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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **PEBCC PRESENT *MAKING HISTORY—NEW WORKS* INCLUDING THE WORLD PREMIERE OF ERIC TUAN'S *CROSSINGS*, BASED ON INTERNATIONAL IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCES FROM BIBLICAL TO CONTEMPORARY**

### **APRIL 12 CONCERT IN BERKELEY FEATURES GUEST ARTISTS, ST. CATHERINE'S COLLEGE GIRLS CHOIR FROM CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND, AND MUSIC BY MEREDITH MONK, MARK WINGES, PEKKA KOSTIANEN AND OTHERS**

Oakland, CA, February 22, 2019 – The world premiere of *Crossings*, a new work by Bay Area composer **Eric Tuan** based on four international stories of the immigrant experience, highlights Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir's *Making History—New Works* program to be given April 12, at 7:30 pm at First Congregational Church in Berkeley. Conducted by Piedmont Choirs founding Artistic Director **Robert Geary**, the program also features guest artists, **St. Catherine's College Girls Choir** from Cambridge England, directed by **Edward Wickham**, and works by **Meredith Monk, Marck Winges, Pekka Kostianen, Peter Knell, Péter Tóth** and a premiere by **Sue Bohlin**. Tickets are priced \$15-\$35 and may be purchased at <https://piedmontchoirs.org/concerts#MakingHistory>

"There is a 'perfect storm' when it comes to the Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir and new music," says Geary. "As a result of the training our singers have had for many years, there is a highly skilled group of young-musical people with adventurous and creative attitudes ready to pounce on the offerings of the most interesting and innovative composers. We recognized this decades ago and it has led to three National ASCAP Awards and many first prizes, gold medals and grand prizes in international competitions in nine countries around the world. Now, with Eric Tuan poised to assume the Artistic Direction of PEBCC, the integration of art, social consciousness and our community becomes even more dynamic and powerful."

#### **About *Crossings***

Incoming Piedmont Choirs Artistic Director Eric Tuan's *Crossings* is an

interdisciplinary four-movement choral work exploring the experiences of refugees across time and geography. The work situates the stories of four different refugee communities in musical dialogue, while the performers enact their own physical journey of displacement through the performance space. Bringing the work alive with performances in California and Finland are the disciplined young voices of three internationally recognized youth choirs: the Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir (Oakland, CA), Vox Aurea (Jyväskylä, Finland); and the St Catharine's College Girls' Choir (Cambridge, UK). Following the April premiere in Berkeley, Piedmont Choirs will tour to Finland in June of this year to perform the work there with the collaborating choirs.

Tuan highlights the voices of four different refugee communities, ranging from ancient Israel to contemporary California. The work opens with a setting of poetry from Javier Zamora's collection *Undocumented*, depicting his grandmother's farewell as the poet flees violence in El Salvador for the United States. The second movement, *The Caravan*, narrates the family history of one of our choristers, whose great-grandmother left Hungary in a migrant caravan at the end of the Second World War. The work uplifts the words of interned Japanese-American poets in the third movement, *Barbed Wire Fence*, before turning to the voices of the ancient Hebrews fleeing Egyptian slavery in *From Desert Wastes*. This final movement sacralizes the refugee experience by situating it within the context of the psalms, a book of devotional poetry common to both Jewish and Christian traditions. The work's use of movement, music and spoken text invites the audience into the journey, as the performing choirs migrate slowly throughout the performance space.

### **About Eric Tuan, Composer and Incoming Artistic Director**

Eric Tuan returned to the Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir after successfully completing studies in the Bay Area and abroad that expanded his horizons in music composition and performance. Tuan received his B.A. in Music with Honors from Stanford University, and completed a Master of Music in Choral Studies with Distinction at the University of Cambridge with the support of a Gates Cambridge Scholarship. Tuan started his musical journey in the Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir as a young chorister and is currently on faculty as Ecco conductor and composer-in-residence. He will take over as Artistic Director of the internationally recognized program in July 2019.

Tuan currently serves as the founding Artistic Director of Convivium, the Peninsula-based chamber chorus he founded in 2012, and as Director of Music at Christ Episcopal Church, Los Altos. His dedication to the creation and exploration of new music has led him to conduct and perform the world premieres of over thirty works.

Tuan has sung professionally with Volti, Cappella SF and the Philharmonia Baroque Chorale, and has received acclaim for his sensitive work as a collaborative pianist, continuo player and répétiteur.

Tuan's choral works, published by E.C. Schirmer, draw upon his diverse musical background to explore questions of transcendence and social justice. He has been widely commissioned by ensembles throughout the United States and Europe including Musae, the Fog City Singers, the Peninsula Women's Chorus and Vox Aurea. His music has been broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and Estonian Public Broadcasting.

### **About Robert Geary, founding Artistic Director**

For 33 years as founding Artistic Director, Robert Geary has put the Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir in the musical vanguard through his determined advocacy of new music. Commissions, premieres, recordings of innovative and demanding new works by today's leading composers and collaborations with domestic and international arts organizations have led to national and international renown.

Under his direction, in addition to winning many international competition prizes, PEBCC has the distinction of being the only children's choir from the U.S. to ever win a first prize at the Choral Olympics or World Choir Games. Geary and PEBCC have performed throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico, Cuba, Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Germany, Austria, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Italy, Slovenia, United Kingdom, Russia, Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, Croatia, Serbia and, most recently, Spain.

Geary also founded the professional new music vocal ensemble Volti in 1979 and he has been the Artistic Director of the San Francisco Choral Society for the past 21 years. His choirs have performed at the Oregon Bach Festival, the Newport Music Festival, with Oakland Ballet, San Francisco Symphony, Berkeley Symphony, San Francisco Opera, Mark Morris Dance Group, and Oakland East Bay Symphony; and for the national conferences of Chorus America, the American Choral Directors Association, the College Music Society, and the Organization of American Kodály Educators.

## **About Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir**

The award-winning Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir has been in the forefront of the music scene in the East Bay since 1982. Founding Artistic Director Robert Geary has established the choir as a leading force in international choral activities with a particular strength in newly commissioned music. Under his guidance, its flagship choir, Ensemble, has won top awards at prestigious international competitions throughout the world. These honors are a product of our exceptional, progressive after school instruction in choral singing that attracts children from throughout the East Bay from 4 to 18 years old.

## **About St. Catherine's College Girls Choir, Cambridge, England**

Now in its tenth year, the St Catharine's College Girls' Choir was the first college-based choir for girls in the UK, breaking with the 900 year tradition of boys' only choirs and setting a precedent which has been followed by several other institutions in the UK. The choir sings weekly in the College's 18<sup>th</sup> century Chapel, as well as giving regular concerts and its repertoire extends from the early Middle Ages to the 21st century.

The full choir is made up of 30 girls, aged between eight and fifteen, drawn from local schools; the touring group consists of only the older girls. The ethos of the choir differs from many other choirs of its type. It is neither a school choir nor is it limited to traditional Church repertoire. It is always looking at ways to expand the musical experience and vision of choir members, and this is reflected in the diversity of the choir's activities, which has included science outreach, working with musicians from the Middle East and premiering experimental electro-acoustic works.

In its first ten years, the choir has given performances in such distinguished venues as St Paul's Cathedral, St David's Hall, Cardiff and St John's, Smith Square, and has sung services in the Cathedrals of Ely, Lichfield and Gloucester. The choir has toured to Poland, Hungary and Ireland, and have participated in several major choral/orchestral works such as Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, Mahler's *Third Symphony*, and Britten's *War Requiem*. The girls have made several appearances on BBC Radio and has released two recordings on the Resonus Classics label, devoted to contemporary music.

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