

## Sneak preview of 3 commissioned works at Piedmont Choirs Making History concert this Saturday



Composer Stacy Garrop's *Mother of Exiles* will be premiered by Piedmont Choirs on March 24.



Jacqueline Hairston's *A Freedom Quodlibet* was commissioned by Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir.

By Heather Saulnier

Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir recently commissioned three innovative pieces of choral music that will be premiered at the choir's Making History concert this Saturday, , March 24 at 7 p.m. at First Congregational Church in Berkeley, 2345 Channing Way.

The concert will include music by the Choirs' performing groups: Ecco, Ancora, Concert Choir and Ensemble.

All three pieces explore the subject of freedom, the theme of this summer's Golden Gate International Choral Festival.

*Last Ditch Fight of the Wish* by multiple award-winning Mark Wings (UNESP Organ Composition Prize, the American Music Center, Piteå Musikhögskolan Lecture Grant) will be performed by the choir's flagship Ensemble choir. The lyrics are from PEN prize-winning local poet Denise Newman who wrote the poem after working with Ensemble in 2018. Wings has held residencies at the MacDowell Colony, the Ragdale Foundation, and Fundación Valparaiso in Mojacar, Spain. The multi-media piece will include choreography of ODC's legendary KT Nelson. Piedmont Choirs' Artistic Director Bob Geary is excited to continue building on his exploration of choregie with Nelson with whom he recently collaborated to stage a performance of *Path of Miracles* with Volti at Grace Cathedral.

Last summer Piedmont Choirs' long-standing relationship with composer Wings culminated in a 2nd place prize at the 70th international Eisteddfod Choral Competition in Llangollen, Wales, with another of Wings' commissioned pieces.

The concert this weekend will include two other commissions augmented by a powerful massing of 150 singers ages 10-18 from. Stacy Garrop, (awarded both the Barlow Prize and a Fromm Music Foundation commission) composed *Mother of Exiles* for PEBCC.

"I could think of no better text to express the upcoming festival's theme of freedom than Emma Lazarus' immortal words in her poem *The New Colossus*, written in 1883 and put on a plaque on the Statue of Liberty in 1903, a symbol of welcome and hope for a better life on American shores for fourteen million immigrants passing her torch en route to this country," said Garrop.

Jacqueline Hairston, a practitioner of Sound Healing, premieres *A Freedom Quodlibet*, a composition skillfully weaving text and motifs from traditional spirituals as well as from Alice Walker's *Joie de Vivre*. Hairston is recipient of several honors, including Los Angeles Living Legends Awards, San Francisco's Channel 7 Jefferson Awards for Preserving Negro Spirituals, and awards from Congresswoman Barbara Lee.

Tickets for the March 24 concert may be purchased at: [tinyurl.com/ycv6bd3b](http://tinyurl.com/ycv6bd3b).

The choir will perform all three commissioned pieces at the Golden Gate International Choral Festival in July. Piedmont choristers will be joined by more than 200 singers from 10 choirs from throughout the world, including choirs from Australia, China, and the country of Georgia. PEBCC is honored to receive generous support for these commissions from the National Endowment for the Arts and continuing Season Sponsor Bell Investment Advisors of Oakland.



Photo by Marielle Hayes

Ensemble will be one of four choral groups from Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir to perform in a concert this Saturday night, March 24 at First Congregational Church in Berkeley.

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Bay Area choral composer Mark Wings will premier *Last Ditch Fight of the Wish* at Saturday's concert with Piedmont Choirs.



### Tulip Exhibition 2018

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