



Old First Concerts

presents

**Young Women's Chorus
of San Francisco**

Carols by Candlelight

Susan McMane, *conductor*

Chloe Tula, *harp*

Margaret Halbig, *piano*

Sunday, December 5, 2021 at 4 PM

Old First Church

1751 Sacramento St. at Van Ness Ave.

San Francisco, CA 94109

(415) 474-1608 www.oldfirstconcerts.org

ABOUT OLD FIRST CONCERTS

- Great venue for music with beautiful acoustics and amazing Steinway concert grand piano.
- Primarily local emerging and mid-career professional musicians presenting innovative programs.
- Every concert offers new insights and virtuosic performances.
- Complimentary refreshments served at intermission or after the concert.
- An independent 501(c)3 non-profit organization devoted to presenting music at affordable prices, especially for low-income seniors and students.
- Solo, chamber music, and world music concerts year-round since 1970.

DONATING TO OLD FIRST CONCERTS

Ticket sales provide about 38 percent of our operating revenue each year. In addition, we rely on support from private foundations and Grants for the Arts from the city of San Francisco. Our generous individual donors complete the picture. We invite you to join us in our mission to connect audiences and local musicians and build up the classical music and world music scene in San Francisco. Donations are tax-deductible and donating on our website is easy and secure: www.oldfirstconcerts.org/give/, or checks can be mailed to: Old First Concerts, 1751 Sacramento Street, San Francisco, CA 94109. Thank you!

COVID-19 RESPONSE: RETURNING TO THE MUSIC

Old First Concerts is committed to the health and safety of our audiences, performers and staff. We look forward to having all audiences back in our space when it is safe to do so. In the meantime, we are happy to be able to continue presenting artists of the highest caliber to our audience in the Bay Area—and beyond—via livestreamed events. We are following city guidelines and safety protocols to help ensure the safest possible environment for our performers and staff.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Following us on **Facebook** is a great way to keep informed about the latest concert information. While you are there, don't forget to **share** events with your friends and hit the "Like" button liberally. [facebook.com/oldfirstconcerts/](https://www.facebook.com/oldfirstconcerts/)

You can also find us on **Instagram** [@oldfirstconcerts](https://www.instagram.com/oldfirstconcerts) with information about upcoming events plus photos and videos from our concerts.

PROGRAM

Benjamin Britten (1913–1976)

A Ceremony of Carols

Procession

Wolcum Yole!

There is no Rose

That yongë child

Sonia Banker, *alto*

Balulalow

Marybeth Ong, *soprano*

As dew in Aprille

This Little Babe

Interlude

In Freezing Winter's Night

Emma Yin, *soprano* and Sedi-Anne Blachford, *alto*

Spring Carol

Sasha Feldman, *soprano* and Enrica Waugh, *alto*

Deo Gracias

Recession

Javier Busto (b. 1949)

Salve Regina

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873–1943), arr. Nadezhda Averina

Bogorotise devo, raduyisia

Christine Donkin (b. 1976)

Magnificat

Emma Yin, Marybeth Ong and Sonia Banker, *sopranos*

(*in order of appearance*)

Randall Thompson (1899–1984)

Pueri Hebraeorum

John Rutter (b. 1945)

The Angels' Carol

Traditional English Carol, arr. Peter Harvey

The Twelve Days of Christmas

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Founded in 2012, the **Young Women's Choral Projects of San Francisco** is recognized nationally and internationally as a world-class choral organization for girls and young women, ages 4-18. YWCP choristers are divided into six levels of choral training where they find their voices as singers, artists, and women in a nurturing environment that empowers them to achieve artistic and personal excellence.

Captivating sound, dynamic programming, sensitive artistry, and musical depth are words used to describe the **Young Women's Chorus of San Francisco**, the premier ensemble of YWCP. Founded and conducted by Dr. Susan McMane, the Chorus has caught the attention of major arts organizations both here and abroad.

Recent activities include a debut performance at Carnegie Hall in 2018, a concert tour to South Africa in 2019, the premiere of the opera *Abraham in Flames* in 2019, and performances with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the San Francisco Symphony, and local professional groups Cappella SF and Sonos Handbell Ensemble.

Every year YWCP presents a concert series in the Bay Area and this season the premier chorus performs Benjamin Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols* at Old First Concerts, a special collaboration with Grace Cathedral entitled *Boundless Grace*, with the San Francisco Ballet School Training Ensemble and guest instrumentalists, a Gala fundraising concert, and two showcase concerts with all four YWCP choruses entitled *Angelic Voices* and *Our Wonderful World*. This season's concerts include premieres by Frank La Rocca and Rollo Dilworth. The Chorus will conclude its season with a concert tour to France.

Acclaimed in the *American Record Guide* as having "refined

and beautifully controlled singing,” the Young Women’s Chorus has won many competitive awards including the American Prize in Choral Performance, the Margaret Hillis Award for Choral Excellence from Chorus America, as well as the Dale Warland Singers Commission Award and the ASCAP Adventurous Programming Award, from Chorus America and the American Composers Forum. The ensemble has shared the stage with renowned artists such as Jake Heggie, Frederica von Stade, Christine Brewer, Kronos Quartet, Kitka, Charles Dutoit, Esa-Pekka Salonen and others. Performing repertoire from early music to contemporary selections, the Chorus regularly commissions new works for young women’s voices from leading composers.

Considered one of the finest conductors of choral music in the nation, **Dr. Susan McMane**, *Artistic Director*, has centered her professional work on transforming young women’s lives through excellence in choral music. In 2012, she became the founding director of the Young Women’s Choral Projects of San Francisco, where she conducts the auditioned, premier chorus of young women in grades 8–12 and oversees the YWCP training program for younger girls. She encourages her singers to reach for excellence in music and life, and has taken her choirs to important venues including the steps of the Capitol in Washington, D.C., for the first inauguration ceremony of President Barack Obama in 2009, to Carnegie Hall and to numerous world stages.

Dr. McMane has won many honors including three GRAMMY® Awards with San Francisco Symphony, and the 2007 “Symphony of Excellence Arts Award” from the Pacific Musical Society. In 2014, her work earned her recognition as an “outstanding community youth choir director” from The American Prize, and in 2017 she was awarded the CEDAW

Women's Human Rights Award for Girl's Empowerment and Education from the Commission on the Status of Women.

Because of her advocacy for new music, Dr. McMane's choruses won the ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming three times: in 2004, 2011 and 2017. Dr. McMane is responsible for commissioning over 25 new works for young women's voices from prominent composers such as Chen Yi, Tania León, David Conte, Augusta Read Thomas, Frank La Rocca, Rollo Dilworth and many more. She has prepared her choirs for performances with many leading symphonic conductors including Michael Tilson Thomas, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Helmut Rilling, Charles Dutoit, Nicholas McGegan, and Kurt Masur. In addition, she personally has conducted ensembles on tour in France, Spain, Italy, Germany, England, Canada, Wales, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Slovenia, Austria, Japan, South Korea, China and South Africa. In 2011, she was invited to bring her chorus to Cuba, on a cultural exchange mission granted by the U.S. and Cuban governments.

Many high-level musicians have commented on Dr. McMane's talents. "Susan McMane is one of the finest conductors of choral music I have encountered anywhere. With her at the podium one may always expect excellent music performed at the highest level. And she accomplishes this in a way that makes her beloved to her singers and raises their awareness as musicians and human beings." (Kirke Mechem, composer) "Her skill as a musical director is most impressive. Her warm relationship with the girls, her musical standards, and her conducting technique are all of the highest order. Her work is not only a gift to the Bay Area; it is a gift to the entire musical world" (Robert Moore, critic for *American Record Guide*).

Pianist **Margaret Halbig** moved to the Bay Area in 2011 and joined the accompanying and vocal coaching staff at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and has been the pianist for the Young Women's Chorus of San Francisco since 2014. An advocate of new and contemporary music, Margaret has been the pianist for the New Music Collective, Wild Rumpus, since its inception in 2011. Margaret is also the pianist for Frequency 49, a wind and piano chamber ensemble exploring the interdependent relationship between color and sound unique to this combination of instruments. In summer 2016, Margaret joined the faculty of the Bay Area Vocal Academy, providing comprehensive vocal training to young singers, as coach and pianist.

Margaret earned her DMA from the University of California, Santa Barbara, under the tutelage of Robert Koenig and also holds performance degrees from the University of Missouri, Kansas City Conservatory, and University of Evansville, Indiana. Her primary teachers include Jonathan Feldman, Robert Weirich, and Anne Fiedler.

American harpist **Chloe Tula** has been widely recognized as a rising talent in the classical music world. Uniquely at ease as both a featured soloist and orchestral musician, Ms. Tula enjoys a varied, most recently having completed a three-year fellowship at the New World Symphony, in Miami Beach, Florida, where she was lauded as a "standout" with "keen musicianship and elegance" (*South Florida Classical Review*).

In demand for the musicality and clarity she brings to the orchestra, other engagements have included performances with the San Francisco Symphony, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Houston Symphony, the Louisville Orchestra, the Santa Fe Opera, and The Knights (NYC). She has worked with conductors from all over the world, including Michael

Tilson Thomas, Andris Nelsons, and Stephane Dénève, and artists Yo-Yo Ma, Gil Shaham, and John Williams. Ms. Tula was a 2019 Harp Fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center, and has also appeared as Principal Harpist of the Lakes Area Music Festival.

Ms. Tula recognizes the need for being a multi-faceted advocate for music. In the 2018-19 season, she launched an ambitious recital series titled *Tales from the Harp* in a partnership with the Miami-Dade Public Library System to promote children's literacy and exposure to the harp in South Florida.

COMING UP AT OLD FIRST CONCERTS

Saturday, December 11 at 8 pm

Musae—*Carols & Hymns*

Laney McClain Armstrong, *Artistic Director*

In *Carols and Hymns*, Musae will explore vocal music spanning the centuries. From medieval chant, to early-Renaissance fauxbourdon, to religious songs, to contemporary compositions, this journey of a program is a way for us to celebrate the season through live music again.

Sunday, December 12 at 4 pm

Ragazzi Boys Chorus—*Mysteries and Miracles*

Kent Jue, *Artistic & Executive Director*; **Yongyu Gao**, *pianist*

Travis Rogers, *Young Men's Ensemble Director*; **Nancy**

Whitecar, *Assistant Director & pianist*

Ragazzi Boys Chorus makes its triumphant return to the stage with treasured yuletide gems and contemporary festive pieces for unchanged, mixed, and changed voices to celebrate the season.

Friday, December 17 at 8 pm

Golden Bough—*Christmas in a Celtic Land*

Margie Butler, Paul Espinoza & Kathy Sierra

This joyful Celtic Christmas Concert is a wonderful opportunity for the whole family to gather together to celebrate and drive the cold winter away with Golden Bough's unique Yuletide presentation.

Saturday, December 18 at 8 pm

Robin Sutherland: celebrating a towering musical genius

Christopher Basso, Elizabeth Dorman, Keisuke Nakagoshi,

Marc Shapiro, *piano*; **Jack Van Geem & Daniel Hallet**,
marimbas

Celebrating the life of Robin Sutherland with performances of music by Bach, Debussy, Beethoven, Respighi, Bolcom, and Bernstein by several of his closest friends.

For tickets & more information visit www.olderfirstconcerts.org

COMING UP AT OLD FIRST CONCERTS

Friday, January 7 at 8 pm

Solomon Ge, piano

A young rising star pianist and Bay Area native, Solomon Ge makes his San Francisco recital debut with a program of beloved works by Bach, Ravel, Beethoven, and Prokofiev, plus one of his own compositions.

Saturday, January 8 at 8 pm

Slow Wave— Kyle Beard, clarinet; Justine Preston, viola; Naomi Stine, piano

Exploring the slower end of the sound wave spectrum, Slow Wave performs the World Premieres of works by Bay Area composers Joowan Kim, Emma Logan, and Kyle Hovatter, plus recent works by Brett Eastman and Kalevi Aho.

Sunday, January 23 at 4 pm

Basma Edrees, violin & Ava Nazar, piano

From Brahms to Piazzolla through Reza Vali

Basma & Ava's program revolves around the music of the contemporary Iranian composer Reza Vali. Nicknamed the Persian Bartók, Vali is considered one of today's leading exponents of using folk songs as a basis for composing contemporary music.

For tickets & more information visit www.oldfirstconcerts.org

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Old First Concerts' piano is a New York Steinway D model, circa 1980, with Hamburg action. It was donated by The Stanley Ibler Fund, and is maintained by David Love Piano Service and Restoration.