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SAN FRANCISCO CHORAL ARTISTS
Magen Solomon, Artistic Director

&

Veretski Pass

Cookie Segelstein, violin and viola
Stuart Brotman, bass, basy (cello), tilinca, and baraban
Joshua Horowitz, chromatic button accordion, cimbalom, and piano

present

Prophets, Kings, & Klezmer

“It is like an accent. If you have a good ear, your ear will inform your hands what to do.”

– Veretski Pass’ violinist Cookie Segelstein in Fiddler Magazine, talking about the relation between tonal gestures in the Yiddish language and playing Klezmer music

Sunday March 11, 2012, at 4 PM:

Congregation Etz Chayim, 4161 Alma Street, **Palo Alto**, CA 94306

Saturday March 17, 2012, at 8 PM:

St. Mark’s Lutheran Church, 1111 O’Farrell Street, **San Francisco**, CA 94109

Sunday March 18, 2012, at 4 PM:

Temple Sinai, 2808 Summit Street, **Oakland**, CA 94609

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

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

(415) 494-8149

San Francisco, February 1st, 2012 — **Last year’s collaboration with the Alexander String Quartet** confirmed San Francisco Choral Artists’ fine reputation for presenting new works for unusual combinations of voices and instruments. Continuing this compelling aspect of their programming, this year they feature world renowned Klezmer band **Veretski Pass** in lively and moving performances of folksongs, psalms, and lullabies from the texts and traditions of Jewish life. The concerts include two world premieres for the combined ensembles.

Please turn to page 3 for an overview of the program.

Composer-Not-in-Residence **Matt Van Brink** and local composer **Tina Harrington** each wrote a piece especially for the unique combination of chamber chorus and Klezmer band. Using energetic rhythms and the harmonic minor scale, Harrington firmly places her *Vest Oysforn* in the tradition of Eastern European folk music. Matt Van Brink based *They Disappear* on two Romanian peasant dances, the *Doina* and the *Hora*, and uses two distinctly different styles to evoke the unique character of each of the dances.

In addition to these two world premieres, the concerts showcase a wealth of music by Jewish composers. Artistic Director Magen Solomon programs a Jewish set for SF Choral Artists every two or three years: **“The Jewish tradition provides us with lots of repertoire that is largely unknown, but extremely interesting and beautiful.”** This year’s selection includes richly scored six-part *Shir Hama’alot* by 17th century Italian composer Salamone Rossi, *Jérusalem* (part of *Les Deux Cités*) by longtime Bay Area resident Darius Milhaud, a lush piece by Romantic 19th century composer Nowakowsky, Sylke Zimpel’s arrangement of the familiar folk tune *Tumbalalaika*, and compelling psalm settings by contemporary composers George Rochberg, Malcolm Singer, and others.

Of all the works on this program, **Solomon is especially taken with the psalm settings.** “I really love this piece,” she says about Rochberg’s Psalm 150. “It is very exciting, very rhythmic, and very celebratory,” she adds. She also likes to point out the features that make Singer’s setting of Psalm 117 so special: “He set part of it in the irregular 7/8 rhythm, and also broke the text into syllables and repeated them, to create a very cool minimalist effect.”

The decision to present two of these concerts in synagogues instead of the usual churches stems from a personal mission of artistic director Magen Solomon: “The only live music most people hear is in church. They thus associate choral music with Christian culture. **I think it is important to provide audiences with a broader spectrum of choral music and promote cross-cultural understanding,**” she says. She also enjoys the fact that these performances of Jewish music allow her to connect with the Jewish community in the Bay Area. Ms. Solomon used to belong to Congregation Etz Chayim in Palo Alto, where she presents this program on Sunday March 11.

Biographies:

Taking its name from the mountain pass through which Magyar tribes crossed into the Carpathian basin to settle what later became the Austro-Hungarian Empire, **Veretski Pass** offers a unique and exciting combination of virtuosic musicianship and raw energy that has excited concertgoers across the world. The trio plays Old Country Music with origins in the Ottoman Empire, once fabled as the borderlands of the East and the West. In a true collage of Carpathian, Jewish, Romanian and Ottoman styles, typical suites contain dances from Moldavia and Bessarabia; Jewish melodies from Poland and Romania; Hutzul wedding music from Carpathian-Ruthenia; and haunting Rebetic aires from Smyrna, seamlessly integrated with original compositions. Veretski Pass recently performed at the Concertgebouw concert hall in Amsterdam, and their CDs have repeatedly been on the 10-best recording lists of journalists.

For biographies of individual members of Veretski Pass, please visit www.veretskipass.com

Nationally-recognized **San Francisco Choral Artists** regularly champion the work of living composers and are known for their eclectic programming. The Choral Artists specialize in both vibrant new music and choral masterpieces of the last 600 years. They have 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.

Program (not in performance order)

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| Vest Oysforn | Tina Harrington (b. 1961) | world premiere |
| They Disappear | Matt Van Brink (b. 1978) | world premiere |
| Marbe | Linda Hirschhorn (b. 1969) | |
| Psalm 114 | Joshua Jacobson (b. 1948) | |
| Psalm 117 | Malcolm Singer (b. 1953) | |
| Psalm 150 | George Rochberg (1918-2005) | |
| Tumbalalaika | Sylke Zimpel (b. 1959) | |
| Hashkivenu | Matt Van Brink | |
| Shir Hama'alot | Salomone Rossi (c.1570-1630) | |
| Hashkivenu | David Nowakowsky (1848-1921) | |
| Jérusalem (from Les Deux Cités) | Darius Milhaud (1892-1974) | |

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