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Old First Concerts

presents

Carols by Candlelight
Young Women's Chorus
of San Francisco

Matthew Otto, *Artistic Director*

Sian Wittke, *assistant conductor*

Margaret Halbig, *collaborative pianist*

Bradley Christensen, *baritone*

Amos Yang, *cello*

Friday, December 15, 2023 at 8 PM

Old First Church

1751 Sacramento St. at Van Ness Ave.

San Francisco, CA 94109

(415) 474-1608 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.

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.olderfirstconcerts.org/give/, or checks can be mailed to:

Old First Concerts, 1751 Sacramento Street, San Francisco, CA 94109.
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Enjoy free concerts, make new friends, and help support your favorite non-profit organization! Volunteering with Old First Concerts is a wonderful opportunity for students, seniors, or anyone with a passion for music—and we'll work with your availability!

contact: curtishuth@olderfirstconcerts for more information.

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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/olderfirstconcerts/

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

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COMING UP AT OLD FIRST CONCERTS

Monday, March 18 at 7:30 pm

Earplay – *Life Cycle + Fundraising Gala*

Challenging the audience to broaden its concept of music with new emotional and auditory experiences, Earplay performs the World Premieres of the 2023 Donald Aird Prize winning work Flower Mantis by Koh Cheng Jin and a new work from the emerging Sacramento-based composer Chris Castro, alongside works by Haris Kittos, Erik Ulman, and Toshio Hosokawa. After the performance, join Earplay for its first-ever mid-season fundraising gala, where we'll toast the musicians and composers, provide insights into our 40th anniversary season in 2025, and celebrate our past, present, and future with you!

Saturday, March 23 at 8 pm

Conspiracy of Venus

Vocal ensemble Conspiracy of Venus will present a program featuring mostly a cappella original arrangements of songs by iconic artists such as Leonard Cohen, Joni Mitchell, Bjork, PJ Harvey, and many more, including a new series featuring Bay Area artists.

For tickets & more information visit www.olderfirstconcerts.org

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PROGRAM

Cecil Frances Alexander (1818–1895)

arr. David Willcocks (1919–2015)

Sing-Along Carol: Once in Royal David's City

Zoë Cort & Laura Petrocelli, soloists

Welcome & Land Acknowledgement

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

arr. Matthew Otto (b. 1985)

Fantasia on Christmas Carols

Bradley Christensen, *baritone*; Amos Yang, *cello*

Bob Chilcott (b. 1955)

Mid-winter

Pietro Yon (1886–1943)

Gesù Bambino

Bradley Christensen, *baritone*; Matthew Otto, *organ*

Franz Biebl (1906–2001)

Ave Maria

Heron Lundeen & Sadie Oliver, *soloists*

Eve Nudd, Catherine Ong, Zoë Cort, Aria Gupta,

Saskia Petitt, Audrey Wong, *sextet*

English Traditional, arr. David Willcocks

Sing-Along Carol: The First Nowell

Hildegard von Bingen (circa 1098–1179)

Karitas habundat

Karitas à Four, arr. Zanaida Robles (b. 1979)

J.S. Bach (1685–1750)

Christe eleison from *Mass in B Minor*

Ola Gjeilo (b. 1978)

Tundra

Eve Nudd & Lily Galante, *soloists*

Adolphe Adam (1803–1856)

O Holy Night

Bradley Christensen, *baritone*; Matthew Otto, *organ*

Traditional Spiritual, arr. Rollo Dilworth (b. 1970)

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

English Traditional, arr. Paul Carrey (b. 1954)

We Wish You a Merry Christmas

Felix Bartholdy-Mendelssohn (1809–1847)

arr. David Willcocks

Sing-Along Carol: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Franz Xavier Gruber (1787–1863), arr. John Rutter (b. 1945)

Stille Nacht/Silent Night

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We wish to acknowledge that the Young Women's Choral Projects operates on the unceded ancestral homeland of the Ramaytush Ohlone, the original peoples of the San Francisco Peninsula. The area comprising the City and County of San Francisco was originally inhabited by the Yelamu, an independent tribe of the Ramaytush Ohlone peoples. We affirm their sovereign rights as First Peoples and pay our respects to their ancestors, elders, and relatives. We also recognize that, as settlers, we continue to benefit from living and working on their traditional homeland. We strive to

COMING UP AT OLD FIRST CONCERTS

Friday, February 23 at 8 pm & Sunday, February 25 at 4 pm

Sixth Station Trio—Anju Goto, violin

Federico Strand Ramirez, cello; Katelyn Tan, piano

Sixth Station Trio, whose mission is to keep classical music accessible to the general public and to challenge the boundaries of what a classical piano trio can do, debuted at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco in 2023 in a sold-out concert featuring music from the films of Studio Ghibli.

Sunday, March 10 at 4 pm

Wooden Fish Ensemble plays Women Composers!

Terrie Baune, violin; Thalia Moore, cello

Thomas Schultz, piano

Wooden Fish Ensemble celebrates International Women's Day with performances of works by Galina Ustvolskaya, Ruth Crawford, and Clara Schumann, plus the World Premiere of Hyo-shin Na's *Many Paradises*.

Sunday, March 17 at 4 pm

Junior Bach Festival

The Junior Bach Festival returns to Old First Concerts by popular demand, as we have every year since 2015, showcasing a new generation of superbly talented and virtuosic young soloists and ensembles who are uniquely capable of expressing the genius of Bach's timeless music.

Friday, March 15 at 8 pm

The Spizzwinks(?)

The Spizzwinks(?) are composed entirely of full-time undergraduate students at Yale, bringing our diverse repertoire of over 600 arrangements everywhere from local New Haven elementary schools, to concert halls, special events, businesses, and universities on our international tours.

For tickets & more information visit www.oldfirstconcerts.org

COMING UP AT OLD FIRST CONCERTS

Sunday, January 28 at 4 pm

Ives Collective—**Kay Stern**, *violin*; **Susan Freier**, *violin/viola*;
Stephen Harrison, *cello*; **Elizabeth Schumann**, *piano*

Presenting powerful live music experiences through fresh and informed interpretations of established masterworks and under-appreciated gems, the Ives Collective's winter set builds on last season's commitment to presenting lesser heard works by Mélanie Bonis and Dame Ethel Smyth.

Saturday, February 3 at 8 pm & Sunday, February 5 at 4pm

Circadian String Quartet with Amy Zanrosso, *piano*
Monika Gruber & David Ryther, *violins*; **Omid Assadi**, *viola*;
David Wishnia, *cello*

Circadian String Quartet, founded in 2013 to perform classical and contemporary repertoire of folkloric or cultural significance, are joined by pianist Amy Zanrosso in two-day festival of piano quintets by Schumann, Dvořák, Shostakovich and Stravinsky/Ryther.

Monday, February 5 at 7:30 pm

Earplay—*The Poetry of Physics*

Challenging the audience to broaden its concept of music with new emotional and auditory experiences, Earplay performs the World Premiere of stellar Chilean-American composer Miguel Chuaqui's *Ad Hoc*, West Coast Premieres by Suzanne Sorkin and Yotam Haber, and works by Kaija Saariaho and Ines Thiebaut.

Sunday, February 18 at 4 pm

Duo Chiaroscuro—*Love and Dreams*

Tristana Ferreyra-Rantalaiho, *alto*; **Johanna Tarcson**, *piano*
Duo Chiaroscuro explores the play of light and shadow in art and music, with works by Schubert, Lili Boulanger, Ernest Chausson, Henri Duparc, Emile Paladilhe, Claude Debussy, Peter Lieberon, Carlos Guastavino and Alberto Ginastera.

deepen our own understanding of local Indigenous communities and ways of knowing, uplift contemporary Indigenous voices and cultures, and reframe our responsibilities to land and community. At YWCP, we are grateful for the opportunity to make music on this land.

ABOUT THE MUSICIANS

The **Young Women's Choral Projects of San Francisco** transforms the lives of young women through exceptional artistry in choral performance and brings the expressive power of their music to the community, the nation, and the world. Founded in 2012 by Dr. Susan McMane, and now led by Artistic Director Dr. Matthew Otto, YWCP includes six levels of choral experience for young women ages 4-18 from across the San Francisco Bay Area. Through YWCP, participants of richly diverse socio-ethnic backgrounds find their voices as singers, artists, and women in a nurturing environment that empowers them to achieve artistic and personal excellence.

The **Young Women's Chorus of San Francisco** is the premier ensemble of the Young Women's Choral Projects. The Chorus comprises singers ages 12-18, and has been praised for its beauty of sound, stellar musicianship, and dynamic programming. Acclaimed in the *American Record Guide* for its "refined and beautifully controlled singing," the Young Women's Chorus has also won many competitive, national awards including the American Prize in Choral Performance, the Margaret Hillis Award for Choral Excellence, the Dale Warland Singers Commission Award from Chorus America and American Composers Forum, and the ASCAP Adventurous Programming Award. Recent activities include a debut performance at Carnegie Hall in 2018; concert tours to South Africa (2019), France (2022), and Argentina (2023); the premiere of the opera *Abraham in Flames* in 2019; and

performances with the London Philharmonia Orchestra and the San Francisco Symphony. Performing repertoire from early music to contemporary selections, the Chorus annually performs a professional series of concerts in the Bay Area, and commissions new works by leading composers.

YOUNG WOMEN'S CHORUS OF SAN FRANCISCO

Noemi Barbagli	Anna-Sophia	Sadie Oliver ★
Lena Beer	Gruzman	Catherine Ong ★
Amelia Cheung	Aria Gupta	Saskia Petitt
Alex Cohen	Cecilia Heath ★	Laura Petrocelli
Imogen Cornes	Beatrice Hord	Aria Ramsinghani ◆
Zoë Cort ◆	Nora Hunter	Kären Rindal
Nola Evans	Hilde Kirsch Kutz	Jodie Rivera ◇
Chloe Faison ★	Lydia Kleinbart	Hazel Robinson
Camille Fanvu	Heron Lundeen ◇	Naomi Williams
Charlotte Fanvu	Claire Malaney-Lau	Sarah Wolfe ★
Lily Galante ★	Kalpana Narlikar ★	Audrey Wong ★
Rowan Gleser	Amelie Nordström	Sophie Yuen
	Eve Genie Nudd	

◆ *Chorus Manager* ★ *Section Leader* ◇ *Music Librarian*

Dr. Matthew Otto, *Artistic Director*, is an award-winning Canadian conductor, educator, and collaborator. From 2010-2023, he served on the faculty of the world-renowned Toronto Children's Chorus, including as Director of Education and Interim Artistic Director. In addition to conducting several ensembles, he oversaw their choral curriculum, educational outreach programs, and conductor apprentice program. In 2013, he co-founded the Toronto Youth Choir (TYC) to offer a space for innovation, inclusion, and musical excellence to youth and young adults ages 14-30. During his tenure, the TYC performed with The King's

COMING UP AT OLD FIRST CONCERTS

Saturday December 16 at 8 pm

Golden Bough—*Christmas in a Celtic Land*

Share the laughter, song and joy with rare versions of Celtic songs of Winter, and a unique take on better known Christmas Carols.

Sunday, December 17 at 4 pm

KITKA—*Wintersongs*—Shira Cion, Director

What sustains us in times of darkness, scarcity, uncertainty, and hardship? Kitka's *Wintersongs* program this year is a musical response to this question, featuring songs that express wonder and gratitude for the miracle of creation, the diversity of life on Earth, and the mysterious influences of heavenly bodies.

Sunday, January 7 at 2 pm

Sarah Cahill, piano

Sarah Cahill, hailed as "a sterling pianist and an intrepid illuminator of the classical avant-garde" by *The New York Times* and "a brilliant and charismatic advocate for modern and contemporary composers" by *Time Out New York*, has commissioned and premiered over seventy compositions for solo piano. For this concert, she will perform Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's *Forest Scenes, Op. 66*, along with other works.

Monday, January 22 at 7 pm

Amateur Music Network presents Sarah Cahill's Backstage Pass

with guest artist Jason Vieaux, guitar

How does a jazz pianist create a unique arrangement of a standard? Why do notation and improvisation seem like such separate worlds? We'll explore these questions and more in this new series, with guest artists demonstrating and revealing the secret processes behind their music.

member of the Seattle Symphony. Yang has performed as a soloist and chamber musician throughout the United States, the Far East, and Europe, appearing at the Aspen Music Festival, the American Academy in Rome, Wigmore Hall, and Alice Tully Hall. He has collaborated with the Ying Quartet, Turtle Island String Quartet, pianists Ann Schein and Melvin Chen, violinist Earl Carlyss, and composer Bright Sheng.

Yang's awards include the Performer's Certificate at the Eastman School of Music and first prizes in the American String Teachers Association and Grace Vamos competitions. He was a finalist in the Pierre Fournier International Cello Competition and was awarded the CD Jackson Prize at the Tanglewood Music Festival for outstanding musical contribution.

Born and raised in San Francisco, he was a member of the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra and San Francisco Boys Chorus. Yang holds bachelor's and master's degrees from The Juilliard School. His primary teachers have included Irene Sharp, Channing Robbins, Paul Katz, and Steven Doane. From 1996 to 2002, he was the cellist in the Maia String Quartet. He also served on the faculties of the Peabody Conservatory, the University of Iowa, Grinnell College, and the Interlochen Advanced String Quartet Institute. Yang serves on the faculty of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and the San Francisco Academy Orchestra.

Singers, Irish Youth Choir, Choir of Trinity College Melbourne, musica intima, Missouri State University Chorale, Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

As a strong advocate for the choral arts in Canada, Matthew was President of Choirs Ontario, a board member of Choral Canada, and a founding member of Bridge Choral Collective. He has worked extensively as a guest conductor, lecturer, clinician, and adjudicator. In 2016, Matthew co-organized Chorus America's Choral Management Institute in Toronto and served on its faculty.

Matthew has led performances of Handel's *Messiah*, Mozart's *Requiem*, *Mass in C Minor* and *Coronation Mass*, Bach's *St. John & St. Matthew Passions*, and has prepared choruses for Helmuth Rilling, Peter Oundjian, Masaaki Suzuki, Donald Runnicles, Nicholas McGegan, Bramwell Tovey, and Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos. Passionate about music's role in Western liturgy, Matthew has served as music director at several Toronto churches, most recently Christ Church Deer Park. From 2021–2023, he was a lecturer in Choral Music Education at the University of Toronto and, in 2022, directed their Soprano-Alto Chamber Choir.

Matthew holds a Bachelor of Music in Composition, Master of Music in Conducting, and Ph.D. in Music Education. His doctoral dissertation is entitled "*Let the Music Win!*" *Towards a Re-imagined Choral Pedagogy: A Phenomenological Case Study of Chorister Experience at the Toronto Children's Chorus*, and traces the impact of high-level choral singing on youth.

Young Women's Chorus Assistant Conductor **Sian Wittke** has a degree in Music Education with an emphasis on Choral Conducting from Berklee College of Music. Sian began

teaching music in Boston in 2014 and was the choral director at Orchard Gardens School for two years before moving back to the Bay Area. She has worked with the Boston Children's Chorus as well as the Oakland Youth Chorus, and was YWCP's Choral Fellow in the 2017-18 season. Sian was the music director at San Francisco's Adda Clevenger School for the past four years, and now teaches at Hamlin School.

Pianist **Dr. Margaret Halbig** moved to the Bay Area in 2011 and joined the accompanying and vocal coaching staff at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. 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.

Bradley Christensen enjoys a busy multi-faceted career as a baritone, voice teacher, and guest clinician, and has continued to earn praise for his "most well-rounded instrument ... focused, rich, and sympathetically communicative" (Natasha Gauthier, *Ottawa Citizen*). He holds four degrees: a BMUS (Hons) in Vocal Performance and a BA in Italian, both from the University of Auckland, and a MMus and a DMA in

Voice Performance and Pedagogy from the University of Toronto. In 2016, he was invited by The Royal Conservatory of Toronto to hold one of seven positions in its prestigious Rebanks Family Fellowship and International Performance Residency Program. He also furthered his development as a young artist with Opera on the Avalon, Highlands Opera Studio, and Opera North.

Bradley has had the pleasure of working with many arts organizations across Canada and internationally through the realms of opera, operetta, oratorio, chamber music, song recitals, and musical theater. Recent performance highlights include appearances with: Canadian Opera Company Concert Series, Cultureland Opera Collective, Confluence Concerts, Choral Connection, Bach Elgar Choir, New Opera Lyra, as well as a performance in Auckland, New Zealand of Brahms' song cycle, *Die schöne Magelone*, staged by Aria Umezawa. Bradley made his US debut in 2017 performing the role of Agamemnon with Opera North in Offenbach's *La belle Hélène*, while also covering the role of Fred/Petruccio in Cole Porter's *Kiss me Kate*.

Awards include the Sondra Radvanovsky scholarship, awarded by the International Resource Centre for Performing Artists as one of 10 'Singing Stars: The Next Generation'; the Pears-Britten singing scholarship (University of Auckland); the Marie D'Albini scholarship in singing (University of Auckland); and a travelling scholarship to study in Italy in 2007 (University of Auckland). Bradley has also been a top 10 finalist in the New Zealand Aria Competition, the LEXUS Song Quest and the Rochester International Voice Competition.

Amos Yang has been assistant principal cellist with the San Francisco Symphony since 2007. He was previously a