

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS CONTACT:

Adam Fong

info@sfca.org

(415) 494-8149

IMAGES available for download: <http://www.sfca.org/press-page>

SAN FRANCISCO CHORAL ARTISTS

Magen Solomon, Artistic Director

DECEMBER CONCERTS EXPLORE MUSICAL IMPACT OF MARTIN LUTHER AFTER 500 YEARS

**Unique choral program includes singalongs, tracing of
Lutheran tunes from past to present**

A Rebel's Christmas: Martin Luther's Musical Reformation

- Saturday, December 9, 2017, 8pm
St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 600 Colorado Avenue, Palo Alto 94306
- Sunday, December 10, 2017, 4pm
St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 114 Montecito Avenue, Oakland 94610
- Sunday, December 17, 2017, 4pm
St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 1111 O'Farrell Street, San Francisco 94109

San Francisco, November 30, 2017 — **San Francisco Choral Artists** (SFCA) launches its 2017–18 season, with *A Rebel's Christmas: Martin Luther's Musical Reformation* (December 9, 10, 17, 2017), a holiday inspired program that explores the roots of beloved church tunes, follows them into the 21st century, and examines how one man changed the course of music.

The choir will perform works by Bach, Brahms, Distler, Handl, Mendelssohn, Praetorius, Schein, and Walther. The program will also feature new works by three composers:

- Ash Stemke, a young composer from Tallahassee, Florida, is this year's winner of the SFCA *New Voices Project*, a commissioning competition for composers under age 30. His composition, "Be Still, and Know," will receive its world premiere.
- SFCA's Composer-in-Residence for the year, Oakland-based Michael Kaulkin, contributes one new work to the set, entitled "The Noble Art of Music."

- The work SFCA's *Composer-Not-in-Residence*, Sylke Zimpel, will be featured twice, with her composition "Es traumet einer Frauen," as well as her new arrangement of the well-known chorale "Joseph lieber, Joseph mein."

Audiences will have the opportunity to join the signers of SFCA in singing Lutheran tunes in English, including "Joseph lieber, Joseph mein," "Nun komm der Heiden Heiland," and "Von Himmel hoch."

The Choral Artists, led by Artistic Director **Magen Solomon**, has been widely recognized for imaginative programming and superior musicianship over its more than three-decade history in the Bay Area. *San Francisco Classical Voice* has praised the Choral Artists for a "wide dynamic range...clear enunciation, sensitive harmonic blend, and tight rhythmic cohesion," and *artsf.com* has placed the choir "...amongst the foremost unaccompanied singing groups...on this or any other coast." SFCA was awarded the Chorus America/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming in 2012 and again in 2015.

TICKETS

Single tickets for all concerts are \$28 in advance/\$33 at the door, or \$25 advance / \$29 at the door for seniors; \$12.50 advance / \$15 at the door for individuals 30 and under with ID. Season subscriptions are also available at \$75, with a discounted price of \$67 for seniors 65 and over. Tickets may be purchased online at www.sfca.org, or by mailing a check or credit card number to Attention: Orders, SF Choral Artists, 55 Taylor Street, San Francisco, CA 94102. Call 415-494-8149 or email tickets@sfca.org for more information.

ABOUT SAN FRANCISCO CHORAL ARTISTS

San Francisco Choral Artists presents imaginative programs of new and old works that entice, reward, inspire, and intellectually challenge listeners and performers. The Choral Artists have brought over 250 world premieres to Bay Area audiences in stunning performances of new works alongside music of the last 600 years. They have released four recordings, sung at national conferences, and twice earned the Chorus America/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming.

Under the *Roger Nixon Living Music Initiative*, SFCA provides support for new works by living composers through six programs for composers in all stages of their careers; these programs are expanding the repertoire for chamber choir. The 2017-18 season features a new work by the winner of the *New Voices Project* for

composers under 30, world premieres of new pieces by the *Composers-in-* and *Not-in-Residence* for each concert set, plus special *SFCA+1* collaborations.

About Artistic Director Magen Solomon

Artistic Director since 1995, Magen Solomon avidly cultivates engagements with living composers to bridge the gulf between audience, composer, and performer. The Choral Artists are known for their imaginative concerts—at once musically, intellectually, and emotionally engaging; composer Ted Allen called SFCA “the choral composer’s dream choir.” Under her leadership SFCA has established the *Composer-in-* and *Not-in-Residence* programs, the *Composers Invitational*, the *New Voices Project* competition to help launch the artistic careers of young composers under age 30, *SFCA+1* to expand the repertoire for chamber choir and a single instrument, and the *Wild Card* Program to expand SFCA composer support. Active nationally as a guest conductor, adjudicator, and clinician, Dr. Solomon is also Artistic Director of the San Francisco Bach Choir, has taught at major colleges and universities, and directed the Oakland Symphony Chorus for twelve years.

About *Composer-in-Residence* Michael Kaulkin

Oakland composer Michael Kaulkin's choral, orchestral and chamber music has been performed around the world. In the Bay Area, his works have been performed by the Oakland East Bay Symphony, San Francisco Choral Artists, Pacific Mozart Ensemble, Mission Chamber Orchestra, LIEDER ALIVE! among others. A native of Washington, D.C., he holds a Master of Music from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where he studied composition with Conrad Susa after a previous 3-year period studying composition and choral conducting at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest, Hungary. In addition to composing, he juggles positions as Assistant Music Director of San Francisco's Calling All Choir and on the Musicianship and Composition faculty of the San Francisco Conservatory's Pre-College Division. Kaulkin is also the founder of Swirly Music, providing self-publishing composers with an online storefront for their works in print.

About *Composer-Not-in-Residence* Sylke Zimpel

Sylke Zimpel studied composition at Dresden High school of Music and choral conducting at Weimar and Lyon. Since 1986 she has worked as a freelance composer and conductor. The focus of her compositional work is setting modern poetry to music for all kinds of choirs and arrangements of folksongs, with a special interest in Eastern European and Yiddish folksongs. Zimpel has won several composition awards and scholarships in her own country and abroad, the most recent in Casa Baldi in Olevano Romano, Italy. In Dresden, she founded and has lead

the women's choir femmes vocales since 1994, and chorbühne TRITONUS dresden since 1984. Both ensembles perform contemporary choral music as well as international folksongs in new settings.

About *New Voices Project* winner Ash Stemke

The music of Ash Stemke (b. 1991) explores symmetry, trajectory, organicism, and humor, and traverses several mediums. He has been commissioned by the UNC Lab Orchestra (Vincent L. Povázsay, conductor), Holy Trinity Lutheran Church (Laura Alexander, cantor), saxophonist Wally Wallace, and a film score for violinist Christin Danchi that will be sent to the moon in 2018 as part of the Moon Arts Ark project at Carnegie Mellon University. Ash's music has been featured at festivals and conferences such as NSEME, DIGITECH, numerous SCI conferences, and the Schoenberg Academy in Vienna, Austria. His works have also been performed by the Tallis Chamber Orchestra in Wilmington, NC and Present~Continuous in Greensboro, NC. Ash currently studies composition with Clifton Callender at Florida State University (DM; anticipated graduation 2019), where he has been recognized as an outstanding graduate teaching assistant. Ash holds degrees from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (MM-Composition and PBC-Music Theory) and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (BM with Highest Honors), and has studied composition with Steven Bryant, Mark Engebretson, Alejandro Rutty, and Allen Anderson.

####

END