



SAN FRANCISCO CHORAL ARTISTS

Magen Solomon, Artistic Director

and

Veretski Pass

Cookie Segelstein, violin; Joshua Horowitz, tsimbl, accordion, piano; Stuart Brotman, basy, tilinca, baraban

present

Love, Loss, and Latkes

“The group’s unity of phrasing was especially praiseworthy, with crisp entrances and beautifully shaped lines across the program’s gamut of styles.”

– Benjamin Frandzel, San Francisco Classical Voice, June 2013

Saturday March 22, 2014, 8:00 pm

St. Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church, 500 De Haro Street, San Francisco 94107

Sunday March 23, 2014, 4:00 pm

Temple Sinai, 2808 Summit Street, Oakland 94609

Sunday March 30, 2014, 4:00 pm

All Saints’ Episcopal Church Parish Hall, 555 Waverley Street, Palo Alto 94301

TICKETS: \$30 at the door; discounts for advance purchase, seniors, and students.

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San Francisco, February 24, 2014— Klezmer improv trio Veretski Pass and 20-voice San Francisco Choral Artists present their third collaboration featuring music from Jewish culture. Magen Solomon’s thoughtful and adventurous programming has allowed for a wonderfully varied view on this year’s themes of love and loss. The repertoire includes intimate compositions by Weelkes and Mendelssohn, lively Yiddish and Ladino folk songs, *Somewhere* from Bernstein’s *West Side Story*, an unknown gem from the Spanish

Renaissance, and world premieres by Benjamin Taylor, Kala Pierson, Wayne Eastwood, William Vollinger, and Joshua Horowitz.

Joshua Horowitz' works, written for the combined ensembles, give audiences the unique opportunity to preview the magical folk opera *Lilith the Night Demon*, a co-production of San Francisco Choral Artists and Veretski Pass that premieres on the first weekend of May 2014.

The Words by Composer-Not-in-Residence Kala Pierson meditates on love as a universal human right, and honors university student Roger Mbede of Cameroon, who was sentenced to three years in prison for sending the text message "I'm very much in love w/u" to another man. The words of this message are sung slowly and meditatively, with difference in dynamics and color providing character and texture to the piece. "It is not a standard choral composition," says Solomon. "It really pushes us technically to have intense control. In places we have to keep tone color, pitch, and dynamic absolutely steady, while in other places the sound has to come from nothing, build, and then disappear into nothing again."

Composer-in-Residence Benjamin Taylor wrote two works for this program – *Lullaby Chaconne* and *Morning*. *Lullaby Chaconne*, with a traditional rocking rhythm, deals gently with the loss of a child. *Morning* describes dawn and the explosion of light. "It has brilliant colors in it and clever word painting through bi-tonality," says Solomon. "When singing 'Night hath yielded up a birthplace for morning,' the men's voices (night) yield, in the final chord, to the key of the women's voices."

A passionate supporter of living composers, Solomon's warm embrace for this art shines through when she talks about Wayne Eastwood's *Not While Blood is Strong*: "It is a strong, engaging piece, with excellent texture and counterpoint. Wayne always thinks on six different levels at once, so everything he writes has multiple layers, that are interrelated in ways you would never expect." The piece also sensitively sets the many different emotions of Emma Lazarus' poem *Life and Art*. The opening "Not while blood is strong" is loud, then drops to piano and lower pitches for "The eyes are veiled." At the end, some of the material from the opening returns as a quasi da capo but with new coloring to match the new text: "But when dream is done."

On including *Somewhere* from Bernstein's *West Side Story* in this program, Solomon says: "I wanted to represent some of the many Jewish American composers who are not solely classical composers. The text and the ideas of this lovely tune and fine arrangement fit perfectly with our themes of love and loss."

Two pieces on the program share the same title *When David Heard*, on the Old Testament text that describes King David learning of his son Absalom's death. The concerts feature a Renaissance setting by Thomas Weelkes and a modern setting by Norman Dinerstein. Both are heart-wrenching despite their radically different musical

and harmonic styles. Dinerstein's broader palette creates a particularly huge, dramatic emotional range.

More texts from the Old Testament feature in Mendelssohn's intimate setting of Psalm 100, and in Vivanco's gorgeous *Sicut Liliium*, set to part of the Song of Songs. Solomon describes her choice to include this work: "Though Vivanco was a Catholic composer, I wanted to include this piece for two reasons: The Song of Songs texts are spectacular (and appropriate!) but all the Renaissance settings are by Christians. This particular piece, however, is included to honor one of my most important musical mentors, L. Dean Nuernberger (Oberlin College) who passed away this year. It was he who found the manuscript in a church in Salamanca, Spain. Sometimes "new" music is also old!"

Program (pieces marked * are world premieres)

The Sacred

Psalm 100	Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)
Not While Blood is Strong*	Wayne Eastwood (b. 1946)
Y'fey nof	Paul Ben-Haim (1897-1984)
Morning*	Benjamin Taylor (b. 1977)

I am that I am

Echiye*	Joshua Horowitz (b. 1960)
Basmiden*	Joshua Horowitz

Loss

When David heard	Thomas Weelkes (c.1575-1623)
Lullaby Chaconne*	Benjamin Taylor
When David heard	Norman Dinerstein (b.1937)

Love and Courtship

Tumbalalaika	Sylke Zimpel (b.1959)
The Words*	Kala Pierson (b.1977)
Sicut Liliium	Sebastian de Vivanco (1551-1622)
Somewhere	Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990), arr. Robert Edgerton

Naming and Loss

Nehmen*	Josh Horowitz
Khulem*	Josh Horowitz
NokhsPil*	Josh Horowitz

Food and Drink

A Nign	Lazar Weiner (1897-1982), Alice Parker, arr.
Two Banquets*	William Vollinger (b. 1945)
Hamisha Asar	Flory Jagoda (b.1923)