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presents

NEW MUSIC FOR TREBLE VOICES

PIEDMONT CHOIRS ROBERT GEARY, *Artistic Director*

PENINSULA WOMEN'S CHORUS

MARTÍN BENVENUTO, *Artistic Director*

VOLTI ROBERT GEARY, *Artistic Director*

Sunday, April 27, 2008 at 4 P.M.

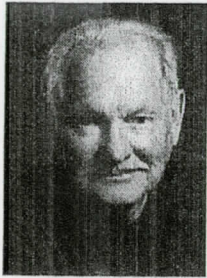
Old First Church

1751 Sacramento St at Van Ness Ave

San Francisco, CA 94109

(415) 474-1608 www.oldfirstconcerts.org

UPCOMING CONCERTS



SUNDAY, MAY 11 AT 4 PM
RON MCFARLAND & FRIENDS
 80TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

A group of the Bay Area's finest musicians, both classical and jazz, will salute Ron McFarland on his 80th birthday, with performances of his rich and expressive music. Works include *The Audition of Molly Bloom*, *Les Hommages*, *Dreams*, *Four Songs in Blue*, *Sonata for Violin & Piano* and *Serenade for Piano, Violin and 'Cello*.

Old First Concerts is proud to co-present two concerts with the Istituto Italiano di Cultura of San Francisco as a part of Primavera Italiana: the spring festival of Italian new music.



FRIDAY, MAY 16 AT 8 PM
FABRIZIO OTTAVIUCCI, piano

Fabrizio Ottaviucci is well known for his involvement in contemporary and experimental music, and since 1986 has collaborated intensively with Markus Stockhausen. For this concert, he presents a program of works by Ivan Vandor, Alberto Caprioli, Gilberto Cappelli, Tonino Tesei, Fernando Mencherini and Nicola Sani.



SUNDAY, MAY 18 AT 4 PM
STEFANO SCODANIBBIO & sfSOUND: LABORE NAVIGACIONES

Composer and contrabassist Stefano Scodanibbio is prominently linked to the renaissance of the double bass, with works written for him by composers such as Ferneyhough, Frith, Sciarrino and Xenakis. Today he is joined by sfSound for a concert of his works, including the Bay Area premieres of *Mas lugares* (on Monteverdi's *Madrigali*) for String Quartet and *Labore navigacionis* for two pianos, along with other works.

For tickets, please visit www.oldfirstconcerts.org or call (415) 474-1608

UPCOMING CONCERTS



FRIDAY, MAY 23 AT 8 PM
EDMUND WELLES: THE BASS CLARINET QUARTET
 CORNELIUS BOOTS; AARON NOVIK; JEFF ANDERLE;
 JONATHAN RUSSELL, *bass clarinets*

Drawing virtuosic precision from the classical realm; innovation and texture from jazz; and power, rhythm and overall perspective from rock and metal, Edmund Welles has the distinction of being the world's only original, composing band of four bass clarinetists. Their program features *Apicultural Excursion Parts I & II* by Cornelius Boots and other heavy chamber music.



WEDNESDAY, JUNE 4 AT 8 PM
FAR OUT FRIENDS: POETRY & MUSIC
GARY SNYDER & THE GALAX QUARTET
 GARY SNYDER, *poet*; KAREN CLARK, *contralto*; DAVID WILSON, *violin*; CYNTHIA FREIVOGEL, *violin*; ROY WHELDON, *viola da gamba*; DAVID MORRIS, *'cello*

Join this celebration of new song premieres with Gary Snyder and composers Fred Frith, Allaudin Mathieu, Robert Morris and Roy Whelden, all on hand to honor the half-century of Snyder's publishing career. Karen Clark's evocative contralto with the rich baroque strings of the Galax Quartet bring the Beat renaissance into the 21st century.



SATURDAY, JUNE 7 AT 8 PM
SAN FRANCISCO COMPOSERS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
 MARK ALBURGER, *Music Director*

Music for the people, by the people! SFCCO brings new music by living composers to the public like no one else! Since its inception in 2002, The Composers Orchestra has premiered more new music than any other ensemble in the Bay Area with a surprising diversity of styles influenced by as much by pop and world as post-modernist and minimalist music.

For tickets, please visit www.oldfirstconcerts.org or call (415) 474-1608

PODCAST

We are pleased to announce the Old First Concerts podcast series, featuring excerpts from past performances previews of upcoming concerts from our series. The seventeenth episode includes pianist Reto Reichenbach performing César Franck's *Prelude, Choral et Fugue* and pianist William Wellborn performing six sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti.



To subscribe to this free podcast, please enter the following URL into your podcatcher or aggregator (such as iTunes):
<http://www.oldfirstconcerts.org/podcast/oldfirstconcerts.rss>

Old First Concerts is seeking reliable volunteers of all ages to help at its Friday & Saturday evening and Sunday afternoon concerts, as well as office volunteers. Performances are all year long and you choose the concerts you wish to staff. Please email volunteer@oldfirstconcerts.org for more information.

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Mark Winges was born in Louisville, Kentucky, and currently resides in San Francisco, where he is composer / advisor for the chamber choir Volti. He is a graduate of the College-Conservatory of Music - University of Cincinnati, San Francisco State University, and has studied at the Musikhögskolan in Stockholm, Sweden. His principal teachers have been Ellsworth Milburn, Henry Onderdonk, and Arne Mellnäs. He is the recipient of the UNESP Organ Competition Prize, the Dumler Award, a Barlow Competition prize, and has received grants from Meet the Composer, the California Arts Council, the American Music Center. He is also a MacDowell Colony Fellow.

Recent works include *Gloss* for string quartet, which was performed in San Francisco and Davis, California by the Left Coast Chamber Ensemble, *The Moon-Dance*, which was performed in Gorizia, Italy and Ljubljana, Slovenia by the women's chorus Ancora, *Two Voices for violin, 'cello and harp*, (featured at the Music Exchange festival in Sofia, Bulgaria), *Familial Banter*, which was performed at the Camarissa Festival in Mexico City by Earplay, and also on the Music Now! series at Sacramento State University, *Fog Patterns and Clouds*, which was featured on a recent Under Construction program by the Berkeley Symphony, and *The Oh of Moon and Piano* (commissioned as part of the NEA / American Composer's Forum Continental Harmony project), which was performed by the Piedmont Choirs at the American Choral Director's Association national convention in San Antonio, and was included in the choir's European tour repertoire. His *Unbecoming: Songs for Dancing* for chorus and 2 percussionists was premiered last season by Volti, and his *Magic Strings* was performed during the ISCM World Music Days held in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

A CD of his *Aural Colors* for orchestra is available on the VMM label. His most recent CD *Freed From Words: Choral Music of Mark Winges* has just been released on Innova Recordings. Amanda MacBlane of the American Music Center's New Music Box says of this recording: the choral music of San Francisco-based composer Mark Winges probes deeply into the spiritual and sonic depths of the chorus.

Chen Yi - Looking at the Sea

A native of China, Chen YI was born into a family of doctors with a strong interest in music. She began violin and piano studies at the age of three. When the Cultural Revolution overtook China in the 1960's, she was sent into the countryside for two years of forced labor and took her instrument along. When the school system was restored in 1977, Chen enrolled in the Beijing Central Conservatory, where she studied composition. In 1983, Chen composed the first Chinese viola concerto (*Xian Shi*) and in 1986, she became the first woman in China to receive the degree of Master of Arts in

composition. In 1986, Chen went to the United States for further musical studies, and in 1993, she received her doctor of musical arts, with distinction, from Columbia University. In the same year, Dr. Chen was appointed, through the Meet the Composer New Residencies program, to a three-year term as composer-in-residence for the Women's Philharmonic, Chanticleer, and the Aptos Creative Arts Program, all located in the greater Bay Area. Dr. Chen has received numerous awards, prizes, and fellowships including the Lili Boulanger Award, the Adventurous Programming Award from ASCAP (for Music From China), the Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Stacy Garrop – *Pity Me Not* and *Thou Famished Grave*

Stacy Garrop has won several orchestra competitions resulting in performances by the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, Omaha Symphony, New England Philharmonic, the Women's Philharmonic, and readings by the Minnesota Orchestra and the American Composers Orchestra. Garrop was selected for the Dale Warland Singers 2000-2001 New Choral Music Program, was a finalist for the 2001 Rome Prize, received a 2001 Barlow Endowment commission, as well as a 2002 Artists Fellowship Award from the Illinois Arts Council. Her works have been recently performed by the Charleston Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Chamber Singers, EARPLAY, violinist Gregory Fulkerson, the Santa Cruz Symphony, and the Roosevelt University Chamber Orchestra. Future performances will be given by the National Repertory Orchestra and the new music ensembles, Third Angle and SoundsNew. She has attended residences at the Banff Centre for the Arts, MacDowell Colony, Millay Colony, Atlantic Center for the Arts, Yaddo, and Wellesley Composers Conference. Garrop completed her Doctorate in Music at Indiana University in 2000; she also holds an M.A. from the University of Chicago (1995) and a B.M. from the University of Michigan (1992). Garrop is currently an Assistant Professor in Composition at the Chicago College of the Performing Arts at Roosevelt University.

Lojze Lebič - *Urok*

Lojze Lebič was born in 1934 in Prevalje, Carinthia (Slovenia). He studied archeology at the University of Ljubljana and conducting at the Academy of Music. Later Lebič established himself as a conductor of various chamber choirs and won numerous awards for his work. Moving towards composition, Lebič developed his own style, balancing his interests in modern music with traditional folk music and culture. In *Urok*, Lebič fuses the traditional with modern in his use of repeated chanting in short, motivic patterns punctuated with stones or sticks. Here, we revisit our primal connection to nature and the earth. Lebič also uses a variety of avant-garde choral techniques connecting the three incantations against swelling, snakebite,

known for its adventurous programming, seeking out music written specifically for women, and frequently commissioning new works. The singers are selected by audition and share an enthusiasm for challenging repertoire sung in original languages. Among PWC honors are third prize in the 2006 Béla Bartók 22nd International Choir Competition, women's division, in Debrecen, Hungary; two Chorus America / ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming (2003 and 1999); second place, 2000 Margaret Hillis Award for Choral Excellence; and second prize at the 1994 Tallinn International Choral Competition in Estonia. The chorus has made three appearances at ACDA National Conventions—first in 1987, singing a feature concert of the vocal orchestra music from the film, *Song of Survival*, and presenting music for women's voices in a special interest session of music by Kirke Mechem; in 1993, presenting a traditional choral program; and most recently in March of 2001, presenting a contemporary tour de force before more than 6,000 choral directors to great acclaim. In addition, the chorus performed as a continental founding choir at the AmericaFest World Festival of Women's Singing in Seattle in July of 2001. In the summer of 2003, the PWC participated, as one of four choirs representing the United States, in Festival 500: Sharing the Voices, an international festival of choral music in St. John's, Newfoundland. In addition to extensive performing throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, the chorus has competed in international competitions, has performed on National Public Radio, and has appeared on television both nationally and internationally.

Martín Benvenuto is a native of Buenos Aires, Argentina, where he received his Licenciado en Música degrees in Choral Conducting and Composition. As Chair of the Music Department at St. Patrick's School in Buenos Aires, he led a graded choral program that earned prizes at competitions and toured nationally and internationally. Mr. Benvenuto earned his Master's degree from Westminster Choir College, majoring both in Choral Conducting and Voice Performance and Pedagogy. As a member of the Westminster Symphonic Choir, he has sung under the batons of Kurt Masur, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Helmuth Rilling, and Esa-Pekka Salonen with the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra and Los Angeles Philharmonic. He is currently a candidate for the DMA in Choral Conducting at Boston University, where he was an assistant to Dr. Ann Howard Jones for the Women's Chorale, Repertory Chorus, Chamber Chorus, and Symphonic Chorus. Mr. Benvenuto has studied conducting under Antonio Russo, Néstor Andrenacci, Eric Ericson, Joseph Flummerfelt, Josep Prats, Robert Sund, Ann Howard Jones, and the late Robert Shaw, and has led church music programs and community choruses both in both this country and his native Argentina. Active as a clinician, panelist, and guest conductor, Mr. Benvenuto is currently on the faculty of Piedmont Choirs, is artistic director for WomenSing, and has been artistic

director for the Peninsula Women's Chorus since February 2004.

Susan Soehner joined PWC in the fall of 2005. She is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music, where she earned an MM in piano performance and literature. She also holds a BME in voice and a BM in piano performance from the University of Wisconsin. Prior to moving to the Bay Area in 1998, Ms. Soehner was director of education and Suzuki piano instructor at the Bermuda Conservatory of Music and served as assistant professor/staff accompanist at Finger Lakes Community College in Canandaigua, New York. She also accompanies Chorissima and Virtuose, the recording and touring groups of the San Francisco Girls Chorus, and is the accompanist for the Oakland Symphony Chorus.

CHOIRS

Piedmont Choirs

Ensemble

Tziporah Amgott-Kwan
Marie Bantz
Jackie Barron
Chloe Bash
Lauren Boranian
Brisa Camacho-Lovell
Dragor Cochrane
Edward De Puy
Alice Del Simone
Hannah Dewit
Sophia El-Wakil
Darren Fletcher
Michele Fletcher
Maya Florsheim
Akela Franklin-Baker
Honor Grace Goodby
Kimiko Guillermo
Katharine Harley
Zoë Heins
Mason Heller
Meredith Heller
Laura Henry

Kristi Hong
Jordan Howzell
Rachel Kelley
Anna Kubitschek
Casey Lewis
Eivind Limon
Tlalli Aztlan Moya-Smith
Megan Newcomb
Hannah Pinkham
Maymunah Rasheed
Anna-Linnea Rodegard
Christopher Rogers
Allison Rosengard
Kira Setren
Kyra Simpson
Matty Specht
Rachel Stewart
Kelly Teshima McCormick
Aliza Theis
Nathan Wang
Allison Wetter

grammar". Several of my previous choral works set one text in two or more languages simultaneously, but in this movement for the first time the process is dramatized. The children lead the way with Huidobro's Spanish, which the adults attempt to translate into English, as if in real time — and not very well, at least initially: they can do no more than grasp desperately at the meaning of isolated words. Gradually, however, they begin to attune themselves to the flow of the Spanish text, and to the playful spirit of the children's music. "Words carry too much weight"; "As long as we live let us play / The simple game of words". By the end of the movement the generation gap has been bridged, just as meaning evaporates altogether: "Then nothing nothing / Spirit whisper of the wordless phrase". A third movement (not being performed tonight) finally brings adults and children together on the same text — the final section of *Altazor*, an ecstatic outburst of mellifluous "Spanish" nonsense. - Elliott Gyger

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

Eric Tuan

Twilight

Sonnet 73 by William Shakespeare

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou seest the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire
Consumed with that which it was nourish'd by.
This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

Péter Tóth

Magas hegyről foly le a víz

From the high mountain flows down the water
My rose does not trust my anymore!
Also if you trust, it is in vain
because you are closed off from my heart.

That way you are closed off from my heart
as a beautiful dress chest in the wedding chest.
Like a beautiful dress without air
my heart without yours is worthless.

Night and day I am drinking, I am never able to finish
my bitter and sad day,
My table is set with sadness.
My glass is full of sorrow.

Olli Kortekangas

Harmony

text by the composer after the *Book of Changes*

Looking upward, we contemplate the signs in the heavens.
Looking down, we examine the lines of the earth.
So we come to know the circumstances of the dark and the light.

Looking upward, we contemplate the signs in the heavens.
Looking down, we examine the lines of the earth.
So we come to know the lessons of beginnings and endings.

In this way we come to resemble heaven and earth,
and we are in harmony with them.

Looking upward, we contemplate the signs in the heavens.
Looking down, we examine the lines of the earth.

Mark Winges

The Moon-Meeting text Hans Arp

A great moon-meeting has been arranged
Moons and everything to do with the moon
Will be present.
Moon-springs,
Feathered moons,

Moon-bells,

White moons with diamond navels,
Moons with ivory handles,
Tiny moon-flunkeys who love more than anything
to pour boiling hot water over upholstered furniture
megalomaniac roses
that think they are moons.

White moons weeping black tears,
Moonagrams consisting almost entirely
Of Anna
And which have had added to them
Only a couple of grams of moon.
A moon-conglomeration of sliver branches,
ranching out all sliver,
On which moon-fruits ripen.
A naked moon, naked like all moons,
But with a hat, on which a figleaf
Is fastened.

Chen Yi

Looking at the Sea text by Cao Cao (155-220)

Up to the stony hill on eastern shore,
I am looking at the boundless sea.
The water is running calm,
And islands stand in between.
Tree on tree grows from peak to peak;
Grass on grass looks lush layer upon layer.

When the autumn wind blows drear and bleak;
The waves surge up greater and greater.

The sun by day, the moon by night,
Appear to rise up from the deep.
The Milky Way with stars looked so bright,
It comes out all the way from the sea.

How happy I feel at this scene!
Ode to the sea that symbolizes my ideal.

Lojze Lebic

Urok, go out onto the green plain; go nine elbows deep, go deep into the ground. Go to the very end of the tap root to do your magic.

Whether the venom has turned you white, black, spotted (like one of the most venomous snakes found in Slovenia), or made you deaf or mute — bad blood: begone! Urok, take this venom upon yourself.

Urok, go nine elbows deep into the ground, go to the end of the tap root, take the venom as far away as possible. Bad blood: begone! Begone, Urok! Begone!

Stacy Garrop

Pity me Not text by Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950)

Pity me not because the light of day
At close of day no longer walks the sky;
Pity me not for beauties passed away
From field and thicket as the year goes by
Pity me not the waning of the moon,
Nor that the ebbing tide goes out to sea,
Nor that a man's desire is hushed so soon,
And you no longer look with love on me.

This have I known always: love is no more
Than the wide blossom which the wind assails;
Than the great tide that treads the shifting shore,
Strewing fresh wreckage gathered in the gales.
Pity me that the heart is slow to learn
What the swift mind beholds at every turn.

Stacy Garrop

Thou Famished Grave text by Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950)

Thou famished grave, I will not fill thee yet,
Roar though thou dost, I am too happy here;
Gnaw thine own sides, fast on; I have no fear
Of thy dark project, but my heart is set
On living - I have heroes to beget
Before I die; I will not come anear
Thy dismal jaws for many a splendid year;
Till I be old, I aim not to be eat.
I cannot starve thee out: I am thy prey
And thou shalt have me; but I dare defend
That I can stave thee off; and I dare say,
What with the life I lead, the force I spend,
I'll be but bones and jewels on that day,
And leave thee hungry even in the end.

Mark Winges

Give Us text from the Mayan Popol Vuh

Wait!

Maker, Modeler,
look at us, listen to us,
don't let us fall, don't leave us aside,
god in the sky, heart of earth
give us our sign, our word,
as long as there is day, as long as there is light.
When it comes to the sowing, the dawning,
will it be a greening road, a greening path?
Give us a steady light, a level place,
a good light, a good place,
a good like and beginning,
Give us all of this, thou Hurricane,
newborn thunderbolt, raw thunderbolt, falcon,
sovereign plumed serpent, bearer, begetter,
grandmother of day, grandmother of light,
when it come to the sowing, the dawning.

Elliott Gyger

Fire in the Heavens text William Brennan

Fire in the heavens, and fire along the hills,
and fire made solid in the flinty stone,
thick-mass'd or scatter'd pebble, fire that fills
the breathless hour that lives in fire alone.

This valley, long ago the patient bed
of floods that carv'd its antient amplitude,
in stillness of the Egyptian crypt outspread,
endures to drown in noon-day's tyrant mood.

Behind the veil of burning silence bound,
vast life's innumerable busy littleness
is hush'd in vague-conjectured blur of sound
that dulls the brain with slumbrous weight, unless

the dazzling puncture let the stridence throng
the cicada's torture-point of song.

Elliott Gyger **Dancing in the Wind** text W.B. Yeats (1865-1939) and Vicente Huidobro (1893-1948)

I. CHILDREN'S CHOIR

Mar cielo
Mar y cielo
Cielo y mar
El mar y el cielo
El cielo y el mar
El mar y su cielo
El cielo y su mar
El cielo y su madre
El mar y la madre
El mar y su padre
Mar y cielo y luna
Cielo de luna en el mar de cielo
Luna de mar en el cielo de luna
Mar de cielo en la luna de mar
El padre del mar en la madre del cielo de la luna
Mar y cielo y luna y noche
La noche de la luna bajo el cielo de mar
El mar de la noche sobre el cielo de la luna
La luna de cielo con la noche de mar
El cielo del mar con la noche de la luna
El padre de la luna de mar en la noche de la madre del cielo
El mar el cielo la luna la noche el viento
El viento
El mar al viento
El cielo al viento
La luna al viento
La noche al viento
El viento al mar
El viento de la luna
El cielo del viento
La noche del viento
El mar en el cielo sobre la noche de la luna en el viento
El viento del cielo
El viento del cielo en la luna
El viento del cielo sobre el mar del viento
El viento del viento delante el viento
La noche de la luna al viento
El mar de la noche
El cielo de la luna
La noche de la luna en el mar del cielo al viento

La luna
El viento
El mar
El cielo
La noche
La luna de la luna llena
El viento del viento norte
El mar del altamar
El cielo del séptimo cielo
La noche de la noche eterna.
- Vicente Huidobro, Canción de Marcelo Cielomar

I. ADULT CHOIR

Dance there upon the shore;
What need have you to care
For wind or water's roar?
And tumble out your hair
That the salt drops have wet;
Being young you have not known
The fool's triumph, nor yet
Love lost as soon as won,
Nor the best labourer dead
And all the sheaves to bind.
What need have you to dread
The monstrous crying of wind?

Has no one said those daring
Kind eyes should be more learn'd?
Or warned you how despairing
The moths are when they are burned,
I could have warned you, but you are young,
So we speak a different tongue.

O you will take whatever's offered
And dream that all the world's a friend,
Suffer as your mother suffered,
Be as broken in the end.
But I am old and you are young,
And I speak a barbarous tongue.

- W.B. Yeats
A Child dancing in the Wind and Two Years Later

II. CHILDREN'S CHOIR

Todas las lenguas están muertas
Muertas en manos del vecino trágico
Hay que resucitar las lenguas
Con sonoras risas
Con vagones de carcajadas
Con cortacircuitos en las frases
Y cataclismo en la gramática
Levántate y anda
Estira las piernas anquilosis salta
Fuegos de risa para el lenguaje tiritando de frío
Gimnasia astral para las lenguas entumecidas
Levántate y anda
Vive vive como un balón de fútbol
Estalla en la boca de diamantes motocicleta
En ebriedad de sus luciérnagas
Vértigo sí de su liberación
Una bella locura en la vida de la palabra
Una bella locura en la zona del lenguaje
Aventura forrada de desdenes tangibles
Aventura de la lengua entre dos naufragios
Catástrofe preciosa en los rieles del verso
Y puesto que debemos vivir y no nos suicidamos
Mientras vivamos juguemos
El simple sport de los vocablos
De la pura palabra y nada más
Sin imagen limpia de joyas
(Las palabras tienen demasiada carga)
Un ritual de vocablos sin sombra
Juego de ángel allá en el infinito
Palabra por palabra
Con luz propia de astro que un choque vuelve vivo
Saltan chispas del choque y mientras más violento
Más grande es la explosión
Pasión del juego en el espacio
Sin alas de luna y pretensión
Combate singular entre el pecho y el cielo
Total desprendimiento al fin de voz de carne
Eco de luz que sangra aire sobre el aire

Después nada nada
Rumor aliento de frase sin palabra
- Vicente Huidobro from Canto III of Altazor

II. ADULT CHOIR (in fragments)

All the languages are dead
Dead in the hands of the tragic neighbor
We must revive the languages
With raucous laughter
With wagons of giggles
With circuit breakers in the sentences
And cataclysm in the grammar
Get up and walk
Stretch your legs limber the stiff joints
Fires of laughter for the shivering language
Astral gymnastics for the numb tongues
Get up and walk
Live live like a football
Explode in the mouth of motorcycle diamonds
In the drunkenness of its fireflies
The very vertigo of its liberation
A beautiful madness in the life of the word
A beautiful madness in the zone of language
Adventure clothed in tangible disdains
The adventure of language between two wrecked ships
Precious catastrophe on the rails of verse

And since we must live and not kill ourselves
As long as we live let us play
The simple game of words
Of the pure word and nothing more
Without clean images of jewels
(Words carry too much weight)
A ritual of words without shadow
An angel game there in the infinite
Word by word
With the light of a star that a collision brings to life
Sparks leap from the collision and then more violent
More enormous the explosion
Passion of the game in space
Without moon-wings and pretense
Single combat between chest and sky
Total dissolution at last of the voice from flesh
Echo of light that bleeds air over the air

then nothing nothing
Spirits whisper of the wordless phrase.
- translation by Eliot Weinberger

ARTISTS

The Piedmont Choirs; Robert Geary, Artistic Director

For 25 years, the internationally-acclaimed Piedmont Choirs have been offering children from throughout San Francisco's East Bay an outstanding program of choral training and performance. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Robert Geary, the Choirs have established themselves as a leading force in international choral activities and new music. With concert tours to more than twenty-five nations, and sponsorship of the Golden Gate International Children's Choral Festival (the oldest and only international children's choral competition in the United States), the Piedmont Choirs are vigorously engaged in the global community of choral ensembles. Recognizing that the creation of art is a forward-looking and forward-thinking endeavor, the Piedmont Choirs have commissioned and premiered 26 new works by 16 living composers, have won numerous first prize awards for new music in international competitions, and engage in a never-ceasing exploration of innovative repertoire from around the world.

The Choirs' flagship group, Ensemble, has earned grand prizes, first prizes, and gold medals at prestigious competitions in Canada, Poland, Germany, Austria, Italy, Hong Kong and the United States. They have commissioned and premiered new works by Kui Dong, Mark Winges, Pekka Kostianen, Kirke Mechem, and many others. Ensemble has been invited to perform for national and regional conventions of the American Choral Directors Association and for the national conference of the Organization of American Kodály Educators.

Ensemble and other Piedmont Choirs groups regularly collaborate with major Bay Area performing arts organizations such as the San Francisco and Oakland East Bay symphonies, have been featured on many of the Bay Area's most prestigious concert series, and have performed with artists as diverse as the Kronos Quartet, the Mark Morris Dance Company, and the folk rock group, Bare Naked Ladies. Founded in 1982 with just twenty-two singers, the Piedmont Choirs now celebrate their 2007-08 Silver Anniversary season with 340 young performers singing in twelve distinct choirs, and an ambitious concert schedule that anticipates more than forty public performances, including the world premieres of eight new works commissioned especially for the Piedmont Choirs.

The Piedmont Choirs' comprehensive music curriculum, under the direction of conductor and composer Sue Bohlin, offers students age 6-18 the chance to progress through a series of training choirs to professional-level performing groups. Besides offering an outstanding education in vocal

technique and music theory, the organization strives to offer lessons in creativity, expression, poise and engagement with many cultures, a character-building, transformative process they describe as "Growing With Music."

Volti; Robert Geary, Artistic Director

Volti's professional vocalists, under the direction of founder and Artistic Director Robert Geary, are dedicated to the discovery, creation, and performance of new vocal music. The ensemble's mission is to encourage, foster, and showcase contemporary American music and composers, and to introduce contemporary vocal music from around the world to local audiences.

Robert Geary established the San Francisco Chamber Singers (now known as "Volti") in 1979, favoring the music of Benjamin Britten and other 20th-century composers early on. The ensemble soon began to focus on today's music, and by the '90s was basing its programming almost exclusively on premieres and commissions from living composers.

Volti is esteemed for its commitment to and excellence in performing works by contemporary composers, particularly American composers. The ensemble has performed at music festivals in the U.S. and abroad to remarkable critical acclaim, always performing new works by American composers as representative of the artistic excellence and spirit of its home.

Volti has collaborated with many distinguished theatrical and musical organizations, both on stage and in recording. Partners have included George Coates Performance Works, Earplay, SF Contemporary Music Players, the Berkeley Symphony, the Oakland Symphony, San Francisco Sinfonietta, the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra and Other Minds.

Throughout its history, Volti has been a vehicle for contemporary composers, and is proud to have had Mark Winges as its Resident Composer since 1990. In 2007, Volti became the first chorus to receive the ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming for a fifth time.

In 2003-04, Volti inaugurated a Choral Arts Laboratory program for American composers under the age of 35. One composer selected each year is the opportunity to work with Volti's professional vocalists as they prepare a new work, written specifically for Volti.

In addition to concertizing, Volti is committed to education by producing the Choral Institute for high-school singers. This innovative program, developed by Robert Geary, provides concentrated training and performance opportunities over the course of an intensive weekend. Volti's singers

serve as the resident choir and faculty and, along with Bob, lead rehearsals and teach voice lessons, classes, and seminars.

A champion of contemporary music, **Robert Geary** and his choirs have won numerous international and national awards from ASCAP and at prestigious competitions in Gorizia, Italy; at the Choral Olympics in Linz, Austria (2000); at the Miedzzydroje Choral Festival in Poland; at the Giessen International Children's and Youth Choir Festival (Germany), where Geary received a special award for Outstanding Conductorial Achievement; at the Des Moines International Children's Choral Festival; and at the Kathaumixw Festival in British Columbia. Geary was awarded the International Peace Child Medal for his role as co-founder of the Golden Gate International Children's Choral Festival, named Music Educator of the Year by KDFC in 2002, and received the Lois B. Rawlings Educational Inspiration award in 2003.

Robert Geary, founder of the Piedmont Choirs and Volti, also holds directorial positions with the San Francisco Choral Society and the Golden Gate International Children's Choral Festival. He served for thirteen years as the Music Director of the First Unitarian Universalist Church in San Francisco.

Champions of contemporary music, Geary and his choirs have won numerous international and national awards. Under his direction, Ensemble of the Piedmont Choirs has won various grand prizes, first prizes, gold medals and special awards in Canada, the United States, Germany, Poland, Austria, Italy and Hong Kong. Geary received a special award for Outstanding Conductorial Achievement in Giessen, Germany 1997, and a special award for interpretation at the Miedzzydroje Choral Festival in Poland 1998. In 1993 he was awarded the International Peace Child Medal for his role as co-founder of the Golden Gate International Children's Choral Festival. In 2002 he was named Music Educator of the Year by KDFC and in 2003 he received the Lois Blair Rawlings Educational Inspiration Award. Geary's choirs have been honored more than any other choir for Adventurous Programming by ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers).

Geary has served on the California Arts Commission's Peer Review Panel and as an adjudicator and guest conductor in the United States and internationally. Harmonia Mundi, Koch International, Swiss International Radio and Innova have recorded his choirs.

The Peninsula Women's Chorus; Martín Benvenuto, Artistic Director
The Peninsula Women's Chorus, established in 1966, is a leader in a resurgence in women's choirs specializing in choral masterpieces. The PWC is

and disease from the opening soaring folk chant to musical improvisation with sharp cries and eerie wailing. The text of *Urok* is based on traditional Slovenian folk poetry in which children (uroki or "little wizards"), playing games, chant spells to protect against evil. We chant "Urok!" casting out spells, venom, or disease from the innermost part of the body, the bone marrow, the bone, the flesh and finally, out through the hair. "Urok!" take the marrow from the bone! Tear apart the flesh! Tear off the fur! "Urok!" go out onto the green plain, and nine elbows deep into the ground to the very end of the taproot, bury the evil.

Elliott Gyger – Fire in the Heavens and Dancing in the Wind

Elliott Gyger was born in Sydney, Australia, in 1968, and began writing music at about the age of ten. He holds a Bachelor of Music from the University of Sydney (1990) and a Ph.D. in Music from Harvard University (2002). His composition teachers have included Ross Edwards, Peter Sculthorpe, Bernard Rands and Mario Davidovsky. His awards have included the Peggy Glanville-Hicks Fellowship, the Walter Hinrichsen Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and commission grants from the Australia Council and the Fromm Foundation. In July 2003, he was in residence as the inaugural Harvard-Walton Fellow at La Mortella on Ischia, Italy.

Elliott's music has been performed by many of Australia's major ensembles as well as North American ensembles including the Nouvel Ensemble Moderne, the New York New Music Ensemble, Columbia Sinfonietta, Collage, and the Emerson, Mendelssohn and Ying Quartets. His work has been heard at the Sonic Boom Festival and the Tanglewood Festival of Contemporary Music. Recent premieres include *Soli* (2003) for the Ying Quartet; *Temptation in the Desert* (2005) for Boston's Seraphim Singers, and *From the hungry waiting country* (2006) for Halcyon, which was highly commended in the 2006 Paul Lowin Song Cycle Award.

In addition to his work as a composer, Elliott Gyger is active as a performer, teacher, curator, and writer on music. He was a founding member and co-director of the Contemporary Singers, a Sydney chamber choir devoted exclusively to new music. He was Assistant Professor of Music at Harvard from 2002 to 2007, and is now Lecturer in Composition at the University of Melbourne.

Fire in the heavens sets a text by the early 20th-century Australian poet Christopher Brennan, describing the oppressive power of the noonday sun in the Australian bush. The language is distinguished by great vividness and energy, qualities I have tried to reflect in my setting, which is comparably extreme in its use of word painting. The choir is divided into three

parts throughout, with occasional further divisions, at times creating the effect of three different choirs. The most unusual feature of the piece is its exploration of consonant sounds, both percussive and sustained, as equal partners with the vowels in creating musical and expressive effects. The high level of intensity throughout the work perhaps partly reflects the circumstances of its composition, in an unusually cold and snowy Boston winter — while at the same time Sydney was ringed by bushfires. - Elliott Gyger

Dancing in the wind

I have written several pieces for children's choir, and many for adult choir, without necessarily thinking all that much about the age of the performers as an important compositional factor. Writing for the two together, on the other hand, is a completely different proposition: all of a sudden the generation gap looms large as an expressive challenge and opportunity. *Dancing in the wind* combines this contrast between young and old with some of my ongoing concerns with language, in a structure that is hard to explain and looks strange on paper — but which somehow makes sense to me!

My starting point for the piece was Yeats' poems *To a Child dancing in the Wind* and *Two Years Later*, an adult's view of childhood suffused with poignant nostalgia and bitter regret. Yeats symbolizes the gulf between generations linguistically: "I could have warned you, but you are young, so we speak a different tongue". I decided to interpret this metaphor literally, and in seeking for suitable non-English texts to juxtapose with the Yeats I came across the extraordinary work of the early 20th-century Chilean poet Vicente Huidobro, perennially youthful in its combination of playfulness and innovative force. In the first movement, then, the children sing Huidobro's game-like *Canción de Marcelo Cielomar*, based on the virtuosic permutation of five Spanish nouns, while the adults declaim the Yeats as baffled, sorrowful observers. The two layers might as well be in different worlds: they coincide, but never intersect.

While Yeats' poem reaches a fairly emphatic dead end, Huidobro suggests a possible way forward. Huidobro's literary career was dedicated to the rejuvenation of language, liberating it from traditional 19th-century ideas of structure and meaning (embodied here in the Yeats) and forging it anew for the 20th century.

My second movement sets a passage which could stand as his manifesto from his amazing book-length poem *Altazor, o El Viaje en Paracaidas* (The Voyage in a Parachute): "All the languages are dead ... We must revive the languages ... With circuit breakers in the sentences / And cataclysm in the

Piedmont Choirs

Ancora

Jasa Alexander-Mends
Alice Del Simone
Katherine Diamantine
Alethea Dolan
Maya Florsheim
Nicole Friedman
Katharine Harley
Allegra Harrison
Hilary Hecht
Ainsley Lockhart

Camden Louie
Julia Michaels
Catherine Muster
Allison Rosengard
Margaret Ruenzel
Rebecca Smith
Lucy Swenson
Katrina Turman
Maya Viavant

Peninsula Women's Chorus

Soprano 1

Stephanie Batties
Mardie Daul
Renee Evans
Kathryn Feetham
MaryLouise Meckler
Mercidita Navarro
Kyle Sofman
Lorena Soulodre
Judy Sweet
Tricia Tani
Josephine Taubert
Mary Tusa

Alto 1

Sarah Etheredge
Ann Hillesland
Emily Jiang
Cathleen Kalcic
Betsy Landergren
Kathy MacLaury
Roselena Martinez
Joanne Petersen
Kathy Plock
Jan Schonhaut
Gail Schwettman
Maria Timatkova
Deanne Tucker
Marsha Wells

Soprano 2

Penny Ahearn Er
Sara Asher
Vicki Brown
Beatrice Fanning
Yenyi Fu
Carolyn Hayes
Amy Hunn
Elise Kent
Stacey Lewis
Andra Marynowski
Carole McCreery
Robin Mulgannon
Tokiko Oishi
Barbara Pforzheimer
Bonnie Senko

Alto 2

Anne Anderson
Joan Angelopoulos
Tricia Baldwin
Grace Chen
Lisa Collart
Beverly Colquhoun
May Goodreau
Lynne Haynes-Tucker
Valerie Hornstein
Sue Irvine
Martha Morgan
Gerri Roe

Volti

Soprano

Elisabeth Commanday
Pamela Igelsrud
Elenka Proulx
TJ Tогasaki
Mitzie Kay Weiner

Alto

Verah Graham
Jennifer Nadig
Naomi Newman
Ari Nieh
Celeste Winant

Tenor

Michael Eisenberg
Paul Ingraham
David Kurtenbach
Roderick Lowe
Steven Sven Olbash

Bass

Joshua Fishbein
E.E. "Chip" Grant IV
Philip Saunders
Joseph Trumbo

PROGRAM

Ancora

Eric Tuan (b. 1990)

Twilight†

premiered October 2007

Péter Tóth (b. 1947)

Magas hegyről foly le a víz

Olli Kortekangas (b. 1955)

Harmony

Mark Wings (b. 1951)

The Moon-Meeting†

premiered 1999

Peninsula Women's Chorus

Chen Yi (b. 1953)

Looking at the Sea*

Lojze Lebic (b. 1934)

Urok

Stacy Garrop (b. 1969)

Pity me Not

Thou Famished Grave*

Ensemble

Mark Wings (b. 1951)

Give Us†

premiered 1995

Soloists: Michele Fletcher, Maya Florsheim, Mason
Heller, Alice Del Simone, Grace Goodby, Maymunah
Rasheed, Allison Rosengard, Aliza Theis

Elliott Gyger (b. 1968)
Fire in the Heavens

INTERMISSION

Volti & Ensemble

Elliott Gyger (b. 1968)

Dancing in the Wind I & II

Co-Commissioned by Volti and Piedmont Choirs, premiered
March 2008

Soloists: Naomi Newman, Joshua Fishbein, Elisabeth
Commanday, Pamela Igelsrud, Jennifer Nadig,
Roderick Lowe, Tziporah Amgott-Kwan, Alice Del
Simone, Maya Florsheim, Grace Goodby, Anna
Kubitschek, Casey Lewis, Anna-Linnea Rodegard,
Allison Rosengard

†Commissioned by the Piedmont Choirs

** Commissioned by the Peninsula Women's Chorus on the occasion
of their 40th Anniversary; premiered March 2007*

NOTES

Eric Tuan - Twilight

Eric Tuan, 17, has studied piano since age 6, and has been a chorister with the Piedmont Choirs for nearly ten years. His vocal accomplishments include numerous solos with the Piedmont Choirs, the Oakland East Bay Symphony, and other Bay Area ensembles, as well as the soundtrack of *American Gun* starring James Coburn. He served as the tour accompanist for the Piedmont Choirs' touring group, Ensemble, for their five-city tour of China in 2005. For the past three years Eric has been a rehearsal and performance pianist for the Piedmont Choirs. He has taught music theory and led music rehearsals, serving on the faculty of Piedmont Choirs' annual choir camp. Eric will graduate from San Ramon Valley High School in June 2008, where he sings in the Concert Choir, Chamber Singers, and Jazz Vocal Ensemble.

As part of Piedmont Choirs' Silver Anniversary Season, Eric was commissioned to write three a cappella pieces, including *Twilight*.

Mark Wings - **The Moon-Meeting and Give Us**

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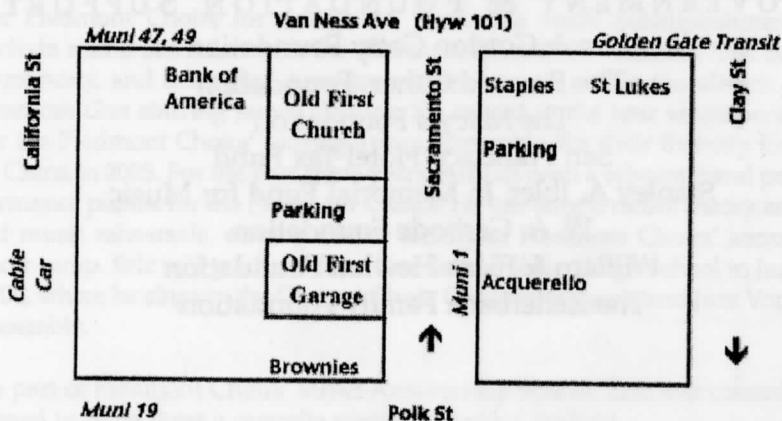
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