SAN FRANCISCO BACH CHOIR

MAGEN SOLOMON, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

2026—2027

Love! Murder! Passion! Grief! Opera!

Sunday, October 18th, 2026, 4:00 PM

Calvary Presbyterian Church, San Francisco

NOTES FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Dear friends, old and new, of the SF Bach Choir,

Welcome to the first concert of our 91st season! We were honored that so many of you were able to join us in celebrating our Big Birthday last year and we hope you're as excited as we are about what's ahead! More about that later.

Despite the many challenges in today's world, we're escaping briefly to the wonderful, magical world of opera where the thrill of grand emotions truly takes center stage. Of the many glorious musical moments for chorus and soloists, we've chosen a few of our favorites and are honored to have as our collaborators not only four amazing opera singers, but also a talented guest at the keyboard to fill out our "orchestra." (Biographies are found in the program.)

As you can see, we have arranged the program by theme, resulting in interesting contrasts and juxtapositions. "Dreams of Home" matches Mozart with our own local David Conte. "Grief" links Purcell from the theaters of Restoration England, with Verdi, who dominated Italian grand opera throughout the last half of the 19th century. If nothing else, we recognize the universality – across time and culture – of these elemental emotions. The language of opera is the language of music and words, and therein also lies its astonishing power to move and to delight. Since many of our operas were written in languages other than English, we encourage you to read along in the translations to get the full story.

Looking ahead to December, we're thrilled to be collaborating, once again, with the brilliant Velocity Handbell Choir. Those who witnessed their dazzling performance two years ago – when they brought four handbell virtuosos – will be further astonished to hear – and see – all eleven of them! (For a taste of their talent, see www.velocitybells.org.) Our traditional-with-a-twist holiday concert will also include music from many centuries and lands, as well as the beloved traditions of the boisterous Boar's Head (with special verses), singalong carols, and the peace of candlelight.

In May we will visit Vienna. In collaboration with the Oakland Civic Orchestra (Martha Stoddard, conductor), we'll present Brahms' grand *Song of the Fates*, a Mendelssohn overture and motet, and Beethoven's beloved *Mass in C*. Joining hands across the Bay, we will offer this concert in both San Francisco and Berkeley. As always, we're welcoming new singers, so contact us if you're interested in joining!

I have the deepest gratitude for our wonderful singers, staff, and Board without whom none of this would be possible. I'm grateful also to you, our audience and community, who share our love of this great art, and who work so hard to keep the music flowing! In these challenging times I continue to hope that a love of music and community will inspire us to keep working to bridge divisions and pain.

Thank you for joining us this afternoon for a voyage into the world of opera, a dramatic world but one not entirely unlike our own – one filled with Love! Grief! and Passion!

Love! Murder! Passion! Grief! Opera!

SAN FRANCISCO BACH CHOIR

Magen Solomon, *Artistic Director*
Christopher Wemp, *Assistant Conductor*

Dara Phung & Yongyu Gao, *collaborative pianists*

Cara Gabrielson, *soprano* · Sara Couden, *contralto*
Elliott JG Encarnación, *tenor* · Curtis Streetman, *bass*

No cameras or recording devices, and please turn off your phones and pagers.
Please hold your applause until the end of each set.

LOVE!

Brindisi (*La Traviata)* **Giuseppe Verdi (1813 – 1901)**

Cara Gabrielson, *soprano*; Elliott JG Encarnación, *tenor*

Traviata *is the story of an impossible love, doomed by social forces and by the heroine's tuberculosis. The opera opens on a luxurious and grand party at Violetta's house. The guests join in a rousing toast while Violetta and Alfredo start falling in love.*

Cruda sorte *(L'italiana in Algeri)* **Gioachino Rossini (1792 – 1868)**

Sara Couden, *contralto*

Isabella, an Italian woman shipwrecked in Algiers, is captured by pirates after she set out to rescue her lover Lindoro. She laments her fate but resolves to stay strong.

Two Excerpts from the Overture *(Orphée aux Enfers)* **Jacques Offenbach (1819-1880)**

Dara Phung & Yongyu Gao, *piano*

Habanera *(Carmen)* **Georges Bizet (1838 – 1875)**

Sara Couden, *contralto*

Carmen is trying to seduce Don José who is eyeing her, surrounded by all her friends. Carmen explains her philosophy of life and love, saying: watch out! I will love you if and when I please! I am free and will remain so!

Couplets du Toréador *(Carmen)*

Curtis Streetman, *bass*

Escamillo, the toreador, sings of the glories of bull-fighting, describing the chorus of onlookers' raucous reactions and the triumph of the toreador.

DREAMS OF HOME!

Placido è il mar *(Idomeneo)* **Wolfgang Amadé Mozart (1756 – 1791)**

Cara Gabrielson, *soprano*
Christopher Wemp, *conductor*

In Placido é il mar *the chorus bids farewell to Idamante. Elettra and the townspeople note that the sea is calm, in contrast with the characters' souls...*

Fuor del mar *(Idomeneo)*

Elliott JG Encarnación, *tenor*

Idomeneo, King of Crete, is distressed: if Neptune saves him from shipwreck, he promises to sacrifice the first person he encounters upon return. Alas, that person is his son, Idamante!

Candles in the Wilderness *(The Dreamers)* **David Conte (b. 1955)**

Mid-19th-century pioneers, in the new community of Sonoma, sing of starlight and candlelight, describing "the lights of human habitation lit and extinguished..."

GRIEF!

Dido's Lament & Final Chorus *(Dido and Aneas)* **Henry Purcell (1659 – 1695)**

Sara Couden, *contralto*

Dido, the Queen of Carthage, is distraught at the departure of her lover, the Trojan Prince Aeneas. She laments that she must now die. She begs her friend Belinda to remember her life, not her fate. Note the repeating descending bass line of her lament. The chorus sings a dirge in her memory.

So, When the Glitt'ring Queen of Night *(Yorkshire Feast Song)*

Elliott JG Encarnación, *tenor*

Although not strictly from an opera, this aria paints a picture of the beautiful night sky, the moon in eclipse.

Va, Pensiero *(Nabucco)* **Giuseppe Verdi**

Va, Pensiero*, the unofficial Italian national anthem, is the heartbroken plea of the Israelites. They long for their homeland, from which they have been exiled by the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar II. The King will eventually come out of his madness, save them, and convert to Judaism.*

GRATITUDE!

Blow Ye the Trumpet *(John Brown)* **Kirke Mechem (b. 1925)**

This opera centers around the passionate abolitionist John Brown's abortive attempt to end American slavery. Blow Ye the Trumpet *was John Brown's favorite hymn and it prophesies the events which would hasten the end of slavery.*

Dan-u-el *(John Brown)*

Curtis Streetman, *bass*

In Dan-u-el*, a former slave tells how Brown and his men led his escape from Missouri, to freedom in Canada. The slave named his child John Brown in his honor. Danuel is invoked through the spiritual* Didn't my Lord deliver Danuel.

OPERA!

Ave Signor *(Mefistofele)*, prologue **Arrigo Boito (1842 – 1918)**

Boito's Mefistofele *is based on the Faust story. We begin with angels and cherubs praising the Creator with joy.*

L'altra notte fondo al mare *(Mefistofele)*

Cara Gabrielson, *soprano*

In the middle of the opera, Margherita, a peasant girl who has been seduced by Faust, sings to herself of her insanity and pending death. She is in jail awaiting execution for killing her baby.

Psalmodia Finale *(Mefistofele)*

In the Psalmodia Finale*, the angels return with penitents, cherubs, and celestial hosts, praising God as they spiral rapturously into the sky.*

❖❖❖

BIOGRAPHIES

The San Francisco Bach Choir is an auditioned choir offering dedicated singers the opportunity to study and perform both Early Music and the diverse repertoire of great works from other eras and genres. Founded in 1936, it is one of the oldest continuously performing community choirs in the western United States. The Choir uses historically informed performance practice and performs with world-class professional instrumentalists and soloists, both period and modern.

Now in her thirteenth season with the SF Bach Choir, Artistic Director **Magen Solomon** has been active in early music as a conductor, singer, scholar, and editor for over four decades. She has been the Artistic Director of the San Francisco Choral Artists since 1995; together, they have premiered

over 300 choral works, performed at major choral conferences, released three CDs, and have twice won the Chorus America/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming. She has served as Artistic Director of the Oakland Symphony Chorus, Stockton Chorale, and California Bach Society, and has taught and conducted at the University of Southern California, UC Berkeley, Santa Clara University, and Smith and Mount Holyoke colleges. Active across the US and abroad as a clinician, teacher, and guest conductor, Dr. Solomon has directed Pro Coro Canada, the UC Santa Cruz Chamber Singers, and other ensembles, and has collaborated on performances of major choral works with Michael Morgan, Michael Tilson Thomas, Nicolas McGegan, Helmuth Rilling, Kent Nagano, and Christoph von Dohnányi, among others. For 14 years she edited the "New Voices in Research" column in the ACDA Choral Journal and has published an edition of Johannes Eccard's *Newe deutzsche Lieder* (1578) with A-R Editions.

Christopher Wemp strives to create inclusive singing environments that explore how choral music inspires us to thrive. He has led international music collaborations across four continents, directs local community and school ensembles, and manages the publishing platform adscensio.org. He holds three degrees from Santa Clara University.

Dara Phung is a San Francisco-based pianist and music director. She is collaborative pianist for the San Francisco Bach Choir and the Young Women's Choral Projects of San Francisco, and has accompanied YWCP's premiere ensemble on tours to Canada, New Zealand, and Puerto Rico. Dara is the music director at Noe Valley Church, where she leads the adult choir and youth choral scholars program. When she's not working with choirs, Dara enjoys playing ragtime, accompanying classes at the San Francisco Ballet School, and performing with Teatro Mistral's Opera Cocktales at Martuni's. Dara holds a music degree from the University of Southern California, where she studied with Kevin Fitz-Gerald.

Yongyu Gao serves as an organist and pianist at Burlingame United Methodist Church, and as a collaborative pianist at Ragazzi and PGC. In addition, she tours with different groups domestically and internationally for concerts and music festivals, including Argentina, Austria, Australia, Canada, Chile, Czechia, Germany, and Italy. She has also accompanied at ACDA (Western and National), Chorus America, CMEA Bay Honor Choir, and CMEA State Festival.

Soprano **Cara Gabrielson** was recently seen as the soprano soloist with the San Francisco Symphony in *Carmina Burana* and Bach's *Magnificat*, Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* (Livermore Valley Opera), and Lucy in *Fellow Travelers* (Opera Parallèle). She joined The Metropolitan Opera roster for *Idomeneo* after being a National Semifinalist in their Laffont Competition.

Curtis Streetman, bass, performs a rich and excitingly varied repertoire. Mr. Streetman's artistry has been presented in some of the world's major concert halls and opera houses, and he has performed lead roles in Verdi, Handel, and Rossini operas, among others. Operatic performances include appearances at The Salzburg Festival, as well as opera houses in Vienna, Bilbao, Dortmund, Halle, and Victoria. Mr. Streetman was recently appointed Director of Voice and Opera at the University of the Bahamas in Nassau, where he makes his home. Live recordings of Mr. Streetman's artistry are available at: https://soundcloud.com/user-26394210

American contralto **Sara Couden** is a premiere interpreter of opera, oratorio, chamber music, and art song. Praised by Opera News for her "unusually rich and resonant" voice, Sara has thrilled audiences worldwide on stages including the Metropolitan Opera, Carnegie Hall, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Cincinnati Symphony, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Charleston Symphony, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, and St. Pete Opera. Sara is a graduate of the Lindemann Young Artist Program at the Metropolitan Opera and earned a master's degree with Honors in Opera from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. She is also an early music enthusiast and holds an A.D. in Early Music, Chamber Music, and Oratorio from the Yale Institute of Sacred Music.

Elliott JG Encarnación is a composer and conductor of choral and operatic repertoire. As a self-taught tenor, he has appeared as a soloist with the San Francisco Symphony, the California Bach Society, the Dessoff Choirs, the Long Island Symphony Choral Association, and Musica Sacra. He can be heard in premiere choral ensembles around the country, including the Santa Fe Desert Chorale, Voices of Ascension, and the Byrd Ensemble, and he has recorded under the Delos and Decca labels. He has served as Artistic Director for the Opera Theater Unlimited, Prodigal Opera Theatre, and Composer in Residence for the International Orange Chorale. Elliott is proud to serve as the Assistant Regional Director for the American Guild of Musical Artists in San Francisco.

❖❖❖

SAN FRANCISCO BACH CHOIR

OUR 2026–2027 SEASON

December 5-6: *Festive Bells & Candlelight*
with Velocity Handbell Choir

May 22-23: *Glorious Vienna: Beethoven, Brahms, & Mendelssohn*
in collaboration with Oakland Civic Orchestra

Sing with us – auditions this month!
Rehearsals Tuesdays 7–10 PM (beginning October 20th) at Calvary Presbyterian, SF
Audition info and sign-up: sfbach.org/join

We want to hear from you!
What you enjoyed, what you want to hear in the future, what we could do better.
Please fill out our audience survey.
You'll have a chance to get a free pair of tickets to an upcoming concert.

DONORS

Anonymous
Doug Abbey
Jim Abrams
Katarina Aiken
Sara Alexander
Manuel Alonso
Alison Amonette
Elena Anaya
Jessica & Richard Anderson
Kathryn Anderson-Levitt
Kathy Angus
Leonor Arevalo
Janice Arquette
Yoshika Asada
Ethan Atkins
Patsy Babbitt
John Thomas Bacon
Kathryn Bader
John Baer
Lisbit Bailey
James Bainton
Stefanie Baldwin
Christine Bartels
Arthur Baxter
Stephen Bayes
Gregory Bell
Kay Bell
Susanna Benningfield
Karen Berg-Smith
Judith Berlowitz
Barbara Bernhart
Patricia Beyer
Joseph Biancalana
Joel S. Birdwell
Alan Black
Marion & Robert Blumberg
Carl Boe
Kimberlee Bogen
Carol Bohnenkamp
Don Borges
James Bovee
Jeff Bowles
Bill Boyd
Terry Boyer
Sylvia Braselmann & Kathy Emery
Alexander Brebner
Thomas Breunig
Carol Brewer
Linda Brewer
Rosecarrie Brooks
K. E. Brown
Daryl Browne
Michael & Sharon Burch
Beth Burnside
Carolyn Butler
Hilary Cadwell
Alexis Caloza
James Campbell
Kevin Carlson
Jan Case
Michaela Cassidy
Marianne D'Emidio Caston
Kate Chenok
Jane Cheshire-Allen
Rhys Cheung
Liz Chong
Angela Chow
Maura Church
Lise Ciolino
James Clarke
Rebecca & David Conant
Margaret Conkey
Sharon Constant
Robert Cook
Robert & Polly Coote
Frederick Craw
Freddie Crenshaw
George Cronin
Fred Cummins
Grace Danca
Anne Daniel
Julia Dashe
Rena David & Walter Meyers
Jan de Gier
Eleonora De Marchi
Hildy Defrisco
Carole Deitrich
Kuankuan Deng
Patricia Denning
Rosemary DeSena
James Devine
Debra Diaz
Cynthia Dodge
Michael Dodson
Andrea Donahoe
Carol Donohoe
Carol Dorrance
Jean & George Dowdall
Dianne Drosnes
M.C. Duboscq
Laura Dudell-Foley
Marie Duggan
Rublyn Dumas
Sally Durgan
Helen Edmonds
Julie Olsen Edwards
Gabriella Bozza Einaga
Carol Emert
Michael Emery
James Emery & Paul Irving
Jane English
Jean Espey
Dianne Esson
Buck Farmer-Gregory & Conway Tan
Abigail Farrell
Louise Feldman
Vallery Feldman
Leslie Finlev
James & Stacy Flaherty
Valerie Flood
Curtis Ford
Cynthia Ford
Craig Forte
Louise Fortmann
Elizabeth Fracchia
Christiane Frederickson
Elizabeth Frey
Francia Friendlich
Velia Frost
Rosemarie Garland Thomson
Joan Gelb
Martin Gellen & Connie Mansell
Paul & Helen Gerken
Helen Gibbons
Jane Gitschier
Carol Glanville
Lisa Golden
Judy Goldstein
Renee Goldstein
Karen & Douglass Goodkin
Gregory Gorman
Roselle Gozali
Marilyn Graham
Anne Greeley
Diane Greene
Roberta & Carol Greer
Donald Grinberg
Carol Gross
Dominique Guenot
Olya Gurevich & Aaron Siegel
Sharon Gustavson
Olivia Gustine
Junko Habu
Nancy Hall
David Hammer
Lise-Lotte Harding
Julie Harris
Anne Harvey & Hartmut Fischer
Christine Hastorf
Sandy & Pat Hayashi
Margaret Hegg
Lucy Henderson
Carol Henri
Kathleen Henschel
Isabel T. Heredia
Ellen Hershey
Michael Hexner & Frances Evensen
Heike Hiss
Jon Hodge
Eugene Hogenauer
Rebecca Hogenhuis
Hallie & Gil Holtzman
Robin Horner
Tyler Hoyt
Carol Hudson
Leslie Hughes
Julie Humphrey
Anna Hunt
Jean Hurley
Marilyn Hurst
Mary Virginia Hurwitz
Kristin Hutchins
Carol Hyde
Ofurhe Igbinedion
Dawn Imada
David Israel
Carole Issel
Clayton R. Jackson
Carolyn Jayne
Yonchu Jenkins
Mary Jew
Lars Johannesson & Alissa Roedig
John Johnson
Ann Jones
Frances Homan Jue
Alex Karim
Naneen Karraker
Irene Kaufman
Diane Keaton
Cheryl Keller
Francis Kim
Henry Kingman
Maurice Kinsolving
David Kirk
Molly A. Kittle
Carole R, Klein
The Lenore & Howard Klein Foundation, Inc.
Carole Klokkevold

Ellen Klutznick
Gretchen Koehler
Howard Kong
Sun Hee Koo
Patricia Kubanis
Youngla Kwon
Eliza Lagerquist
Mary Lanier
Louise Laufersweiler
Linda Lavelle
Amy Law
Susan Lee
Frances Lee & Chris Littman
Mary Rae Lehman
Nancy Lemon
Christine Lemor-Drake
Nancy Lenvin
Kathleen & John Leones
Margaret Lerian
Catherine Lewis
Rita Lewis
Yanshu Li
Michele Liapes
Eileen & Gordon Libby
David Lichtenstein
Kent Lightfoot
Ward & Elaine Lindenmayer
Peg Lisi
Yi Liu-Polczynski & Chris Polczynski
Audrey Livermore
Barbara Livermore & Peter Gaffney
Renee Lorda
The Loring, Wolcott & Coolidge Charitable Trust
Mardith Louisell
Elisabeth Lowry
Addison Luh & Albert Sammons Jr.
Betty Luk
Steven Lundy
Doug MacKay
Emma MacKenzie
Tippi MacKenzie
Thomas MacKinnon
Edena Madden
Beckett Madden-Woods
Pamela Magers
Marie Mallannao
Leila Marcus
Robert Marcus
Judith Margulis
Jacquelyn Marie
Larry Marietta
Paula Markovitz
Wallace Marshall
Dale Martin
Randall Matamoros
Jodie Mathies
Bina Mayani
Beverly & Earl Mayeri
Shari L. McClanahan
Linda McCoy
Sarah McCuskey
Patrick McDonnell
Jane McDougle
Paula McGrath
Joseph McGuire
Alice McLean
Laura Mcleod
Éamonn McManus
Marie McNulty
Katherine McStravick
Pamela Meeds
Kelsey Menehan
Patricia Meredith
Sandra Merlo
Karen Metz
Sam Meyer
Dana Meyerson
Jenny Michael
Martha Michel
Craig & Holly Middleton
Marianne Miller
Meredith Miller
Jack Miller & Sarah Jelley
Abigail Millikan-States
Edward Milner
Adriana Mireles
Kris Moen
Liban Mohamed
Judith Morrow
Lee Morrow
Nancy Mueller
Arlene Murillo
Margot Murtaugh
Ken & Beth Myers
Diane Myrick
Clara Naidich
Elle Najt
Leighton Nakata
Sally Nielsen
Debra Niemann
Kathy Nitsan
Mary Noble
Michael Norton-Lindsay
Michael Novotny
Kathy O. O'Brien
Emma O'Connell
John O'Donnell
Elisabeth Ochs & Lea Salem
Katherine Ogburn
Michael Ogrinc & Dean Ebesu
Kaori Okada
Donna & Robert Oliver
Kristine Olmstead
Laurie Olsen
Mayumi Omi
Naomi Onaga
Barbara Paschke
Ulises Patino
Alina Pawson
Linda Peebles
Pam Peirce & Ann Carey
Kathy & Mark Perl
Israel Perla
Elise Phillips
John Phillips
Charlotte Pilgrim
Federico Pisani
Douglas & Ruby Pleasure
Crima Pogge
Ellena Popova
Janet Potter
Elise Proulx
Carol Quattrin
Lynne Rappaport
James Rea
Sherri Richards
Eileen Richey & Mark Caplin
Katie Riggs
Rebecca Rishell
Gary R. Robinson & Danny Field
Jan B. Robitscher
Adelena Rodriguez
Eusebio Rodriguez
Emery Roe
Mark Roller & Colette Crutcher
Isabella Rosen
Shawn Rosenmoss
Lisa Rude
Abby & David Rumsey
Renee Rymer
Mehrangiz Samadi
Albert Sammons Jr.
Kathleen Sandoval
Margaret Sansburn
Lisa & Alyssa Sargent
Leon Scales
Ceil Scandone
Charna & Peter Schakow
Elena Schmid
Scott Schmidt
Kelly Schroeder
Bettina Schuller
Erik Schutter
Hope Schwoebel
William Scott & Amy Osterholm
Carolyn Seen
Jonathan Seiberlich
Kathy Setian
Eric Shackelford
Roberta Shaw
Susan Sherk
Jeffrey Shopoff
Kate Siepmann
David & Sue Singer
Stephen Skinner
Betty Smith
David Smith
Elaine & Roch Smith
Michael Smith
Paul Smith
Tim Smith
Vivian Sobarzo
Magen Solomon
Mara Solomon-Auger
Kristen Sparrow
Linda Spencer
Phillip Spohn & Mary Hickman
Mary Alexandra Spyk
Paola Staeblein
Scott Stauffer
Mary Jean Stempien & James Stricker
Harold Stoddard
Mary Stodder
Judith Stone
Laura Stone
Margaret Stone
John Takakuwa
Tsvi Tal
John Taylor
Sarah Taylor
Elaine Tennant
Peter Tharaldson
Emma Thomas
Chris Thorman
John Toldi
Cheri Toney
Barbara Treadwell
Ruth Tringham
Helen Trowbridge
Chris Tweedie
Dolores Ubeda
Janet Um
Catherine Valentine
Christine Valentine
Bert Vander Meeren
Katherine Vaughan
Lisa Velasquez
Robert & Laura Venning
Laurie & Scott Vercoe
Frances Verrinder
Melissa Vivas
Mary & Terry Vogt
Gary Walker

Karen Walker
Julia Walsh
Nancy Ware
Peter Warhit
Janice Watson
Sharon Wayne
Carol Weinstein
William Welch
Ann Wellington
Will Wenham
William Westland
Christian White
Lynn White
Samuel White
Sharon Wong
Cynthia Wood
Margaret Wootton
Laurie Wyman-Heron
Lori & Paul Yeomans
Michael Yuann & Danyi Gu
Suzanne Yuen
Albert Zimmermann
Barbara Zoeller
Philippa Zuckerman
Adobe Inc.
Cisco
Google
HP Inc.
Roblox
UBS
United
Seesaw Finance
Wells Fargo Foundation

The donor list includes gifts made between July 1, 2025 and October 8, 2026. We have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of our donor listing. If we have misspelled or omitted a name, please notify us at info@sfbach.org so that we may update our records accordingly.

TRIBUTE GIVING

Anonymous, in honor of Polly Adema

Anonymous, in honor of Kate Allen

Judy Goldstein, in loving memory of David Babbitt and Kathy Clement

Anonymous, in honor of Tammi Brown

John R. Miller, in honor of Hardy Burl, who made St. Nick seem sedate.

Marianne D'Emidio Caston, in memory of Kathy Clement, Kathy's beautiful art graced the program for years!

Laurie Olsen, in loving memory of Kathy Clement, her rich alto voice, infectious laugh, beautiful graphics, friendship, and years of dedicated contribution to our choir.

Susan Sherk, in memory of Kathy Clement, dear friend and longtime member of the choir.

David Hammer, in memory of Eleanor Hammer

Elisabeth Lowry, in memory of Ludwig Janzow

K.E. Brown, in honor of Sarah Jelley and Jack Miller – with sincere gratitude for generous and talented cousins!

Mardith Louisell, in memory of Claudia Krawchuk

Christine Valentine, in honor of Beckett Madden-Woods

Sylvia Braselmann, in honor of Sally Nielsen, tireless friend and singer.

Nancy Lenvin, in honor of Michael Ogrinc

Anonymous (2), in honor of Laurie Olsen

Sharon Gustavson, in honor of Laurie Olsen

Judy Stone, in honor of Laurie Olsen, in celebration of 50 years of friendship and singing together in the SF Bach Choir

Anonymous, in honor of Pops

Maura Church, in honor of the SFBC Board of Directors

Anonymous, in memory of Dr. Robert H. Schwoebel

Anonymous (2), in honor of Magen Solomon

Mary Virginia Hurwitz, in honor of Magen Solomon

Judy Stone, in honor of Magen Solomon, thank you for bringing all the beautiful music to us.

Arthur Baxter, in honor of Judy Stone

David Israel, in memory of Madeline Ettin

Betty Luk, in honor of Polly Fung

Ward Lindenmayer, in honor of Paul Gerken

Craig Forte, in honor of Judy Goldstein

Christine Valentine, in honor of Beckett Madden-Woods

Nancy Lenvin, in honor of Michael Ogrinc

Robert Marcus, in honor of Laurie Olsen

Ward and Elaine Lindenmayer, in honor of Paul Gerken

James Emery & Paul Irving, in honor of Sylvia Braselmann

Robert Cook, in honor of Blanca Haendler

Robert and Laura Venning, in honor of Mary Vogt

THE SAN FRANCISCO EARLY MUSIC SOCIETY
PRESENTS

ENSEMBLE CORRESPONDANCES
CHARPENTIER'S MESSE DE MINUIT & MORE

Under the direction of the harpsichordist and organist Sébastien Daucé, the singers and instrumentalists of Ensemble Correspondances have become a benchmark ensemble for seventeenth-century French repertory.

The ensemble will usher in a joyful holiday season in a one-night-only special event in Berkeley with a French Baroque program featuring Marc-Antoine Charpentier's *Messe de minuit pour Noël* (Midnight mass for Christmas).

DEC 6, 4 PM, BERKELEY

MORE INFORMATION AT
SFEMS.ORG

PAY-WHAT-YOU-CAN • PAY-IT-FORWARD •

❖❖❖

Join us around the fire as we "roast" again the texts and melodies so beloved of the holiday season. Over the centuries, composers have been inspired, again and again, by the texts of "Ave Maria" and "There is No Rose," and by the melodies of "The Coventry Carol" and even "Jingle Bells!" We'll share a few of these settings—from across the centuries and across cultures—pairing beloved old chestnuts with newly discovered voices, including those of our *Composers-in-* and *Not-in-Residence*.

TICKETS & DETAILS – **WWW.SFCA.ORG** Buy **in advance**, and **PAY WHAT YOU WILL**!

SAN FRANCISCO
CHORAL ARTISTS
MAGEN SOLOMON, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

DECEMBER 2026

SUN 13 SAN FRANCISCO
NOE VALLEY MINISTRY
1021 SANCHEZ ST • 4PM

SAT 19 PALO ALTO
ALL SAINTS' EPISCOPAL CHURCH
555 WAVERLEY ST • 7:30PM

SUN 20 OAKLAND
ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
114 MONTECITO AVE • 4PM

❖❖❖

Please Support the San Francisco Bach Choir!
To become a member of our community of supporters, please visit
https://www.sfbach.org/donate-online/, or send your
tax-deductible contribution to:
SFBC, 2443 Fillmore Street, No. 195, SF, CA 94115
a 501(c) non-profit organization. Tax ID 94-2489642

❖❖❖

TEXT AND TRANSLATIONS

Love! Murder! Passion! Grief! Opera!

BRINDISI (Verdi)

Alfredo

Libiamo nei lieti calici, che la bellezza infiora;	Let us drink from these joyful goblets, for beauty is blooming;
E la fuggevol ora s'innebrii a voluttà.	And let the fleeting hour become intoxicated with pleasure.
Libiam nei dolci fremiti che suscita l'amore,	Drink of the sweet thrills that love inspires,
Poichè quell'occhio al core onnipotente va.	As those omnipotent eyes (indicates Violetta) go to the heart.
Libiamo amore, amor fra i calici più caldi baci avrà.	Drink, oh love, for with drink, love will have hotter kisses.

Chorus

Libiamo amore, amor fra i calici più caldi baci avrà.	Drink, oh love, for with drink, love will have hotter kisses.

Violetta

Tra voi saprò dividere il tempo mio giocondo;	I'll be able to share my joyful time among you;
Tutto è follia nel mondo ciò che non è piacer.	All that in the world is not pleasure is folly.
Godiam, fugace e rapido è il gaudio dell'amore;	Let us enjoy, the joy of love is fleeting and short-lived;
È un fior che nasce e muore, nè più si può goder.	It is a flower that is born and dies, no more to be enjoyed.
Godiam! c'invita un fervido accento lusinghier.	Let's enjoy! A passionate caressing voice invites us.

Chorus

Ah, godiam, la tazza e il cantico	Ah, let's enjoy, the cup and the song;
la notte abbell e il riso;	make the night beautiful as well as the laughter
In questo paradiso, ne scopra il nuovo dì.	In this paradise, let the new day find us.

Violetta

La vita è nel tripudio.	Life is only pleasure.

Alfredo

Quando non s'ami ancora.	For those who don't yet love.

Violetta

Nol dite a chi l'ignora	Don't say it to who does not know it [love]

Alfredo

È il mio destin così.	Such is my fate.

Chorus

Ah, godiam, la tazza e il cantico	Ah, let's enjoy, the cup and the song;
la notte abbell e il riso;	make the night beautiful as well as the laughter
In questo paradiso, ne scopra il nuovo dì.	In this paradise, let the new day find us.

(translation – Alexandra Amati)

CRUDA SORTE! (Rossini)

Cruda sorte! Amor tiranno!	Cruel fate! Tyrannical love!
Questo è il premio di mia fé.	This is the reward for my fidelity.
Non v'è orror, terror, n'affanno	There is no horror, terror, or anguish
Pari a quel ch'io provo in me.	Equal to what I feel inside.
Per te solo, o mio Lindoro,	For you alone, my Lindoro,
Io mi trovo in tal periglio.	Do I find myself in such peril.
Da chi spero, oh Dio, consiglio?	From whom can I hope for counsel, oh God?

Chi conforto mi darà?
Qua ci vuol disinvoltura,
Non più smanie, nè paura:
Di coraggio è tempo adesso,
Or chi sono si vedrà.

Who will give me comfort?
Here we need confidence,
No more anxiety or fear:
Now is the time for courage,
Now we will see who we are.

HABANERA (Bizet)

L'amour est un oiseau rebelle
Que nul ne peut apprivoiser,
Et c'est bien en vain qu'on l'appelle
S'il lui convient de refuser.
Rien n'y fait, menace ou prière,
L'un parle bien, l'autre se tait;
Et c'est l'autre que je préfère,
Il n'a rien dit mais il me plaît.

Love is a rebellious bird
Which no one can tame
And calling it is in vain
If it suits it to refuse!
Nothing works, neither threat nor prayer.
One man speaks well, the other stays silent,
And it is the other that I prefer.
He has said nothing, but I like him.

L'amour est enfant de bohème,
Il n'a jamais jamais connu de loi,
Si tu ne m'aimes pas, je t'aime,
Si je t'aime, prends garde à toi!

Love is a child of Bohemia –
It has never known any laws.
If you don't love me, I love you;
If I love you, watch yourself!

L'oiseau que tu croyais surprendre
Battit de l'aile et s'envola;
L'amour est loin, tu peux l'attendre,
Tu ne l'attends pas, il est là.
Tout autour de toi, vite, vite,
Il vient, s'en va, puis il revient;
Tu crois le tenir, il t'évite,
Tu crois l'éviter, il te tient.

The bird you thought you caught unawares,
Flapped its wings and flew away.
Love is far away, you can be ready for it,
You're not ready for it, and it is there
All around you quickly, quickly it comes,
Leaves then comes back again
You think you've caught it, it avoids you.
You think you've avoided it, it has caught you.

L'amour est enfant de bohème…

Love is a child of Bohemia…

(translation –Éamonn McManus)

COUPLETS DU TOREADOR (Bizet)

Escamillo

Votre toast... je peux vous le rendre,
Señors, Señors, car avec les soldats
Oui, les toreros peuvent s'entendre,
Pour plaisirs ils ont les combats.
Le cirque est plein, c'est jour de fête,
Le cirque est plein du haut en bas.
Les spectateurs perdant la tête,
Les spectateurs s'interpellent à grands fracas:
Apostrophes, cris et tapage
Poussés jusques à la fureur.
Car c'est la fête du courage,
C'est la fête des gens de cœur.
Allons! En garde! Allons! Allons! Ah!

Your toast... I can return it to you
Señors, Señors, because with soldiers,
Yes, toreros can see eye to eye,
Their pleasure is fighting.
The circus is full, it's a holiday,
The circus is full from top to bottom.
The spectators are losing their heads,
The spectators are calling out loudly:
Rebukes, shouting and noise,
Pushed to fury
Because it's the celebration of courage,
It's the celebration of the big-hearted.
Let's go! On guard! Come on! Come on! Ah!

Toréador, en garde! Toréador! Toréador!
Et songe bien, oui songe en combattant
Qu'un œil noir te regarde
Et que l'amour t'attend.
Toréador, l'amour, l'amour t'attend!

Toreador, on guard! Toreador! Toreador!
And think well, yes think while fighting
That a dark eye is watching you
And that love is waiting for you.
Toreador, love, love is waiting for you!

Chorus

Toréador, en garde! Toréador! Toréador!	Toreador, on guard! Toreador! Toreador!
En combattant songe qu'un œil noir te regarde	While fighting, think that a dark eye is watching you
Et que l'amour t'attend,	And that love is waiting for you,
Toréador, l'amour, l'amour t'attend!	Toreador, love, love is waiting for you!

Escamillo

Tout d'un coup on fait silence;	All at once there is silence;
On fait silence. Ah que se passe-t-il?	The people are silent. Ah, what's going on?
Plus de cris; c'est l'instant	No more screams; it's the moment
Le taureau s'élance en bondissant hors du toril…	The bull springs by leaping out of the bullpen...
Il s'élance, il entre, il frappe, un cheval roule	He rushes, he enters, he strikes, a horse rolls over
Entraînant un picador.	Bringing a picador with it.
Ah bravo toro! hurle la foule.	Ah bravo toro! yells the crowd.
Le taureau va... il vient... il vient et frappe encore!	The bull goes... he comes... he comes and strikes again!
En secouant ses banderilles,	Shaking his banderillas,
Plein de fureur, il court!	Full of fury, he runs!
Le cirque est plein de sang;	The ring is full of blood;
On se sauve, on franchit les grilles;	People escape, they jump over the barriers;
C'est ton tour maintenant.	It's your turn now.
Allons! En garde! Allons! Allons! Ah!	Let's go! On guard! Come on! Come on! Ah!

Chorus & Escamillo

Toréador, en garde! Toréador! Toréador!...	Toreador, on guard! Toreador! Toreador!...
L'amour! L'amour t'attend!	Love! Love is waiting for you!

PLACIDO E IL MAR (Mozart)

Chorus

Placido è il mar, andiamo;	The sea is calm; let us go;
Tutto ci rassicura.	everything reassures us;
Felice avrem ventura,	we will have good fortune;
Su su, partiamo or or.	come, let us leave at once!

Electra

Soavi zeffiri soli spirate,	Gentle breezes, you alone blow,
Del freddo borea lira calmate.	Of the cold north wind; calm the anger
D'aura piacevole crtesi siate,	with your pleasing breath be generous,
Se da voi spargesi per tutto amor.	If from you spreads love everywhere.

Chorus

Placido è il mar, andiamo, ecc.	The sea is calm; let us go, etc.

(translation – Alexandra Amati)

FUOR DEL MAR (Mozart)

Fuor del mar ho un mar in seno,	Saved from the sea, I have a raging sea
Che del primo è più funesto.	more fearsome than before within my bosom,
E Nettuno ancor in questo	and Neptune does not cease
Mai non cessa minacciar.	his threats even in this.
Fiero Nume! dimmi almeno:	Stern god! Tell me at least,
Se al naufragio è sì vicino	if my body was so close to shipwreck,
Il mio cor, qual rio destino	for what cruel purpose
Or gli vieta il naufragar?	was that wreck withheld?

CANDLES IN THE WILDERNESS (Conte)
Candles in the wilderness, stars in the sky, what a night!
Near or far, candle light or star light, both are bright.
Light my way, star and candle. Candle burn.
Set the candle in the window, home and heaven both are sure.

New neighbor, Light your lamp!
More light, new houses, lights on earth:
Camp-fires, towns and cities, what a sight!
As many as the stars in heaven, here on earth as heaven... What a sight tonight!
– Philip Littell

DIDO'S LAMENT & FINAL CHORUS (Purcell)
Dido
Thy hand, Belinda; darkness shades me:
On thy bosom let me rest:
More I would, but Death invades me:
Death is now a welcome guest.

When I am laid in earth, may my wrongs create
No trouble in thy breast;
Remember me, but ah! forget my fate.

Chorus
With drooping wings, ye Cupids come,
And scatter roses on her tomb,
Soft and gentle as her heart,
Keep here your watch and never part.

SO WHEN THE GLITT'RING QUEEN OF NIGHT (Purcell)
So when the glitt'ring Queen of Night
With black eclipse is shadow'd o'er,
The globe that swells with sullen pride,
Her dazzling charms to hide,
Does but a little time abide,
And then each ray is brighter than before.

VA, PENSIERO (Verdi)

Va, pensiero sull'ali dorate	Go, thought, on golden wings
Va, ti posa sui clivi, sui colli,	Go, alight on the cliffs, on the hills,
Ove olezzano tepide e molli	Where there are wafting the warm and gentle
L'aure dolci del suolo natal!	Sweet breezes of our native land.
Del Giordano le rive saluta,	Greet the Jordan's banks,
Di Sione le torri atterrate…	The fallen towers of Zion…
O, mia patria sì bella e perduta!	Oh, my fatherland – so beautiful and lost!
O membranza sì cara e fatal!	Oh, remembrance so dear, and fatal.
Arpa d'or dei fatidici vati,	Harp of gold of the prophet bards,
Perchè muta dal salice pendi?	Why do you hang silent from the willow?
Le memorie nel petto raccendi	Rekindle the memories in our breast
Ci favella del tempo che fu!	That speak to us of the time that was.
O simile di Solima ai fati	O [harp], like Jerusalem to the fates,
Traggi un suono di crudo lamento,	Draw a sound of harsh lamentation;
O t'ispiri il Signore un concento	May the Lord inspire in thee an accord
Che ne infonda al patire virtù.	To infuse our suffering with virtue.

(translation – Alexandra Amati)

BLOW YE THE TRUMPET (Mechem)
Blow ye the trumpet, blow.
Sweet is Thy work, my God, my King.
I'll praise my Maker with all my breath.
O happy the man who hears.
Why should we start, and fear to die,
With songs and honors sounding loud.
Blow ye the trumpet, blow.
Ah, lovely appearance of death.

Traditional text as quoted in Stephen B. Oates, To Purge This Land: A Biography of John Brown, New York, 1970.

DAN-U-EL (Mechem)
Dan-u-el
I'm free! I'm free!
John Brown delivered me.
Come on, you people,
Sing with me!

Chorus
He's free! He's free!

Dan-u-el & Chorus
Didn't my Lord deliver Dan-u-el, Dan-u-el, Dan-u-el,
Didn't my Lord deliver Dan-u-el,
And why not every man? And why not everyone?

He delivered Daniel from the lion's den,
And Jonah from the belly of the whale,
And the Hebrew children from the fiery furnace,
So why not every man? So why not everyone?

Didn't my Lord deliver Dan-u-el?
Yes, Oh thank you, my Lord.
So if my Lord delivered Dan-u-el,
Why not everyone?

Dan-u-el & Choral Response
Now here's a verse, one more verse,
Come along and sing it with me.
You all know it's the gospel truth
'Bout how John Brown set me free.

Don't you know the man who delivered me
And saved me from the devil's livin' hell?
So I named my baby Little John Brown,
And changed my name to Dan-u-el.

Dan-u-el & Chorus
Didn't John Brown deliver Dan-u-el,
Yes, O thank you, John Brown
So if John Brown delivered Dan-u-el,
Why not everyone?

PROLOGUE (Boito)
The Celestial Hosts

Ave Signor	Hail Lord
Degli angeli e dei santi,	Of the angels and of the saints,

Ave Signor, Signor degli angeli,	Hail Lord, Lord of the angels,
O Signor degli angeli	O Lord of the angels
E dei volanti cherubini d'or...	And of the flying cherubim of gold...
Ave, ave Signor.	Hail, hail Lord.
Dall'eterna armonia dell'Universo	From the eternal harmony of the Universe
Nel glauco spazio immerso	Immersed in blue space
Emana un verso	Arises a verse
Di supremo amor.	Of supreme love.
E s'erge a Te	And it rises to Thee
Per l'aure azzurre e cave	Through the blue and empty breezes
In un suon soave.	In a sweet sound.
Ave, ave, ave, ave!	Hail, hail, hail, hail!

L'ALTRA NOTTE (Boito)
Margherita

L'altra notte in fondo al mare	The other night at the bottom of the ocean
Il mio bimbo hanno gittato,	my little boy was lying
Or per farmi delirare dicon ch'io	or, in order to drive me mad, they told me
L'abbia affogato.	he has drowned.
L'aura è fredda,	Dawn is fresh,
Il carcer fosco,	the cell gloomy,
E la mesta anima mia	and my spirit,
Come il passero del bosco	such a sparrow in the woods,
Vola, vola, vola via.	flies, flies, flies away.
Ah! Pietà di me!	Ah! Pity me!
In letargico sopore	Into a lethargic sleep
E' mia madre addormentata,	I lulled my mother,
E per colmo dell'orrore dicon ch'io	and, crowning horror, they say
L'abbia attoscata.	that I poisoned her.
L'aura è fredda,	Dawn is fresh,
Il carcer fosco…	the cell gloomy…

PSALMODIA FINALE (Boito)
Penitents

Salve Regina!	Hail Queen!
S'innalzi un eco	An echo arises
Dal mondo cieco	From the blind world
Alla divina reggia del ciel.	To the divine throne of heaven.
Col nostro canto	With our song,
Col nostro pianto,	With our crying,
Domiam l'intenso	We conquer the intense
Foco del senso,	Fire of the senses,
Col nostro canto mite e fedel.	With our meek and faithful song.

Cherubim (simultaneous)

Sugli astri, sui venti, sui mondi,	On the stars, on the winds, on the worlds,
Sui limpidi azzurri profondi,	On the clear blue depths,
Sui raggi del sol,	On the rays of the sun,
La danza in angelica spira	In an angelic spiral dance
Si gira, si gira, si gira, ecc.	We turn, turn, turn, etc.
Ave Maria, gratia plena.	Hail Mary, full of grace.

Penitents (simultaneous)

Odi la pia,	Hear the pious,
La pia prece serena.	The pious, serene prayer.
Ave Maria, gratia plena,	Hail Mary, full of grace,

Odi la pia prece serena.	Hear the pious, serene prayer.
Ave Maria, gratia plena.	Hail Mary, full of grace.

Celestial Hosts (simultaneous)

Oriam, oriam.	We pray, we pray.
Oriam per quei morienti,	We pray for the dying,
Per quei morienti oriam, ecc.	For the dying we pray, etc.
Ave Maria, gratia plena.	Hail Mary, full of grace.

Penitents (simultaneous)

Il pentimento lagrime spande.	Repentance causes tears to flow.
Di queste blande	Of these gentle multitudes
Turbe il lamento	May heaven
Accolga il ciel.	Receive the lament.

Celestial Hosts (simultaneous)

Oriam per quelle	We pray for the
Di morienti ignave	Cowardly enslaved
Anime schiave,	Souls of the dying,
Sì per quell'anime	Yes, for those enslaved
Schiave preghiam.	Souls we pray.

Cherubim (simultaneous)

Siam nimbi volanti dai limbi,	We are clouds flying from Limbo,
Nei santi splendori vaganti,	Wandering in the holy splendors,
Siam cori di bimbi, d'amori	We are choirs of adoring cherubim,
Siam nimbi, volanti dai limbi.	We are clouds, flying from Limbo.

Penitents, Cherubim, Celestial Hosts

Odi la pia,	Hear the pious,
La pia prece serena.	The pious serene prayer.
Ave, ave, ave, ecc.	Hail, hail, hail, etc.
Ah! ah! ah! ecc.	Alas! alas! alas! etc.
Ave Signor,	Hail Lord,
Signor degli angeli e dei santi	Lord of the angels and of the saints
E delle sfere erranti,	And of the wandering spheres,
E dei volanti cherubini d'or.	And of the flying cherubim of gold.

Penitents, Celestial Hosts

Dall'eterna armonia dell'Universo	From the eternal harmony of the Universe
Nel glauco spazio immerso	Immersed in blue space
Emana un verso di supremo amor.	Arises a verse of supreme love.

Penitents, Cherubim, Celestial Hosts

E s'erge a Te	It rises to Thee
Per l'aure azzurre e cave	Through the blue and empty breezes
In suon soave.	In sweet sound.
Ave, ave!	Hail, hail!

(translation – Harriet Smith)

❖❖❖

PROGRAM NOTES

This program features some of the most famous opera choruses, as well as a few lesser-known ones, some with and some without participation of soloists, as well as a few solo pieces from the same repertoire. The chorus, since the time of Greek tragedies, has fulfilled essentially two roles – that of a commentator on the action, and that of a participant (nymphs and shepherds, soldiers, crowds, angels, etc.). Except for 18th-century Italian *opera seria*, the chorus has always been a welcome and essential presence in opera and has contributed some of the most famous tunes, familiar even to those who have never attended an opera. We're sure you will recognize at least one or two (but it's probably better not to sing along)!

Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901) was the foremost Italian composer of opera in the 19th century, bringing the genre he inherited from the "bel canto" school of Rossini, Donizetti, and Bellini to new heights of realism, emotional depth, characterization, pathos, and drama. His greatest achievement was probably his ability (and determination) to portray every character and emotion in the most fitting way. For example, he insisted that Tadolini, a wonderful soprano who had already premiered his Alzira, could not sing the role of Lady Macbeth because her voice was too lovely for the role of the rough and devilish character. Another hallmark of Verdi's works for the stage is a fondness for the chorus, often cast as a participant in the action, creating rousing choral scenes. His operas were quintessentially "human," portraying people in all their complex personalities but also within their environment (hence the frequent presence of people—the chorus). "Libiamo" is the famous *brindisi* ("toast") from the initial scene of *Traviata*, where Violetta and Alfredo meet during a party and fall in love. Of very different fabric is "Va pensiero," the song of the Hebrew slaves in *Nabucco*. Both pieces feature one of Verdi's favorite techniques, which consists in having all choral voices sing soaring memorable melodies in unison before splitting into glorious harmonies. However, the *Nabucco* chorus has taken on a life of its own as the unofficial Italian national anthem, used as a patriotic hymn. Most Italians prefer it to the official anthem and people will stand when it is sung.

Georges Bizet (1838-75) was a gifted Parisian composer. His *Carmen*, one of the most famous operas in any opera house's repertoire, was composed in his last year. The Habanera "L'amour est un oiseau rebelle" is Carmen's entrance song. Bizet adapted it from a song called "El arreglito," believing it to be a folk song; it was in fact composed by Spanish composer Sebastián Yradier (1809-65). The descending chromatic melody is an indicator of "otherness" and sexuality. The mezzo-soprano and the chorus engage in a typical call-and-response. *Carmen* showcases Bizet's peculiar amalgam of memorable melodies, piquant harmonies, and vivid character delineation. His passion for portraying real people, and often violent situations, brought him to Prosper Merimée's 1847 novel, on which Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy based their libretto. The opera masterfully portrays local color, with *seguidillas* (Castilian folksongs and dances), flamenco, etc., as well as seduction and romance. The central theme of the opera, revolving around the gypsy Carmen, a strong woman who would rather die than submit to someone else's wishes, is the progressive disintegration of the personality of her suitor Don José, who stabs her to death when she refuses his request to get back together. The opera is in the French tradition of *opéra lyrique*, which includes arias and spoken dialogue, unlike Italian opera, which is sung throughout. After Bizet's untimely death (when he still believed his new opera to have been a failure), someone else (a composer called Guiraud) turned the spoken text into recitative, believing the work would thus fit better into the mold of Italian opera, as audiences expected.

Wolfgang Amadé Mozart (1756-91), the most famous of all child prodigies, was a versatile and extraordinarily gifted composer who wrote music of all genres and at all levels, from party music (like the famous *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*) to the most serious church music, and everything in-between. He had an unmatched gift for producing perfect melodies and writing expressive, colorful, and exquisitely crafted music. The most famous of his operas are certainly the three he wrote on Lorenzo Da Ponte's libretti (*Le nozze di Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Cosí fan tutte*), as well as his very last one, *Die Zauberflöte* (strictly speaking, not an opera but a *Singspiel*—a German comic opera). The

three Da Ponte operas broke new ground by uniting elements of all operatic traditions, comic as well as serious, on one stage, and bringing the plots into contemporary life. *Idomeneo*, however, is one of the operas in the older, somewhat stale mold of *opera seria*, and was written in 1780 on a commission from Munich, as an allegory of enlightened monarchy. Most serious operas had little or no chorus, but in this work, Mozart wrote great choral scenes, having been influenced in his travels to Paris by French opera, which always favored choral scenes.

David Conte (b. 1955) is a local composer and a professor at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. He is one of the youngest composers to have studied in Paris with famed professor Nadia Boulanger. His opera *The Dreamers*, with a libretto by Philip Littell, was commissioned by the Sonoma City Opera and is set in Sonoma in 1848, two years after the creation of the California Republic. It seeks to depict the mood and the dreams of those early settlers.

Henry Purcell (1659-95), born at Westminster (London) into a family of musicians, showed early signs of musical gifts, serving as a boy chorister in the Royal Chapel where his father and uncle sang. After his voice broke in 1673, he first became keeper of the king's wind and keyboard instruments, and then composer for the court violins in 1677. He studied under Westminster Abbey's organist John Blow, who in 1679 handed this post to his gifted pupil Purcell, who retained it until his death. His funeral took place in Westminster Abbey, where he was interred next to the organ. *Dido and Aeneas* was written in 1689 for a performance by "Young Gentlewomen" at Josias Priest's boarding school at Chelsea. Even so, the piece contains parts for men, which require singing technique at the professional level. The libretto, from Virgil's *Aeneid*, is by Nahum Tate. This miniature opera features a wide range of emotional expression and unprecedented pathos: from Dido's soliloquies to Aeneas's passionate regret to the somber utterances of the sorceress and the breezy heartiness of the sailor. The most famous piece, "Dido's Lament," shows a favorite technique of Purcell's: the ground bass, where the melody and accompaniment unfold over a repeated bass line. In the case of the lament, the bass line is a descending set of notes (here a set of 10 pitches repeated 11 times).

Kirke Mechem (b. 1925, turned 100 years old last year) grew up in Kansas and has lived in San Francisco since 1963. He attended Stanford University (beginning as an English major and switching to music in his junior year) and later Harvard. His opera *John Brown* is based on the life of the controversial abolitionist by the same name (1800-59), who believed that slavery could be abolished only by violence and rebellion. Instrumental in the start of the Civil War, Brown led various insurrections, including an attack on the federal amory at Harpers Ferry, for which he was executed by hanging. The chorus "Blow ye the Trumpet" is a setting of John Brown's favorite hymn, although the melody was newly composed. "Dan-u-el" is an original spiritual. In it the solo baritone, a former slave, tells John Brown's family and friends how Brown and his men led his escape from Missouri, a slave state, into Kansas and on to freedom in Canada.

Arrigo Boito (1842-1918), a leading figure in the *Scapigliatura,* an Italian branch of the bohemian movement, composed *Mefistofele* (a dramatic condensation of Goethe's *Faust*) over several years. The 1868 premiere at Milan's La Scala was a fiasco—the opera, accused of Wagnerism, ran a mere two evenings. Boito revised it dramatically (including re-casting Faust as a tenor rather than a baritone) and when it was performed in Bologna in 1875, it received the success it deserved. Boito was both a composer and a librettist, having pulled Verdi out of retirement and provided him with the libretti for his last two operas, *Otello* and *Falstaff*. Boito belonged to a younger generation, which meant he and the older man often butted heads. To Verdi's credit, he did see the younger man's point of view and with him crossed the "intangible divide" between opera as a juxtaposition of active and reflective moments, and opera as continuous action.

© Alexandra Amati, PhD

VOLUNTEERS

Our sincere thanks to our many volunteers from within the choir and our community. Their talents, energy, and dedication make all this possible.

Concert Production: Polly Adema, Mahala Bundy, Rena David, Abigail Farrell, Jane Gitschier, Rebecca Hogenhuis, Julie Koo, Casey Leones, Craig Middleton, Lisa Ochs, Rebecca Primoff, Katie Riggs, Tim Smith, Bert Vander Meeren

Concert Program: Alexandra Amati, Carol Douglass, Éamonn McManus, Sally Nielsen, Barbara Paschke

Marketing: Frances Lee, Hallie Holtzman, Peter Nissen

Community Engagement: Tricia Bell, Judy Goldstein, Betty Luk, Barbara Paschke, Bert Vander Meeren

Singer Resources & Rehearsals: Alexandra Amati, Polly Adema, Tricia Bell, Mike Burch, Rhys Cheung, Rena David, Stacy Flaherty, Jane Gitschier, Louis Lao, Casey Leones, Yi Liu-Polczynski, Beckett Madden-Woods, Éamonn McManus, Craig Middleton, Sally Nielsen, Rebecca Primoff, Ruth Tringham, Bert Vander Meeren

Concert Recording: Louis Lao, Mathew Meyers, Lisa Ochs, Mike Ogrinc, Ruth Tringham, Yi Liu-Polczynski, Will Welch

Nominating Committee: Polly Adema, Hallie Holtzman, Liban Mohamed-Schwoebel, Sally Nielsen, Bert Vander Meeren

Ushers: Carol Braves, Roberta Duncan, Gail Galli, Davis Gikundi, Lisa Klein, Alan Perlberg, Annabelle Wasserman

With heartfelt appreciation, we extend our deepest thanks to each and every singer for the incredible dedication, tireless effort, generous contributions, and genuine care that made the continued success of our choir possible.

JOIN OUR COMMUNITY

- Invite a friend to our next concert or bring a child for free
- Make a donation
- Audition for the choir
- Follow us on Facebook and Instagram
- Subscribe to our YouTube channel

Visit sfbach.org to...

Donate
Audition
Join our mailing list
Learn about our programs

CONDUCTOR'S THANKS

Alexandra Amati, Tricia Bell and the Covid Advisory Group, Mahala Bundy, Calvary Presbyterian Church (and their wonderful staff), David Conant, Sara Couden, Rena David, Elliott JG Encarnación, Cara Gabrielson, Yongyu Gao, Carol Henri, Hallie Holtzmann, Michael Kaulkin, Cara Keller, Louis Lao, Casey Leones, Éamonn McManus, Yi Liu-Polczynski, Sally Nielsen, Peter Nissen, Michael Ogrinc, Barbara Paschke, Dara Phung, Curtis Streetman, Dan Priven-Troncoso, SFBC's Board of Directors, James Thomassen, Ruth Tringham, Bert Vander Meeren, Chris Wemp, the rehearsal recording and set up crew, all the ushers, AND the entire, wonderful SF Bach Choir!

SAN FRANCISCO BACH CHOIR

Magen Solomon, *Artistic Director*

Christopher Wemp, *Assistant Conductor*

Dara Phung, *Collaborative Pianist*

Cara Keller*, Choir Manager*

Dan Priven-Troncoso, *House Manager*

James Thomassen, *Box Office Manager*

Jeanne and Stu Korn, Korn and Co., Inc, *Bookkeeping*

Martha Westland and Michael Kaulkin, *Administrative Consultants*

Elizabeth Anderson, Ariel Glassman Barwick, Caroline Rensel, Kirsten Rogers*, Marketing & Fundraising Consultants*

SOPRANOS
Tricia Bell
Rhys Cheung
Rebecca Conant
Joan Curry
Abigail Farrell
Jane Gitschier
Carol Henri
Hallie Holtzman
Julie Koo
Betty Luk
Katherine McStravick
Sally Nielsen
Ruby Pleasure
Philippa Zuckerman

ALTOS
Mahala Bundy
Kate Collignon
Rena David
Cynthia Dodge
Carol Douglass
Susannah French
Judy Goldstein
Ofurhe Igbinedion
Casey Leones
Yi Liu-Polczynski
Laurie Olsen
Barbara Paschke
Rebecca Primoff
Judy Stone
Ruth Tringham

TENORS
James Bainton
David Conant
Stacy Flaherty
Ellen Freed
Tyler Hoyt
Louis Lao
Beckett Madden-Woods
Liban Mohamed
Katie Riggs

BASSES
Mike Burch
Quinn Evans
Éamonn McManus
Craig Middleton
Lee Morrow
Jason Payne
Douglas Pleasure
Tim Smith
Bert Vander Meeren
Christopher Wemp

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Hallie Holtzman, *President* • David Conant, *Vice President*

Betty Luk, *Secretary* • Rena David, *Treasurer*

Tim Smith • Tippi MacKenzie • Craig Middleton • Sally Nielsen • Judy Stone