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presents

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**San Francisco Girls Chorus
Chorus School Level IV
Graduation Ceremony & Concert**

Dr. Anne K. Hege, *Level IV Director*
César Cancino, *Level IV Accompanist*

Friday, June 3, 2022 at 8 PM

Old First Church

1751 Sacramento St. at Van Ness Ave.

San Francisco, CA 94109

(415) 474-1608 www.oldfirstconcerts.org

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.

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.

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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:

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You can also find us on **Instagram @oldfirstconcerts** with information about upcoming events plus photos and videos from our concerts.

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COMING UP AT OLD FIRST CONCERTS

Sunday, June 5 at 4 pm

Jason Sia, piano

Recognized for his eloquently expressive depth of interpretation and seamless technique, pianist Jason Sia performs masterworks by Fragoso, Corigliano, Debussy, Chaminade, and Schumann.

Friday, June 10 at 8 pm

Passionflower Duo—*In Bloom, A Pride Program*

Gabrielle Lochard, soprano & Jonathan Liu, piano

Focusing on optimism, joy, and authenticity, Passionflower Duo perform a collection of songs by composers from the 19th & 20th centuries, celebrating some of the countless and incredible contributions to song forms by queer artists.

Sunday, June 12 at 4 pm

Not Only Muses: Patricia Garcia-Gil, piano

Not Only Muses showcases compositions written by three women from different historical moments linked to Spain, performed by one of the most versatile pianists of her generation. The program includes the complete repertoire for solo piano by Marianne Von Martinez, plus works by Pauline Garcia Viardot and Rosa Garcia Ascot.

For tickets & more information visit www.oldfirstconcerts.org

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PROGRAM

Welcome Remarks

Traditional, arr. Alice Parker, set by James Rodde
Hark, I Hear the Harps Eternal

Yossi Spivak, arr. Shira Cion

Ma Navu

Soloists: Shiva Swaminathan Strickland, Cate Cross,
and Magdalena Sambajon Mercado

Morton Lauridsen

Dirait-on* from *Les chansons des roses

Pekka Kostiainen

Moni kakku päältä kaunis...

Armahan kulku

Onpa tietty tietyssäni

Orlande de Lassus, arr. Level IV

medley: *Sicut rosa inter spinas / In pace in idipsum*

Florence B. Price

The Moon Bridge

Michael McGlynn

Cúnnla

Soloists: Shiva Swaminathan-Stickland, Theo Alling,
and Calista Stone

Sheldon Secunda, arr. Carl-Bertil Agnestig

Donna, Donna

George Frideric Handel

from **Dixit Dominus**

Movement I: Chorus

Movement IV: Chorus

Movement VI: Chorus (excerpt)

Marcy Heisler & Zina Goldrich, arr. Mac Huff

Taylor, the Latte Boy

Soloist: Cate Cross

Nacio Herb Brown, arr. Anita Kerr

Singing in the Rain

Soloist: Amelia Berger

Graduation Ceremony

Introduction to Graduate Speaker by Dr. Anne K. Hege

Level IV Graduate Speaker – Francisca Li

Graduate Remarks by Dr. Anne K. Hege

Ceremony and Presentation of Graduate Certificates

Fanny Mendelssohn

Wand'ich in dem Wald des Abends

Kinley Lange

Esto Les Digo

Soloist: Vibhuti Singh

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Level IV Graduate Speaker - Francisca Li

This year's Level IV ensemble is the hardest working group I've ever had. This group has mastered the most challenging repertoire I have done in all my years with Level IV. It is an ensemble filled with leaders, creative minds, hard workers, and strong musicians. The graduate speaker is a Level IV graduate who demonstrates the qualities that SFGC fosters. This year's graduate speaker is

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Emily Kusnadi and Christopher Street, *Prep Chorus Directors*

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Bobby Chastain, *AP Music Theory Instructor*

Chesley Mok, *Premier Ensemble Pianist*

César Cancino, *Level IV and Level III Pianist*

Ian Llacer Chamberla, *Level III Pianist*

Nicholas Perez, *Level III Pianist*

Alice Kubo, Natsuko Murayama, Alyssa Tai, *Level II Pianists*

Christopher Hewitt, Kevin Lie, Jenny Ma, Aria Querubin, *Level I Pianists*

Aiyana Liu, *Level I and Training Chorus Pianist*

Angel Chuang, Nathan Crowe, *Training Chorus Pianists*

In September 2019, SFGC released its most recent album, *My Outstretched Hand*, on Supertrain Records featuring The Knights and Trinity Youth Chorus. The album includes world premiere recordings of choral-orchestral works by three American composers, Lisa Bielawa, Aaron Jay Kernis and *If I Were Not Me* by Colin Jacobsen. Further demonstrating its commitment to the music of today, SFGC's February 2018 album release, *Final Answer*, includes works by nine living composers, among them Philip Glass, Aleksandra Vrebalov, Lisa Bielawa, John Zorn, and Gabriel Kahane. The Premier Ensemble has been a recipient of numerous music industry awards, including five GRAMMY Awards, four ASCAP/Chorus America Awards for Adventurous Programming, and the Margaret Hillis Award for Choral Excellence from Chorus America.

In addition to its Premier Ensemble, SFGC is renowned as a regional center for choral music education and performance for girls and young women ages 4-18. Hundreds of singers from 46 Bay Area cities participate in this internationally-recognized six-level Chorus School, hailed as "a model in the country for training girls' voices" by the California Arts Council. Launched in March 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, SFGC created an innovative Online Learning Program that utilizes technology to bring choral music education to the homes of choristers across the Bay Area. For more information, visit <http://www.sfgirlschorus.org>.

San Francisco Girls Chorus

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Francisca Li. Francisca Li is a graduate member who has continued to show her commitment to Level IV through her time as a section leader leading our S1s. She is always ready to participate and share her thoughts in our musical discussions. And this year, what has been most remarkable to me is her growth as a singer. She has worked steadily over this year to master her breath control and ability to support great singing through the high range. Francisca's willingness to keep putting in the work and continue to grow as a singer, even after disappointments, is a testament to her tenacity, commitment to SFGC, and vision of herself as a singer. Francisca has truly realized and stepped into a new level of singing this year through her consistent hard work. For these reasons, Francisca is this year's graduate speaker.

Level IV Singers

Theo Alling ↗~	Iris Pradal
Amelia Berger	Wilhelmina Naumann Ratto
Gloria Cebrian	Elizabeth Rogers
Charlotte B. Choi	Katherine Rogers
Cate Cross ↗~	Vibhuti Singh ↗
Natalie Falero	Leonora Steward
Julia Howe	Calista Stone
Rebecca Jia > ~	Shiva Swaminathan
Aram Kim	Strickland ↗~
Francisca Li > ~	Anayah Tin
Sierra Valencia Lyon ↗ ~	Ana Camila Vazquez Gonzalez
Magdalena Sambajon	↗
Mercado ↗~	Pearl Watson
Margot Pecceu	Venus Yu ↗~
Mackenzie Pederson	Miroslava Zagal

↗ 2022 graduates > graduate members ~ section leader

Dr. Anne K. Hege, *Level IV Director*, creates musical worlds that invite an awareness of and attention to the body and our present moment. In her work as a conductor, composer, vocalist, instrument builder, and scholar, she explores the roots of musicality in the intersection of ensemble interaction, technology,

embodiment, and expression. In 2014, she completed her Ph.D. in Music Composition at Princeton University where she studied the role of the body in the creation of meaning in musical performance. Her research was guided by and has influenced her work as a conductor, vocalist, and composer.

Working as a choral conductor since 1999, Hege studied conducting with Melvin Strauss, Neely Bruce, Marika Kuzma, and Judit Hartványi. She founded and directed Folk3000 (1999–2001), Albany Community Chorus (2000–2004), Cuatro Vientos (2004–2006), and Celestial Mechanics (2007–2010). Hege was the conductor of the Holy Names University Chorus (2013–2016) and artistic director of Voci Women’s Vocal Ensemble (2013–2017). Currently, she is the artistic director of the Peninsula Women’s Chorus and on the voice faculty at Mills College.

Hege’s compositions have been recognized with awards such as The Elizabeth Mills Crothers Prize, The Gwen Livingston Pekora Prize in Music Composition, and a Mark Nelson Fellowship. She has composed for film, installation art, dance, and concert settings. Her works have been performed by So Percussion, Volti SF, Clerestory, Princeton Laptop Orchestra, Ensemble Klang, NOW Ensemble, Newspeak, Flux Quartet, New York Virtuoso Singers, loadbang, among others. From 2008–2015 and again in 2022, Hege composed musical scores for Carrie Ahern Dance with over 40 performances of these works in locations including the vaults of 14 Wall Street, a retired Lyceum, and Dickson’s Farmstand in Chelsea Market. Hege has received awards and grants including a New Music USA Project Grant, an INNOVA Records Project Grant, Composer in Residence (Resound Ensemble), Visiting Artist (CCRMA, Stanford University), Research Affiliate (Center of Arts and Cultural Policy Studies, Princeton University), among other awards. She is currently finishing her opera, *The Furies: A Laptopera*, to premiere November 11-13, 2022 at Stanford University and will be releasing her first album, *The Tape Machine*, on INNOVA Records this coming fall.

performances of two previous SFGC commissions by 2021 Pulitzer Prize winner Tania Leon and 2019–2020 Rome Prize winner Pamela Z; and numerous collaborations with artists, ensembles and organizations from across the Bay Area and beyond.

Additional highlights from the 2020–2021 season include the release of a video collaboration with The King’s Singers as part of its virtual residency featuring an arrangement Leonard Cohen’s *Hallelujah*; the world premiere of *Music for Hard Times* by former Chorus School Composer-in-Residence Danny Clay (2018–2019) in collaboration with The Living Earth Show and San Francisco Conservatory of Music; the world premiere of *Music of the Birds* by Sahba Aminikia, a co-commission with Kronos Quartet, Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History and Turkey’s Sirkane Social Circus School; and a unique video project with Ars Minerva that combined excerpts from Vivaldi’s *Juditha Triumphans* alongside arias by women composers of the Baroque era.

In recent seasons, SFGC embarked on a July 2019 debut tour of England and France that featured six performances in London, Windsor, Cambridge, and Paris; debut performances in February 2018 at Carnegie Hall alongside Philip Glass and the Philip Glass Ensemble; and an April 2017 debut performance at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts with The Knights for SHIFT: A Festival of American Orchestras. SFGC has also traveled the world as a musical ambassador for San Francisco, with tours to the Nordic countries, Germany, Japan, China, South Korea, and Cuba, and performed for the 2009 inauguration of President Barack Obama.

Praised by *Gramophone Magazine* as a “remarkable tapestry of teenage voices,” SFGC has been a champion of the music of our time since its founding, having commissioned more than three dozen works by leading composers including Philip Glass, Richard Danielpour, Aaron Jay Kernis, Gabriel Kahane, Augusta Read Thomas, and Chen Yi.

Armstrong holds a Level I Certification in Kodaly teaching and has prepared singers to sing with the San Francisco Opera, the San Francisco Symphony, and Opera Parallèle.

About the San Francisco Girls Chorus

Stunning range, flexibility, drama, and power are among the hallmarks of the 43-year-old San Francisco Girls Chorus's Premier Ensemble, recognized as one of the world's leading youth vocal ensembles. Led by Artistic Director Valérie Sainte-Agathe, the Premier Ensemble has achieved an incomparable sound that underscores the unique clarity and force of impeccably trained treble voices.

Over the last year, SFGC has embraced the challenges of distance learning by presenting eight virtual performances, premiering seven new works as well as five commissions, and collaborating with renowned guest artists and ensembles from across the Bay Area, United States and beyond, including Virtual Artists-in-Residence The King's Singers (Fall 2020), Roomful of Teeth (Spring 2021), and TENET Vocal Artists, among many others. Through its innovative Online Learning Program, SFGC has utilized technology to keep its hundreds of choristers engaged and advancing in their musical activities and performing live together from their own homes. Most recently, SFGC presented three sold-out presentations of *The Line Between*, a special video production at the Fort Mason FLIX drive-in theater that included world premiere commissions by Cava Menzies, featuring Roomful of Teeth as part of its virtual residency, and Chorus School Composer-in-Residence Susie Ibarra (2020-2021).

This season, SFGC welcomes American folk-jazz singer Bobby McFerrin as Artist-in-Residence and will present a live performance of excerpts from his 1997 improvisational studio album *Circlesongs*; two SFGC commissioned works including the world premieres of Matthew Welch's four act choral-opera *Tomorrow's Memories: A Little Manila Diary* and Theresa Wong's *In Stillness I Sing*, a special collaboration with pianist Sarah Cahill that will also be featured in three KALW radio broadcasts;

César Cancino, *piano*, enjoys a musically diverse career as pianist, musical director, conductor, and composer. He studied piano with Alain Naudé, a pupil of the great Dinu Lipatti. He was for many years the musical director/pianist for *Teatro Zinzanni* in San Francisco and for several years toured with singer/songwriter Joan Baez as her musical director and pianist. In 2021 he appeared as pianist/accompanist for LA Opera's *After Hours* Latina Composers series. Mr. Cancino has performed throughout North America, Europe and Australia in such venues as Montreux Jazz Festival, Carnegie Hall, Atlanta Summer Pops Symphony and the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival.

Valérie Sainte-Agathe, *Artistic Director*, has prepared and conducted the San Francisco Girls Chorus since 2013, including performances with renowned ensembles such as the Philip Glass Ensemble, The Knights, Kronos Quartet, New Century Chamber Orchestra, Voices of Music, TENET Vocal Artists, the San Francisco Symphony, and San Francisco Opera.

Ms. Sainte-Agathe continues to bring high-profile guest artists and ensembles from across the United States and beyond to work in collaboration with the choristers of SFGC. She most recently joined forces with The King's Singers and Roomful of Teeth to further SFGC's creative energy during the COVID-19 pandemic with several unique video and audio projects that were released in spring 2021. This season, Ms. Sainte-Agathe welcomes legendary American folk-jazz vocalist Bobby McFerrin as SFGC Artist-in-Residence and will lead a rare performance of excerpts from his groundbreaking 1997 Sony Classical album *Circlesongs*.

Through transformative choral music training, education, and performance, Ms. Sainte-Agathe empowers young women and champions the music of today throughout the choral world. Recent commissions by Theresa Wong, Susie Ibarra, Cava Menzies, and Matthew Welch will continue to build upon SFGC's legacy of creating and presenting new repertoire for treble chorus.

In the 2021–2022 season, Ms. Sainte-Agathe will join forces with GRAMMY Award-winning Kronos Quartet to conduct the world premiere of *At War With Ourselves* by Michael Abels throughout the U.S. She will also serve as Artist in Residence in Choral Conducting at the University of the Pacific's Conservatory of Music in Stockton, CA.

During the 2019–2020 season, Ms. Sainte-Agathe, in collaboration with Berkeley Ballet Theater, created and conducted *Rightfully Ours*, a fully-staged choral music and dance production that brought together young singers and dancers for an entire program of new music and choreographies. Featured works included world premiere commissions by Angélica Negrón and Aviya Kopelman. Ms. Sainte-Agathe also served as Artist-in-Residence for the Kronos Quartet's Festival 2019.

In February 2018, Ms. Sainte-Agathe made her Carnegie Hall debut with the Philip Glass Ensemble, conducting with Michael Riesman in Glass's *Music with Changing Parts*. Ms. Sainte-Agathe also conducted the Philip Glass Ensemble in another performance of this work making her debut at London's prestigious Barbican Center in October 2019. In October 2017, she conducted *The Photographer* by Philip Glass and in June 2016, she conducted SFGC alongside The Knights and Brooklyn Youth Chorus for the New York Philharmonic Biennial Festival at Lincoln Center. She also collaborated with The Knights for the SHIFT Festival at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. Her first recording as SFGC's Music Director, *Final Answer*, was released on Orange Mountain Music in February 2018, and her second recording, *My Outstretched Hand*, featured composer Aaron Jay Kernis, The Knights, and Trinity Youth Chorus and was released in July 2019. Between 2014 and 2016, she prepared choruses for Lisa Bielawa's made-for-TV opera, *Vireo: The Spiritual Biography of a Witch's Accuser*. She also served as Choir Master with Taylor Mac, recipient of MacArthur Foundation's "Genius Grant," for the *Holiday Sauce* production at the Curran Theater in December 2018.

Ms. Sainte-Agathe served as Music Director for the Young Singers program of the Montpellier National Symphony and Opera in France from 1998–2011. In this capacity, she trained young singers for opera and symphony concerts and productions. She participated in eight recordings with the Montpellier National Orchestra and The Radio France Festival.

Dr. Laney McClain Armstrong, *Director of Choral Studies*, is a singer and conductor who has made choral music and education her life's work. As a conductor and educator, Dr. Armstrong strives to cultivate a love of music in each singer through quality programming, building skills and musicianship, and devotion to the music and texts. She has toured internationally with the San Francisco Girls Chorus and the Harvard University Choir as a singer, and was one of the founding members of the Choral Fellows program at Harvard University in 2001. She received a Foreign Language Area Studies Fellowship in 2009 while a student at the University of Washington that supported her study of Estonian language and culture. As part of her fellowship, she assisted in cataloging entries in the University of Washington's Baltic Choral Collection. Dr. Armstrong has worked with singers of many ages, teaching middle school and high school, serving as the Associate Artistic Director and Director of Musicianship at the Cantabile Youth Singers of Silicon Valley, and working in many capacities at the San Francisco Girls Chorus. She currently works music teacher at the Renaissance International School in Oakland and is the Artistic Director of the San Francisco-based women's ensemble, Musae.

Dr. Armstrong holds a Bachelor of Arts from Harvard University in Afro-American Studies and a Masters of Music in Choral Conducting from the University of Oregon under the direction of Dr. Sharon Paul. In 2013, she received a Doctorate in Musical Arts in Choral Conducting from the University of Washington, where she studied with Dr. Geoffrey Boers. Her dissertation, entitled *From the mouth and from the heart: the Spiritual Folksongs of Cyrillus Kreek*, explores the life of the Estonian composer and his arrangements of folk hymns, with a focus on those written for treble voices. Dr.