

FACING WEST

CHORAL MUSIC
OF Conrad Susa
AND David Conte

Cappella SF
Ragnar Bohlin, conductor



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FACING WEST

Choral Music of Conrad Susa and David Conte
Cappella SF • Ragnar Bohlin, conductor

CONRAD SUSA

Six Joyce Songs, Vol. II (12:31)

Landscapes and Silly Songs (13:01)

DAVID CONTE

The Composer (5:29)

A Whitman Triptych (15:43)

Invocation and Dance (11:48)

Total Playing Time: 58:37

Keisuke Nakagoshi • Kevin Korth – piano

Artie Storch • Stan Muncy – percussion

FACING WEST

CHORAL MUSIC OF CONRAD SUSA AND DAVID CONTE

1. **DAVID CONTE : The Composer**
Text by John Stirling Walker (5:29)

CONRAD SUSA: Six Joyce Songs, Volume II Texts by James Joyce (12:31)

2. I. The Twilight Turns from Amethyst (2:16)
3. II. At That Hour (2:00)
4. III. Lean Out of the Window (00:58)
5. IV. Who Goes Amid the Green Wood (01:21)
6. V. Winds of May (2:18)
7. VI. From Dewy Dreams, My Soul, Arise (3:38)

Keisuke Nakagoshi, *piano*

DAVID CONTE: A Whitman Triptych (15:43) Texts by Walt Whitman

8. I. O Setting Sun (6:07)
9. II. What Is the Grass? (5:21)
10. II. Facing West (4:15)

Soloists: Rita Lilly, *soprano* • Jonathan Thomas, *tenor* • Matthew Peterson, *baritone*

CONRAD SUSA: Landscapes and Silly Songs Texts by Federico García Lorca (13:01)

11. I. Landscape I (2:51)
12. II. The Gallant One (1:19)
13. III. The Kings of the Deck (1:40)
14. IV. Landscape II (4:41)
15. V. Silly Song (2:30)

DAVID CONTE: Invocation and Dance Texts by Walt Whitman (11:48)

16. Invocation (6:26)
17. Dance (5:22)

Keisuke Nakagoshi • Kevin Korth, *piano*
Artie Storch • Stan Muncy, *percussion*

Total Playing Time: 58:37

Cappella SF • Ragnar Bohlin, conductor
Keisuke Nakagoshi • Kevin Korth, piano
Artie Storch • Stan Muncy, percussion

The Composer for unaccompanied chorus was commissioned by The Walden School for Young Composers in New Hampshire in celebration of their 30th anniversary, and was premiered by the Walden School Chorus in August of 2002, conducted by Leo Wanenchak. *The Composer* speaks to the nature of an artist's inspiration as something that can transcend personal will or earthbound concerns. The poem's author had in mind Beethoven as an example of this quality of receptivity to a heaven-sent creative impulse.

— David Conte

Six Joyce Songs, Volume II My favorite poetry is by George Herbert, Henry Vaughan, and John Donne, and the madrigalists Thomas Campion and John Dowland. The nearest contemporary poetry has come to that is in the collection of 36 poems in *Chamber Music* (1907), James Joyce's first published book. The poems, written in elegant imitation of their "dainty" Elizabethan models, abound in rich opportunities for word painting and atmospheric effects, endearing them to many composers besides myself. The work was commissioned by the New Classic Singers, Lee Kesselman, conductor.

The poems envision a miniature drama that unfolds in six parts:

1. As the evening turns "to deep and deeper blue," a young man listens enraptured to a girl playing upon the old piano an air "sedate and slow and gay."

2. Her piano playing has changed into harps sweeping across the sky, mingling with the night wind "answering in antiphon."

3. He calls: "Lean out of the window, Goldenhair!"

4. The lovers now run amid the "merry green wood."

5. The winds of May are dancing. The young man asks them if they have seen his true love. "Love is unhappy when love is away!"

6. Awakening from "dewy dreams,.../ From love's deep slumber and from death," the poet experiences dawn in his soul. He can now hear "the wise choirs of faery" and their bells ringing "sweetly, gently, secretly."

— Conrad Susa

A Whitman Triptych is comprised of three a cappella choral pieces that were composed between 2012 and 2014. **O Setting Sun** was commissioned by the Madison Chamber Choir, Madison, Wisconsin, Anthony Cao, conductor, and was premiered on April 20, 2012. **What Is the Grass?** was composed for Cappella SF (Ragnar Bohlin, conductor) and was premiered on February 6, 2015. **Facing West** was commissioned in celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Golden Gate Bridge by the International Orange Chorale, Zane Fiala, conductor, and was premiered on May 27, 2012.

I first set Whitman to music in 1986, when I adapted part of "When Lilacs Last in the Door-

yard Bloom'd" as the basis for my composition *Invocation and Dance*. I went on to set "Good-Bye, My Fancy" for Male Chorus and Soprano Saxophone in 1992. Like so many composers, I have found the visionary quality of Whitman's verse inspiring; the vigor and intensity of the poetry seem to draw out music naturally.

O Setting Sun is based on a text adapted from Walt Whitman's much longer poem "Song At Sunset." The poem, often described as a paean, or a song of enthusiastic praise, was first published in 1860 as "Chants Democratic No. 8," and received its present title in 1867. In Whitman's manuscript, two words were written in the margins – "finale" and "religious." I believe these are clues to the generally reverent and exalted tone of all of Whitman's poetry.

O Setting Sun for SATB Chorus and Baritone is cast in a loose rondo form. The opening musical gesture of stacked imitative entries on the words "O setting sun" (and later "We sing") is repeated several times, with episodic passages separating them. The baritone soloist acts as narrator, singing noble recitatives praising the sun and the hour of its setting, supported by commentaries in the chorus. A central section ("How the earth darts on and on!") is fast and rhythmic with many changing time signatures. After a return of the baritone soloist, the final section's music is both serene and reverent, as "Nature continues, glory continues,/ O setting sun!"

What Is the Grass? is also an adaptation of a much longer poem, one of Whitman's deep-

est and most mysterious. The poem begins as a childlike meditation on grass: as hope, as an embodiment of new life and new growth in the plant world. Then suddenly the mood turns somber with the line: "And now it seems to me the beautiful uncut hair of graves." Here Whitman enters an extended meditation on how grass connects life and death, informed by his experiences in the Civil War. Hope returns with the line: "They are alive and well somewhere," leading to the mysterious final line: "And to die is different from what anyone supposed, and luckier." Here Whitman affirms that death can be an initiation into a broader participation of existence. In the words of poet Ivan M. Granger, Whitman offers a "Zen-like riddle that doesn't offer an answer so much as a pathway of questioning."

My musical setting follows Whitman's exploration, first taking a child's point of view, expressed with lilting melodies set in a lively compound meter. The entry of the tenor soloist indicates a change of mood to the serious. The first mood returns, leading to a climax on the words: "And led forward life...," set in nine-part harmony. The mood turns reverent as the tenor soloist intones: "All goes onward and outward; nothing collapses." The piece ends with a tone of gentle, slightly ironic questioning.

Facing West is drawn from the "Children of Adam", a group of sixteen poems in Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. The full title of the poem is "Facing West From California's Shores." Though Whitman never visited Cal-

ifornia, his biographer Justin Kaplan made the insightful observation that "he imagined California's shores to be the starting point for a journey through time and culture. Here was Walt, 'a child, very old,' facing home again, looking over to it, joyous, as after long travel, growth, and sleep, asking: '(But where is what I started for, so long ago?/And why is it yet un-found?)'"

The invitation from the International Orange Chorale to compose a piece in honor of the 75th anniversary of the Golden Gate Bridge led me easily and naturally to this great poem. The tone of "Facing West" is rich and complex, and draws on one of Whitman's favorite themes: using travel to distant lands as a metaphor for spiritual development. In his poem, Whitman strikes notes of reflection, of longing for adventure, and ultimately ends with a question. The continuing relevance of this question is, for me, beautifully addressed by the contemporary American writer Edmund White in his 1980 book *States of Desire*. To paraphrase somewhat, White writes: "California is where dreams may come true, and the problem it presents is whether, after all, we wanted these particular dreams to be fulfilled – or would we have preferred others? Did we know what price these dreams would exact? Did we anticipate the ways in which they would unsuit us for the business of daily life? Or should our notion of daily life itself be transformed?"

For Americans, California's coast is as far as one can go in establishing new roots and new ways of living. As a transplanted Midwesterner who

has made California his home for nearly three decades, I experience the Golden Gate Bridge as a beautiful monument to the aspirations and dreams of a restless and inventive people, qualities that Whitman's poem captures perfectly.

Landscapes and Silly Songs, based on the poetry of Federico García Lorca, is Conrad Susa's only multi-movement suite for unaccompanied chorus. Susa deeply admired Lorca's work, which is also the basis for his one-act opera *The Love of Don Perlimplin* and for the choral suite *The Cricket Sings*. **Landscape I** evokes the varied images and colors of Lorca's poem, with undulating ostinatos and rich cluster harmonies. **The Gallant One** is for women's voices alone, marked "Mocking, childishly flirtatious;" **The Kings of the Deck** is for men's voices alone, marked "Defiantly." These two short pieces are portraits of love from the feminine and masculine points of view. The women haughtily reject the advances of love; the men "repent of ever having loved you so." **Landscape II** is a luxurious habanera, marked "undulating, spacious." It moves through many moods, with marvelous word painting, particularly on verbs ("The gray air curls." "Reeds and half-light tremble." "The olive trees are charged with shouts.") **Silly Song** is an impish rondo, with the refrain of the child calling "Mama." Marked "Devilish, bright," this finale features clapping and finger-snapping, with many changing meters, and ends with a joyous stomp. The work was commissioned by the Houston Concert Chorale.

Invocation and Dance is based on a text drawn from Walt Whitman's "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," a long poem in the form of an elegy for President Abraham Lincoln. The poem never mentions Lincoln by name, but rather employs the traditional progression of the pastoral elegy in moving from grief toward an acceptance and knowledge of death.

Invocation and Dance is cast in two movements that explore two moods contained in Whitman's epic poem: grief and an acceptance of death; and a celebration of life and joy, even in the face of death. In the first movement the chorus sings a slow, solemn invocation over a pulsating accompaniment that ebbs and builds. The second movement is a complete contrast: an exuberant dance, featuring syncopation, changing meters, and minimalist repetition of motives.

The version for male chorus was commissioned by the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus, Greg Tallman, conductor, in 1986, and was written in direct response to the gathering AIDS crisis. A version for mixed chorus was commissioned by the Whitman College Chorale, Robert Bode, conductor, and was premiered in 1989. The work is dedicated to Conrad Susa.

—David Conte



David Conte and Conrad Susa
at Susa's residence in San Francisco
1989

The Composer

Text by John Stirling Walker

(Music!...O Music!)

In restless moments or in quiet,
When the feel or thought draws near,
And though the Muse's will deny it,
Comes him music, loud and clear.

(Music!...O Music!)

When, oh, when the world, awaiting,
Glistens in the morning dawn,
Or asleep lies, grief abating,
'Midst the stars that carry on,

Listens he,

and hears

His music,

married to the tones
that he must carry on.

(Music!...O Music!)

SIX JOYCE SONGS, VOLUME II

Texts by James Joyce

1. The Twilight Turns to Amethyst

The twilight turns from amethyst
To deep and deeper blue,
The lamp fills with a pale green glow

The trees of the avenue.
The old piano plays an air,
Sedate and slow and gay;
She bends upon the yellow keys,
Her head inclines this way.

Shy thought and grave wide eyes and hands
That wander as they list—
The twilight turns to darker blue
With lights of amethyst.

2. At That Hour

At that hour when all things have repose,
O lonely watcher of the skies,
Do you hear the night wind and the sighs
Of harps playing unto Love to unclothe
The pale gates of sunrise?

When all things repose, do you alone
Awake to hear the sweet harps play
To Love before him on his way,
And the night wind answering in antiphon
Till night is overgone?

Play on, invisible harps, unto Love,
Whose way in heaven is aglow
At that hour when soft lights come and go,
Soft sweet music in the air above
And in the earth below.

3. Lean Out of the Window

Lean out of the window,
Goldenhair,
I hear you singing
A merry air.
My book was closed,
I read no more,
Watching the fire dance
On the floor.

I have left my book,
I have left my room,
For I heard you singing
Through the gloom.

Singing and singing
A merry air,
Lean out of the window,
Goldenhair.

4. Who Goes Amid the Green Wood

Who goes amid the green wood
With springtide all adorning her?
Who goes amid the merry green wood
To make it merrier?

Who passes in the sunlight
By ways that know the light footfall?
Who passes in the sweet sunlight
With mien so virginal?
The ways of all the woodland
Gleam with a soft and golden fire—
For whom does all the sunny woodland
Carry so brave attire?

O, it is for my true love
The woods their rich apparel wear—
O, it is for my own true love,
That is so young and fair.

5. Winds of May

Winds of May, that dance on the sea,
Dancing a ring-around in glee
From furrow to furrow, while overhead
The foam flies up to be garlanded,
In silvery arches spanning the air,
Saw you my true love anywhere?
Welladay! Welladay!
For the winds of May!
Love is unhappy when love is away!

6. From Dewy Dreams, My Soul, Arise

From dewy dreams, my soul, arise,
From love's deep slumber and from death,
For lo! the trees are full of sighs
Whose leaves the morn admonisheth.

Eastward the gradual dawn prevails
Where softly-burning fires appear,
Making to tremble all those veils
Of grey and golden gossamer.

While sweetly, gently, secretly,
The flowery bells of morn are stirred
And the wise choirs of faery
Begin (innumerable!) to be heard.

A WHITMAN TRIPTYCH

Texts by Walt Whitman

I. O Setting Sun

Splendor of ended day floating and filling me,
Hour prophetic, hour resuming the past,
Inflating my throat, you divine average
You earth and life till the last ray gleams I sing.

(We sing, O setting sun!)

Open mouth of my soul uttering gladness,
Eyes of my soul seeing perfection,
To breathe the air,
To speak - to walk - to seize something
by the hand!

How the clouds pass silently overhead!
How the earth darts on and on!
How the sun, the moon, the stars, dart
on and on!
How the water sings! (Surely it is alive!)
How the trees rise and stand up, with strong
trunks, with branches and leaves!
(Surely there is something more in each of the
trees, some living soul.)

O setting sun!

O strain musical flowing, through ages and
continents, now reaching me,
I take your strong chords, and cheerfully pass
them forward.
I too carol the sun,
I too throb to the beauty of the earth,

I too have felt the resistless call of myself.

Nature continues, glory continues,

O setting sun!

II. What Is the Grass? (from *Song of Myself*)

A child said What is the grass? fetching it to
me with full hands;
How could I answer the child? I do not know
what it is any more than he.

I guess it must be the flag of my disposition,
out of hopeful green stuff woven.
Or I guess it is the handkerchief of the Lord,
A scented gift designedly dropt,
Or I guess the grass is itself a child, the pro-
duced babe of the vegetation.

And now it seems to me the beautiful uncut
hair of graves.

What has become of the young men and old
men?
What has become of the women and children?

They are alive and well somewhere,
The smallest sprout shows there is really no death,
And if ever there was it led forward life,
And ceas'd the moment life appear'd.

All goes onward and outward, nothing
collapses,
And to die is different from what any one
supposed, and luckier.

III. Facing West

Facing west, from California's shores,
Inquiring, tireless, seeking what is yet unfound,
I, a child, very old, over waves, towards the
house of maternity, the land of migrations,
look afar,
Look off the shores of my Western Sea—the
circle almost circled;

For, starting westward from Asia
From the north—from the God, the sage, and
the hero,
From the south—from the flowery peninsulas,
and the spice islands;

Long having wander'd since—round the earth
having wander'd,
Now I face home again—very pleas'd and
joyous;

(But where is what I started for, so long ago?
And why is it yet unfound?)

LANDSCAPES AND SILLY SONGS

Texts by Federico García Lorca
Translations by Will Kirkland

I. Landscape I

The misplaced afternoon
dressed itself in cold.
Behind the misted windows
all the children see
a yellow tree changing into birds.

The afternoon is stretching out
along the river.
And an apple blush
trembles on the little roofs.

II. The Gallant One

Gallant mine,
young gallant mine.
In your house they burn thyme.
Whether you come or whether you go
with a key I lock the door.
With a key of fine silver.
Tied with a ribbon.
On the ribbon there's inscribed:
"My heart is distant!"
Gallant mine,
young gallant mine.
In your house they burn thyme.

III. The Kings of the Deck

If your mother wants a king,
the deck of cards has four:
the King of Cups, the King of Clubs,
the King of Swords, the King of Gold.
Run or I'll catch you,
run or I'll squeeze you,
watch out or I'll give you
a mud pie - a face full.
From the olive tree
I retreat,
from esparto grass
I move apart,
from the vine shoots

I repent
of having loved you so.

IV. Landscape II

The field of olive trees
opens and folds like a fan.
Over the olive grove is a sunken sky
and a dark rain of cold bright stars.
Reeds and half-light tremble on the banks
of the river.
The gray air curls.
The olive trees are charged with shouts.
A flock of captive birds move their long tails
in the gloom.

V. Silly Song

Mama. I want to be of silver.
Son, you'll be very chilly.
Mama. I want to be of water.
Son, you'll be very chilly.
Mama. Embroider me upon your pillow.
That of course!
I'll start at once!

INVOCATION AND DANCE

Texts by Walt Whitman

I. Invocation

Come lovely and soothing death,
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
Sooner or later delicate death.

II. Dance

Prais'd be the fathomless universe,
For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge
curious,
And for love, sweet love - but praise! praise! praise!
For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding death.

Dark mother always gliding near with soft feet,
Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest
welcome?
Then I chant it for thee, I glorify thee above all,
I bring thee a song that when thou must
indeed come, come unfalteringly.

Approach strong deliveress,
When it is so, when thou hast taken them I
joyously sing the dead,
Lost in the loving floating ocean of thee,
Laved in the flood of thy bliss O death.

From me to thee glad serenades,
Dances for thee I propose saluting thee,
adornments and feastings for thee,
And the sights of the open landscape and the
high-spread sky are fitting,
And life and the fields, and the huge and
thoughtful night.

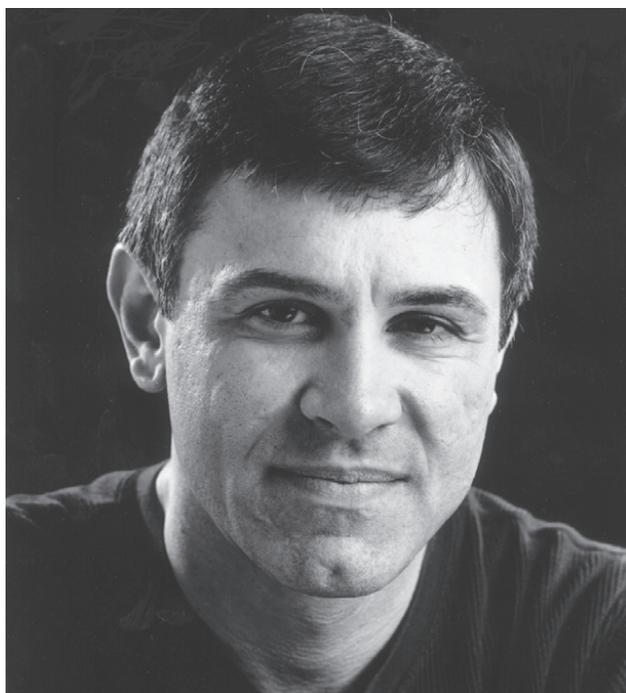
(Dance on, sing praises!
For life, joy, love, sing praise!)



Conrad Susa (1935-2013) was resident composer for the Old Globe Theatre in San Diego and served as dramaturge for the O'Neill Center in Connecticut. He has written numerous scores for documentary films and PBS television productions, as well as choral and instrumental works and operas (*Transformations*, *Black River*, and *The Love of Don Perlimplín*) commissioned by the Minnesota Opera Company, San Francisco Opera, and Pepsico. He has also composed a church opera (*The Wise Women*) for the American Guild of Organists and an opera (*The Dangerous Liaisons*) for San Francisco Opera. In addition, he has served as staff pianist with

the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and as assistant editor of *Musical America* magazine. His many awards include Ford Foundation fellowships, National Endowment for the Arts grants, and a National Endowment Consortium grant. Susa earned a B.F.A. from Carnegie Institute of Technology and received an M.S. from The Juilliard School, where he studied with William Bergsma, Vincent Persichetti, and P.D.Q. Bach. Susa joined the composition faculty of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music in 1988 and taught there until his death in 2013. He served as chair of the department from 2000 to 2010.

David Conte (b. 1955) is Chair of the Composition Department at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where he has taught since 1985. He has received commissions from Chanticleer; the San Francisco Symphony Chorus; the Dayton, Oakland East Bay, and Stockton Symphonies; the Atlantic Classical Orchestra; the American Choral Directors Association; the American Guild of Organists; Sonoma City Opera; and the Gerbode Foundation. He has composed songs for Barbara Bonney, Thomas Hampson, and Phyllis Bryn-Julson. The composer of six operas and a musical, he has published over 100 works with E.C. Schirmer, and his work is represented on numerous recordings. A Fulbright Scholar in Paris with Nadia Boulanger, a Ralph Vaughan Williams Fellow, and an Aspen Music Festival Conducting Fellow, he earned a B.M. from Bowling Green State University and an M.F.A. and D.M.A. from Cornell University, where he studied with Karel Husa and Steven



Stucky. In 1982 he worked with Aaron Copland preparing a study of the composer's sketches. He has taught at Cornell, Keuka College, Colgate University, and Interlochen. He co-composed the score for the documentary *Ballets Russes* and composed the score for the PBS American Master's documentary *Orozco: Man of Fire*. In 2009 he composed "An Exhortation," a setting of words by Barack Obama performed at President Obama's inauguration. In 2011 he was appointed to the composition faculty of the European American Musical Alliance in Paris, and to the board of the American Composer's Forum. He is currently Composer-in-Residence for Cappella SF, a professional chamber choir in San Francisco.

Cappella SF is a professional chamber choir founded by Ragnar Bohlin, Artistic Director of the Grammy Award-winning San Francisco Symphony Chorus, to bring the magic of a cappella music from all stylistic periods to the Bay Area and beyond at the highest artistic level.

Ragnar Bohlin founded the chamber choir Cappella SF in late 2013, and conducted its debut performance in February, drawing a large audience. The group's first recording, *Light of Gold*, a Christmas CD, was released in 2015. As Chorus Director for the San Francisco Symphony since 2007, Mr. Bohlin prepares the chorus for performances under internationally renowned conductors and has also conducted such pieces as Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Handel's *Messiah*, Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* and B Minor Mass, and Poulenc's *Figure humaine*. His outstanding work has been recognized with a Grammy Award for Best Choral Performance for Mahler's Symphony No. 8 with Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony.

Mr. Bohlin has worked frequently with the Swedish Radio Choir and in 2010 conducted them on their tour of the United States. He has also conducted the Ericson Chamber Choir and the Opera Chorus of Stockholm. He was choirmaster of Stockholm's Maria Magdalena Church and appeared regularly on Swedish radio with the Maria Magdalena Motet Choir and The Maria Vocal Ensemble. Mr. Bohlin toured internationally with his Swedish choirs – the KFUM Chamber Choir, the Maria Magdalena Motet Choir and the Maria Vocal Ensemble – earning prizes in inter-



national competitions and such distinctions as the prestigious Johannes Norrby Medal in 2006 for expanding the frontiers of Swedish choral music making. In June 2010 he made his Carnegie Hall debut conducting Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem*. Guest conducting engagements have brought him to many parts of the world, including the Sao Paulo Symphony in Brazil and the Malmö Symphony Orchestra in Sweden. In 2015 Bohlin made his debut with the Stavanger Symphony in Norway, conducted *Messiah* with the Edmonton Symphony in Canada and served as Guest Music Director for Chanticleer.

Mr. Bohlin studied conducting with Jorma Panu-la and the legendary choir director Eric Ericson, piano with Peter Feuchtwanger in London on a British Council scholarship, and singing with the great Swedish tenor Nicolai Gedda. Mr. Bohlin is also on the faculty of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

CAPPELLA SF MEMBERS

Soprano

Cheryl Cain sings with the San Francisco Symphony Chorus, the San Francisco Opera Chorus, American Bach Soloists, Philharmonia Baroque, and a number of other local ensembles, and has performed as a soloist throughout Europe and North America. She holds a Bachelor of Music from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and a Master of Music from the Manhattan School of Music and is a member of the American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA) and the National Association of Teachers of Singing.

Phoebe J. Rosquist specializes in early music, with a special love for the 17th century in Italy. She also directs the choir for the Art Monastery Project.

Elizabeth Kimble is an active singer and composer based in San Francisco, appearing regularly with the San Francisco Symphony Chorus, Cappella SF, the International Orange Chorale, and Gaude. She worked with both Conrad Susa and David Conte while she was a graduate student at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

Rita Lilly is an active soloist, choral singer and teacher, who resides in the Bay Area. Aside from specializing in the performance of early music, she is on the faculty of the Pacific Boy Choir Academy as voice teacher, serves as music director at Lafayette Christian church, and maintains an active voice studio in her home. She is delighted to be part of this very beautiful recording.

Kate Offer holds a master's degree in music education and has been teaching in classrooms for the last ten years. In her alter ego as Kate Offer, (Very) Melodramatic Soprano, Ms. Offer inflicts musical comedy on audiences around the Bay Area with her touring recitals, "'Aria Kidding?'" and "'Aria Kidding 2?: This Time I'm Serious."

Alexandra Sessler divides her time among opera, choral, instruction, and composition. She is especially dedicated to the promotion of new works, works by female composers, and music of Spanish composers. She has two very supportive cats.

Alto

Gail Nakano, a member of Cappella SF since its inception, is a Bay Area native who sings in various local ensembles including the San Francisco Symphony Chorus. She studied at Vassar College and currently works as a chemist in South San Francisco.

Danielle Sampson has performed with many local ensembles including the American Bach Soloists, California Bach Society, Black Box Baroque, Guerrilla Composers Guild, and Cappella SF, as well as Pacific MusicWorks in Seattle, and the Boston Early Music Festival. She received her MM at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and is a founding member of the voice/plucked strings duo Jarring Sounds with Adam Cockerham.

Kindra Scharich is a professional singer based in San Francisco. In addition to operatic roles, she relishes the pursuit of musical interests that are dearest to her heart: song, chamber music, concert repertoire, and meaningful collaborations with living composers on their new and wonderful works.

Meghan Spyker is a professional choral singer--AGMA at the SF Symphony Chorus, American Bach Soloists, and Cappella SF--as well as a psychologist at the UCSF Infant-Parent Program specializing in infant and early childhood mental health.

Nicole Takesono is an active singer around the Bay Area with groups such as the San Francisco Symphony, San Francisco Opera, Opera Parallele, and West Edge Opera. She is originally from Hawai'i, received her BA from Tufts University, and currently studies with Deborah Benedict.

Merilyn Telle Vaughn is in her 29th season as a professional chorister in the San Francisco

Symphony Chorus. In addition to Cappella SF, Marilyn also sings with her husband, John, on saxophone as the duo /vÉ"n/, performing sacred and secular music often originally written for two voices.

Cindy Wyvill is a professional chorister, singing with Cappella SF and the San Francisco Symphony Chorus. A twelve year AGMA veteran, she has performed choral and solo parts in Davies Hall, Mondavi Center, Mission Dolores, and other northern California venues, and has participated in several recording projects with SFS and Cappella SF.

Tenor

Mark Bonney is a professional soloist and chorister, known primarily as a historically informed performer of oratorio and opera repertoire from the Baroque and Classical periods. A San Francisco native, Mark currently resides in London, where he is completing a master's degree at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and expanding his singing career in the U.K. and Europe.

Mickey Butts is a writer and editor who lives in Berkeley (www.mickeybutts.com). He has sung with professional choirs in the San Francisco Bay Area for more than twenty years.

Sam Smith appears regularly with many of the West Coast's finest choirs, including Cappella SF, the San Francisco Symphony Chorus, American Bach Soloists, and the Grace Cathedral

Choir of Men and Boys, among others. A professionally trained violist as well as singer, he enjoys playing chamber music with friends and serves on the Board of Governors of the San Francisco Chapter of the Recording Academy.

Jonathan Thomas has performed frequently as a soloist and member of various professional ensembles around the Bay Area, appearing in his second season as an AGMA member of the San Francisco Symphony and singing regularly with Cappella SF. In addition to his performing, Jonathan is the Development Manager at The Walden School.

Steven Ziegler attended Westminster Choir College, Peabody Conservatory, and the University of York in the U.K. He has sung with Bay Area ensembles such as Cappella SF, the St. Dominic's Schola Cantorum, and AVE, and in Philadelphia with The Crossing and the Philadelphia Singers, among others.

Bass

Montague, Michigan, native **Adam Cole** attended Interlochen Arts Academy, Kalamazoo College, and Stanford University. An avid hiker and mountaineer, he also sings professionally with the San Francisco Symphony Chorus, American Bach Soloists, and the Grace Cathedral Choir of Men and Boys.

Vocalist and instrumentalist **Peter Dennis Mautner** is native to the Bay Area, and is deeply

invested in its music community as a performer and private teacher. He performs with Volti SF and the SF Symphony Chorus, and plays guitar and bass in jazz and other popular styles.

Richard Mix sings a solo repertoire that embraces Monteverdi and Mozart as well as Scelsi and Stockhausen. He is also active as a conductor and directs the choirs of St. David of Wales in Richmond, California.

David Erik Peterson received his Bachelor of Music from West Virginia University and his Master of Music from SFSU in 2016. He originated the roles of Jim Jones in *Heaven Down Here*, Jack Kerouac in *Ginsberg in Song*, and Darko in *How to Survive the Apocalypse: A Burning Opera*, which enjoyed a sold-out run in San Francisco's Teatro ZinZanni and was reprised in Los Angeles, Las Vegas, and Black Rock City.

A founding member of Cappella SF, **Matthew Peterson** has been a regular in the Bay Area music scene since 2006, having also performed with the San Francisco Symphony, Gaude, Clerestory, and numerous others. Matthew studied piano with Hans Boepple and voice with Paul Murray at Santa Clara University.

Malaysian-born **Chung-Wai Soong** has performed as soloist and with ensembles in Australia and the United States, including AVE, The Victoria State Opera Chorus, The Vocal Consort, and the San Francisco Symphony Chorus. When not singing himself, he enjoys listening to other people sing, from lieder to opera to cabaret.

GUEST ARTISTS

Keisuke Nakagoshi, a native of Japan, earned a Bachelor of Music in composition and a Master of Music in chamber music from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where he studied composition with David Conte and piano with Paul Hersh. In 2005 he was selected to represent the conservatory for the Kennedy Center's Conservatory Project, a program featuring young musicians from major conservatories across the United States. As the winner of the Conservatory's 2006 Piano Concerto Competition, he performed Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 3 with the San Francisco Conservatory of Music Orchestra at their inaugural orchestra concert. In 2013, he made his solo debut with the San Francisco Symphony when he performed Ingvar Lidholm's *Poesis* with conductor Herbert Blomstedt. Mr. Nakagoshi and Swiss pianist Eva-Maria Zimmermann formed the piano duet ZOFO in 2009. Their debut recording *Mind Meld* was nominated for a Grammy Award for Best Chamber Music Performance. Mr. Nakagoshi is currently Pianist-in-Residence at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and he serves as pianist in the production team for Opera Parallèle.

Kevin Korth graduated in 2006 from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with his bachelor's degree in piano performance, studying under Christopher Taylor. He won the university's concerto competition the year prior, performing Rachmaninoff's 2nd Piano Concerto. In August 2006, Kevin moved to San Francisco to pursue a master's degree in chamber mu-

sic at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music with Paul Hersh and completed the degree in May 2008. Since then, he has held a position at the conservatory as both a vocal coach and a collaborative pianist, dividing his time between working with instrumentalists and singers, and performing in numerous recitals throughout the year. Now an in-demand pianist and coach in the Bay Area, he has collaborated with artists such as Robert Mann, Axel Strauss, Joel Krosnick, Matt Haimovitz, Suzanne Mentzer, William Burden, Lisa Delan, Brian Asawa, and the late Zheng Cao.

Stan Muncy is a percussionist and jazz vibe player who freelances in the San Francisco Bay Area. He is a regular extra with the San Francisco Symphony, a member of the Santa Rosa Symphony, performs with many of the other regional orchestras, and was percussionist/assistant timpanist with the Honolulu Symphony. His recording credits extend to the Naxos classical label and many film and video game scores recorded at Warner Brothers Studios, Capitol Records, and Skywalker Sound. He enjoys a prolific new music career playing with the Eco Ensemble, the new music ensemble-in-residence at UC Berkeley, and has toured with the Chicago-based sextet eighth blackbird. Stan is currently on faculty at California State University, Stanislaus. He received a Professional Studies Certificate from the Colburn School in Los Angeles, a Masters of Music at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and a Bachelor of Arts in Music at California State University, Hayward.

Artie Storch is an active Bay Area freelance musician, a regular extra percussionist for the San Francisco Symphony and other orchestras, and has played with ensembles ranging from Masterworks Chorale to Metallica. Artie has performed in numerous San Francisco area shows, recently premiering *Beautiful, The Carole King Musical*. As principal percussionist for The Skywalker Symphony, he has played for movies (*Mars Attacks*, *Seventeen Again*); television (*Sesame Street*); commercials (Nissan, Hershey's, Taco Bell); albums (Randy Newman, John Williams); and video games (Uncharted, Star Wars, Starcraft II, Kinect Disneyland Adventures). He received his BS in percussion from Brooklyn College, CUNY, and an MM from The Juilliard School. Artie teaches privately, at CSU East Bay and Chabot College, and is the Percussion Director for the California Youth Symphony. www.artiestorch.com

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Recording, production, engineering, editing, and mastering:
David Bowles (Swineshead Productions, LLC)
Assistant engineer: Michael Gray
Piano technician and tuning: Larry Newhouse
Design and layout: Lonnie Kunkel
Cover photo: Larry Gerbrandt

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(707) 996-3844 • Fax (707) 320-0600 • (800) 364-0645
contactus@delosmusic.com • www.delosmusic.com
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David Conte and Conrad Susa
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