

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Wieneke Gorter  
Phone 650.387.1708  
(press contact only)  
[wienekegorter@yahoo.com](mailto:wienekegorter@yahoo.com)

***“An enviable standard of excellence”***

– Wayne Peterson, composer

**SAN FRANCISCO CHORAL ARTISTS**  
**Magen Solomon, Artistic Director**

present

***Company at the Crèche***

with David Kashevaroff and Timothy Silva, hand bells

**PENINSULA:** Sunday, December 4, 2011; 4 PM; St. Mark's Episcopal Church,  
600 Colorado Ave (at Middlefield), PALO ALTO, CA 94306

**MARIN:** Saturday, December 10, 2011; 8 PM; Montgomery Chapel,  
Bolin Avenue (at Richmond), SAN ANSELMO, CA 94960

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Saturday, December 17, 2011; 8 PM; St. Mark's Lutheran Church,  
1111 O'Farrell St (at Franklin), SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94109

**EAST BAY:** Sunday, December 18, 2011; 4 PM; St. Paul's Episcopal Church,  
114 Montecito Ave, OAKLAND, CA 94610

**TICKETS:** \$12-\$25 Advance Purchase; \$15-\$30 At Door.

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

(415) 494-8149

**San Francisco, October 26, 2011 — With the sound of sheep bells disappearing in the distance, shepherds bumping over cobblestones, and a choir of crows cawing,** the acclaimed San Francisco Choral Artists bring the Christmas story down to earth in their upcoming concerts. Their 25 well-balanced voices shine in a program including Daniel Pinkham's charming “Company at the Crèche,” Renaissance music, and five world premieres written especially for this outstanding ensemble. Three pieces feature hand bell player David Kashevaroff.

When Artistic Director Magen Solomon told composer **Wayne Eastwood** about the theme for this concert, he sent his “**Crows on a Certain Evening**” as his gift to the Choral Artists. The text – a poem by Julia Cunningham – features a “tempestuous” loud choir of crows cawing instead of angels singing on the “certain evening,” Christmas Eve.

Eastwood’s piece is **one of five world premieres written especially for the San Francisco Choral Artists** on this program. The other four are by special friends of the Choral Artists Tina Harrington and John Kelley, and by the ensemble’s Composer-In-Residence Allen Shearer and Composer-Not-In-Residence Matt Van Brink.

**Allen Shearer’s “The Holy Innocents”** is set to a poem by Robert Lowell. While the text is darker and more complicated than most on this program, it shares the down-to-earth and animal theme with the other pieces: “The oxen drool and start in wonder at the fenders of a car, and blunder hugely up St. Peter’s hill.” **Matt Van Brink’s “Lull the Solemn Night,”** set to a poem by Thomas Merton, illustrates the sound of sheep out on the field at night: you hear the sheep bells moving away, the sound disappearing into the distance. **Tina Harrington’s “Procession of the Animals”** and **John Kelley’s “The Friendly Beasts”** both feature animals telling the audience what each of them was doing at the time of Jesus’ birth, and both feature hand bells. Harrington’s piece however is in the form of a processional, while Kelley’s work is more lighthearted, with irregular rhythms, the basses in the choir imitating plucked strings and other comical details.

In addition to these world premieres, and Pinkham’s charming “Company at the Crèche,” the program features several **Early Music pieces**, most also with a focus on ordinary people and animals: “La nuit froide” by Lasso, “Vamos al Portal” by Guerrero, “Pastores, dicite” by Morales, “O Magnum Mysterium” by Vittoria, and “All Sons of Adam,” a 15<sup>th</sup> century Scottish anonymous piece for men’s voices only.

### **Biographies:**

Nationally-recognized **San Francisco Choral Artists** regularly champions the work of living composers and is known for eclectic programming. The Choral Artists specialize in both vibrant new music and choral masterpieces of the last 600 years. The ensemble has premiered or commissioned over 175 choral works, performed by invitation at three conventions of the American Choral Directors Association, and released several CDs. The ensemble has been acclaimed “...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 Composers Inc., Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, The Alexander String Quartet, The Whole Noyse, and Sonos.

**Magen Solomon**, Artistic Director, avidly cultivates engagements with living composers to bridge the gulf between composer, performer, and audience. Under her leadership, SFCA established the Composer-in-Residence program in 1999, the Bi-annual Composer’s Invitational in 2001, and the “New Voices” Competition to help launch the artistic careers of young composers in 2005. In 2010, she added the Composer-Not-in-Residence Program

to raise the diversity of the new music offered to Bay Area audiences.

Bay Area audiences, composers, singers, and students are fortunate to enjoy the fruits of her unique programming, her commitment to finding delightful new music, and her talent in presenting concerts of consistently professional quality. An innovative teacher and musician, Ms. Solomon has been a guest conductor and adjudicator for festivals in the US and Asia, and has prepared choruses for Michael Tilson Thomas, Kent Nagano, Nicolas McGegan, and Michael Morgan, among others. She is Artistic Director of the Stockton Chorale & Master Chorale, and a past director of the Oakland Symphony Chorus. Ms. Solomon is also editor of the Research Column of the Choral Journal, and her edition of Johannes Eccard's *Neue deutsche Lieder* (1578) is published by A-R Editions.

**2012 Composer-in-Residence Allen Shearer** composes in all media but is especially drawn to vocal and choral music. He has written four operas and is working on a fifth. Trained in Austria as a singer, he studied composition briefly in Paris, then was granted a year in Rome to compose. He is one of the five artistic directors of Composers, Inc.

**2012 Composer-Not-in-Residence Matt Van Brink** is a multi-faceted composer, lyricist, pianist and accordionist living in Brooklyn. As a faculty member at Concordia Conservatory in Bronxville, New York, he has composed many works for young performers, including song, chamber music, and musical theater. He is SFCA's 2006 New Voices winner.

= END =