



21V presents its inaugural concert

# BEYOND BINARY

APRIL 1, 2022 AT 8PM

Taube Atrium Theater at San Francisco  
War Memorial & Performing Arts Center

APRIL 2, 2022 AT 4PM

African American Museum  
& Library at Oakland

**Martín Benvenuto**

*Artistic Director*



## FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Welcome to our inaugural concerts, *Beyond Binary*! I'm thrilled that you are here, and that 21V's journey to be a catalyst for change through a new, vibrant, and inclusive treble choral sound has begun.

I am often asked in social circles "what are you singing" or "what's the repertoire," but recently I encountered "what is this concert about?" The way the question was posed made me think differently about this program, and the word *truth* came to mind. The truths of needing to embrace sorrow to overcome it, of the required racial reckoning that can potentially heal us all, of the futility of identity stereotypes. Through our efforts to dispel false binaries, do we discover the truths that are unmovable?

I can't tell you how grateful I am that the idea of 21V intrigued you and inspired you in some way. Thank you, Founding Supporters, for your generous gifts and for believing in the spark from the very beginning. Thank you, singers, for your willingness to explore and for your artistry. And a special thank-you to Yiting Jin, singer and collaborator, who has helped bring this idea to life since its inception.

Enjoy the concert!

Yours in song,

**Martín Benvenuto**  
*Artistic Director*

...

“

Self-love is the ability to commit to your own process of living the truth of yourself as you piece it back together from all the ways the world has taught you to lie to yourself about you.

- Christina Springer

”

# 21V A CATALYST FOR CHANGE

# BEYOND BINARY

Fri, April 1, 2022 @ 8pm  
Taube Atrium Theater at  
San Francisco War Memorial & Performing Arts Center

Sat, April 2, 2022 @ 4pm  
African American Museum & Library at Oakland\*

Martín Benvenuto, Artistic Director

## BEYOND BINARY

Kin to Sorrow (2006) Stephen Paulus  
*In honor of lives lost to Covid-19*

Canto a Elegua (2002) arr. Arlety Valdés & Yudelkis Lafuente  
Smruthi Balasubramaniam, *soloist*  
Phil Didlake, *percussion*

Searching My Rage (2020) Andrew Drake

Praise Song for Tulsa (2021) Charles Griffin  
*World premiere, commissioned by 21V*  
Christine Abraham and Kate Offer, *soloists*  
Mark Wilson, *speaker*

False Binaries: The Spirit of Call and Response (2020)  
adapted for 21V by Bradford Dumont and Krystal Morin

Pollerita Roja (2006) Gabriela Lena Frank  
Christine Abraham, *soloist*

...a publicity stunt Lani Ka'ahumanu

Wallflower (2020) Rex Isenberg  
*West Coast premiere*

\* In collaboration with the African American Museum & Library at Oakland (AAMLO),  
a branch of the Oakland Public Library

# PROGRAM NOTES & TRANSLATIONS

*Kin to Sorrow*, Stephen Paulus

Stephen Paulus left an indelible mark on the choral music of the first portion of our 21st century. Paulus was a passionate advocate for the works and careers of his colleagues, cofounding the American Composers Forum in 1973. We perform *Kin to Sorrow* both in his memory and to honor those we've lost to COVID-19 – a necessary counterbalance to the excitement of 21V's new beginnings. Edna St. Vincent Millay, the third woman to receive the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry at the age of 31, if living today would doubtless be considered openly bisexual and polyamorous. "Oh, come in!" exhorts the poem's narrator, aspiring to overcome sorrow by showing it kindness.

Am I kin to Sorrow,  
That so oft  
Falls the knocker of my door-  
Neither loud nor soft,  
But as long accustomed,  
Under Sorrow's hand?  
Marigolds around the step  
And rosemary stand,  
And then comes Sorrow-  
And what does Sorrow care  
For the rosemary  
Or the marigolds there?  
Am I kin to Sorrow?  
Are we kin?  
That so oft under my door-  
Oh, come in!

- Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950)

*Canto a Eleggua*, arr. Arlety Valdés and Yudelkis Lafuente

Yoruba people of the United States and Cuba arrived from West Africa as slaves. They emerged as and continue to be one of the strongest cultures in Cuba, largely because they incorporated the Catholic saints in their own Yoruba deity tradition (the Orishas), enabling them to practice openly under Spanish colonial rule. *Canto a Eleggua* is a collection of traditional folk chants dedicated to Eleggua, one of the Orishas. Eleggua is a messenger and a guardian of roads; he and his twin Eshu help people fight their own battles and find their own paths. The choral arrangement we present is by two Cuban singers, Arlety Valdés and Yudelkis Lafuente, from the vocal quartet Sexto Sentido.

Vital force that through length and breadth appears;  
child who, with the blessing of the saints and elders,  
separates fissures and divides our pathway:  
Do not cut the flow of kindness from me.

- translation of trad. Yoruba

"If I pass for other than what I am, do you feel safer?"

Lani Ka'ahumanu

Praise Song for Tulsa, Charles Griffin, text by Christina Springer

We commemorated in 2021 the centennial of the silenced events of the Tulsa Race Massacre, where White mobs ransacked and destroyed homes and businesses, wiping out one of the most affluent Black communities in the United States. Composer Charles Griffin collaborated closely with poet and Orisha priest Christina Springer in creating *Praise Song for Tulsa*, commissioned by 21V for its inaugural season. Says Christina Springer: "This is a sonic disruption of America's constant requirement for Black trauma. Set in the Greenwood District of Tulsa, Oklahoma the morning of May 31, 1921, the characters in the poem give thanks for their beautiful lives. In this piece, we are celebrating both Black survival and Black thriving. Particular attention has been paid to the miracle of Black survival. It is a glimpse into what is, what was and what should never come again." We humbly introduce this depiction of the everyday glories of the morning hours before the onset of the massacre, intended as a healing contribution to the larger conversation about race relations in the U.S. and beyond.

Glory, glory! Good glory!  
Cool water, cool roads,  
Cool house, cool soul.  
Cool the ancestors in their immortality.  
Good glory, Black and proud!  
Blessings all around. Light and love.  
Give light. Open a way!  
Shine on, Jesus! Another soul rises.  
Ancestors hold you, ancestors guide us.  
This was the promise, the American Dream.  
This is America, This is America!  
I survived! Glory, Good Night!

Sun chased a chill out of the air.  
I said, the everlasting sun chased a chill out the air.  
Won't he do it!  
Sun what make us Black and proud.  
Praise girls skipping rope on Elgin Street,  
sweet little girls with nimble feet.  
Praise the mothers pushing buggies in the park,  
daddies arm in arm strolling smart and dark.  
Bookworm boys o'er by Booker T's school  
won't grow up to be no one's fool!  
That cool clean Jazz band playing Stratford Hotel  
came to church last Sunday, don't you know?  
There's a will and a way.  
Now is our time, and now is our day.  
No longer runaways!  
Greenwood Ave has motor cars, laughing with ladies, edges laid.  
Out parading last night like a Juneteenth parade.  
Hardworking men, just look at Diamond Dick, collecting on shining.  
Careful now man, don't you trip.  
Easy now man, don't you trip.  
Easy now, man. Cover him with the blood.  
Lessie Randall?! Viola Fletcher?! Hughes Van Ellis?!  
The justice America will come to see  
is Negro, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek.  
Your sweet Jesus best beware;  
when justice comes it just won't care.



**False Binaries: the Spirit of Call and Response**, adapted for 21V by Bradford Dumont and Krystal Morin

*False Binaries*, an improvisation-based collaborative composition, was initially created in response to a summer of 2002 Choral Commons podcast interview with Andy Clark and Kristina Gillis on "Disability Justice, Radical Inclusion, and The Choir." Two specific statements drawn from the podcast ("...one of the things too I think is we set up too often [ ] a lot of false binaries." and "... what would it be like to enter into performance spaces where the audience/performer binary was completely shattered, and you wouldn't dream of sitting still while your friends are performing for you...") laid the foundations of the originally virtual creative response. The leaders of this project on the East Coast, Bradford Dumont and Krystal Morin, have adapted this framework especially for 21V. Our recorded virtual participants and in-person singers will reflect upon the false binaries that inhibit us, and you are invited to join the singers and be part of the improvisation.

**Pollerita Roja**, Gabriela Lena Frank

*Pollerita Roja* combines stunning folk-inspired melodies and vocal articulations with exciting folk-inspired rhythms, rendering Lily Flores Palomino's intriguing and provocative text about gender stereotypes even more vivid. Palomino comes from a generation of Quechua bilingual poets who have tended to distance themselves from mythic imagery of the heroic Andean past, even while decrying racism and poverty and denouncing neocolonialism and the destruction of Andean nature and culture. Described by musicologist Richard Crocker as a "totalist" for the richness of her musical language, Gabriela Lena Frank combines visceral audience appeal with an analytical complexity that captivates the interest of the most sophisticated expert. Born in Berkeley in 1972 into a diverse cultural heritage, Frank has developed steadily into one of the most renowned American composers; production of her first opera, a depiction of the complex relationship of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera, is currently underway. *Pollerita Roja* was commissioned and premiered by the Voci Women's Vocal Ensemble in December 2006.

*You there,*  
con esa hermosa pollerita,  
¿eres flor o mujer?  
*You there,*  
con esa tu cara roja,  
¿amapola o clavelina eres?

(Soy mujer, Señor.  
Soy joven, Señora.)

*Hey there,* pollerita roja,  
¿perdiz or vicuña eres,  
por qué apareces y desapareces?  
¿Eres venado o vizcacha  
que tan esquiva eres?

(Imposible, Señor.  
Imposible, Señora.)

*Hey there,* pollerita roja,  
si mujer eres, acércate a mí,  
si flor eres yo te arrancaré.  
(Soy mujer, Señor.)  
Y si eres venado o perdiz  
con mi querer te enlazaré  
y tus alitas cortaré.  
(Soy joven, Señora.)

(I'm a woman, si tú quieres,  
I'm a flower, si tú quieres.  
Flower or woman,  
venado o perdiz,  
lo que tú quieras soy,  
pollerita roja soy.)

*You there,*  
with that handsome skirt,  
are you a flower or a woman?  
*You there,*  
with that red face there,  
are you a poppy or a carnation?

(I'm a woman, Señor.  
(I'm a young man, Señora.)

*Hey there,* red skirt,  
are you a partridge or a vicuña,  
why do you appear and disappear?  
Are you a deer or a vizcacha  
that you're so shy?

(Impossible, Señor.  
Impossible, Señora.)

*Hey there,* red skirt,  
if you're a woman, come close to me,  
if you're a flower, I'll pluck you.  
(I'm a woman, Señor.)  
And if you're a deer or a partridge  
I'll tie you up with my love  
and trim your little wings.  
(I'm a young man, Señora.)

(I'm a woman, if you like,  
I'm a flower, if you like.  
Flower or woman,  
deer or partridge,  
I'm whatever you like,  
I'm a red skirt.)

- Lily Flores Palomino (b. 1937)

## Wallflower, Rex Isenberg

*Wallflower*, composed in a quasi-barbershop style on a poem of 19th-century queer Jewish poet Amy Levy, was completed by composer Rex Isenberg in February 2020 and immediately joined the many pieces with world premieres postponed by the current pandemic. Isenberg became enamored with Amy Levy's verse through *A Rainbow Thread: An Anthology of Queer Jewish Texts*. The poem describes the emotions of the narrator (Levy, we presume) as she watches another woman, perhaps no stranger to herself, dancing with various men in a bar and imagines "some other where, not here" where she and Jane could dance together. To Isenberg the bold and direct sentiment was a particularly good fit given that the Accord Treble Choir, his commissioner, was planning a program called "Love is a Sickness." Read through a framework of queer symbolics, the "leaden" monster twice bemoaned in the poem is surely the cultural impossibility of representing (and especially of openly presenting) lesbian desire. Nonetheless, the uplifting music towards the end of the piece ("my spirit rises to the music's beat") seems to evoke a sense of triumph over those demons.

I lounge in the doorway and languish in vain  
While Tom, Dick and Harry are dancing with Jane.

My spirit rises to the music's beat;  
There is a leaden fiend lurks in my feet!  
To move unto your motion, Love, were sweet.

Somewhere, I think, some other where, not here,  
In other ages, on another sphere,  
I danced with you, and you with me, my dear.

In perfect motion did our bodies sway,  
To perfect music that was heard always;  
Woe's me, that am so dull of foot to-day!

To move unto your motion, Love, were sweet;  
My spirit rises to the music's beat—  
But, ah, the leaden demon in my feet!

- Amy Levy (1861-1889)

• • •

"I am glad that I paid so little attention to good advice;  
had I abided by it I might have been saved from some  
of my most valuable mistakes."

Edna St. Vincent Millay

# 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



# 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 active as a clinician, panelist, and guest conductor at home and abroad.

Recognized for his exacting technique, and a passion for drawing 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. [www.martinbenvenuto.com](http://www.martinbenvenuto.com)





### 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 leads a product team at Salesforce that builds AI applications. 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. She is overjoyed and thankful to sing with 21V in its inaugural season!



### 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 daughter Lily and wife to her husband Jordan. Teaching and being the parent of a toddler has kept her rather busy over the last several years and she is so happy to finally be singing with an ensemble again! 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.

” ...death, like love, is  
ever old and ever new.  
- Amy Levy



### 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 Martin 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.



### VON BRINGHURST, soprano

Von Bringham (he/him or they/them), countertenor and soprano, completed his Master of Music in Vocal Performance degree in 2012 at the Longy School of Music of Bard College in Cambridge, MA. He can often be heard in the Bay Area with Clerestory and other groups. He currently teaches with the Community School of Music and Arts in Mountain View, and is soprano section leader for Christ Church Portola Valley and Woodside. He is a native of Pocatello, Idaho, where he also attended Idaho State University, graduating with honors in 2009. He is active on both coasts as a soloist, ensemble member, rehearsal accompanist, and music director. He is pleased to have been involved with WholeTone Opera, a new company devoted to showcasing the work of female, femme and nonbinary artists, where he was involved in the productions of La Zombiata and The Werewolf, and honored to be able to co-create the role of Vincent. More about Von can be found at vonbringham.com.



### 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 Cora 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.



### LAUREN ESTES, soprano

Lauren Estes (she/her), soprano, is excited to be singing with a treble choir again! Lauren has a double major B.A. in music and psychology from the College of William and Mary and holds a Master of Music degree in choral conducting from Syracuse University, where her research focused on the availability of repertoire for treble choirs. Prior to moving to California, Lauren directed the central Virginia-based choirs Bel Canto Vocal Ensemble and Madison Choral Society. She also sang with several Virginia choirs, including the Oratorio Society of Virginia, chamber choir Plena Voce, and Zephyrus Early Music Vocal Ensemble. In addition to 21V, these days, she sings with Masterworks Chorale and Serenade Chamber Choir. She currently works as the Operations Manager for Ragazzi Boys Chorus and serves as the Education and Outreach Program Coordinator for Music at Kohl Mansion.



### 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.



### 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.



### YITING JIN, alto

Yiting Jin (she/her), alto, 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 at Carnegie Hall as well as with the Greenwich Choral Society, she sang with the Peninsula Women's Chorus for ten years. Yiting is excited and grateful to be a part of 21V and to continue on a journey of constant 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 figure skating, mentoring, traveling, and solving puzzles. She lives in Sunnyvale with her husband Kevin and their rescue animals – two cats, a husky, and a colony of purebred dust bunnies (pandemic limited edition).



### 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, where she sang in several operas and choral groups. 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 before relocating to San Jose. She now works as a voice coach for transgender clients for both singing and speech. She will soon graduate with a masters degree in choral conducting from San Jose State University.



### MICHAEL BRANDON MORALES, alto

Michael Brandon Morales (he/him) is a Bay Area native, conductor, and countertenor. He holds a B.A. in both Drama and Music and completed his Master's in Conducting at Eastern Illinois University. In 2021, Michael was named as the new Artistic Director for Singers Marin in Tiburon. 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 and his wife Katie welcomed their first child, Michael James, this past December.



### 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 Arnopole. 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.



### NANDINI RAJGOPAL, alto

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.



### LARYSSA SADOWAY, alto

Laryssa Sadoway (she/her) is delighted to be singing with 21V after spending the last decade primarily in choral leadership. Laryssa is in her tenth year at Castro Valley High School, where she conducts five choirs. She began her training at the University of Massachusetts, and received her Bachelor of Arts in Voice at North Park University. In 2008 she received a Master of Music in Vocal Performance at San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Career highlights include leading her choirs to "Double Gold" victory at the 2018 Northern California Golden State Choral Competition, conducting CVHS A Cappella at Carnegie Hall (while eight months pregnant), and collaborating with the BYU Singers in 2019. Previously she sang with Berkeley Opera, Concerts at the Presidio, San Francisco Cabaret Opera, and Saint Mary Magdalen Church in Berkeley. Laryssa resides in San Leandro with her husband, Chris, and son, Isaiah.



### 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 delighted to join 21V. 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.

### 21V VIRTUAL SINGERS (FALSE BINARIES):

Lindsey Breitschaedel, Von Bringham, Karen Cook, Alice Del Simone, Jessalynn Levine, Cannon McClure, Annie Kubitschek, Wendy Moy, Noele Martin, Kate Roseman

## FEATURED GUESTS



### DONIEL MARK WILSON, speaker

Mark Wilson is a Continuing Lecturer in the Music Department of University of California at Berkeley, where he conducts the UC Berkeley Gospel Chorus, and Director of Music at Easter Hill United Methodist Church, Richmond. As a singer, Mark is frequent baritone soloist with Cantare Con Vivo Chorale, and a member of the San Francisco Golden Gate Men's Chorus. He earned his undergraduate degree from Howard University, his M.Div. from Harvard Divinity School, and Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Michigan. Pastor Mark was the first pastor to come out and be embraced as a gay man in a Bay Area African American Baptist Church; he has used musical performance to promote acceptance of diversity in his local community, Cuba, Nicaragua, and Sri Lanka, and has been a leader of the Welcoming and Affirming Movement to affirm LGBTIQ people in the Baptist community and beyond.



### PHIL DIDLAKE, percussion

Phil Didlake is a board-certified music therapist and the co-founder of Rhythmic Innovation LLC and Drum Innovation. For over 12 years, Phil has facilitated music based programs for individuals and organizations in clinical, education, wellness, and community settings. Phil received his B.M. in Music Therapy from Berklee College of Music in Boston, where he was featured in a press release recognizing inspiring students in the 2016 graduating class. Phil is trained in drumming-specific programs such as health RHYTHMS, Village Music Circles, Rhythm2Recovery, Beat the Odds, Rhythm for Youth, and Drummessage. In March 2020, Phil transferred his services to Zoom; he plans to continue facilitating groups both online and in-person.



### DREW DRAKE, poet

Drew Drake is a world-traveled actor, poet, and educator currently residing in New York City. During his college years, Drew became heavily interested in creative writing and especially poetry. "I believed that poetry gave me the outlet to voice an opinion and perspective that was different from the perspectives I have been forced to play on stage and film." Since graduating from Western Carolina University (2012), he has performed original poetry in many venues throughout the US. Drew is an MFA Acting Graduate of University of Tennessee (2016), and is currently working on a new collection of poetry entitled A Black Man's Cacophony.



### CHARLIE GRIFFIN, composer

Charlie Griffin has enjoyed a thirty-plus year career as a composer, writer, educator, and arts administrator. His music has been presented in over twenty countries on radio, at festivals, conferences, and notable venues like the Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, and the American Cathedral in Paris. Career highlights include premieres by the St. Louis Symphony, the Orlando Philharmonic, and the Dale Warland Singers. His lectures and classes have brought him to Hofstra University, Teacher's College at Columbia University, the U.S. Embassies in Latvia and Lithuania, and the Epcot International Festival of the Arts at Walt Disney World. He moved to Orlando in 2010 to help launch a B.S. degree in Music Production at Full Sail University. He founded the Central Florida Composers Forum in 2011. He feels honored to write for Martín Benvenuto and 21V.



### CHRISTINA SPRINGER, poet

Christina Springer is an Alt.Black artist who uses text, performance, video and other visual expressions. Her fourth collection of poetry, *The Splooge Factory*, was released by Frayed Edge Press in November 2018. San Jose, Dayton and Pittsburgh recently exhibited *Futuristic Relics & Motherboards Sacred*: a collection of 80 paintings, fabric, mixed media objects and texts from a museum of our Black utopian womanist future. Caye Canem shaped her voice. She is the Founder and Primary Creative for Mmmm, Yes! A Black womanist lifestyle objects store featuring clothing, home good and accessories. Springer serves as the Resident Elder for Black Dream Escape, a company begun by her son whom she home educated. More about her art at [www.christinaspringer.com](http://www.christinaspringer.com).



### LANI KA'AHUMANU, author and activist

Lani Ka'ahumanu is Kanaka Maoli standing with the Hawaiian Sovereignty Movement. A poet, author, educator, historian, and grandmother, she is often regarded as the strategic political architect of the early U.S. bisexual movement. She cofounded BiPOL, the first feminist bisexual political action group [1983]; was a co-organizer of the San Francisco Bay Area Bisexual Network [1987], now the Bay Area Bi+ & Pan Network (BABPN); and cofounded BiNet USA [1990]. She was the only out bisexual invited to speak on the mainstage of the 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay and Bi Rights & Liberation. For 40+ years, Ka'ahumanu challenged the casual and callous disregard of bi+ people within the lesbian/gay movement and the HIV/AIDS/health industry. With Loraine Hutchins, she co-edited the groundbreaking 1991 anthology *Bi Any Other Name: Bisexual People Speak Out*. Lani will finish her activist memoir *My Grassroots Are Showing* before her 80th birthday on October 5, 2023. [www.lanikaahumanu.com](http://www.lanikaahumanu.com) (under re-construction / relaunch mid-2022)



## BEHIND THE SCENES

### FRONT OF HOUSE

Robin Mulgannon and May Goodreau

### RECEPTION

Sue Fish

### GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Jungmee Kim

### PROGRAM DESIGNER

Jungmee Kim

### COPYEDITOR

Asher Davison

### AUDIO/VIDEO ENGINEER

Brendan Dreaper



## THANK YOU

Arlety Valdés and Yudelkis Lafuente

Charles Griffin

Christina Springer

Bradford Dumont and Krystal Marin

Andrew Clark

Voci Women's Vocal Ensemble and Mitchell Covington

Lani Ka'ahumanu

Nicole Kristal

Rex Isenberg

Veda Silva

All Saints Episcopal Church San Leandro

First Presbyterian Church in Hayward

Congregational Church of San Mateo

# FOUNDING SUPPORTERS

## FOUNDERS CIRCLE (\$5,000 and above)

Amy Hiestand and Mike Casendino  
Anonymous  
Anonymous  
Yiting Jin

## COMPOSERS CIRCLE (\$1,000-\$4,999)

Anonymous  
Mario and Silvia Benvenuto  
Martín Benvenuto and Chuck Beazell  
Jodie Bourdet  
Walden and Sally Browne  
Kevin Christopher  
Joanne and Terry Dale  
Mardie Daul  
Petra Dierkes-Thrun  
Elaine Lind  
Robin Mulgannon  
Patty and Jim Murray  
Jerome Parmer  
Cherrill Spencer

## SINGERS CIRCLE (\$500-\$999)

Barbara Beck  
Amy Bruhmuller  
Ginny Davies  
Sue Fish  
Rachel Eidbo  
Patti and Paul Sax

## SUPPORTERS CIRCLE (\$100-\$499)

Anonymous (3)  
Amelia Archer  
Alejandro Benvenuto  
Mike and Diana Brzozowski  
Gail Doering  
May Goodreau  
Diane Griffin  
James Jin  
Cathleen Kalcic  
Kathryn Sanwick  
Jessica Tagasaki  
Hoi-Thu Truong  
Alex Varghese  
Katherine Wallen

## FRIENDS CIRCLE (\$1-\$99)

Anonymous (5)  
Judith Bryant  
Cheryl Christopher  
Kirstina Collins  
Eduardo Garcia Novelli  
Robert Geary  
Ellen Lin  
Jean Murray  
Stan Ng  
Eithne Pardini  
Martha Stoddard



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# AUDITIONS

## CALLING SOPRANO AND ALTO VOICES OF ALL GENDERS

We invite singers seeking a professional-caliber ensemble experience to audition for 21V. 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 where you will be asked to provide the following:

- A description of your choral/vocal/musical background and experience (resume or CV optional)
- One or two references including phone numbers and email addresses
- An audio or video recording file or link to one solo repertoire selection (style of your choice)

Singers selected to audition will be contacted directly to schedule an interview with the Artistic Director via Zoom or in person. Auditions will be scheduled by appointment.

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



"I always felt perfectly whole. I never felt like I was piecemeal or pieces of this, pieces of that. I just felt like I got to claim everything, all of these wonderful heritages."

- Gabriela Lena Frank