



Martín Benvenuto, Artistic Director

# sonic reflections on interconnectedness

Sat 04.01.2023 at 8pm

All Saints' Episcopal Church, Palo Alto

## FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Welcome to tonight's program, ***Sonic Reflections on Interconnectedness!*** The singers and I are thrilled that you are here. 21V's journey to be a catalyst for change through a new, vibrant, and inclusive treble choral sound continues.

One of the missions that 21V has embarked upon is to explore broader identities of contemporary American choral music. Our composers this evening offer an excitingly varied representation of "American" sound: from Indian-American Reena Esmail's extraordinary snapshots of our current monumental time in "Quarantine Madrigals," to Chinese-American Chen Yi's virtuosic and playful "Looking at the Sea," to the surprising textures of Argentinian Diego Boero's imaginary city of forgetfulness in "María Santana."

We are especially proud to present the world premiere of "Skin," in which Mari Esabel Valverde suggests that we don't need to abandon parts of ourselves when we reach out to others. Jake Runestad's seminal "Please Stay" further reminds us that emotional health can be supported when we cultivate a sense of belonging. And we close with David O's and Lakota playwright Larissa FastHorse's "One With the Wind," capturing the essential Native American wisdom that personal identities are forged only in connection to others.

As we continue to emerge from the pandemic, we yearn more than ever for community. May this program remind us all of the many ways we are intertwined.

Enjoy the concert!

Yours in song,

Martín Benvenuto  
*Artistic Director*

**interconnectedness** noun [ɪnˈtɛkənɛktɪdnəs]:  
the state of being connected with each other.



# Sonic Reflections on Interconnectedness

**Sunday, April 1, 2023 at 8pm**  
All Saints' Episcopal Church, Palo Alto, CA

**Martín Benvenuto**, *Artistic Director*  
**Kymry Esainko**, *Piano*  
**Leonora Warkentin**, *Flute*

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**Quarantine Madrigals** (2020)

Reena Esmail

**1. Hello**

**2. In isolation**

Sara Couden, Winona Hendrick, Christine Abraham; *solo trio*

**3. Together at last**

Jessalynn Levine, Peter Kenton, *duet*

**Skin** (2020)

Mari Esabel Valverde

*World premiere, co-commissioned by 21V*

**Looking at the Sea** (2007)

Chen Yi

**María Santana** (2008)

Diego Boero

Julie Boehler, Sara Asher, Amy Hiestand; *solo trio*

**Please Stay** (2016)

Jake Runestad

Julie Boehler, *soloist*

**One with the Wind** (2014)

David O

Nancy Munn, *soloist*  
Anne Hepburn Smith, Kate Offer, Akane Ota; *trio*

# PROGRAM NOTES & TRANSLATIONS

## **Quarantine Madrigals**, Reena Esmail, poetry by Amy Fogerson

The *Quarantine Madrigals* were commissioned by Conspirare in 2020, in direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Composer Reena Esmail explains that the work (whose title alludes to "Florentine madrigals") is intended to "trace the break from society, the descent into isolation, and the eventual return to one another." Conceived as an ensemble work created with the sound of one voice, the madrigals are set to haiku written by Amy Fogerson, a Los Angeles Master Chorale member and alto soloist.

21V performs tonight three of the eight two-minute madrigals: *Hello, In isolation*, and *Together at last*. These gems are extraordinary snapshots of this monumental time and a reminder of our inextinguishable yearning for true connection to community. How grateful we are as musicians to return to being able to actuate aspects of ourselves and share them with others.

Indian-American composer Esmail works between the worlds of Indian and Western classical music, bringing communities together by creating equitable musical spaces. Esmail is the LA Master Chorale's 2020-2023 Swan Family Artist-in-Residence.

1.

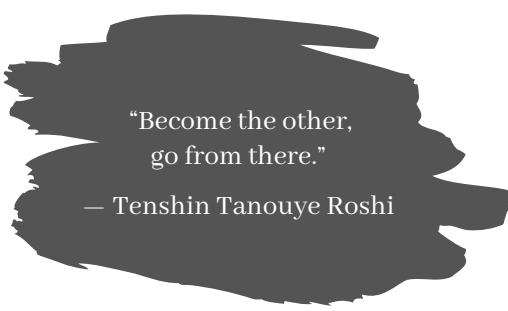
Hello, I hear you.  
With every inhale I shall  
sing my love to you.

2.

In isolation,  
I yearn for true connection  
to community.

3:

Together at last,  
voices entwining  
in a communion of song.



"Become the other,  
go from there."

— Tenshin Tanouye Roshi

## **Skin**, Mari Esabel Valverde, poem by Naomi Shihab Nye


"Skin" addresses themes of healing, resilience, passage, and travel. Without mention of any particular name, age, gender, or race, the protagonist "Skin" acknowledges past traumas and ultimately expresses a profound feeling of gratitude "that there are travelers, that people go places larger than themselves." Such a notion recalls Maya Angelou's, that when we know better, we do better. The incessant pulses of the piano create the impression of how an enormous amount of time seems to slip away as we continuously strive to adapt and grow beyond life's adversities. A single line of text is sung twice, "Love means you breathe in two countries," in honor of the two worlds indicated in the title of the poem ("Two Countries"). Through these words Nye suggests that, because we have the capacity to heal, we need not abandon a part of ourselves when we move to nourish another part of humanity thirsting for life.

Completed in 2020, just before lockdowns initiated on a global scale in response to the imminent spread of COVID-19, "Skin" is finally being premiered in 2022 and 2023 by members of a consortium of fourteen treble choruses from across the United States.

— Mari Esabel Valverde

Skin remembers how long the years grow  
when skin is not touched, a gray tunnel  
of singleness, feather lost from the tail  
of a bird, swirling onto a step,  
swept away by someone who never saw  
it was a feather. Skin ate, walked,  
slept by itself, knew how to raise a  
see-you-later hand. But skin felt  
it was never seen, never known as  
a land on the map, nose like a city,  
hip like a city, gleaming dome of the mosque  
and the hundred corridors of cinnamon and rope.

Skin had hope, that's what skin does.  
Heals over the scarred place, makes a road.  
Love means you breathe in two countries.  
And skin remembers—silk, spiny grass,  
deep in the pocket that is skin's secret own.  
Even now, when skin is not alone,  
it remembers being alone and thanks something larger  
that there are travelers, that people go places  
larger than themselves.



"Everything the  
Power does,  
it does in a circle."  
— Lakota Proverb

### Looking at the Sea, Chen Yi, text by Cao Cao

Chinese-American composer Chen Yi brings a 2nd-century poem to life with "Looking at the Sea" for treble chorus, commissioned by the Peninsula Women's Chorus in 2007. Often considered to possess "dual musical citizenship," Chen has carefully developed a compositional style that blends distinctive elements of two cultures. "Since I speak naturally in my mother tongue, in my music there is Chinese blood, Chinese philosophy and custom. However, music is a universal language. I have studied Western music extensively and deeply since my childhood... I think that my musical language is a unique combination and a natural hybrid of all influences from my background."

In "Looking at the Sea," sets her own English translation of an ancient poem by Cao Cao (155–220 C.E.), using playful and virtuosic lines that connect antiquity to modern life. The opening buoyant chord cluster, based on the alternating major seconds and minor thirds of the pentatonic scale, invites the listener to observe the boundless sea. Nonsense syllables reminiscent of Chinese folk song evoke a spirit of exclamation, connect the stanzas of the poem, and break down the language barrier that otherwise would prevent Western audiences from experiencing the abstract beauty and lingering charm that are the essence of Chinese poetry. An ecstatic high B-natural is reached as the text describes the interdependence of all things: "The Milky Way with stars looks so bright, it comes out all the way from the sea. How happy I feel at this scene."

Up to the stony hill on eastern shore,  
I am looking at the boundless sea.

The water is running calm,  
And islands stand in between.

Tree on tree grows from peak to peak,  
Grass on grass looks lush, layer  
upon layer.

When the autumn wind blows,  
drear and bleak,  
The waves surge up greater and greater.

The sun by day, the moon by night,  
Appear to rise up from the deep.

The Milky Way with stars looks so bright,  
It comes out all the way from the sea.

How happy I feel at this scene!  
Ode to the sea that symbolizes my ideal.

## María Santana, Diego Boero

Diego Boero's Buenos Aires ensemble Coro de Cámara Zahir presented a program in 2008–09 called *Ciudades Imaginarias* (Imaginary Cities), inspired by Italo Calvino's (1923–1985) novel *Invisible Cities*. In the novel, a reimagined Marco Polo describes 55 contrasting cities, each with a different female name, revealing features the cities have in common. The impetus for Boero's contribution, "María Santana," was Calvino's depiction of a city of forgetfulness: whoever enters must give up all their remembrances except one. Boero chose to base his work on the lullaby his grandmother sang to him as a child: "The compositional treatment of the melody generates an evocative daydream of the intimate memory of and connection to my grandmother." In keeping with 21V's interconnectedness theme this evening, Boero chose his memory of his grandmother as the one he would not detach himself from.

María Santana porque llora el niño,  
Por una manzana que se le ha perdido.  
No llores mi niño yo te dare dos,  
Una para el ángel la otra para vos.

María Santana, why is the child crying  
over a lost apple?  
Weep not, my child, I will give you two  
One for the angel and the other for you.

## Please Stay, Jake Runestad

"Please Stay" is an anthem for hope, a participant in the destigmatization of mental illness that challenges all of us to support those who are battling depression and thoughts of suicide. Jake Runestad composed the work in 2016 as a response to the 41,149 lives lost to suicide in the United States in 2013 alone. "To Write Love On Her Arms is a nonprofit movement dedicated to presenting hope and finding help for people struggling with depression, addiction, self-injury, and suicide. Their 2016 campaign for World Suicide Prevention Day was titled 'And So I Kept Living.' Using the hashtag #IKeptLiving, thousands of individuals who battle depression shared their stories on Twitter of why they chose life over death. I read through and collected hundreds of the tweets and used them to inspire the text for this work. You are not alone. We can make a difference. We can be the support system that saves a life."

In 2021, suicide took the lives of 47,646 in the US, a figure highly disproportionate in the entire American continent. Suicide is the second-leading cause of death among young people in our nation and, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, was the tenth-leading cause of death across all ages. Suicide deaths are increasing fastest among people of color, younger individuals (especially LGBTQIA+), and people living in rural areas. An estimated 52% of transgender and non-binary youth considered suicide in 2020, with 20% attempting to end their own lives.

The US transitioned to the universal 3-digit number 988 for its Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) in July 2022. As a part of the Biden Administration's commitment to addressing the mental health crisis, unprecedented federal resources have been invested to scale up crisis centers in support of the 988 initiative. The Lifeline has received to date well over 20 million calls from people in distress. Twenty-five states (including California) have enacted legislation to implement 988 and integrate it into existing crisis call systems.

If you or someone you know is in emotional distress or suicidal crisis, call or text the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline for 24/7 assistance 365 days a year.

A portion of the proceeds from "Please Stay" are donated to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

No! Don't go!  
Don't let your worst day be your last.  
The storm is strong, but it will pass.  
You think you can't go on another day,  
but please stay. Just stay.

Hope is real. Help is real.  
You are breath, you are life,  
you are beauty, you are light.  
Your story is not over.  
You are not a burden to anyone.

Please stay. Just stay.

**One with the Wind**, David O, text by Larissa FastHorse and David O

David O's "One With the Wind," written with Lakota playwright Larissa FastHorse, captures the resiliency of the human spirit. In the Lakota community, personal identities are formed only in connection to others, and no voice stands alone. As the composition builds and gains momentum, it seeks to bring us back to nature, to Mother Earth.

The English text also includes words in Lakota that define circles of community. *Misnala* ("alone I fight the wind"), sung by the soloist, is answered by a trio singing *Tiwahe* ("we build a wall to shield you"), representing the supportive immediate family. Then extended family, friends, and colleagues appear, announcing themselves with the word *Tioshpaye* ("to be part of a circle"), and the gathering concludes that "together we face the wind." The story's struggles become patterns of dissonance among these vocal roles, as the individual fights for self-acceptance and her community fights to support her. "Listen for the places where the notes seems to pull at each other," advises the composer. "Listen, too, for the beautiful alto flute, a healing wind."

Finally, the circle broadens to include *Oyate* ("all people, the nation"). Together, these circles of interconnectedness bolster the individual and support each other, rallying ultimately with the exhortation "Hoka Hey," which urges us all to move forward with confidence. "One With the Wind" was commissioned and premiered in 2014 by Vox Femina Los Angeles.

— adapted from a program note by Dr. Holley Replogle-Wong

Inside this body,  
no one here but me.  
No one in here but me.

*Misnala*. [myself, as a woman defines herself]  
Alone, I fight the wind.  
Through my body aches,  
and my mind is weary,  
and my heart breaks, alone,  
I fight my wind.

My mother,  
my daughter,  
my sisters...

*Tiwahe*. [my immediate family]  
We build the wall to shield you.  
We build the wall so you can fight the wind.  
In the circle, we stand against the wind.

*Tioshpaye*. [my extended family, friends,  
colleagues]  
My daughters,  
my sisters...

We walk together,  
we work together.  
We help each other,  
we hold each other.

Let the wind cool you,  
let the wind soothe you,  
let the wind move you.  
Do not fear the wind.

*Tioshpaye*.

Together we face the wind.

All mothers,  
all daughters,  
all sisters,

*Oyate*. [the whole people]

We face the North for fortitude,  
we face the East for wisdom,  
we face the South for a generous spirit,  
we face the West for courage.

From the four corners of the Earth,  
the wind blows over us all.

Together, we rise,  
together, we fly,  
together, we sail on the wind.

The one breath of the Earth.  
The one breath blows through us.  
The one breath inside of us.  
We are one with the wind.

Hoka Hey! [Onward!]

## ABOUT 21V

Based in the San Francisco Bay Area, 21V is a new professional ensemble of soprano and alto voices of all gender identities. Founded in 2021 by Dr. Martín Benvenuto, 21V explores a broad identity of contemporary American music by focusing on music of the 21st century of the 3 Americas, and challenges existing boundaries and assumptions — both artistically and socially. 21V aims to serve as a beacon for a new generation of treble music lovers, while at the same time to inspire awareness and advocacy for underrepresented American continent perspectives.

### MISSION

A catalyst for change through a new choral sound, 21V is a select ensemble of soprano and alto voices of all gender identities that performs 21st century music of the Americas.

### VISION

21V aims to be a 'house of ideas' that opens up unexplored spaces of artistic expression, and a 'house of belonging' that expands interconnectedness.

## VALUES

- **Vitality:** fosters deep engagement with its singers and community through socially engaged programming
- **Vibrancy:** brings to the forefront art music from North, Central, and South America written after the year 2000
- **Vanguard:** stretches artistic boundaries and ignites innovation
- **Vocal:** advances and advocates for gender inclusivity and racial justice in all its endeavors

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## AUDITIONS

### CALLING SOPRANO AND ALTO VOICES OF ALL GENDERS

Singers should possess classically-based vocal training, extensive choral experience, a high level of musicianship, and a commitment to artistic excellence and professionalism.

We are looking for singers with a collaborative spirit, and an adventurous outlook, and an interest in working with new music. Resonance with the Mission, Vision, and Values of 21V is of utmost importance.

Please submit audition materials through the Audition Request Form.

For more information, please visit  
[www.21vchoir.org/auditions](http://www.21vchoir.org/auditions)  
or scan the QR code.





## ABOUT THE ARTISTS



### **MARTÍN BENVENUTO**, FOUNDER & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Martín Benvenuto (he/him) is one of the leading choir conductors in the San Francisco Bay Area and beyond. A native of Buenos Aires, Argentina, Benvenuto is the Founder and Artistic Director of 21V, a Bay Area professional ensemble of soprano and alto voices of all gender identities with a focus on music of the 21st century of the Americas. He has served as Artistic Director of the Peninsula Women's Chorus (PWC), WomenSing (WS), and the Contra Costa Children's Chorus, has been on the faculty of the Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir, and is currently serving as the Artistic Director of the Young Women's Choral Projects of San Francisco. Dr. Benvenuto is active as a clinician, panelist, and guest conductor at home and abroad.

Recognized for his exacting technique, and passion for eliciting the finest choral tone, Benvenuto's repertoire is extensive. He holds a D.M.A. in choral conducting from Boston University, master's degrees from Westminster Choir College, and undergraduate degrees from the Universidad Católica Argentina.



### **KYMRY ESAINKO**, PIANO

Pianist Kymry Esainko is known for his wide-ranging musical versatility. Principal pianist for the Santa Rosa Symphony, Kymry has also played with regional orchestras including Oakland, Marin, San Jose, and Sun Valley Summer Symphony. In 2008 he performed the Bach *Keyboard Concerto No. 1 in D minor* with Santa Rosa Symphony just days before his son Kai was born. More recently, Kymry performed the Ravel *Piano Concerto in G* with Golden Gate Symphony at the Herbst Theatre. His work as a vocal and choral accompanist has taken him to concert halls around the world including the KKL in Lucerne, Switzerland, the Basilique Sainte-Clothilde in Paris, and the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires. Closer to home, he loves playing for his daughter's chorus at Piedmont Children's Choirs and his son's chorus at the Pacific Boychoir Academy in Oakland. He also enjoys playing chamber music with his colleagues at Santa Rosa Symphony. An accomplished jazz and improvisatory pianist, Kymry plays with Matt Small's Crushing Spiral Ensemble and the silent film ensemble Club Foot Orchestra. Kymry graduated from Oberlin College and Conservatory of Music with degrees in piano performance and American history. He lives in Oakland with his vocalist/trombonist wife Becca, his son Kai, daughter Stella, and a menagerie of cats and dogs.



### **LENORA MATHIAS**, FLUTE

Lenora Mathias has appeared as flute soloist in concert with the Rimsky-Korsakov String Quartet, Sounds New, Peninsula Women's Chorus, Composers' Inc., San Francisco Camerata Americana, and Orquesta Sinfonica Nacional del Peru. She has performed with many bay area ensembles, including Festival Opera, West Edge Opera, local theater orchestras, the Napa Valley, Oakland East Bay, Monterey, Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa and Fremont Symphonies. Lenora holds a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of California at Los Angeles where she won several performing awards and served as a teaching assistant for the Wind Ensemble and music history classes. From 2010 to 2013, she held the position of Music Director for the Junior Bach Festival. A frequent adjudicator for local music festivals and competitions, Lenora currently teaches at the Artis School of Music in Belmont and the Veksler Academy of Music and Dance in Milpitas. Her students have performed in the Junior Bach Festival, San Francisco Youth Orchestra, Young Peoples Symphony Orchestra, Berkeley Youth Orchestra, local theater orchestras, Santa Cruz Jazz Festival, and California Jazz Conservatory Ensembles.

"We start out as little bits of disconnected dust."  
— Naomi Shihab Nye



### **CHRISTINE ABRAHAM, ALTO**

On the concert platform, Christine Abraham (she/her) has appeared as a featured soloist with the orchestras of Philadelphia, San Francisco, Dallas, and St. Louis, as well as Boston Baroque, Chicago's Music of the Baroque, and the Toronto Consort. She has performed roles with the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Santa Fe Opera, Bard Festival, Boston Lyric Opera, and Spoleto Festival USA among others. As an advocate of contemporary works, she has premiered many new works by composers such as Tan Dun, James MacMillan, Tod Machover, Peter Lieberson, Paul Moravec, Stephen Paulus, and David Carlson. Her recordings can be heard on Signum Classics, Naxos American Classics, BIS Music, Arabesque Recordings, and BBC Music. Ms. Abraham maintains a private teaching studio and serves on the collegiate faculty of California State University East Bay and the Pre-College and Continuing Education faculty at San Francisco Conservatory of Music.



### **AMELIA ARCHER, SOPRANO**

Amelia Archer (she/her) was born and raised in Berkeley, CA, where she was immersed in music from a young age at the Crowden School, playing the cello and singing in the school choir. She went on to sing in the Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir before going to Williams College in Massachusetts, where she completed her undergraduate degree in Computer Science with a minor in French. In her time at Williams she studied voice under Erin Nafziger and sang in the Williams College Concert Choir and Chamber Choir under the direction of Brad Wells and the Williams College Opera Workshop. While studying abroad in Paris, Amelia enjoyed singing with the Paris Choral Society. Since returning to the Bay Area to work at Google in machine learning research, Amelia has sung with the Peninsula Women's Chorus and the San Francisco Choral Artists.



### **SARA ASHER, SOPRANO**

Sara Asher (she/her) has been involved in music for most of her life. She has been singing with the Peninsula Women's Chorus since she moved to the Bay Area twenty years ago. Prior to that, she sang with the North Shore Choral Society and was the music director for her college and graduate school a cappella singing groups. In addition to singing, she is also an accomplished pianist and has accompanied choral concerts and musicals for various local schools. When not singing, Sara is Head of Product for Faros AI, a data platform startup focusing on engineering operations. Sara has a Bachelor of Arts from Princeton University and a Ph.D. from Northwestern University, both in Mathematics.



### **SMRUTHI BALASUBRAMANIAM, ALTO**

Smruthi Balasubramaniam (she/her) was introduced to music through Carnatic music when she was little. She joined choir in middle school and continued throughout high school, participating in Georgia's All State program for six years and singing at Carnegie Hall and Sydney Opera House through the Honors Performance Series program. Now at the University of California, Berkeley, Smruthi is pursuing a degree in cognitive science with a minor in data science, and is a member of the UC Berkeley Chamber Chorus under the direction of Dr. Wei Cheng.



### **JULIE BOEHLER, SOPRANO**

Julie Boehler (she/her), soprano, is delighted to be a part of 21V. Julie is the Director of Choral Activities at both Canyon and Creekside Middle Schools in Castro Valley and loves working with middle school students! Additionally, she enjoys being a mother to her daughters Lily and Maggie and wife to her husband Jordan. Teaching and being the parent of two little ladies keeps her rather busy and she is so grateful to have found 21V to pursue her love of singing in an ensemble. Previously, she sang with choirs such as Cappella SF and San Francisco Symphony Chorus both under the direction of Ragnar Bohlin as well as other freelance choir work and solo engagements. Julie holds a B.M. in Music Education and a B.M. in Vocal Performance from the Bob Cole Conservatory of Music at California State University Long Beach.



**JODIE BOURDET, ALTO**

Jodie (she/her) is feeling very fortunate to be working with such a talented and accomplished group of musicians. Although she played several musical instruments as a younger person, Jodie didn't find choral singing until she was in her 40s. She sang first with a church choir, then continued for several years with WomenSing (under the direction of Martín Benvenuto and later Ofer dal Lal), and Sacred and Profane (under the direction of Rebecca Seeman). When she is not singing, Jodie practices corporate and securities law at Cooley, an international law firm. In her voluminous amounts of free time, she managed to raise three children to adulthood without major incident, and now enjoys designing and sewing all things made of fabric, cooking for her spouse and friends, and playing word-based games with an embarrassing level of competitiveness. Jodie received a B.S. in electrical engineering from UCLA and a J.D. from the University of California, Berkeley.



**SARA COUDEN, ALTO**

Sara Couden (she/her) is a graduate of the Lindemann Young Artist Program at the Metropolitan Opera, as well as the Yale Institute of Sacred Music and the San Francisco Conservatory. She has sung around the United States with institutions such as the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Philharmonia Baroque, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Marlboro Music Festival, West Edge Opera, and St. Pete Opera. As well as a soloist, Sara is an accomplished and enthusiastic choral and chamber musician, and is very excited to be singing this beautiful program with 21V.



**ASHER DAVISON, ALTO**

Alto Asher Davison (he/him) was inducted into music by the Santa Monica public schools and private clarinet study with David Sasaki. At Yale, he performed the Copland and Mozart concertos and studied under David Shifrin. As a graduate student in molecular biology at MIT, Asher deepened into chamber music through composer John Harbison. Since returning to California, he has accompanied singers in numerous opera productions, become a professional chamber coach with CMNC, developed voice as his second instrument, and directed the medieval chamber choir Coro Ciconia. A copyeditor, education developer, and former high school science teacher, Asher currently is bass section leader for John Karl Hirten at St. John's Episcopal Ross and sings with Magen Solomon's San Francisco Choral Artists. He has grown into the countertenor voice through Christopher Kula's men and boys Evensongs at St. Paul's Episcopal Oakland and quartet Latin Masses at St. Margaret Mary Oakland, and alto section leading for Sven Olbash's Lacuna Arts.



**TRISTANA FERREYRA-RANTALAIHO, ALTO**

Tristana Ferreyra-Rantalaiho (she/her) is a mezzo-soprano from Buenos Aires, Argentina and is happy to join 21V. She is currently finishing her Master of Music in vocal performance at San Francisco State University, and she has an undergraduate degree in choral conducting from Universidad Católica Argentina. She loves to premiere vocal works by new composers as a soloist and in choirs. She lived in Argentina and Finland where she worked as a singer and conductor, and she is continuing here in California. She placed second at Cal Western Regional Student Auditions at the K Advanced Classical Level of The National Association Teachers of Singing. She is now opening her private vocal studio in Bay Area and looking for new musical adventures. She lives with her husband and son.

*"For wherever we come together, we will forever overcome."*

*— Amanda Gorman*



### MONICA FRAME, ALTO

Monica Frame (she/her), mezzo-soprano, is delighted to embark on 21V's adventure. A member of Volti, San Francisco's new music vocal ensemble, and a soloist and section leader for Saint Mary Magdalene Catholic Church's Early Music Schola in Berkeley, Monica is drawn to the earliest and newest edges of chamber music. Recent highlights include performing Joby Talbot's *Path of Miracles* at Grace Cathedral with ODC Dance, and premiering Huang Ruo's *Angel Island Oratorio* on Angel Island with the Del Sol Quartet. In addition to having sung with numerous Bay Area ensembles, Monica has toured and recorded as a member of Rinat, the National Chamber Choir of Israel. Other recordings include Terry Riley's *Sun Rings* with the Kronos Quartet, and shriek-singing as a post-apocalyptic swamp witch for Valve, the video game company. Monica is also a licensed psychotherapist and works as a counselor and consultant in local schools.



### JULIA GRIZZELL, SOPRANO

Soprano Julia Grizzell (she/her) is honored to be a part of the stellar ensemble, 21V. Julia recently performed the role of Cleopatra in *Giulio Cesare* with the Handel Opera Academy in Tarnowskie Góry, Poland. She also sang the role of High Priestess in *Aida* with Verismo Opera and Bay Shore Lyric Opera in Northern California. Other notable performances include Soprano soloist in Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*, and Orff's *Carmina Burana* with the Sequoia Symphony. While on the east coast, Julia sang at the Tanglewood Festival in the Berkshires under esteemed conductors Charles Dutoit, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, Bernard Haitink, and Keith Lockhart. Other choral performances include Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and Bach's *St. John Passion* with the Back Bay Chorale. Ms. Grizzell teaches voice and piano at the New Mozart School of Music in Palo Alto. To find out more visit [www.juliagrizzell.com](http://www.juliagrizzell.com).



### WINONA HENDRICK, ALTO

Winona Hendrick (she/her) is a mezzo-soprano, instrumentalist, and teacher. A graduate of SF State's Music Education department, she currently teaches band and choir at Marina Middle School. Winona's most recent operatic performance was as a witch in Teatro Mistral's production of Verdi's *Macbeth*. Before that, she performed in the ensembles of Puccini's *Suor Angelica* and Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* with Pacifica-based Phénix Opera. In 2018, Winona joined the SF Renaissance Voices for their production of Hildegard von Bingen's medieval opera, *Ordo Virtutum*. She has continued to perform with the ensemble, as well as lend her expertise on their executive board. In her free time, she enjoys performing with her husband in their ukulele duet, The Letterboxers, which has performed at Hardly Strictly Bluegrass for two years.



### AMY HIESTAND, SOPRANO

Amy Hiestand (she/her), soprano, is thrilled to be singing this season with 21V, and working with such an amazing and fun group of singers! Amy previously sang with the East Bay-based treble voices chorus, WomenSing, most recently under the direction of Ofer dal Lal and previously with Martin Benvenuto. Amy served as the project manager of WomenSing's Treble Voices Now Festival over three seasons. Outside of singing, Amy works as an independent consultant to Bay Area municipalities on their affordable housing program design and project management, and in her free time enjoys hiking, cooking, traveling, and reading. Amy continues to get together for frequent reunions and singing with her Yale College a cappella senior women's group, Whim 'n Rhythm of 1989.

*"Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect." — Chief Seattle*

**YITING JIN, ALTO**

Yiting Jin (she/her) took her first steps as a musician at the age of four on the piano, and began singing with choirs in middle school. After moving to the Bay Area from the East Coast where she sang with the Princeton University Chapel Choir and the Greenwich Choral Society, she sang with the Peninsula Women's Chorus for ten years. She currently also sings with Masterworks Chorale's Chamber Choir, Serenade. Yiting is excited and grateful to be a part of 21V and to continue on a journey of discovery and creation of 21st century choral music — and the role it can play as an advocate for the underrepresented and forgotten. Yiting has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics from Princeton University and works in product management at Atlassian, a global software company. Her interests outside of music include tennis, figure skating, mentoring, traveling, and solving puzzles. She lives in Sunnyvale with her husband Kevin and their rescue animals.

**PETER KENTON, ALTO**

Peter (he/him), a native of Oakland, began singing at the age of 7 years old, and sang throughout his childhood. He majored in Anthropology and Vocal Music at St. Mary's College of California, where he studied with renowned Estill Voice instructor Kelly Burge. Peter sings both as a Countertenor and Tenor/Baritone, and is a member of the Men and Boys Choir at Grace Cathedral. He has sung with other ensembles including American Bach Soloists, Marin Oratorio, Celerestory, and Berkeley Symphony. He maintains a private voice studio, and also teaches at the Pacific Boychoir, where he works full time as the Director of Outreach. When he is not singing, Peter enjoys the outdoors and spending time with his fiancé, Quinci, and their dog, Kaia.

**JESSALYNN LEVINE, ALTO**

Jessalynn Levine (she/her) is an alto and choral music educator from Houston, TX. She received her bachelor's degree in music education from the University of Houston in 2015 and her masters degree in choral conducting from San Jose State University in 2022. Jessalynn served as a choir director for five years at Spring High School in Spring, TX, where she directed ensembles that consistently received the highest ratings in contests. She has sung professionally in choirs throughout the Houston area, including Chorus Angelorum and the Bach Society of Houston. Jessalynn also served as cantorial soloist, co-creator of liturgy, and high holy days music director at Temple Sinai in Houston for over ten years. Here in the Bay Area, Jessalynn now directs the choral program at Las Positas College in Livermore and serves as a staff singer at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in San Francisco. She also co-directs the New Voices Bay Area TIGQ (Trans, Intersex, and Genderqueer) Chorus and works privately with trans clients on identity-affirming speech and singing through Your Lessons Now.

**MICHAEL BRANDON MORALES, SOPRANO**

Michael Brandon Morales (he/him) is a Bay Area native, conductor, and countertenor. He holds degrees in both Drama and Music and completed his Master's in Conducting at Eastern Illinois University. Since 2021 he has been Artistic Director of Singers Marin, and he also conducts worship and educational music throughout the Bay. Michael has worked with young artists in diverse settings, including the Assistant Director for Chanticleer's LAB Skills workshops, intern for Cantare Children's Choirs of Oakland, music director for Town Hall Education in Lafayette, and PK-8 music with the Diocese of Oakland. Performance credits include featured solos in Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* and *Carmina Burana*, both at Weill Hall, and Purcell's *Welcome All the Pleasures* in Champaign, IL. Outside of music, Michael is an avid Giants fan and fervent Beatles scholar. He lives in Walnut Creek with his wife Katie and their son Michael-James.

*"We light the oven so that everyone may bake bread in it."*

— José Martí



**NANCY MUNN, SOPRANO**

Happily returned to the Bay Area and thrilled to be part of 21V endeavors, soprano Nancy Munn (she/her) taught voice the last three years at Texas A&M University Kingsville and was an active member in the National Association of Teachers of Singing Texoma division. She began her singing career with the D'Oyly Carte and Welsh National Opera companies while living in the UK and has sung with Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra Chorale, the Sanford Dole Ensemble, the San Francisco Symphony Chorus and in Pocket Opera's production of *Carmen*, the role of Micaela. She has also performed as a guest soloist with the San Francisco Choral Society and the UC Alumni Chorus. Nancy is a choir section leader at First Unitarian Universalist San Francisco and lives in San Francisco with her husband and son.



**KATE OFFER, SOPRANO**

Kate Offer (she/her), Soprano. Kate is the Music & Movement Specialist for the Pacific Primary School, a preschool in San Francisco. She holds a master's degree in Music Education as well as a fellowship in songleading from Virginia Theological Seminary where she trained with Ysaye Barnwell of Sweet Honey in the Rock and composer Alice Parker. She grew up singing with the Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir, and has gone on to sing with a number of local organizations including the San Francisco Symphony, Cappella SF, Oakland Opera Theater, and West Edge Opera. She was a founding member of the International Orange Chorale where she met her husband, Seth Arnpole. As her alter ego, Kate Offer, Very Melodramatic Soprano, Kate performs a comic recital titled "Aria Kidding," at venues throughout the Bay Area. She also runs Songs from the Sandbox, a YouTube channel of sing-along songs for children and families. Check it out at [www.YouTube.com/songsfromthesandbox](http://www.YouTube.com/songsfromthesandbox).



**AKANE OTA, ALTO**

Akane Ota (she/her), mezzo-soprano is thrilled to be singing with 21V. Akane is an active singer, teacher, and conductor. She was born and raised in Japan. Currently, she is a member of the SF Symphony Chorus and St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Burlingame Soloist, Section leader and Choir School Assistant director. Akane is also a NATS (National Association of teachers of singing) member and Music at Kohl Mansion Education Outreach Committee member. As an opera singer, in 2006, she made her opera debut in the role of Papagena. As a soloist she performed the Japanese Anthem at the Consulate general of Japan and WWII peace treaty's 60th celebration at Presidio. In 2016, She organized a charity concert for earthquake relief in her hometown of Kumamoto, Japan. She has performed as a soloist and a choral singer, and has fundraised for a local music university. Akane enjoys learning cello with her 2 daughters Haruka and Yuki.



**LINDA PRICE, SOPRANO**

Linda Price (she/her), soprano, sings with Marin Baroque, Marin Symphony Chamber Chorus, and Marin Symphony Chorus, and she is a soloist at First Presbyterian San Anselmo. She has sung with San Francisco Bach Choir, Marin Oratorio, and Hampshire College Chorus. She has studied voice with Marla Volovna, Rita Lilly, and Jennifer Paulino. Linda sings Baroque, traditional, folk, gospel, jazz, and world music. She is part of local guitar-and-vocals duo Firefly. Linda plays guitar, piano, and Appalachian dulcimer; she taught music and folk-dance in local schools and at summer youth camps in Germany, France, and Switzerland. She attended music and dance camps in Eastern Europe and the U.S. Linda grew up in North Carolina where she learned traditional folk music and dance in the Blue Ridge Mountains. She earned her B.A. from UNC-Chapel Hill and majored in German and Education.

**THANK YOU**

All Saints Episcopal Church of San Leandro  
First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco  
Congregational Church of San Mateo  
All Saints' Episcopal Church of Palo Alto  
Peninsula Women's Chorus

Alfajores for the reception provided by Wooden Table Baking Co., a women-led, Latinx, LGBTQ business





**NANDINI RAJGOPAL, SOPRANO**

Nandini Rajgopal (she/her) is grateful for the opportunity to sing in a group with such talented musicians. She was first introduced to music with elementary school piano lessons and middle school band, and figured she would abandon the arts in high school. However, after one semester of choir, Nandini fell in love with singing, and never looked back. In high school, Nandini sang in her school's Chamber Chorus and Jazz Choir, and participated in both SCVA Regional and ACDA All State Honor Choirs. She now attends UC Berkeley, has sung in the university's Cal Jazz Choir, and is a member of the UC Berkeley Chamber Chorus under the direction of Dr. Wei Cheng. Outside of singing, Nandini loves to dance, spend time in nature, and meditate, and she's currently studying Psychology and Molecular and Cellular Biology with a concentration in Neurobiology, with hopes of pursuing a future in clinical psychology or psychiatry.



**ANNE HEPBURN SMITH, SOPRANO**

Anne Hepburn Smith (she/her) is a Bay Area-based lyric coloratura soprano and teaching artist. She holds an MM in voice from San Francisco Conservatory and a BM in voice from Boston Conservatory. She freelances around the Bay Area with various chamber groups and and opera companies. Favorite operatic roles include Susanna (*Figaro*), Pamina (*Magic Flute*), and Nella (*Gianni Schicchi*). She also regularly tours with Ensemble Mik Nawooj, a hip-hop orchestra, around the country. As a teacher, she draws heavily upon Orff-Schulwerk. She is passionate about providing music education for underserved communities and ensuring that her students see themselves and their cultures reflected in their music curriculum.



**JUDITH WARD, SOPRANO**

Judith Ward (she/her), soprano, has had a lifelong passion for choral music and has maintained an active singing life alongside an international management career and raising three children. She spent 15 years living and working in Europe where she was a member of the Paris Choral Society and the world-renowned Bach Choir in London. With The Bach Choir she sang for the Royal Family, at major London concert venues, the BBC Proms and on tours to Australia and Germany. She also participated in several recordings of major film scores and choral works. Since moving to the Bay Area, she has sung with the San Francisco Bach Choir, St. Stephen's Choir, Consort Chorale, Marin Symphony Chorus, North Star Vocal Artists, Marin Baroque, Marin Oratorio, Music from Marin Summer Festival, and Contemporary Opera Marin. She also enjoys singing with her outreach quartet, Sing We Enchanted, at Bay Area hospitals and nursing homes.



**REUBEN ZELLMAN, ALTO**

Reuben Zellman (he/they), countertenor, is a soloist and chorister with numerous ensembles over the years, Reuben is fortunate to work with some of the Bay Area's wonderful homes for music and culture. He teaches in the School of Music at San Francisco State University, serves as the baal korei (Torah chanter) at Congregation Ner Tamid, directs the New Voices Bay Area Trans, Intersex and Genderqueer Chorus at the Community Music Center, and is a staff countertenor with the Choir of Men and Boys at Grace Cathedral. He holds master's degrees in choral conducting and in Hebrew literature, and rabbinical ordination from Hebrew Union College, where he also trained in traditional cantorial theory and performance. He has studied and worked in Santiago de Chile, Jerusalem, and across the U.S., and is thankful to live in San Francisco with his family.

**BEHIND THE SCENES**

**FRONT OF HOUSE:**

Chuck Beazell, Chris Follmann, May Goodreau, Robin Mulgannon, Widya Mulyasasmita, Katie Sanwick

**RECEPTION:** Sue Fish

**ARTS ADMIN & GRAPHIC**

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**STAGING:** Kirstina Collins

**COPYEDITOR:** Asher Davison

**AUDIO/VIDEO ENGINEER:** Brendan Dreaper (East Bay Audio), Justin Warren (Cyperus Media)

**PHOTOGRAPHER:** Don Fogg



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