Golden Gate Festival Events • July 9-14, 2012

Opening Concert
July 9, 2012 • 3pm
All twenty participating choirs will perform in a fast-paced rotation of choral excellence! This concert will give a taste of the music and cultures in this year’s festival.

Three Children’s Competition Concerts
First Congregational Church, Berkeley
July 10, 11, and 12 • 7pm
Visiting choirs will be adjudicated in public concerts. Join us for these free concerts for focused performances of over 250 works, Mechem is sometimes praised in a SF Examiner review as “a feast of diverse opportunities for serious listening.”

Three Youth Competition Concerts
First Congregational Church, Berkeley
July 10, 11, and 12 • 7pm
In February, members of the Training Department sang with Ben Simon and the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra in perenially popular and energetic kid-friendly Family Concerts.

Grand Finale Concert
Zellerbach Hall, U.C Berkeley
July 14 • 7pm
The Gala Closing Concert will feature the winners of the competitions, performing their award-winning pieces. The massed mega-choir of 650 singers will raise their voices in one united sound. Witness the joining of cultures, the fruits of competition, and the culmination of an incredible week.

Six Spotlight Concerts
Alameda, Berkeley, Lafayette, Oakland, San Francisco
July 10, 11, and 12 • 7pm
These concerts each feature three to four choirs in a more relaxed, community-focused setting. Two concerts each evening in venues all over the Bay Area. You’ll hear a good cross-section of what each choir has to offer.

First Training Department Recitals
First Congregational Church, Berkeley
July 15 & 16, 2012 • 7pm
Our youngest singers present the fruits of their labor of over the world to experience this together phenomenal! And to bring kids from all over the world to experience this together — what could be more valuable than that?" You said it, Mr. Mechem!

Ecco, Cantoria, and Ancora performed  and the fruits of musical labor.

Meet the Choir — charming, inspiring and fun for the whole family!

For more details, visit www.goldengatefestival.org

Photos by: Brett D’Ambrosio, Don Fogg, Jean Jarvis

Looking Ahead...

Training Department Recitals
May 15 & 16, 2012 • 7pm
Our youngest singers present the fruits of their labor — charming, inspiring and fun for the whole family!

Jazz & Beyond
May 24, 2012 • 7:30pm
Ecco, Cantoria, and Ancora present a snappy evening of jazz arrangements and solos.

Spring Sing
June 2, 2012 • 3pm
Hear the full breadth of the Choir! Say farewell to graduating seniors and hear the massed choir sing.

Spring Sing
May 24, 2012 • 7:30pm
Ecco, Cantoria, and Ancora present two Candlelight Concerts in December, praised in a SF Examiner review as “a feast of diverse opportunities for serious listening.”

Two Holiday Training Department Recitals were a delight to families, showing the fruits of musical labor.

All Training and Performing groups came together in January for All the World’s A Stage, two Winter Concerts, each showcasing a breadth of the Choir.

In February, members of the Training Department sang with Ben Simon and the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra in perenially popular and energetic kid-friendly Family Concerts.

In March at St. Joseph’s Basilica, performing a stunning concert of French music, titled Primarily Poulenc.

In April, Choir supporter gathered for a Mexican Fiesta Fundraising Gala, Ecco, Cantoria, and Ensemble performed and the event raised $85,000 for Choir programs and scholarships.

Sing All Ye Joyful, Now Sing All Together!

With the Golden Gate Festival approaching, Sing All Ye Joyful is in the air at the Piedmont East Bay Children’s Choir. The 1991 commission by San Francisco-based composer Kirke Mechem, has been sung at every Golden Gate Festival and has become a beloved anthem of the Choir. In July, Mechem will preside over this year’s Festival as the Honorary Chair.

When asked about the origin of the piece, Mechem recounted a tale of writing rounds as gifts for children. The young son of a friend was reading Tolkien’s The Hobbit, and a poem from the book stirred Mechem’s imagination. “It was perfect for happy singing children. It was one of the most natural and lyrical tunes I’ve ever written; I could hear it in my head perfectly.”

When Bob Geary asked for a composition for the first Golden Gate Festival, Mechem immediately thought of his simple round and expanded it into a full piece. The first hurdle was acquiring permission from Tolkien’s estate to publish the text; settings had to be of “an appropriate quality” for them to agree. Luckily for us all, Sing All Ye Joyful was given the green light.

A prolific composer with a catalogue of over 250 works, Mechem is a warm and genial man with great enthusiasm for singing. He says of children’s choirs, “Kids learn self-discipline, they learn teamwork, they make wonderful friends. They go on trips to places, sometimes even to foreign countries. They come in contact with great poems, with the texts of many religions, and the individual and personal feelings of many people. They learn tolerance and understanding of other points of view — not to mention what they learn about music itself. Those skills they’ll keep with them the rest of their lives. It’s phenomenal! And to bring kids from all over the world to experience this together — what could be more valuable than that?”
Many friends and fans of the Choir are veterans of the Golden Gate Festival, but the upcoming Festival is different in one key way: it’s going to be enormous. In this twentieth year of the Festival’s existence, twenty choirs will be coming together to perform, compete, and build international friendship. The largest Festival thus far had 15 choirs attending, and we are excited to share this story with you.

A hallmark of the Festival has always been the homestay program, without which many of these choirs could not have afforded the journey to California. With so many visiting children, the need for homestays has never been greater. If you can support the Festival by hosting young singers, please let us know by emailinginfo@goldengatefestival.org.

And join us for the remarkable music-making, July 9-14, 2012.

Counting down to July: The largest Golden Gate Festival ever

Jin and Bonnie Bell

For more information on the Ambassadors Circle or to become a member, please contact the choir office.

Sue and John Malick, Annette Cleary and Michael Begert

Vocal Support: The Ambassadors Circle

On December 9, 2011, the Piedmont East Bay Children’s Choir officially launched the Ambassadors Circle at a reception in the new Piedmont Center for the Arts. The Ambassadors Circle is a newly formed program developed to honor The Choir’s most dedicated supporters and encourage the active participation of both current and alumni families. The program offers donors of $500 or more opportunities to engage with Choir faculty and other artists at special events and behind-the-scenes activities, as well as providing a variety of other benefits and recognition.

Suzie Rahl, Bob Geary, Ray Perman

A special performance by Ancora, and again acknowledged for their steadfast support of the organization.

Andrea and Paul Swenson

Chorus America/ASCAP Adventurous Programming Award Winners

We are thrilled to announce the Piedmont East Bay Children’s Choir has just been awarded the Chorus America/ASCAP Adventurous Programming Award! Awards are based not only on the number of works performed which were written in the last 25 years, but also on the variety and novelty of the new music programmed during the season. The selection panel gives special attention to commissioned works and to world, United States, and regional premieres. This is the eighth time one of Bob Geary’s choirs has won this award.

Mandaluyong Children’s Choir, from the Philippines

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Stephen Leek of Australia. Competitions will take place for choirs and soloists, and all will perform in Spotlight concerts all over the Bay Area. Most of these events are free and will be marvelous musical and cultural spectacles.

The festivities begins July 9 with the Opening Concert, featuring all 20 choirs performing individually to give audiences a taste of their virtuosity and versatility. The balance of that week features daily free public concerts and competitions, culminating in a Grand Finale Concert at Zellerbach Hall, showcasing the winners of the competition, and all 20 choirs combined.

Stephen Leek of Australia.