



Media Contact: Brenda Hughes
415/244-9770 or brenda@theatricalpr.com

**THE WORLD PREMIERE OF
LILITH, THE NIGHT DEMON IN ONE LEWD ACT
OPENS MAY 1 WITH PERFORMANCES ON MAY 3 & 4
PRESENTED BY VERETSKI PASS AND THE SAN FRANCISCO CHORAL ARTISTS**

BERKELEY, March 28, 2014— Veretski Pass's newest and most daring project, *Lilith, the Night Demon in One Lewd Act*, will be produced in collaboration with the San Francisco Choral Artists, and enjoy its world premiere on May 1. The bawdy alternate Jewish story of Creation that focuses on Adam's "first" wife, Lilith, will be presented as an edgy folk opera, with music composed by Joshua Horowitz. Performances will be given at the Osher Marin JCC on May 1, at the JCC of the East Bay in Berkeley on May 3, and at Menlo-Atherton Performing Arts Center on May 4. Following each performance of the opera will be a traditional "klezmer dance party" with the music for which Veretski Pass is best known.

Michael Wex stars as the story's narrator, with soprano **Heather Klein** as the wicked Lilith, and bass **Anthony Russell** as the frustrated Adam. The tale is helped along by the voices of the [San Francisco Choral Artists](#) under the direction of **Magen Solomon**. **Veretski Pass** (Stu Brotman, Joshua Horowitz and Cookie Segelstein) provides the extraordinary instrumental backup, and 9-year-old **Ariel Spagnolo** is welcomed briefly as a savvy, young street vendor. Artist **Phil Blank** spent hundreds of hours creating the artwork for the project, culminating in a complete annotated, illustrated libretto that will be made available at the performances.

The mythological figure Lilith did not appear in the Bible (although possibly mentioned briefly in Isaiah 35:14 in a description of utter desolation). Later, however, she would be found in medieval times – in the Babylonian Talmud, with references from Mesopotamia and the Dead Sea Scrolls. Legend has it that she was created at the same time as Adam, but refused to be subservient to him and was forced to flee Paradise.

She became an irresistibly seductive demonic woman, a seductress of unwary men, and a savage killer of children. For this she became the demon responsible for the death of babies. To guard against Lilith, even today Jews hang amulets on each wall of a newborn baby's room. Modern feminists in the 1970s, however, latched onto the rabbinical story of punishment for resisting male domination, and used Lilith as a symbol of oppressed womanhood.

Joshua Horowitz's extraordinary and often bizarre score to *Lilith, the Night Demon* uses elements from medieval works, so that the music weaves together ancient and modern motives and explores some of the lesser-known facets of Jewish mysticism and superstition, integrating them into a new composition.

Veretski Pass offers a unique and exciting combination of virtuosic musicianship and raw energy that has excited concertgoers across the world. The trio plays Old Country Music with origins in the Ottoman Empire, once fabled as the borderlands of the East and the West. In a true collage of Carpathian, Jewish, Rumanian and Ottoman styles, typical suites contain dances from Moldavia and Bessarabia; Jewish melodies from Poland and Rumania; Hutzul wedding music from Carpathian-Ruthenia; and haunting Rebetic aires from Smyrna, seamlessly integrated with original compositions. The trio's CDs have repeatedly been on the 10-best recording lists of journalists. Veretski Pass takes its name from the mountain pass through which Magyar tribes crossed into the Carpathian basin to settle what later became the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

San Francisco Choral Artists, a 24-voice chamber ensemble specializing in innovative programming, is widely recognized as one of the finest choral ensembles on the West Coast. SFCA has premiered over 230 works and is winner of the 2012 ASCAP/Chorus America Award for Adventurous Programming, affirming its reputation for eclectic programming and stunning performances of music spanning 600 years. The Choral Artists offer audiences three to four concert sets per season in locations across the San Francisco Bay Area, showcasing new works by living composers programmed alongside masterworks and favorites from the choral repertoire. SFCA performs mostly unaccompanied and also cultivates unusual collaborations, performing with Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, The Alexander String Quartet, Composers Inc., Veretski Pass, and The Whole Noyse early music wind band, among others.

Michael Wex (Narrator), columnist, bon vivant and raconteur, has been called "a Yiddish national treasure." He is author of *Born to Kvetch*, the bestselling book ever written about Yiddish, and was hailed by *The New York Times* as "wise, witty and altogether wonderful." A native of Lethbridge, Alberta, Wex has worked in virtually every area of contemporary Yiddish. Some of his songs have been recorded by such klezmer bands as Sukke, The Flying Bulgars, and 2007 Grammy winners, The Klezmatics.

Heather Klein (Lilith) has performed across the U.S., Canada and Europe, both as a soloist and with musical groups and opera companies. However her passion has been Yiddish classical song. Highlights have included singing with mentors Three Yiddish Divas, and touring with the National Yiddish Theatre-Folksbiene. She has released two Yiddish musical albums, including "Shifreles Portret: A Yiddish Art Song Project" with her "Inextinguishable Trio." She performed Yiddish art song in New York City at YIVO Institute for Jewish Research for the last 3 years in concert, and as a part of Sidney Krum Young Artist Series. She played the role of Rosie in the world-premiere of "Ravensbruek Project," a cabaret opera based on the Holocaust, before a sold-out theater in Boston. She also starred recently in *Di Megileh* in Berkeley.

Anthony (Mordechai Tzvi) Russell (Adam) has worked primarily in the field of opera in the San Francisco Bay and New York Metro areas for the past fifteen years. Highlights include the West Coast premiere of Anthony Davis's *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* and the world premiere of Philip Glass's *Appomattox* with the San Francisco Opera Company. More recently, Anthony has devoted himself in the recital repertoire of Sidor Belarsky (1898-1975), one of the

twentieth century's most prolific performers of cantorial music, Chassidic *nigunim* and Yiddish art song. Anthony's continuing development of Belarsky's repertoire has brought him to the stages of the JCC in Manhattan, Symphony Space, the Ashkenaz Festival and Ideacity Conference in Toronto, the Montreal Jewish Music Festival and the recent Jewish Music Festival in Berkeley.

Tickets range from \$25 - \$49 (with discounts for seniors & students, and **20% discount for advance purchase**) and are available for all three performances at <http://brownpapertickets.com/producer/6139>.

For more information visit [Lilith the Night Demon website](#).

The production is funded in part by San Francisco Friends of Chamber Music's Musical Grant Program: www.sffcm.org

#####

For Calendar Editors:

A World Premiere!

Veretski Pass and SF Choral Artists present

LILITH, THE NIGHT DEMON IN ONE LEWD ACT

The bawdy alternate Jewish story of Creation, presented as a magical folk opera
With Michael Wex (narrator), Heather Klein (Lilith) and Anthony Russell (Adam)

Thursday May 1, at 7:30 PM

(Presented by Veretski Pass with SF Choral Artists,

Hoytt Theater, Osher Marin JCC,

200 N. San Pedro Rd., San Rafael, CA. 94903

Tkts: \$30 - \$39 (Advance) \$39 - \$49 at the door.

In association with Osher Marin JCC and the Jewish Music Festival.

Saturday May 3, at 8 PM

JCC of the East Bay

1414 Walnut St, Berkeley, CA 94709

Tkts: \$25 - \$30 (Advance) \$30 - \$35 at the door

In association with the Jewish Music Festival and KlezCalifornia.

Sunday May 4, at 4 PM

Menlo-Atherton Performing Arts Center

Menlo-Atherton High School

555 Middlefield Road, Atherton, CA, 94027

Tkts: \$30 - \$39 (Advance) \$39 - \$49 at the door

In association with the Jewish Music Festival, KlezCalifornia, and the City of Menlo Park.

Advance tickets -- 20% discount -- click <http://brownpapertickets.com/producer/6139>

More info: www.liliththenightdemon.com

#####