

Looking Ahead...

Spring Sing

May 21, 2011 • 3pm

Hear the full breadth of the Choir! Bid adieu to our graduating seniors and hear the massed choir sing.

Jazz & Beyond

May 26, 2011 • 7:30pm

Ecco and Cantoria present jazz arrangements and solos. Selected alumni join Ancora for a preview of the new opera *Caliban Dreams*, with guest tenor John Duykers as Caliban.

Training Department Recitals

May 31, 2011 • 7:30pm

June 1, 2011 • 7:30pm

Our youngest singers present the fruits of their labor — charming, inspiring and fun for the whole family!

Chorus America Conference

June 11, 2011 • 5pm

Ensemble joins Volti in a performance at the national Chorus America Conference in San Francisco.

Homecoming and Bon Voyage!

June 22, 2011 • 7pm

Concert Choir returns triumphant from tour and Ensemble is about to embark. You'll never hear them in better form.

Caliban Dreams

July 30, 2011 • 8pm

August 5, 2011 • 8pm

August 12, 2011 • 2pm

West Edge Opera presents the world premiere of *Caliban Dreams*, a new opera by Clark Suprynovicz. Alumni and Ancora form the chorus.

Mendelssohn's Elijah

August 26, 2011 • 8pm

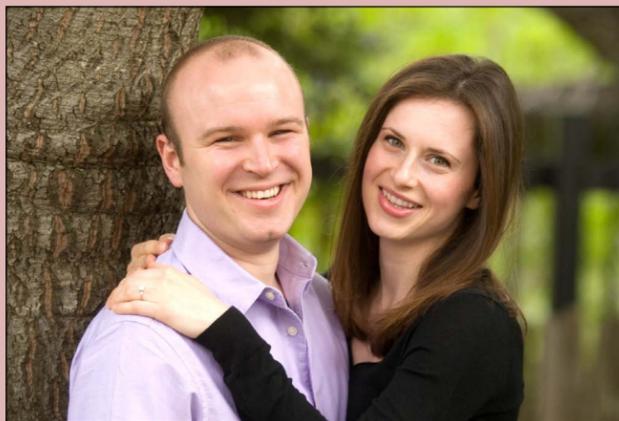
August 27, 2011 • 8pm

PEBCC joins the San Francisco Choral Society at Davies Symphony Hall for performances of Mendelssohn's *Elijah*.

Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir gives thanks to our 2010-2011 Season Sponsor, Bell Investment Advisors, Inc.



Lynn Tousey's Pre-Kinderchoir cuties



A Choir Love Story

This is a first — we have a choir alum wedding coming up! Alumni Hilary White and Richard Fessler ('02) both sang in the Choir as children, but didn't meet until they were both singing in Ecco. They attended different colleges (Richard at Cal Berkeley, Hilary at USC) but discovered that true love knows no distance. They are getting married on June 4, 2011.

Mother of the bride Joan White served on the PEBCC Board of Directors for many years, including one term as President. Congratulations to Hilary and Richard, and all the Fesslers and Whites. We wish you a long, fruitful and musical collaboration!

Photos by: Jay Bransfield, Katherine Falk, Don Fogg, and Jean Jarvis



The ChoirWire

Sound Bites

- Ensemble joined **Volti** in February 2011 for the premiere of *Painted Lights* by Kui Dong, a co-commission by both groups for a collaborative piece.
- *A Night In New Orleans*, the Choir's **Fundraising Gala**, was a rousing success, gathering supporters and alumni and raising over \$50,000.
- The Choir presented two sparkling concerts of the music of **Benjamin Britten**. The Alumni Choir sang, alongside Concert Choir, Ensemble, Ecco and Ancora.
- Choristers Andres Beck-Ruiz, Emma Thvedt, and Daphne Williams, played roles in **Cal Performances'** production of Britten's *Albert Herring*. Trained by Sue Bohlin, they garnered praise from company, press and audience alike.
- Ancora sang backup vocals for Rebecca Dharmapalan (a former PEBCC member) at Children's Hospital fundraiser **Notes and Words**. Ensemble and Concert Choir sang for the events VIPs.
- Ensemble and Ancora performed at the **New Music For Treble Voices** Festival, alongside Peninsula Women's Chorus, Cantabile Youth Singers, Volti, and Crystal Children's Choir.
- Under Sue Bohlin's direction, Ensemble sang chorus and solos with Michael Morgan and the **Oakland East Bay Symphony** in Kurt Weill's *Street Scene*.

To hear it in the deep heart's core

*I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made:
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee;
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.*

*And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.*

*I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.*

— *The Lake Isle of Innisfree*, W.B. Yeats

We have all had moments of balance and contentment, where "peace comes dropping slow," and we are rooted in our awareness of ourselves, our past and present. In our fast-paced lives, such moments can be all too rare.

But this past fall, Concert Choir Director Andrew Brown helped some of our choristers find that peace within themselves. He led a retreat of Concert Choir, Girls and Boys Advanced, and taught them Eleanor Daley's musical setting of Yeats' *The Lake Isle of Innisfree*. The children spoke about that island with a bee-loud glade, and how Yeats could summon the spirit and peace of that place in his heart.

As they advance through the Choir's program, our young singers develop an ever-higher level of musical understanding and vocal skills. And as satisfying as these accomplishments are in their own right, these skills are really a means to a larger goal: the increasing ability to use their personal instrument to express the meaning they find in themselves.

Through music, they explore their own interior worlds, charting the distances and zooming in on the minutiae. And once they've discovered that inner landscape,

they know they can call upon it. It is their deep heart's core, the quiet font of art that is found in each of us.

And when Andrew led those children in concert, they sang out, "I will arise!" In that moment, each child heard the voice of his or her inner artist, and let that voice out into the world.



Aaron Lee, Boys Advanced

New Music for New Musicians

By Robert Geary, Artistic Director

Music, like other arts and sciences, renews itself every day. Although our understanding of music is shaped by the great composers throughout history, we have a human need and cultural obligation to create music for our own time. In fact, I think that even the great historical composers would likely be shocked to learn how much of our resources are dedicated to re-creation of their music, as opposed to the creation of new music.

The performance of new music provides unique benefits to kids, both as artists and as humans. For this reason, the Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir has been actively commissioning and performing new music since our founding. Assuming responsibility for the first performance of a new work requires a personal commitment to the creative process. A premiere calls on the artist to think critically and flexibly, to be independent and forward-looking. The development of these characteristics

equip our kids for the challenges of contemporary life.

Earlier this year, the Choir partnered with Volti to co-commission *Painted Lights*, a work by composer Kui Dong. Working with Kui was an essential part of the process; her explanations and demonstrations clarified her intent to the singers. There were specific musical challenges requiring singers to make adjustments up to the last minute, always seeking clearer communication of the music.

We are fortunate to live in the artistically rich Bay Area, where we have frequent opportunities to work directly with composers. I have seen the performance of a piece be profoundly changed by the composer's presence; that presence somehow cements a connection between the emotional content of the piece and the performers, even if the composer doesn't say a word. Working with a composer illuminates to the children that music is a living and

breathing art form, and is therefore current, relevant and immediate.

In every era, art is expressed through the values and perspectives of the time. Kids are perfect for advancing the art form: they don't have preconceived ideas of accepted norms, and their openness and flexibility make them ideal ambassadors of new music. And just as our young singers are helping to define the future of the art form, their participation in a creative act is providing deep personal enrichment for them. A key element of adolescence is the development of self-awareness. The creative process complements their emerging self-awareness; the process of discovering the art helps them find more within themselves.

It's fun for the kids and fun for me to be on the cutting edge of art. We've got plenty of new projects in the works — join us, and witness history in the making.



Kui Dong works with Bob Geary and Ensemble on *Painted Lights*

Launching our Legacy into the World

Each spring, the Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir comes together under one roof for our annual Spring Sing. Six year olds sing with eighteen-year olds; rank beginners with burgeoning professionals. With twelve choir groups performing separately, and a massed choir of 325 voices, this is truly an event for and of our community.

A main focus of the concert is the graduation ceremony for our departing seniors. It is a crossroads, an ending and a beginning. Parents and graduates alike anticipate this moment with both trepidation and excitement.

The graduates know they are leaving a musical family which has shaped their innermost developmental experiences. It is a genuine loss, and many weep openly and hard. The rest of us cry out of sympathy, but also out of pride. As members of this community, each of us owns a piece of the potential and achievement that is embodied in the graduating class.

Our graduates have performed on prominent stages, worked with composers and performed premieres, toured and competed across the US and other countries. They have learned how to support one another, how to trust each other, and how to trust themselves. They have close friendships, born of a shared passion and deepened with time,

experience, and achievement. They have acquired solid skills and high standards, and are searching for genuine artistic expression.

While these young people rightfully take pride in the years of personal effort that have brought them to this point, they would not have made it without the investment of their Choir community: their parents, who have provided encouragement, transportation, volunteerism, and sacrifices of time and money, the teachers who have invested their creative spirit into the formation of fine musicians, and almost three decades of alumni singers, whose pursuit of excellence set the example and paved the way.

Each year, we hear from some of our youngest singers, saying "someday I'll be like that big kid — someday that will be me." And we all stand ready to support this new generation of young singers through their musical journey, just as we've done for so many before them.

So don't be surprised if you find your eyes welling up at that inevitable moment, when the children who are not graduating rise from their seats, face the graduates on stage and sing them out the door and into the world with the song "Homeward Bound." These young singers speak for the whole



Matthew Reif, Class of 2010, with Michael Adams, Class of 2018

community when they bid farewell to those graduates, and wish them well on their journey.

To our graduates: you've been given a tremendous gift. We have utter faith in you, and we know you are ready. Go out and do great things. And know that you always have a home with us.



Megan Newcomb, Class of 2010, with Mia Horvath, Class of 2019

Homeward Bound, by Marta Keen

*In the quiet misty morning, when the moon has gone to bed,
When the sparrows stop their singing and the sky is clear and red,
When the summer's ceased its gleaming, when the corn's past its prime,
When adventure's lost its meaning, I'll be homeward bound in time.*

*Bind me not to the pasture. Chain me not to the plow.
Set me free to find my calling and I'll return to you somehow.*

*If you find it's me you're missing, if you're hoping I'll return,
To your thought I'll soon be list'ning; in the road I'll stop and turn.
Then the wind will set me racing as my journey nears its end,
And the path I'll be retracing when I'm homeward bound again.*

*Bind me not to the pasture. Chain me not to the plow.
Set me free to find my calling and I'll return to you somehow.*

*In the quiet misty morning when the moon has gone to bed,
When the sparrows stop their singing, I'll be homeward bound again.*