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PIEDMONT CHOIRS TAKES HOME THE GOLD & GRAND PRIX

OAKLAND, Calif. -- Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir's "Ensemble" is 'taking home the gold' after competing in the Fifth International Youth Music Festival held in Bratislava, Slovak Republic, July 11-14. Not only was Ensemble of Piedmont Choirs the only choir to enter three categories of competition, they won the first prize in all three categories (Children's Choir; Gospel & Spiritual; and Contemporary) as well as the coveted Grand Prix Award, indicating PEBC as the overall winner of the choral competition.

"It was gratifying to see that the tremendous effort of our choir members singing a repertoire that was dominated by three Bay Area composers was so highly regarded by an international jury," said Robert Geary, Artistic Director of the Oakland, California based choir (The music of Mark Winges, Sue Bohlin, and Jonathan Goodwin were featured in the competition). "It's an honor to hear one's music performed with such accuracy, plus heart and soul, which are the added ingredients needed to win over the audience and judges", said Sue Bohlin, composer, and also the choir's accompanist. "It is a fact that we share this award with all the choir supporters who believe in this amazing organization, the parents who understand the benefits for their children in this type of cultural exchange, and the brilliant conductors and singers in our choirs. This is really a team effort," added Geary.

The Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir sang in the famous Hall of Mirrors at the Primatial Palace where the Treaty of Pressburg (now Bratislava) between France and Austria was signed in 1805. PEBC presented a concert in the magnificent concert hall together with three other winning choirs including the Gene Louw Children's Choir of South Africa, conducted by Marietjie Martinson, the Youth Choir of St. Vid, Slovenia, conducted by Aken Krajnc, and Artis' Jok of Belgium, conducted by Tinne De Groot.

The competition, held over a period of 4 days, is adjudicated by a panel of six international judges who grade each choir on several criteria such as tone quality, interpretation, vocal technique, rhythm elements, and presentation.

The choral festival, led by Mgr. Milan Kolena, ArtD., has become one of the established European festivals dedicated to youth music. Choirs and orchestras from around the world participate in a competitive and non-competitive setting as they perform together in the historic festival. This year, competing choirs came from Belgium, China, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Mexico, Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Slovenia and South Africa.

The Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir may host one of these same choirs in 2015 at the Golden Gate International Choral Festival in Oakland, California, which was developed by PEBC in 1982 and is one of the only such Festivals hosted by a children's choir in the United States.

The 42 girls and boys of Ensemble finished their annual summer tour in Slovakia after performances in Germany and Austria.

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Bell Investment Advisors (www.bellinvest.com) is the lead sponsor for the 2012-2013 Season of the Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir, including the Golden Gate Festival.

The internationally-acclaimed Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir has been offering children from throughout San Francisco's East Bay an outstanding program of choral training and performance. Founded in 1982 by Suzie Rahl, the Choir has established itself as a leading force in international choral activities and new music under the dynamic leadership of Artistic Director Robert Geary. International tours every summer and a keen desire to meet, collaborate, and compete with choruses and singers of other cultures have led to high marks at prestigious festivals across the world, and to the sponsorship of the Golden Gate International Choral Festival, convening next in July 2012. The Choir regularly collaborates with major Bay Area arts organizations such as the Oakland East Bay Symphony, the Mark Morris Dance Company, Berkeley West Edge Opera, and Volti. The Choir's comprehensive music curriculum offers students age 4-18 the chance to progress through a series of training choirs to professional-level performing groups. Besides offering an exceptional education in vocal technique and music theory, the organization strives to offer lessons in creativity, expression, poise and engagement with many cultures.

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