

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

## Children's Choir in International Commissioning Consortium

In summer of 2009, Bob Geary met with one of Finland's most prominent composers, Olli Kortekangas. It was during Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir's tour to Finland and Estonia, and Kortekangas was there to ask Bob to join a commissioning group for a new piece: *Seven Songs for Planet Earth*. That is how the Choir joined an international consortium to fund a new work. Kortekangas' piece was co-commissioned by the Choral Arts Society of Washington, the Tampere Philharmonic Orchestra of Finland, the Children's Chorus of Washington, the San Francisco Choral Society, and the Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir. The world premiere was given in May 2011 at Lincoln Center, and on November 19 and 20 the Choir will join the San Francisco Choral Society in the west coast premiere.

An additional bonus for the Choir is the presence of two alumni who have gone far - baritone Nickolas Nackley and soprano Shauna Fallihee will be soloists in the concert.

It can be challenging to finance new compositions in a difficult economy, and in this case several smaller organizations came together to produce something truly important. Believing "respect and love for nature should be seen as a fundamental element of human life," Kortekangas wrote *Seven Songs for Planet Earth* to celebrate man's relationship with nature in all of its spiritual richness and fragile vulnerability.

Bob Geary is regularly asked why he prioritizes the commissioning of new pieces. He responds, "Music will die if it doesn't renew itself. Imagine a world where music was frozen at a point five hundred years ago. That would mean no Beethoven, Debussy, Mahler - no Gershwin, no Bernstein. No Beatles!" He goes on, "We are in the midst of a vitally important consciousness-raising moment in music. There is a growing body of music that focuses on the natural world and our need to respect it. In the nineteenth century, nature was used by poets and composers as a metaphor for human emotions and experiences; our modern perspective is to respect and protect the natural world for its own sake. This is a fundamental shift in consciousness."

Weaving the guttural chantings of the ancient folk language of Yoik, the simple reflections from children, and the earthy elegance of the poet Wendell Berry, *Seven Songs* reminds us all that respect and love for nature is a fundamental element of human life. One of the most popular Finnish composers of today, Kortekangas studied at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, and continued his studies in West Berlin. His oeuvre consists of more than 100 works from solo pieces and chamber music to orchestral works and operas. The composer will be attending the west coast premiere, which will take place on November 19 and 20, 2011 at Calvary Presbyterian Church in San Francisco.

Mozart Grand Mass in C Minor  
Kortekangas *Seven Songs for Planet Earth* (west coast premiere)

Saturday, November 19, 2011 at 8 pm  
Sunday, November 20, 2011 at 4 pm  
Calvary Presbyterian Church  
2515 Fillmore Street at Jackson, San Francisco  
Tickets available at [sfchoral.org](http://sfchoral.org)

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Bell Investment Advisors ([www.bellinvest.com](http://www.bellinvest.com)) is the lead sponsor for the 2011-2012 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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