maintains a private piano studio for more than 20 students. Much in demand as a pianist, vocal coach and accompanist, she has gained national recognition for her compositions and arrangements. Many have been performed across the U.S. and Canada and can be found at Hal Leonard Publishing Co., Moon of Hope Publishers, Treble Clef Music Press, and Santa Barbara Music Press.

Also on the program and continuing this season's focus on composers with ties to Milwaukee, local soprano **Kathleen Matts** and pianist **Wallace Cheatham** will perform *Six Songs on Poems of Walt Whitman* by Donald St. Pierre. A former music director at Milwaukee's Skylight Opera Theatre, St. Pierre is now on the music faculties of the Curtis Institute of Music and Temple University in Philadelphia. Matts has been on the faculty of the Wisconsin Conservatory of Music since 1993 having earned her MM degree there and a BM degree from UW-Madison. In addition to radio and television appearances, she has appeared with several regional orchestras and local choruses, and has sung leading roles for the Skylight, Great Lakes Opera, the Madison Savoyards, and many Broadway stage productions. Matts currently heads the Alverno College voice faculty. Cheatham is an internationally acclaimed musician, composer and scholar. Also in demand as an accompanist, he is active with groups that perform at the Milwaukee Youth Arts Center and taught for many years for the Milwaukee Public Schools.

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A work of Edward MacDowell (1860-1908) has been a key component of each of the MacDowell Club of Milwaukee's centennial season concerts. The first American composer to receive international recognition, he became the namesake of several MacDowell Clubs across the nation early in the last century. His monumental Piano Sonata No. 2 in G minor (Op.50), the "Eroica", will be performed by **Geraldine Thien Stone** of Wauwatosa. A classically-trained pianist, her long career has covered the musical gamut from the Florentine Opera Company and the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra to musical comedy and touring artist accompanist.

Opening the Club's program will be *Three Flute Pieces* (Op. 31) by Arthur Foote (1853-1937), a good friend and contemporary of MacDowell's. They will be performed by **Frank Suetholz** of Racine, accompanied by Wauwatosa pianist, **Mariann Landa**. Suetholz taught instrumental music in the Racine United School District and for many years has been principal flutist with the Racine Symphony Orchestra. He is a charter member of the National Flute Association and maintains a private studio in his home. Landa holds degrees from Mount Union College in Ohio and the University of Michigan, has taught piano at the Wisconsin Conservatory of Music and in her home studio. She is the immediate past-president of the MacDowell Club of Milwaukee.

This is the seventh of eight concerts presented by the Club in commemoration of its upcoming 100th Anniversary on May 19th. Although donations are warmly accepted, admission is free and the public is welcome. For additional information, call 262-512-0909 or 414-771-5832. *(Please do not call the St. Joseph Center.)*

The MacDowell Club of Milwaukee presents a regular series of public programs by its Performing Members at various venues around the area and holds occasional informal tea recitals in private homes exclusively for its members. For information on Performing Membership, contact Marilyn Eisenberg, Membership Chair, at 414-332-3234 or via merzy@earthlink.net. Associate (non-performing) Membership is available at any time by sending a check for $25, payable to the MacDowell Club of Milwaukee, c/o the treasurer, Barbara Bunge, 5860 Fulham Court, Greendale WI 53129.

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Photo attached