

# PERFORMING ARTS

## PHS alum Reed Criddle ('99) returns as composer Piedmont Choirs to perform his vocal piece, *Quiet Enlightenment* March 13

By Jay Russell

Reed Criddle, a 1999 Piedmont High grad, will return to town for the debut of his choral composition, *Quiet Enlightenment*. It was commissioned by Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir and will be performed on Friday, March 13, at 7:30 p.m. at the First Congregational Church in Berkeley. The concert will be preceded by a "Meet the Composer" talk with Reed Criddle at 7:00.

The March 13 concert, titled *Music of the Pacific Rim*, will showcase the traditions and cultures of Japan, China, California, Mexico, Taiwan, and Hawaii. Four of Piedmont Choirs' performing ensembles – Concert Choir, Ensemble, Ecco, and Ancora – will perform.

Reed's new work represents contrasting thoughts of "home" according to Buddhist and Con-

fucist poetry. The Confucian poem "Quiet Night Thoughts" by Li Bai exudes a veneration attitude towards home as a protective place. As a freshman at PHS Reed studied

Mandarin the first year it was offered, and "Quiet Night Thoughts" was the first poem they studied.

It stuck with him. The contrasting poem" by Master Shen Zhao Ben Ru, gives a detached view of "home" as just another concept encompassed in the Buddhist non-duality concept. Meaning "not two," non-duality focuses on the sameness of "opposite" concepts, in this poem home and away are not different, one is not preferable. The Ecco ensemble will also perform Criddle's arrangement of a Chinese folk melody, "Boat on Tai Lake," featuring Anderson Wang playing the erhu (two



**Eric Tuan: Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir Artistic Director**

stringed violin/ fiddle).

As a Fulbright Scholar in Taiwan studying Buddhist chants. Criddle gained the insight that chanting was not so much about performance but as a meditation.

In his composition Criddle uses sounds of audible breaths to show anxiety, all within the

rhythm of a beautiful choir piece.

"When practicing Buddhist principles of mindfulness and meditation, I find the human inclinations to be anxious and fearful naturally creep in. This is the meaning of these breathless moments," he said.

Fittingly, "Quiet Enlightenment" marks the return home of Criddle from Utah Valley University, where he teaches. He recalls his time singing in Piedmont Choirs, then directed by Bob Geary, whose "intellectual curiosity and musical fearlessness" he greatly admired.

He sees PEBCC artistic director Eric Tuan, who spearheaded the commissioning of this piece of music, as continuing Geary's inspirational spirit.

### Composition also by Eric Tuan

The *Music of the Pacific Rim* concert also will include a composition by Tuan, called "Nagasaki." Using song, spoken text and movement it tells the story of his grandmother's survival of the atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki.

The choir will also present two works by award-winning



**Reed Criddle: Director of Choral Studies at Utah Valley University**

composer Tonia Ko. Her first work, "Lost Queens," sheds light on the destruction of Hawaiian monarchy by US-backed sugar barons in 1893, and on the extinction a bird with iconic bold yellow plumage. Her second piece, "Before Color," imagines a world without air molecules to refract light and create color.

Tickets to the March 13 concert are available online at [www.piedmontchoirs.org](http://www.piedmontchoirs.org).



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