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“ a perfect unison blend of almost unearthly beauty”

– Fanfare Magazine, October 2012

SAN FRANCISCO CHORAL ARTISTS
Magen Solomon, Artistic Director

present

Wild Woods & Starry Nights

Sunday December 2, 2012, at 4 PM:

St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 1111 O'Farrell St (at Franklin), **San Francisco**, CA 94109

Saturday December 8, at 8 PM:

St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 600 Colorado Ave, **Palo Alto**, CA 94306

Sunday December 9, 2012, at 4 PM:

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 114 Montecito Ave, **Oakland**, CA 94610

TICKETS: \$12-\$25 Advance Purchase; \$15-\$30 At the door.

<http://www.sfca.org/tickets>

(415) 494-8149

San Francisco, November 2, 2012—**The award-winning San Francisco Choral Artists explore images of nature in a program spanning five centuries of Christmas music.**

The performances—featuring gems from the Renaissance, masterworks by Howells, Poulenc, and Kodály, as well as two world premieres by living composers—promise to present audiences with all the group has been hailed for: lively rhythmic renditions of beloved tunes, compelling melodies, and a choral sound that can be ethereal and atmospheric as well as powerful and lush.

These concerts also mark the 15th anniversary of the group's successful Composer-in-Residence program, one of the fruits of Artistic Director Magen Solomon's commitment to help launch the careers of young composers. This year the "Composer-in-Residence" title goes to Mark Winges. His world premiere *Toward the Horizon* is one

of three new works he is writing for the group this season. He explains:

“Since I purposely use sounds instead of words in this piece, the work’s “language” draws us forward, but never really presents a definitive meaning. To me this is similar to how the horizon suggests a place (emotional, intellectual or otherwise) toward which we move but at which we never quite arrive.”

In addition to *Winges’ Toward the Horizon* the program features a second world premiere: *The Darkling Thrush* by Composer-Not-in-Residence Eleanor Aversa. Her work is set to Thomas Hardy’s poem *The Darkling Thrush* from 1901. Eleanor says:

“This poem has long been a favorite of mine, and its dramatic scope seemed particularly appropriate for a choral piece. As a composer, I was most excited to reflect the contrast between the anxious speaker in a dark landscape and the bird’s sudden and joyful music. After setting the entire text as is, I added a section—beginning with a tenor solo—that retells key sections of the poem, but now from the bird’s point of view. For this, I used short melodies taken from field recordings of the Hermit Thrush and the Wood Thrush.”

Nationally-recognized **San Francisco Choral Artists**, recently awarded the Chorus America/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming, regularly champion the work of living composers and are known for their eclectic programming. They have premiered or commissioned over 175 choral works, performed at American Choral Directors Association and Chorus America conferences, and released four CDs, including *With Strings Attached*, a critically acclaimed collaboration with the Alexander String Quartet. The ensemble has been called “amongst the foremost unaccompanied singing groups ... on this or any other coast” (artssf.com) and is sought after for guest appearances and collaborations. San Francisco Choral Artists has been described by composer Kirke Mechem as “a Bay Area treasure.” The Choral Artists have partnered to bring new music to young people through programs at the UC Berkeley New Music Project, SF Conservatory of Music, St. Mary’s College of California, SF School of the Arts, De Anza College, and the San Joaquin Office of Education. Additional musical collaborations have been with Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, The Alexander String Quartet, Veretski Pass, The Whole Noyse, Composers Inc., and Sonos Handbell Ensemble.

Magen Solomon, Artistic Director, avidly cultivates engagements with living composers to bridge the gulf between audience, composer, and performer. Under her leadership SFCFA has established the Composer-in-Residence Program, Composer-Not-in-Residence Program, Composer’s Invitational Program, and the “New Voices Project” Competition. Audiences, composers, performers, and students are fortunate to enjoy the fruits of her unique programming and her commitment to presenting a wide range of excellent new music. An innovative teacher and conductor, Ms. Solomon is Director of Choral Activities at Santa Clara University, and is active across the United States and abroad as clinician, teacher, and guest conductor. She has collaborated on performances of major works with Michael Tilson Thomas, Kent Nagano, Nicolas McGegan, Christoph von Dohnányi, and Helmuth Rilling, among others. Ms. Solomon is also Artistic Director of the Stockton Chorale and Master Chorale, and served as Music Director of the Oakland Symphony Chorus for twelve years. She taught at the University of Southern California from 2004-2010, is editor of the *New Voices in Research* column of ACDA’s Choral Journal, and has published a scholarly edition of 16th-century partsongs. **END.**