

Voices that Guide Us

WINTER 2025 CONCERTS

PENINSULA
WOMEN'S CHORUS



Friday, December 12, 2025 at 7 pm
First United Methodist Church, Palo Alto

Saturday, December 13, 2025 at 1 pm
Mission Santa Clara, Santa Clara

From the Artistic Director

Welcome to our winter concert, *Voices that Guide Us*! This season, the Peninsula Women's Chorus draws inspiration from its vision statement: "The Peninsula Women's Chorus envisions a future as a vibrant choral community where singers of different backgrounds collaborate to create transcendent musical experiences." By focusing our year on the idea of transcendence, we seek to reflect on its meaning, its demands, and the ways it may transform us.

Tonight's program traces many forms of guiding voices—divine, human, natural, ancestral, contemporary, and communal. We begin with Zachary Steele's "Veni Emmanuel," an invitation to gather and open ourselves to the season. This is followed by four solo excerpts and two treble-chorus arrangements from Handel's *Messiah*, invoking the angelic proclamation that begins our journey with the voices of the Divine.

Eric Tuan's multi-movement composition *A Great Cloud of Witnesses* brings forward the writings of women across centuries, each illuminating a different facet of transcendence. Joan Szymko's "The Peace of Wild Things," inspired by Wendell Berry's evocative poem, extends these guiding voices into the natural world. Szymko's nuanced treatment of text—particularly her use of shifting rhythmic lengths—reveals new shades of meaning with each repetition.

Shira Cion's "Ma Navu" offers a contemplative call to peace, paired with Kimia Koochakzadeh-Yazdi's "Māhi," composed last year for our collaboration with Stanford University. Using a text by Iranian poet and filmmaker Forough Farrokhzad, "Māhi" reflects on the emergence of courage and inner resolve preceding transcendence. The composer's use of vibrato, instability, and layered textures mirrors the tension between vulnerability and strength before ultimately arriving at clarity.

Radiance then steps forward with Anna Goblukova's "Subtler than Subtlety," blending acoustic voices with delicate electronics to create a shimmering new harmonic world. We close our contemporary set with Pamela Z's "Pen Pal," a playful and insightful work for chorus and tape by our Composer-in-Residence, reminding us that our everyday conversations also guide our understanding of a changing world.

From here, the program turns toward the holidays and the voices of community—whether in a delightfully off-kilter "Deck the Halls in 7/8," the traditional villancico "La Virgen Como Gitana," or the uplifting anthem "Still I Rise," sung in celebration and collective determination.

Throughout this fall, I have spent time reflecting on transcendence in a world that often feels heavy with uncertainty. It is tempting to think of transcendence as escape, yet I believe it is something else entirely: a willingness to let go, to trust, to be changed, and to offer our best to something larger than ourselves. For a community chorus, this is a profound act. Our singers—amateur musicians who commit themselves wholeheartedly to craft, care, and integrity—model what is possible when people gather with intention. Together, we create moments of beauty that remind us of our nature at its best: thoughtful, generous, and deeply connected.

My hope is that tonight's concert carries you through moments of being guided, lifted, and moved—moments where listening becomes its own kind of transcendence. Thank you for joining us, and may this season bring you peace, joy, and the warmth of community.

Happy holidays,

Dr. Anne K. Hege

Artistic Director



PENINSULA WOMEN'S CHORUS • SPRING 2025 CONCERTS

Voices *that Guide Us*

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2025 • 7:00 PM

First United Methodist Church, Palo Alto, CA

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2025 • 1:00 PM

Mission Santa Clara, Santa Clara, CA

Dr. Anne K. Hege, *Artistic Director*
Anne Rainwater, *Collaborative Pianist*

Veni Emmanuel*	arr. Zachary D. Steele
Solo Recitatives for Soprano from <i>Messiah</i>	G.F. Handel
There were Shepherds Abiding in the Fields — Kate Lincoln, <i>soloist</i>	
And Lo! The Angel of the Lord came upon them — Stacey Street, <i>soloist</i>	
And the Angel said unto them — Jane Lien, <i>soloist</i>	
And suddenly there was with the Angel — Cathleen Kalcic, <i>soloist</i>	
Glory to God* from <i>Messiah</i>	G.F. Handel
And the Glory of the Lord* from <i>Messiah</i>	G.F. Handel
A Great Cloud of Witnesses	Eric Tuan
Processional — Kate Andrade, <i>soloist</i>	
I. The Thunder: Perfect Mind — Stacey Street and Brooke Steele, <i>soloists</i>	
II. At last free! — Brooke Steele, Jane Lien, and Kate Andrade, <i>soloists</i>	
III. A Thousand Names	
IV. I am a woman's rights*	
The Peace of Wild Things*	Joan Szymko
Allison Rosengard, <i>soloist</i>	
Ma Navu	Yossi Spivak, arr. Shira Cion
Cathleen Kalcic, Jane Lien, and Lynn Haynes-Tucker, <i>soloists</i>	
Māhi**	Kimia Koochakzadeh-Yazdi
Subtler than Subtlety**	Anna Golubkova
Pen Pal	Pamela Z
Deck the Halls (in ¾)	arr. James McKelvy
Allison Rosengard, <i>soloist</i>	
La Virgen Como Gitana	trad. Spanish Carol, arr. Anne Hege
Allison Rosengard, <i>soloist</i>	
Still I Rise*	Rosephanye Powell
Sara Asher and Jane Lien, <i>soloists</i>	
Emily Jiang, Stacey Street, Wynn Tauberg, and Kate Andrade, <i>small group soloists</i>	
Silent Night	arr. John Rutter

**Vivo repertoire*
***Radiance*

PENINSULA
WOMEN'S CHORUS

From the PWC Board of Directors

Eric Tuan reshaped “I Am A Woman’s Rights” this fall as part of a remarkable process.

It started at our very first fall rehearsal, when we sang through a piece then titled “Ain’t I A Woman.” After rehearsal, one of our singers approached a board member and, in confidence, told her that the piece’s lyrics made her quite uncomfortable. She directed the board member to the Sojourner Truth Project website, where the board member learned that although Truth spoke in 1851, the best-known version of Truth’s speech—and the one that formed the basis of the lyrics—had been penned by a white abolitionist in 1863. Truth, who was born and bred in upstate New York, would more likely have spoken Dutch-accented English, nothing like the southern black style of the 1863 version. Instead, the site presents the version of the speech captured by Truth’s friend, Rev. Marius Robinson, in 1851, a version which he reviewed with Truth before it went to press.

The text we had planned to sing was deeply troublesome.

The board member alerted both the board president, Stacey Street, and Anne Hege, our artistic director. The board had an incredible discussion about the piece, the history of the two versions of Truth’s speech, and what could possibly be done to present composer Eric Tuan’s remarkable music in a less-tainted form. Anne approached Eric, who was unaware of the earlier version of Truth’s speech. (His composition predated the debut of the website and more widespread awareness of the issues with the 1863 version.)

Eric, in discussion with Anne, did his own research into the matter and soon presented the PWC with a new version, based on the earlier version of the speech. He generously undertook this rewrite on his own time, without the benefit of a commission to support his efforts.

At every step of the process, the PWC has worked to support our core values of respect, compassion, inclusivity, and integrity. We are so proud of the respect each person has shown as we have grappled with this issue, from the brave singer who brought this to our attention, to the open-hearted discussions among the board members and Anne, to Eric’s care as he recrafted his original setting.

The PWC is honored to debut this new version.

With respect and joy in music,
The Board of Directors of the PWC

Text & Program Notes

Veni, Emmanuel! 15th Century French melody, words from the 18th Century, arr. Zachary D. Steele

“Veni, Emmanuel!” (O Come, Emmanuel) is a beloved Advent hymn that expresses the deep longing and hope for the arrival of the Messiah during the season of anticipation before Christmas. Steele’s innovative take on the traditional French melody infuses it with excitement, wonder, and the spirit of expectation that defines Advent.

Veni, veni, Emmanuel
Captivum solve Israel,
Qui gemit in exsilio,
Privatus Dei filio.
Gaude! Gaude! Emmanuel,
Nascetur pro te, Israel!

O come, thou Dayspring come and cheer
our spirits by thine advent here.
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death’s dark shadow put to flight.

O Come, Thou Key of David,
come and open wide our heavenly home.
Make safe the way that leads to thee,
and close the path to misery.

Solo Recitatives for Soprano from *Messiah*, G. F. Handel

No. 14 There were Shepherds Abiding in the Fields (Luke 2:8)
There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night.

And Lo! The Angel of the Lord Came Upon Them (Luke 2:9)
And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid.

No. 15 And the Angel Said Unto Them (Luke 2:10-11)
And the angel said unto them: Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

No. 16 And Suddenly There Was With the Angel (Luke 2:13)
And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying:

Glory to God, arr. Michael Ryan (Luke 2:14) Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, goodwill toward men.

And the Glory of the Lord, arr. Michael Ryan (Isaiah 40:5)
And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

A Great Cloud of Witnesses, Eric Tuan

Although women have played central roles in every religious tradition, too often their voices have been marginalized from scriptures and faith communities dominated by men. When Laney first approached me about composing a multi-movement work for Musae, I was immediately drawn to the idea of lifting up the voices of prophetic women from a variety of wisdom traditions. I had recently been reading a great deal of Christian theology and poetry as part of my own faith journey, and was particularly captivated by the female mystics of the medieval period (Hildegard of Bingen, Mechthild of Magdeburg, Julian of Norwich). While these extraordinary women drew deeply from the language and traditions of their faith community, they also sought to expand its circle of empathy to encompass their own voices, their own experiences, their own encounters with the sacred.

That struggle for greater inclusion, for redrawing the boundaries of community ever more expansively, also lies at the heart of our own time. The women whose voices lie at the heart of this piece – proclaiming power and wisdom, joy and suffering, slavery and freedom – offer us guidance on the way. Each of the singers of Musae also brings their own voice to this piece, offering

individually chosen words you will hear spoken in dialogue with Sojourner Truth’s iconic “Ain’t I a woman?” speech in the fourth movement. I hope that the words of this “great cloud of witnesses” will challenge, delight, and inspire you. — Eric Tuan, *from the program notes accompanying the debut performance*

A Great Cloud of Witnesses opens with a text from the Gnostic Gospels, a set of early Christian scriptures that did not make it into the Biblical canon. Translator Jane Hirshfield observes that the powerful imagery of this text, which depicts a female-gendered sacred that is both “the first and the last...the honored one and scorned,” appears to draw on the traditions of pre-Christian Isis worship. We then journey to ancient India to hear a voice from one of the earliest female followers of the Buddha, Sumangalamatha. Set amidst chiming handbells and serene ostinati, the speaker rejoices in the freedom of liberation, both from her callous husband and from the sting of earthly attachments.

The third movement, “A Thousand Names,” seeks to honor some of the myriad names of women, using invented words from the playful *Lingua Ignota* of the medieval mystic Hildegard of Bingen. It begins with roles often understood as feminine in Hildegard’s time: nun, anchorite, widow, martyr, and prophet. The middle section explores the roles assigned by family structures: mother, sister, aunt, and wife. The final section names women into roles that would have surprised some medieval women, but which Hildegard, perhaps, would have celebrated: master teacher, high priest, bishop, and even God.

The original version of the final movement was titled “Ain’t I a woman?”, and was based on Frances Gage’s popular but inaccurate version of Sojourner Truth’s famous speech. The revised version is dedicated with gratitude to the Sojourner Truth Project and Leslie Podell for uncovering the more authentic version of Sojourner’s words, and to Anne Hege, Artistic Director of PWC, for collaborating with me on rewriting the work. This movement sets Sojourner Truth’s iconic speech in dialogue with the song of Deborah, one of the prophets and military leaders of ancient Israel. In the closing section, the singers offer their own words of wisdom and reflection, expanding this “great cloud of witnesses” into our own time and place.

Processional and I. The Thunder: Perfect Mind

From “The Thunder: Perfect Mind” (Gnostic Gospel: Nag Hammadi Library) translation (c) Jane Hirshfield. From *Women in Praise of the Sacred: 43 Centuries of Spiritual Poetry by Women* (NY: HarperCollins, 1994). Used by permission of Jane Hirshfield.

[For] I am the first, and the last.
I am the honored one, and the scorned.
I am the whore and the holy one.
I am the wife and the virgin.
I am the mother, the daughter,
and every part of both.
I am the barren one who has borne many sons.
I am she whose wedding is great
and I have not accepted a husband.
I am the midwife and the childless one,
the easing of my own labor.
I am the bride and the bridegroom
and my husband is my father.
I am the mother of my father,
the sister of my husband;
my husband is my child.
My offspring are my own birth,
the source of my power,
what happens to me is their wish.

I am the incomprehensible silence
and the memory that will not be forgotten.
I am the voice whose sound is everywhere
and the speech that appears in many forms.
I am the utterance of my own name.

For I am knowledge and ignorance.
 I am modesty and boldness.
 I am shameless, I am ashamed.
 I am strength and I am fear.
 I am war and I am peace.

Give heed to me...
 I am the one they call Life,
 the one you call Death.

II. At last free!

By Sumangalamata, translation (c) Jane Hirshfield. From *Women in Praise of the Sacred: 43 Centuries of Spiritual Poetry* by Women (NY: HarperCollins, 1994). Used by permission of Jane Hirshfield.

At last free,
 at last I am a woman free!
 No more tied to the kitchen,
 stained amid the stained pots,
 no more bound to the husband
 who thought me less
 than the shade he wove with his hands.
 No more anger, no more hunger,
 I sit now in the shade of my own tree.
 Meditating thus, I am happy, I am serene.

III. A Thousand Names

Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179): *Lingua Ignota*
 The translations here are drawn from Sarah L. Higley’s monograph *Hildegard of Bingen’s Unknown Language: An Edition, Translation, and Discussion* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007; used by permission of the author).

Vanix	<i>woman</i>
Korzinthio	<i>prophet</i>
Falschin	<i>seer</i>
Iugiza	<i>widow</i>
Phalischer	<i>anchorite</i>
Imschiol	<i>martyr</i>
Reimonz	<i>nun</i>
Maiz	<i>mother</i>
Nilzmaiz	<i>stepmother</i>
Pleniza	<i>paternal aunt</i>
Maizfia	<i>maternal aunt</i>
Miskila	<i>sister</i>
Liaziz	<i>daughter-in-law</i>
Kaueia	<i>wife</i>
Kulzphazur	<i>ancestor</i>
Agizinix	<i>master, teacher</i>
Scalzido	<i>high priest</i>
Enpholianz	<i>bishop</i>
Aiegonz	<i>angel</i>
Aigonz	<i>God</i>

IV. I am a woman’s rights!

Sojourner Truth (c. 1797-1833), “I am a woman’s rights!”
 Delivered 1851 at the Women’s Convention in Akron, Ohio, as transcribed by Rev. Marius Robinson.

I am a woman’s rights! I have as much muscle, and can do as much work.
 I have plowed and reaped, and husked and mowed,
 Can any man do more?

And how came Jesus into the world?
 Through God who created him and woman who bore him.
 Man, where is your part?

The Song of Deborah (Judges 5:3-4, 7)

Transliteration: Jan Levin

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Sheem’oo m’lahkhim,
 Hahah zeenoo Rohzneem,
 Ahnokhee Lah Hah Shem
 Anohkhee A Sheerah Azahmer
 Lah Hah Shem Ehlohkhay Yisrahayl.

Hahshem B’tsaytkhah Meesayeer,
 B’tsad’khah Meesday Eh dohm,
 Ehrets Rah-ah sha,
 Gahm Shah mahyim,
 Nahtahfoo Gam Ahveem
 Nahtfoo Mahyim.

Khadloo F’rahzohn,
 B’yisrahayl Khahdayloo,
 Ahd Sha kahmtee D’vorah,
 Shakahmtee Aym B’Yisrahayl.

*“Hear, O kings; give ear, O princes;
 to the Lord I will sing,
 I will make melody to the Lord, the God of Israel.
 “Lord, when you went out from Seir,
 when you marched from the region of Edom,
 the earth trembled,
 and the heavens poured,
 the clouds indeed poured water.
 The peasantry prospered in Israel,
 they grew fat on plunder,
 because you arose, Deborah,
 arose as a mother in Israel.”*

The Peace of Wild Things, Joan Szymko, poem by Wendell Berry

In this contemplative choral setting, Joan Szymko gives voice to Wendell Berry’s evocative poem that speaks to the modern “despair for the world” and the solace found in nature’s quiet presence. Szymko’s music mirrors the poem’s arc—from anxious tension through restorative stillness. The piano accompaniment draws us into the water’s hush, the wood drake’s reflection, and the day-blind stars waiting with their light. Harmonies unfold gently, giving the poet’s lyrics space to breathe and drawing out the message and moment of release.

This piece offers both performers and listeners a moment of deep reflection and peace—an invitation to set aside worry, to enter into the natural world unfettered by thought, and to find freedom in simple presence. It is at once a meditation and a celebration: a reminder that even amid life’s turbulence, the earth holds a sanctuary for our spirits.

When despair for the world grows in me
 and I wake in the night at the least sound
 in fear of what my life and [my] children’s lives may be,
 I go [and] lie down where the wood drake
 rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
 I come into the peace of wild things
 who do not tax their lives with forethought
 of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
 And i feel above me the day-blind stars
 waiting with their light. For a time
 I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

— Wendell Berry from *Collected Poems*

מָה־נָּבוּ / **Ma Navu** (How Beautiful), Yossi Spivak, arr. Shira Cion, from Book of Isaiah 52:7

Sung in Hebrew, “Ma Navu” celebrates the arrival of peace and salvation — themes central to both Jewish tradition and the universal human spirit. With its gentle repetition and flowing melodic lines, “Ma Navu” evokes a sense of reverence, hope, and quiet joy. While not specifically a winter holiday song, it is often performed during festive or sacred gatherings, conveying a sentiment that is timeless and true to the spirit of the season. This choral arrangement was inspired by a setting for harps by Theresa Schroeder-Sheker.

Ma navu al heharim
Ragley hamevaser,
*How pleasant on the mountains
Are the feet of the messenger of good
tidings,*

Mashmia yeshua,
Mashmia shalom,
Mashmia yeshua,
Mashmia shalom
*Proclaiming salvation,
Proclaiming peace.
Proclaiming salvation,
Proclaiming peace.*

ماهی / **Māhi** (The Fish), Kimia Koochakzadeh-Yazdi, poem by
Forough Farrokhzad, from 2024-2025 PWC–Stanford
Collaboration

Forough Farrokhzad, one of Iran’s most influential modern
poets, wrote with striking emotional clarity and defiance of
social norms. *Māhi* is a vivid and symbolic text exploring themes
of longing, confinement, and the struggle for freedom — both
personal and societal.

Through the image of a trapped fish, Farrokhzad evokes a
powerful inner world, often interpreted as a reflection on
gender, autonomy, and the desire to transcend limitation. In this
choral setting, the music amplifies the tension and tenderness of
the poem, weaving Persian literary tradition with contemporary
soundscapes.

Māhi invites listeners into a poignant meditation on resilience,
identity, and the quiet beauty of resistance.
— Kimia Koochakzadeh-Yazdi

Hargez nabude galb-e man
ingune
garm o sorkh:
ehsās mikonam
dar badtarin daghāyeq-e een shām-e margazāy
chandeen hezār cheshme-ye khorshid
dar dalam
mijushad az yaqeen;
ehsās mikonam
dar har kenār o gushe-ye in shurezār-e ya’s
chandin hezār jangal-e shādāb
nāgāhān
miruyad az zamin.

āh ey yaqeen-e gomshode, ey māhi-ye goriz
dar berkehā-ye āyene laghzide tu be to!
man ābgir-e sāfiyam, inak! be sehr-e eshgh;
az berkehā-ye āyene rāhi be man beju!

man fekr mikonam
hargez nabude
dast-e man
in sān bozorg o shād:
ehsās mikonam
dar cheshm-e man
be ābsher-e ashk-e sorkhgun
khorshid-e bighorub-e sorudi keshad nafas;
ehsās mikonam
dar har ragam
be har tapesh-e qalb-e man
konun
bidārbāsh-e ghāfele-yi mizanad jaras.

āmad shabi berahnam az dar
cho ruh-e āb
dar sine’ash do māhi o dar dastash āyene
gisuy-e khis-e u khazebu, chun khaze beham.
man bāng barkeshidam az āstān-e ya’s:
<<- āh ey yaqeen-e yāfte, bāzat neminahām!>>

*I think
my heart has never been
this much
warm and red:
I feel
in the worst moments of this deathly night
many thousand wellsprings of sun*

*in my heart
flows out of confidence;
I feel
in every inch and corner of this despair desert
many thousand merry forests
suddenly
Sprout out of earth.*

*Oh my lost confidence, my elusive fish,
who slides through the ponds of mirror!
I am a pure lake, now! With the magic of love;
from the ponds of mirror find a way to me!*

*I think
never before
my hand
has been this much big and gay:
I feel
in my eyes
on the ruddy fount of teardrops
breathes the decline-less sun of a song;
I feel
in every vein of mine
with every breathing of my heart
now
the waking chimes of a caravan sounds.*

*One night she came to me in the nude
like a water sprite
in her breasts two fish and in her hands a mirror:
her wet hair moss smelling, like moss, together
weaved.
I screamed out of despair:
“Oh my gained confidence, I will not let you leave!”*

Subtler than Subtlety, Anna Golubkova from 2024-2025 PWC–
Stanford Collaboration

Transparent and ephemeral in nature, this new work explores
the delicate interplay between poetry, harmony, and space.
Rooted in a text that evokes fragility and reflection, the music
responds with carefully shaped prosody and a harmonic
language that mirrors the poem’s emotional transparency.

What unfolds in performance is a living soundscape, one that
incorporates live electronic processing. The singers’ voices are
captured in real time and echoed back into the space with
delays, creating a subtle and shifting counterpoint in space.
These delayed reflections function almost as ghost harmonies,
expanding the sonic texture beyond what is notated.

The work uses rests and silences as placeholders for the
electronic responses, which will vary based on the acoustic
properties of the venue. In this way, the piece becomes a
collaboration not only between composer and performers but
also between the music and its environment — a meditation on
time, breath, and the resonance of stillness. — Anna Golubkova

Нежнее нежного — Nezh-nee-yeh nezh-noh-voh
Лицо твоё, — Lee-tsoh tvoh-yoh
Белее белого — Be-leh-yeh be-loh-voh
Твоя рука, — Tvoh-yah roo-kah
От мира целого — Ot mee-rah tseh-loh-voh
Ты далека, — Tee dah-leh-kah
И всё твоё — Ee vsyo tvoh-yoh
От неизбежного. — Ot nye-iz-bezh-noh-voh
От неизбежного — Ot nye-iz-bezh-noh-voh
Твоя печаль — Tvoh-yah peh-chahl
И пальцы рук — Ee pal’-tsy rook
Неостывающих, — Nee-oh-sti-vah-yoo-shchikh
И тихий звук — Ee tee-khee zvook
Неунывающих — Nee-oo-nih-vah-yoo-shchikh
Речей, — Reh-chey
И даль — Ee dal’
Твоих очей. — Tvoh-ikh oh-chey

Subtler than subtleness —
 Your subtle face.
 Fairer than fairness —
 Your fair hand.
 From the entire universe
 Away you stand.
 And all in you —
 Is unavoidable:
 Seems unavoidable your quiet
 blues,
 And the tiny fingers,
 Never settling down.
 And the gentle sound
 Of never dying down words.
 And the distance in your eyes.

Pen Pal, Pamela Z

“Pen Pal” was commissioned by the San Francisco Girls Chorus and premiered by the entire SF Girls Chorus School in 2018. I used samples of the speaking voice of Ingrid Norgaard, excerpted from interviews I recorded previously for a larger work called ‘Correspondence.’ Much of the melodic and rhythmic material I wrote for the chorus was transcribed directly from the pitches and rhythms I found in Ingrid’s speech fragments. — Pamela Z

The following text is a transcription of the Ingrid Norgaard interview, which forms the only accompaniment to the singers. Those words spoken or sung by the chorus are indicated in bold.

For a long time—I think for four years—I was corresponding with my, **um, second cousin**. Is that what the thing is in English? Second cousin? **Um, so, uh**, I did letters. I think that was the first type of correspondence I did, and that lasted quite a while. Then I had a very dear friend in high school. She was very good at keeping a diary; I wasn’t. **But then one year**—I think it was for Christmas—she gave me a book. And she had already started writing in it, like a kind of letter exchange, but in book form. Uh, and that lasted for about a year.

I don’t have any of my old penpals. But a couple of years ago I met a lady and we started talking and I really, really liked her. And I knew that the only way I was going to be able to keep in touch with her was if I asked her if she wanted to be my pen pal. But we started emailing, so we’re email pals. **Uh, then, uh**, I started doing **longer emails**. But it’s not—I must admit—it’s not the same as the letter writing. Now, there’s a temporal quality to the letter, **and also the kind of connection you get** by knowing that they probably will save your letter.

I have a stack at home in Norway that must be at least ten years worth of letters: **print with** a little bit of cursive in between. Emails, it’s the immediacy of it can be a little stressful. It’s a lot of stuff you have to follow up on, **and that never was the case with** letters. It would be ok if you responded a couple of weeks later.

Ten years ago I loved text messaging. My phone can’t do that many things. It can make a smiley face, but only from a colon and parentheses. With one of my pen pals, I remember writing to her in one letter—I **think for four years**, might have been in March. To wait from March to July, I think that says a lot about the timing of correspondence.

I remember when I was, uh, must-a been around nine—there was an address book, uh, very small—like pocket-sized. And I really wanted it, because I had all of my penpals so I wanted to put all their addresses into this little beautiful book. **And then I got home, and I looked at the book, and I was, like**, “Wow, this book is so nice. I’m going to keep it for the rest of my life.” And because of that, I’m not going to write any addresses into it now, **because I know that everyone will move**. So it won’t be the addresses these people are going to have forever, **and therefore, I’m gonna wait, ‘til I’m, like, twenty**. I actually waited. **And, uh**, I have never written in that

little address book. By the time I moved away from home, nobody really had penpals anymore and there weren’t—like—addresses. I still have it, though. I even took it with me when I moved to the US. But there are no addresses in it. **It’s just blank**.

Deck the Halls (in ¾), traditional Welsh Carol, arr. James McKelvy

A festive favorite around the world, “Deck the Halls” brings joy and sparkle to any holiday celebration. Originating from a 16th-century Welsh melody (Nos Galan), the tune was later paired with English lyrics in the 19th century. With its famous “fa la la” refrain and bright, dance-like rhythm, the carol captures the spirit of seasonal cheer, warmth, and togetherness.

Deck the halls with boughs of holly, Fa la la
 ‘Tis the season to be jolly, Fa la la
 Don we now our gay apparel, Fa la la
 Troll the ancient Yuletide carol, Fa la la

See the blazing Yule before us, Fa la la
 Strike the harp and join the chorus, Fa la la
 Follow me in merry measure, Fa la la
 While I tell of Yultide treasure, Fa la la

Fast away the old year passes, Fa la la
 Hail the new, ye lads and lasses, Fa la la
 Sing we joyous all together, Fa la la
 Heedless of the wind and weather, Fa la la

La Virgen Como Gitana, trad. Villancicos, Raya Real, arr. Anne Hege

“La Virgen Como Gitana” is a traditional Spanish *villancico*, a genre of festive folk song closely associated with Christmas throughout the Iberian world. *Villancicos* blend sacred themes with the colors, rhythms, and imagery of regional popular music, creating a vivid intersection of devotion and everyday life. This carol portrays the Virgin Mary “as a Romani woman,” an image that reflects both historical folk imagination and the cultural diversity of Spain’s past. In this context, the term evokes wandering, humility, and closeness to ordinary people—qualities celebrated in many vernacular Nativity traditions. The lively rhythmic character and dance-like phrasing give the piece a sense of movement and joy, underscoring the portrayal of Mary not as a distant figure but as warm and profoundly human.

La Virgen como gitana,
 A los gitanos camela,
 San José como gachón,
 se rebela, se rebela.

[Refrain]

La Virgen lavaba,
 San José tendía,
 la Virgen lavaba,
 San José tendía.
 ay, curricutin
 ay curicuricutincurricuti curricutin,
 agua le traía, agua le traía, agua le traía.

Madroños al niño no le demos más,
 que con los madroños se pué’ emborrachar.
 Que sí, que no, Rocío se llama la madre de Dios.

La Virgen estaba guisando,
 mirando por la ventana,
 mientras qué el niño cantaba,
 como el coro de esta casa.

Los gitanos son bronce,
 y los payos de hojalata,
 y el chaval del portal,
 mejor que el oro y la plata.

*The Virgin Mary as a gypsy,
She charms the gypsies,
Saint Joseph as a non-gypsy,
rebels, rebels.*

[Refrain]

*The Virgin Mary was washing,
Saint Joseph was hanging out the laundry,
the Virgin Mary was washing,
Saint Joseph was hanging out the laundry.*

*Oh, curricutin
Oh curicuricutincurricuti curricutin,
she brought him water, she brought him water, she brought
him water.*

*Let's not give the child any more arbutus berries,
because with arbutus berries he might get drunk.
Yes, no, Rocío is the name of the Mother of God.*

*The Virgin Mary was cooking,
looking out the window,
while the child sang,
like the choir of this house.*

*The gypsies are bronze,
and the non-gypsies are tin,
and the boy in the doorway,
better than gold and silver.*

Still I Rise, Rosephanye Powell

Inspired by the strength and resilience of women throughout history, "Still I Rise" is a powerful choral anthem that celebrates courage in the face of adversity. The text, penned by Rosephanye Powell, draws from the spirit of Maya Angelou's famous poem of the same name, while standing as an original tribute to the unyielding dignity of women who rise above oppression, hardship, and injustice.

Rooted in the rich traditions of African American spirituals and gospel music, the composition features soaring melodies, rhythmic vitality, and heartfelt harmonies. It is both a lament and a declaration — a musical affirmation of inner strength, hope, and triumph.

With each refrain of "Still I rise," the piece reminds us of the power of perseverance and the enduring light of the human spirit.

Though I have been wounded;
aching heart, full of pain.
Still I rise, yes, still I rise.

Jus' like a budding rose,
my bloom is nourished by rain.
Still I rise, yes, still I rise.

Haven't time to wonder why,
though fearful I strive.
Still I rise, yes, still I rise.

My pray'r and faith uphold me
'til my courage arrives.
Still I rise, yes, still I rise.

Still I rise as an eagle,
still I rise,
still I rise.

With each day I succeed,
I grow strong an' believe that
it's all within my reach;
I'm reaching for the skies,
Bolstered by courage,
yes, still I rise.

Yes, it's all within my reach;
I'm reaching for the skies,
yes, still I rise.

Gentle as a woman;
tender sweet are my sighs.
Still I rise, yes, still I rise.

Strength is in my tears
and healing rains in my cries.
Still I rise, yes, still I rise.

Plunging depths of anguish,
I determine to strive.
Still I rise, yes, still I rise.

My pray'r and faith uphold me
'til my courage arrives.
Still I rise, yes, still I rise.

Though you see me slump with heartache;
Heart so heavy that it breaks.
Be not deceived I fly on birds' wings,
rising sun, its healing rays.

Look at me, you see a woman;
Gentle as a butterfly.
But don't you think, not for one moment,
that I'm not strong because I cry.

Yes,
Still I rise as an eagle,
soaring above ev'ry fear.

With each day I succeed,
I grow strong an' believe
That it's all within my reach;
I'm reaching for the skies,
Bolstered by courage,
yes, still I rise.

Yes, it's all within my reach;
I'm reaching for the skies,
Higher and higher,
yes, still I rise.

Silent Night, Franz Gruber, arr. John Rutter (SFGC SSAA voicing)

In the quaint town of Oberndorf bei Salzburg, Austria, this beloved Christmas carol was born in 1818. Composed by Franz Gruber with heartfelt lyrics penned by Josef Mohr, this timeless carol was honored by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage in 2011.

Silent night! Holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night! Holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heav'nly hosts sing Alleluia!
Christ, the Savior is born,
Christ, the Savior is born.

Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heav'nly hosts sing Alleluia!
Christ, the Saviour is born,
Christ, the Saviour is born.

PENINSULA WOMEN'S CHORUS



Photo: Don Fogg

Since 1966, the Peninsula Women's Chorus (PWC) has become synonymous with artistic excellence in choral music. Known for its adventurous programming and recognized as one of the leading women's choruses in the U.S. and beyond, the PWC is dedicated to commissioning new works, discovering rarely performed works, and keeping classical choral masterpieces for treble voices alive. Comprised of a diverse group of auditioned singers who share an enthusiasm for challenging repertoire, the PWC has commissioned 46 new works and released seven CD recordings over the last ten years. Among the PWC honors are: third place winner of The American Prize in 2023 in Virtual Performance, first place winner in Choral Performance in 2015, and second place winner in 2011; third prize in the 2006 Béla Bartók 22nd International Choir Competition in Debrecen, Hungary; two Chorus America/ASCAP Awards for Choral Excellence; and second prize at the 1994 Tallinn International Choral Competition in Estonia. Other noted performances include four appearances (in 2016, 2001, 1993, and 1987) at American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) conferences and an appearance at the closing ceremony of the Chorus America Conference in 2023. In addition to extensive performances throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, the chorus has been heard on National Public Radio, has appeared on television both nationally and internationally, and has participated in international choral festivals in Spain in 2023 and Argentina in 2015.

With its commitment to exciting outreach programs PWC adds to its reputation as a dynamic force in music making and community building. In 2008, PWC was among the founding choirs of the New Music for Treble Voices (NMFTV) festival, which brings together diverse local and national choruses in the study and performance of innovative contemporary works. Assuming production of the festival in 2013, PWC has participated in all ten iterations of the event. The PWC also offers a Mentorship Program to provide outstanding local high school treble singers an opportunity to study and rehearse challenging works, culminating in a performance opportunity with the PWC. The ViVo program, for singers who live outside the Bay Area or are otherwise unable to commit to the full ensemble, provides flexibility for singers and gives the PWC an even fuller sound for the ViVo portions of its repertoire. After celebrating its 50th anniversary season in 2016-17, the PWC dove right into another 50 years of enriching its community with vibrant music.

PWC Chorus Roster

SOPRANO 1	<p>Margaret Daul * Jennifer Davidson Kim Lydia Goodson † Yvonne Ho * Katharina Huang Emily Jiang †§ Kate Lincoln Emily Macway Bridget O'Keeffe Allison Rosengard † Brooke Steele Stacey Street † Wynn Tauberg †</p>	SOPRANO 2	<p>Sara Asher †§ Liliana Avila Ella Bacon Helen Bailey Jan Cummins * Petra Dierkes * Marjie Hempstead Barbara Hennings Gwen Johnson † Vanessa Lemahieu Andra Marynowski Yuwon Park * Kathryn Sanwick † Allie Sanzi Jane Wong *</p>	ALTO 1	<p>Ivy Burg Raquel Coelho Corty Fengler Sonia Gaiind-Krishnan * Cathleen Kalcic † Betsy Landergren * Jane Lien † Kathryn MacLaury † Heather Mannion † Debbie Romani † Peggy Spool Beate Teufel * Hoai-Thu Truong * Deanne Tucker †§ Tenaya Zoeller</p>	ALTO 2	<p>Hildy Agustin Morgan Ames † Kate Andrade † Alice Bauder * Jen Cao Paula Chacon † Lisa Collart †§ Madeleine Collart Indumathi Das * Susie Driscoll * Nadia Echeandia * Lynne Haynes-Tucker Ann Miller * Martha Morgan Jenni Murrill Maggie Oren</p>
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* **ViVo:** The Virtual Voices Program offers a way to participate in the PWC with a reduced commitment. ViVo members perform a select portion of our repertoire in concerts.

† **Mentorship:** High school students participating in the PWC Mentorship Program.

‡ **Radiance:** Small Ensemble

§ **Section leader**

Auditions

Spring 2026 Auditions in
January 2026

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AUDITIONS

About the PWC Team



Dr. Anne K. Hege, Artistic Director

Dr. Anne K. Hege creates musical worlds that invite awareness of and attention to the body and our present moment. In her work as a conductor, composer, vocalist, instrument builder, and scholar, she explores the roots of musicality in the intersection of ensemble interaction, technology, embodiment, and expression. Working as a choral conductor since 1999, Hege founded and directed new music and technology-focused ensembles Folk3000 (1999-2001), Cuatro Vientos (2004-2006), and Celestial Mechanics (2007-2010). She developed her style as a conductor supporting community empowerment through choral practices as founder and director of the Albany Community Chorus (2000-2004), Holy Names University Chorus (2013-2016), Voci Women's Vocal Ensemble (2013-2017), and Level IV of the SF Girls Chorus (2015-2022). As the artistic director of the Peninsula Women's Chorus, Anne works to expand the role of the community chorus in commissioning and performing adventurous and transcendent works for treble chorus.

Hege's compositions have been performed and commissioned by ensembles worldwide, including So Percussion, New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, Princeton Laptop Orchestra, Stanford Laptop Orchestra, Google Mobile Devices Ensemble, loadbang, Ensemble Klang, Clerestory, NOW Ensemble, and Volti SF. Since 2008, Hege has composed musical scores for Carrie Ahern Dance with over 50 performances of these works in New York, Baltimore, LA, SF, and Seattle. Hege has received numerous awards and grants, including a New Music USA Project and Organizational Grant, Mark Nelson Fellowship (Princeton University), Composer-in-Residence (Resound Ensemble), Visiting Artist (CCRMA, Stanford University and Cal Poly), Research Affiliate (CACPS, Princeton University), Elizabeth Mills Crothers Prize (Mills College), Gwen Livingston Pokora Prize in Music Composition (Wesleyan University) and Associate Artist Residency (Atlantic Center for the Arts). In 2022, Hege created and premiered her first laptop opera, *The Furies*, an opera for live voices and laptop orchestra, at Stanford's Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics. *The Furies* is a retelling of the Greek tragedy Electra, which showcases a new kind of operatic medium (the "laptopera") to reimagine the potential of instrument building to support dramatic elements and character relationships, while simultaneously posing questions about technology in our lives today. In 2025, Hege founded Laptopera Productions to produce operas for laptop orchestra and live voices, including the premiere of her second laptop opera, *The Glance*, May 29-31, 2026, at ODC in San Francisco. Laptopera Productions has received grants from New Music USA and Intermusic SF. Hege regularly tours and performs on her analog-live looping instrument, the tape machine, along with the laptop orchestra ensemble, Sideband. You can learn more about her work at www.annehege.com



Anne Rainwater, Collaborative Pianist

Concert pianist Anne Rainwater is a dexterous musician known for her vibrant interpretations of works from J.S. Bach to John Zorn. Recognized for her "boldly assertive rhetoric" (San Francisco Examiner) and "sensitivity to performance and interpretation" (TEMPO Magazine), she engages audiences as a soloist, chamber musician, and lecture artist locally and around the country. Anne has performed in venues and festivals throughout the US and Europe, including the Kennedy Center, the Donau Festival in Austria, Kampnagel in Germany, Severance Hall, Cal Performances, Stanford University, Roulette, and Le Poisson Rouge. Diverse appearances include chamber music performances at Mass MOCA and Bargemusic, concerto performances at UC San Diego and Mendocino College, and radio interviews on KWMR, KZYX, KALW, and KALX. She curates a monthly musical gathering called the Vernon Salon Series, which she founded in 2016, and is a 2019 recipient of an InterMusic SF Grant. Anne has released 3 solo albums – *J.S. Bach's Goldberg Variations* (2018), *Anywhere But Here* (2020), featuring electronic keyboard works by Jude Traxler, and *Ave Maria: Variations on a Theme by Giacinto Scelsi* (2023), a vocal and piano work by Ian Power out on Carrier Records. That album was reviewed by Alex Huddleston, who wrote that it was "without a doubt the best music I've yet reviewed for TEMPO." Inspired by an early interest in the writings of Noam Chomsky and Fritjof Capra, she is working on a series of long-form essays that explore the intersection of cognition, movement and ecosystems with the processes responsible for understanding and performing music. In June 2025, Anne participated in a Brain Waves online residency as part of Ayatana's Biophilium Science School for Artists, based in Canada, which brought together artists and scientists. This October, she participated in a month-long artist residency at the Arteles Creative Center in Haukijärvi, Finland.



Peggy Spool, Assistant Conductor

Peggy Spool founded Vivace Youth Chorus in 2003. She retired in 2020 and is now serving as Emeritus Artistic Director. She has worked with youth choruses in the San Francisco Bay Area for over 25 years, including preparing children's choruses for Opera San José, San José State Choirs, San Jose Symphonic Choir, and Mission City Opera. Prior to founding Vivace, she was a music director at Cantabile Youth Singers in Los Altos, California. She maintains a private vocal studio, teaches the children's choir at Stone Church of Willow Glen, and sings with Peninsula Women's Chorus.

Ms. Spool received a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from Boston University, a Master of Music in Vocal Performance from San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and a Certificate in Kodály Music Education from Holy Names University. She is a member of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) and has served as the Children's Repertoire and Resources Chair for both the California Choral Directors Association and the Western Division States ACDA. She is also a member of National Teachers of Singing and the Organization of American Kodály Educators.

About the PWC Team



Kathryn Sanwick, *Director of Operations*

Kathryn discovered a love of choral music in college when she joined the choir as a timid freshman. It was such a positive experience that she quickly made the decision to change her major to music, building on her formative years as a student of the piano. By the time she graduated, she had interned with the American Composers Forum of Los Angeles and knew her preferred career path was in arts administration. She had a few detours along the way, including earning her Master's degree in Music Systems from San Jose State University, before serving as a private lesson coordinator and later registrar at the Community School of Music and Arts in Mountain View. She joined the Peninsula Women's Chorus in 2007, and in 2021, she became PWC's first General Manager.



Jungmee Kim, *Director of Marketing & Graphic Designer*

After serving as PWC's collaborative pianist from 2010 to 2015, Jungmee returned to the PWC in 2018 as the Director of Marketing. Leveraging her creativity, drive, and extensive background as a performer and arts administrator, Jungmee has been fostering PWC's evolution, adaptability, and growth. She holds degrees from New England Conservatory, Harvard University, and Northeastern University. Jungmee is an opera coach and currently serves as a staff pianist at the Conservatorio di Milano "Giuseppe Verdi" in Milano, Italy.



Kayvon Abbaszadeh, *Concert Manager*

Kayvon Abbaszadeh is an audio tech and music composer born and raised on the Peninsula. Right now, he handles the live audio and video for various groups in the peninsula. Starting his music journey in his teens, Kayvon picked up the bass guitar, then eventually migrated over to digital music and composition. During his journey through digital music, he got his AA in electronic music at College of San Mateo, where he learned all aspects of digital audio recording and equipment. After that, he decided to further his music knowledge and obtained his Bachelor of Music in composition at San Francisco State University. Away from work, Kayvon works as a concert operations manager and audio tech for various other organizations, and he also creates his own digital pop, video game, and classical music.

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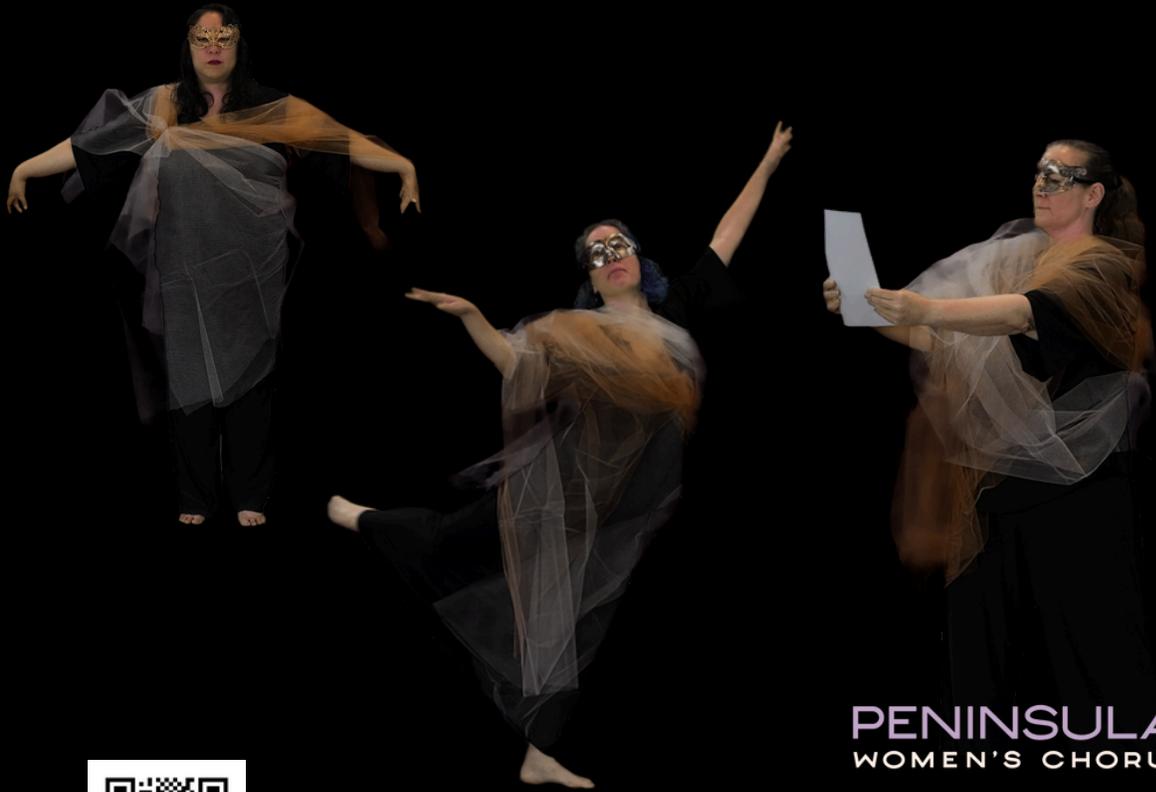
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