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SAN FRANCISCO CHORAL ARTISTS

Magen Solomon, Artistic Director

PRAYERS FROM THE ARK AND OTHER CHORAL GEMS

HIGHLIGHT MARCH CONCERTS

Adventurous Chamber Choir Brings Ancient and Modern Jewish Texts to

Life in Concerts in Three Bay Area Cities

Prayers from the Ark: Songs of Lamentation and Jubilation

- Saturday, March 12, 2016, 8:00 pm
St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Parish Hall, 600 Colorado Avenue, Palo Alto 94306
- Sunday, March 13, 2016, 4:00 pm
Temple Sinai, 2808 Summit Street, Oakland 94609
- Monday, March 14, 2016, 7:30 pm
Music at Meyer Series, Temple Emanu-El, 2 Lake Street, San Francisco 94118

San Francisco, February 8, 2016 — **San Francisco Choral Artists** (SFCA), the Bay Area chamber choir celebrated over its 30-year history for imaginative programming and diverse repertoire, will present a program exploring the wide range of human emotion in ancient and modern Jewish texts, from celebration to mourning to quests for life's meaning. The three-concert set, titled ***Prayers from the Ark: Songs of Lamentation and Jubilation*** (March 12, 13, 14, 2016), includes rarely heard Yiddish and Ladino folk music, liturgical works, Psalms, songs, and chant spanning many centuries.

This concert borrows its title from 20th English composer Ivor Davies' brilliant set of pieces, "Prayers from the Ark". The work sets six poems written by Carmen Bernos De Gastzold (trans. Rumer Godden) in the 1940s during the German occupation of France. Each prayer expresses the personal perspective of an animal in Noah's Ark, evoking the uncertainty of Europe during this perilous time.

SFCA Artistic Director Magen Solomon:

Davies' setting of six of the "Prayers" is **a perfect marriage between text and music** .

The work is better-known in England, and deserves to be heard here in the US much more frequently. It's in the same category as other iconic sets of short a cappella pieces, like Britten's "Five Flower Songs" and Vaughan Williams' "Three Shakespeare Songs"; they're not flashy or quirky, just spectacularly good choral music.

The most unusual and ground-breaking works will be two premieres by prominent young composers: Berkeley-based [Robin Estrada](#) has set, in Tagalog, the beloved Ecclesiastes 3 text (“To everything a season...”) which uses traditional Filipino musical elements to build wonderfully complex textures. *Composer-Not-in-Residence* [Shawn Crouch](#) has created a driving, powerful work, entitled “Invocation”, in which 21 ancient words are heard in 20 different arrangements with the proper sequence heard only at the very end.

SFCA’s March program will also feature settings of secular Yiddish and Ladino songs, including three world premieres: “Tumbalalaika” by Oakland composer Michael Kaulkin, “Dort Baym Breg” by SFCA’s current Composer-in-Residence [John Kelley](#), and “Adiyo Kerida,” arranged by SFCA Assistant Conductor Tina Harrington, as well as Paul Ben-Haim’s “Yo m’enamori d’un aire” and works by Stephen Glass, Joshua Jacobson, David Nowakowsky, Arnold Schönberg, Malcolm Singer, and Karen Tarlow.

The sixth world premieres is by SFCA’s under 30 [New Voices Project](#) competition winner for 2016, Oakland-based James Tecuatl-Lee.

A reception will follow each performance.

TICKETS

Single tickets 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. 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 (SFCA) is a 24-voice chamber choir dedicated to presenting imaginative programming of diverse repertoire. SFCA has brought over 240 world premieres to Bay Area audiences in eclectic programs and stunning performances which offer 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 expansive support for new works by living composers through six programs for composers in all stages of their careers, including the *New Voices Project* for composers under 30, the *Composer-in-Residence* and *Composer-Not-in-Residence* programs, the *Composers Invitational*, *SFCA+1*, and *Wild Card Commissions*. With *SFCA+1*, the ensemble fosters yet more innovative repertoire in programs featuring instrumental partners (last season, Mads Tolling). SFCA has also collaborated with Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, The Alexander String Quartet, Veretski Pass, Composers, Inc., The Whole Noyse, actors, and dancers.

SFCA Artistic Director since 1994, [Magen Solomon](#) avidly cultivates engagements with living composers to bridge the gulf between audience, composer, and performer. Under her leadership SFCA has established the above six composer-focused programs--the *Composers-in* and *Not-in-Residence*, the *Composers Invitational*, the *New Voices Project* competition, *Wild Card Commissions*, and *SFCA+1*. An innovative teacher and conductor, Solomon is active across the US and abroad as clinician, teacher, and guest conductor, and she has collaborated on performances of major choral works with Michael Tilson Thomas, Kent Nagano, Nicolas McGegan, Christoph von Dohnányi, and Helmuth Rilling, among others.

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