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SAN FRANCISCO CHORAL ARTISTS

Magen Solomon, Artistic Director

ANNOUNCES 2015-16 SEASON

FEATURING THREE CREATIVE PROGRAMS OF NEW AND CLASSIC WORKS IN DECEMBER, MARCH AND JUNE in THREE BAY AREA CITIES

2015-16 season showcases the choir's diverse repertoire and innovative programming, with new works by resident composers John Kelley and Shawn Crouch, and a collaboration with Bay Area "contemporary Baroque" string ensemble Galax Quartet

PROGRAM 1: *Tales from Wales: A British Christmas*

- Saturday December 12, 2015, 8:00 pm
St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 1111 O'Farrell Street, San Francisco 94109
- Sunday December 13, 2015, 4:00 pm
St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 114 Montecito Avenue, Oakland 94610
- Saturday December 19, 2015, 8:00 pm
St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 600 Colorado Avenue, Palo Alto 94306

PROGRAM 2: *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

PROGRAM 3: *21st-Century Baroque* with guest artist Galax Quartet

- Sunday June 5, 2016, 4:00 pm
St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 1111 O'Farrell Street, San Francisco 94109
- Saturday June 11, 2016, 8:00 pm
St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 600 Colorado Avenue, Palo Alto 94306
- Sunday June 12, 2016, 4:00 pm
St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 114 Montecito Avenue, Oakland 94610

San Francisco, November 4, 2015 — **San Francisco Choral Artists (SFCA)**, the Bay Area chamber choir celebrated over its 30-year history for imaginative programming and diverse repertoire, announces its 2015-16 season, with three programs presented in December, March and June, in venues across the region. Winner of the 2015 Chorus America/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming, the ensemble, led by Artistic Director **Magen Solomon**, has been praised for its “wide dynamic range...clear enunciation, sensitive harmonic blend, and tight rhythmic cohesion” (*San Francisco Classical Voice*). Each of this season’s programs features premieres of commissioned works by Composer-in-Residence, **John Kelley**, and by Composer-Not-in-Residence, **Shawn Crouch**. The Bay Area’s **Galax Quartet**, an ensemble exploring the connections between contemporary and Baroque repertoire, joins SFCA for a new collaboration to close the season.

About this season’s featured composers, Artistic Director Magen Solomon says, “John [Kelley] has a wonderful gift for melody, and for revealing the different facets of a tune through changing vocal textures. A prolific composer of both sacred and secular music, John’s stylistic range, from jazz and pop to lush romanticism to earthy folk styles, is supported by a deep understanding of the vocal instrument.”

She continues, “I have long admired Shawn [Crouch]’s compositions, and his vocal writing especially. For our first concerts this season, he brings us a creative and nuanced setting of Dylan Thomas, with the wonderful text enlivened with word-painting, and a variety of dynamic textures.”

Tales from Wales: A British Christmas (December 12, 13, 19, 2015), the first program of the season, celebrates the holidays with gems from the British Isles, from Medieval songs to Irish, Scottish, and Welsh hymns, to early work by Byrd, and 20th and 21st Century music by Tavener, Bennett, Vaughan Williams, Martin Dalby and John Paynter. The program features dramatic readings from Dylan Thomas’ beloved *A Child’s Christmas in Wales*, and world premieres by Composers-in- and Not-in-Residence **John Kelley** and **Shawn Crouch**.

Prayers from the Ark: Songs of Lamentation and Jubilation (March 12, 13, 14, 2016) explores the wide range of human emotion in ancient and modern Jewish texts, from celebration to mourning to quests for life’s meaning. The program includes rarely heard Yiddish and Ladino folk music, liturgical works, Psalms, songs, and chant spanning many centuries. Works include Ivor Davies’ *Prayers from the Ark*, as well as works by Milhaud, Mendelssohn, Rossi, Zimpel, Schönberg and Weill. Composers-in- and Not-in-Residence John Kelley and Shawn Crouch premiere new works, as does former SFCA Composer-in-Residence **Robin Estrada**. Since 2005, SFCA’s New Voices Project for composers under the age of 30 has promoted high-quality new choral works through an annual competition, and the (as-yet-unannounced) 2016 winning work will also be premiered.

San Francisco Choral Artists’ 2015-16 Season concludes with a characteristically eclectic program, ***21st-Century Baroque*** (June 5, 11, 12, 2016), featuring guest artist, the Bay Area “contemporary Baroque” ensemble, **Galax Quartet**. Galax Quartet’s instrumentation of two violins, viola da gamba and cello, is inspired by an 18th-Century ensemble configuration, and the group’s debut CD was praised by the *San Francisco Chronicle*: “This fascinating new release...boasts an endless dialog between tradition and innovation, past and present. It’s mesmerizing.”

The collaborative program includes Baroque and contemporary music for choir and quartet, performing together and separately, with works by Bach and Purcell, and premieres by Ted Allen, Veronika Krausas, Robinson McClellan, Roy Whelden, and resident composers John Kelley and Shawn Crouch.

TICKETS

Season subscriptions are priced at \$75, with a discounted price of \$67 for seniors 65 and over. 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. Single tickets for the December performances are on sale now; single tickets for March and June 2016 performances go on sale in November. 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 230 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 five 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, and the Composers Invitational. With SFCA's newest program, *SFCA+1*, the ensemble fosters yet more innovative repertoire in programs featuring an instrumental partners (last season, Mads Tolling). SFCA has also collaborated with Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, The Alexander String Quartet, Veretski Pass, Composers, Inc. and The Whole Noyse.

SFCA Artistic Director since 1995, **Magen Solomon** avidly cultivates engagements with living composers to bridge the gulf between audience, composer, and performer. 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, and the *SFCA+1 Artist Project* to expand the repertoire for chamber choir and a single instrument. 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.

2016 Composer-in-Residence, John Kelley

Since 1994, SFCA has presented more than 10 works by composer John Kelley, who sang with the ensemble for 5 years. His choral works and arrangements—which have also been performed by Bay Area choral ensembles such as Clerestory, the Grace Cathedral Choir of Men and Boys, and The Choral Project—are notable for their soaring melodies, lush harmonies, and distinctively American sound.

2016 Composer-Not-in-Residence, Shawn Crouch

Shawn Crouch has received recognition from the American Academy of Arts & Letters, ASCAP, BMI, Yale University, Meet the Composer, and others. His works have been performed and recorded by Chanticleer, Volti SF, Clerestory, Cantori New York, and the Cleveland Symphony Chamber Players.

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