



A program of 21st-century music for vocal ensemble by

Aftab Darvishi

Jens Ibsen

Tania León

Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate

and a world premiere by

Eric Tuan

Saturday, June 18, 2022

St. Paul's Episcopal, Walnut Creek

7:00 PM Pacific Time

Sunday, June 19, 2022

Noe Valley Ministry, San Francisco

4:00 PM Pacific Time

Volti presents
Shadows, Visions and Dreams
June 18 and 19, 2022

How god comes to the soul

(2014)

Jens Ibsen

Soloists: Elizabeth Kimble, Rachel Rush

And the world stopped, lacking you (2016)

Aftab Darvishi

Soloists: Colby Smith, Jessica House Steward, John Mansfield

In the Rain Shadow

(2022)

Eric Tuan

Volti Commission, World Premiere

1. *Communion*

Soloists: Jessica House Steward, Emily Ryan Kusnadi

2. *The Stars Move*

Soloists: Megan D'Andrea, Blythe Tai, Will Betts,
Jefferson Packer, Sidney Chen

Rezos (Prayers)

(2003)

Tania León

1. ... *from Home*

Soloists: Jessica House Steward, Colby Smith, Blythe Tai,
Emily Ryan Kusnadi

2. ... *on the open space*

3. ... *drawing nigh*

Soloist: Blythe Tai

Visions of a Child (A Pueblo Lullaby) (2012)

Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate

Soloists: Tim Silva, Andrea Mich, Sidney Chen

Volti

Robert Geary, Artistic Director

Ben Barr

Eric Newell

Will Betts

Jefferson Packer

Sidney Chen

Rachel Rush

Megan D'Andrea

Philip Saunders

Elizabeth Kimble

Tim Silva

Emily Ryan Kusnadi

Colby Smith

John Mansfield

Jessica House Steward

Andrea Mich

Blythe Tai

Volti is an instrument –

bridging ethnicities, cultures, and generations in our community and beyond.

As a dynamic vehicle for the musical expression of artistic and personal perspectives,
we give voice to each person's unique contribution, and to the breadth of human experience.

Tonight's program showcases the creativity of artists of diverse backgrounds,
each expressing something deeply personal, yet universal, through the power of voices combined.

We invite you – composers, listeners, singers – to join us
in the discovery of what it means to be a citizen of this world, at this critical moment in time.



Jens Ibsen, composer/tenor, is a multidisciplinary artist whose vocal talents have led him to performances from Dubai to Shanghai, with stops along the way on German television, at Carnegie Hall, and the UN. Ibsen was a principal soloist and the first African-born member of the world-renowned Vienna Boys Choir.

Ibsen has been commissioned by the Oregon Bach Festival Composer Symposium and the Impulse New Music Festival. Other recent commissions include *Concrete Sea* for the Cincinnati Song Initiative and *Pretty Girl* for The Kennedy Center's Cartography Project, a commissioning initiative which "seeks to create a musical map of racial hate crimes across America and use music as both a source of healing and a way to open dialogue about the future of anti-racism."

Ibsen's string quartet *Overdrive* received a reading by the JACK Quartet through their JACK studio program. Ibsen was a finalist in Beth Morrison Projects' Next Ten Competition, which seeks out emerging voices in the field of new opera. Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir recently premiered his treble choir piece *A Portrait in Greys*.

Ibsen completed his B.A in Music Composition at Pepperdine University under N. Lincoln Hanks while studying voice under Louise Lofquist. He received his M.M. in Music Composition at the Mannes School of Music under Missy Mazzoli while studying voice under Stephen Powell. Other composition teachers have included Randall Woolf, Matthew Brown, and Matthew Cmiel, and other voice teachers have included Sheri Greenawald and Eva Lindquist.

<https://www.jensibsen.com>

Composer's Note:

I have been continuously inspired by the works of female medieval mystics. While most people only know Hildegard von Bingen, Mechthild von Magdeburg was a remarkably gifted writer of ecstatic poetry and prose in her own right, and was the first medieval mystic to write in the vernacular German. This particular excerpt I have set hails from her book *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*. It is full of everything from discourse on proper Christian worship, to prosaic conversations between the author and God, and lines of poetic verse. As in other mystic poetic traditions, like that of the Sufis, there is always a sense of duality to these texts. Taken out of context, they can be interpreted as ecstatic love poetry to a distant lover, but upon closer inspection one sees the texts' deeply spiritual nature. That said, some excerpts could even be read as highly erotic, which is not uncharacteristic for the genre. In honor of her legacy, I chose to set the text in its oldest surviving German translation; it is as close to the original Old High German as possible.

I wanted the piece to be full of constant movement, reflecting the excited nature of the text. Often the singers are behaving more instrumentally than vocally, particularly during the fast sextuplet figures in the middle section. The piece is a spiritual journey, starting from a chant-like invocation, exploding into glory upon god answering his beloved, and then an ascension into heaven when the beloved's spirit takes wing out of sheer awe at God's immanence.

Wie got kumet in die sele

Ich kum zü miner leben
Als ein töwe vf den blümen.

How god comes to the soul

I come to my beloved
as the dew upon the flowers.

Wie got die sele empfahet

Siest wilkomen liebü tube.
Du has so sere geflogen in dem ertriche,
das dine vedern sint gewahsen in dem himelriche.

How god receives the soul

Welcome, my precious dove.
You have flown so keenly over the earth
that your feathers reach to heaven.

Mechthild von Magdeburg, *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*
Translation by Frank Tobin, New York: Paulist Press, 1998.



Aftab Darvishi was born in Tehran, Iran and currently lives in Amsterdam. Her musical life began with violin lessons at the age of 5, and progressed through earning degrees from the University of Tehran, the Conservatory of Amsterdam and the Royal Conservatory of The Hague.

She composes music for various mediums including concert music, film scores, and theater music. Creating unusual combinations of vocals and mixing the different musical cultures has been and still is her inspiration in her musical journey. Her music has been presented at concerts and festivals in Europe, Asia and the United States, by artists including Kronos Quartet, Hermesensemble, Orkest de Erepriis, Cappella Amsterdam, BBC Singers, and more.

Darvishi was awarded the Tenso Young Composers Award 2016 for *And the world stopped, lacking you...* In 2017, she was commissioned by San Francisco's Kronos Quartet to write a piece for *Fifty for the Future*, a project devoted to the most contemporary approaches to the string quartet, designed expressly for the training of students and emerging professionals. Her opera *Turan Kokht* in collaboration with Miranda Lakerveld premiered at Holland Festival 2019. In July 2022, she will release her debut album *A Thousand Butterflies* on 30M Records. It spans a range of styles and includes work for a variety of instrumental forces as well as electronics.

<https://aftabdarvishi.com>

Perhaps
(To R.A.L.)

Vera Brittain

Perhaps some day the sun will shine again,
And I shall see that still the skies are blue.
And feel once more I do not live in vain,
Although bereft of You.

Perhaps the golden meadows at my feet
Will make the sunny hours of Spring seem gay.
And I shall find the white May blossoms sweet,
Though You have passed away.

Perhaps the summer woods will shimmer bright,
And crimson roses once again be fair,
And autumn harvest fields a rich delight,
Although You are not there.

Perhaps some day I shall not shrink in pain
To see the passing of the dying year,
And listen to Christmas songs again,
Although You cannot hear.

But, though kind Time may many joys renew,
There is one greatest joy I shall not know
Again, because my heart for loss of You
Was broken, long ago.

Vera Brittain (1893-1970) was an English Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) nurse, writer, feminist, socialist and pacifist. Her poem "Perhaps" was written in 1916, and dedicated to her fiancé Roland Leighton, after he was killed in World War I.



Recognized for his adventurous programming and passion for musical excellence, **Eric Tuan** brings a wealth of experience in the choral and keyboard arts to the concert stage. He currently serves as Artistic Director of the Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir, where he oversees a choral program of 250 singers and leads the performing choirs in a diverse array of collaborations, concert tours, and commissions. Tuan also serves as Director of Music at Christ Episcopal Church in Los Altos and as Artistic Director of Convivium, the Peninsula-based chamber chorus he founded in 2012.

Tuan's dedication to the creation and exploration of new music has led him to conduct and perform the world premieres of over thirty works, including a program of new choral works celebrating the 500th anniversary of King's College Chapel, Cambridge. Tuan has sung professionally with Volti, Cappella SF, and the Philharmonia Baroque Chorale and received acclaim for his sensitive work as an organist, collaborative pianist, continuo player, and répétiteur.

Tuan's choral works have been widely performed by ensembles throughout the world including Elektra Women's Choir (Canada), Vox Aurea (Finland), Midtvest Pigeekor (Denmark), the Girls' Choir of St. Catharine's College, Cambridge (UK), Musae (USA), and the Stanford Chamber Chorale (USA). His music has been broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and Estonian Public Broadcasting, and is published by E.C. Schirmer.

Tuan received his B.A. in Music with Honors from Stanford University and completed a Master of Music in Choral Studies with Distinction at the University of Cambridge with the support of a Gates Cambridge Scholarship. Among his mentors and conducting teachers are Stephen M. Sano, Jameson Marvin, Craig Jessop, Robert Geary, Stephen Layton, Stephen Cleobury, and David Skinner.

<https://erictuanmusic.com/home>

Composer's Note:

In the Rain Shadow is a choral reflection on the Owens Valley, a landscape that is particularly close to my heart. This high desert valley sits in the rain shadow of the towering Sierra Nevada immediately to the west, receiving only 4-6 inches of rain each year – hence its description as “The Land of Little Rain” by the nature writer Mary Hunter Austin. The valley's original residents named it *Payahū'ūnadū* (“place of flowing water”), which captures the abundance of the snowmelt-fed Owens River before the water was diverted to feed the growth of Los Angeles.

The Owens Valley is a magical place, with the majesty of the Sierra rising 10,000 feet to the west, the desert floor covered with sagebrush and cottonwoods, and the steep canyons. It's a landscape that reminds you just how small you are in the universe, an experience that I try to capture in this piece. Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, who was imprisoned in the valley at the Japanese American internment camp at Manzanar, describes the spiritual sustenance the internees took from the land: “If anything made that country habitable it was the mountains themselves, purple when the sun dropped and so sharply etched in the morning light the granite dazzled almost more than the bright snow lacing it...The tremendous beauty of those peaks was inspirational.”

In the Rain Shadow sets the words of Mary Hunter Austin, a fiercely independent nature writer and feminist from the early 20th century. Her book “The Land of Little Rain” is her love letter to the Owens Valley prior to the construction of the Los Angeles Aqueduct. The passage I draw from is at the end of the first chapter:

For all the toll the desert takes of a man it gives compensations, deep breaths, deep sleep, and the communion of the stars. It comes upon one with new force in the pauses of the night that the Chaldeans were a desert-bred people. It is hard to escape the sense of mastery as the stars move in the wide clear heavens to risings and settings unobscured. They look large and near and palpitant; as if they moved on some stately service not needful to declare. Wheeling to their stations in the sky, they make the poor world-fret of no account. Of no account you who lie out there watching, nor the lean coyote that stands off in the scrub from you and howls and howls.

Rezos (Prayers) (2003)

Tania León

Dedicated to the memory of the innocent victims of September 11, 2001, worldwide.

Commissioned by Terry Knowles and Marshall Rutter to honor Grant Gershon, Music Director, Los Angeles Master Chorale.

Premiere performance: March 8, 2003.

To the best of our knowledge, Volti is the first group to perform *Rezos* since the premiere.



Tania León (b. Havana, Cuba) is highly regarded as a composer, conductor, educator and advisor to arts organizations. Her orchestral work *Stride*, commissioned by the New York Philharmonic, was awarded the 2021 Pulitzer Prize in Music.

Recent commissions include works for Los Angeles Philharmonic, NDR Symphony Orchestra, Grossman Ensemble, International Contemporary Ensemble, and pianist Ursula Oppens with Cassatt String Quartet. Appearances as guest conductor include Orchestre Philharmonique de Marseille, Gewandhausorchester, Orquesta Sinfonica de Guanajuato, and Orquesta Sinfónica de Cuba.

Upcoming premieres feature commissions for the NewMusic USA Amplifying Voices Program, The Musical Fund Society in Philadelphia to celebrate their 200th anniversary, and The Crossing chamber choir with Claire Chase, flutist, among others.

A founding member of the Dance Theatre of Harlem, León instituted the Brooklyn Philharmonic Community Concert Series, co-founded the American Composers Orchestra's *Sonidos de las Américas* Festivals, was New Music Advisor to the New York Philharmonic, and is the founder/Artistic Director of Composers Now, a presenting, commissioning and advocacy organization for living composers.

Honors include the New York Governor's Lifetime Achievement, awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the ASCAP Victor Herbert Award, among others. She also received a proclamation for Composers Now by New York City Mayor, and the MadWoman Festival Award in Music (Spain).

León has received Honorary Doctorate Degrees from Colgate University, Oberlin and SUNY Purchase College, and served as U.S. Artistic Ambassador of American Culture in Madrid, Spain. A CUNY Professor Emerita, she was awarded a 2018 United States Artists Fellowship and Chamber Music America's 2022 National Service Award.

<https://www.tanialeon.com>

Composer's note:

The choral work *Rezos (Prayers)* is a sound palette propelled by a series of complex chords that dissolve into simple sounds, sudden interruptions and/or silence. The harmonic environment of these substantial sounds is my reflection of masses of people, raising their voices in heartfelt, collective prayer.

The rhythmic environment of *Rezos* is, at times, influenced by indigenous overtones of the many cultures of the Americas.

Rezos was created using excerpts of text from three works in Jamaica Kincaid's collection "At the Bottom of the River." The power of her words became for me a kind of personal invocation.

The final piece in *Rezos* contains the text "Sing again. Sing now," reassuring and urging us to keep our spirits uplifted.

Text by Jamaica Kincaid (from "At the Bottom of the River")

A significant voice in contemporary literature, **Jamaica Kincaid** (born Elaine Potter Richardson) is widely praised for her works of short fiction, novels, and essays in which she explores the tenuous relationship between mother and daughter as well as themes of anti-colonialism. A native of Antigua, Kincaid is considered one of the most important women Caribbean writers. She is a Professor of African and African-American Studies at Harvard University

Texts are on the following page.

1 ... from Home

I milked the cows,
I churned the butter,
I stored the cheese,
I baked the bread,
I brewed the tea,
I washed the clothes,
I dressed the children;

the cat meowed,
the dog barked,
the horse neighed,
the mouse squeaked,

the door banged shut,
the stairs creaked,
the fridge hummed,
the curtains billowed up,
the pot boiled,
the gas hissed through the stove,

the tree branches heavy with snow,
crashed against the roof;
my heart beat loudly *thud, thud!*

the drawers didn't close,
the faucets dripped,
the paint peeled,
the walls cracked,

the books tilted over,
the rug no longer lay out flat,

I ate my food,
I chewed each mouth full thirty-two times,
I swallowed carefully,
my toe healed,

there was a night,
it was dark,
there was a moon,
there was a bed,
it held sleep;

there was a movement,
there was a being,
there was a space,
it was full,
then there was nothing;

2 ... on the open space

We prayed ...
We prayed to be saved,
We prayed to be blessed,
We prayed for long and happy lives for our children,
And always we prayed to see the morning light.

A mountain. A valley. The shade. The sun.
A streak of yellow rapidly conquering a streak of green.
Blending and separating.

Children are so quick:
quick to laugh, quick to brand, quick to scorn,
quick to lay claim to the open space.
The thud of small feet running, running.

An old treasure rudely broken.
See how the amber color fades from its rim.
Now it is the home of something dark and moist.
An ant walking on a sheet of tin laid bare to the sun-
crumbles.

But what is an ant?
But what is a beetle?
What is one fly?
What is one day?

3 ... drawing nigh

He looks at the house he has built with his own hands,
the books he has read standing on shelves,
the fruit-bearing trees that he nursed from seedlings,
the larder filled with food that he has provided.

He contemplates the beauty in the common thing:
the sun rising up out of the huge,
shimmering expanse of water that is the sea;
it rises up each day as if made anew,
as if for the first time.

"Sing again, Sing now."

... he watches the sun, a violent red, set on the horizon,
he hears the birds fly home,
he sees the insects dancing in the last warmth of the day's
light,
he hears himself sing out loud:

*Now the day is over,
Night is drawing nigh;
Shadows of the evening
Steal across the sky.*

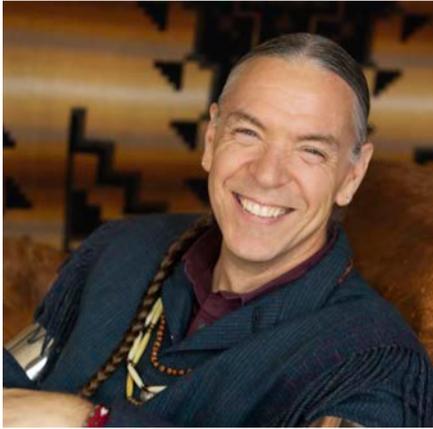
"Sing again, Sing now."

Visions of a Child (A Pueblo Lullaby) (2012)

Commissioned by Santa Fe Desert Chorale in honor of New Mexico's centennial.

Premiered July 28, 2012.

Jerod Impichchaaha' Tate



Jerod Impichchaaha' Tate is a classical composer, citizen of the Chickasaw Nation in Oklahoma and is dedicated to the development of American Indian classical composition. His *Washington Post* review states that "Tate is rare as an American Indian composer of classical music. Rarer still is his ability to effectively infuse classical music with American Indian nationalism."

Tate is Guest Composer/Conductor/Pianist for San Francisco Symphony Currents program *Thunder Song: American Indian Musical Cultures* and was recently Guest Composer for Metropolitan Museum of Art's Balcony Bar program *Home with ETHEL and Friends*, featuring his commissioned work *Pisachi (Reveal)* for String Quartet.

In addition to his work based upon his Chickasaw culture, Tate has worked with the music and language of multiple tribes, such as: Choctaw, Navajo, Cherokee, Ojibway, Creek, Pechanga, Comanche, Lakota, Hopi, Tlingit, Lenape, Tongva, Shawnee, Caddo, Ute, Aleut, Shoshone, Cree, Paiute and Salish/Kootenai.

Tate earned his Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance from Northwestern University, where he studied with Dr. Donald Isaak, and his Master of Music in Piano Performance and Composition from The Cleveland Institute of Music, where he studied with Elizabeth Pastor and Dr. Donald Erb.

Mr. Tate's middle name, Impichchaaha', means "his high corncrib" and is his inherited traditional Chickasaw house name. A corncrib is a small hut used for the storage of corn and other vegetables. In traditional Chickasaw culture, the corncrib was built high off the ground on stilts to keep its contents safe from foraging animals.

<https://jerodtate.com/>

Composer's note:

Visions of a Child is inspired by and dedicated to the Pueblo Indian people of New Mexico. The work is based upon Pueblo melodies and rhythms and depicts the imaginings of a child being lulled to sleep. It begins with a traditional lullaby followed by visions of a playful buffalo, a sunflower field, rays of sunlight, the flight of an eagle, a sunrise and then waking to the same lullaby.

The style of the composition reflects the unique feel of traditional Pueblo music, where phrases have mixed meters and phrasing has distinct sections. In this vein, the child's visions have a playful and whimsical nature, while remaining simple and clear.

The text is made entirely of Pueblo vocables, common to their traditional music, and is used to achieve an impression of how a child may abstract speech at a very young age.



2021
2022

SINGING WITHOUT A NET

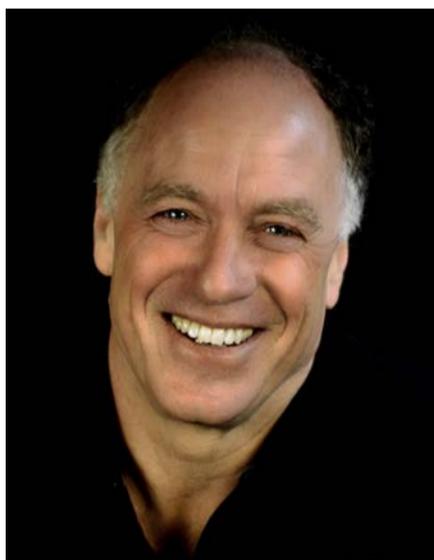
Volti, one of the leading professional vocal ensembles in the United States, has a primary purpose of performing contemporary American music. Having commissioned more than 100 new works, by emerging as well as established composers, Volti is the only seven-time winner of the prestigious Chorus America/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming of Contemporary Music. Volti has been guided by founding Artistic Director Robert Geary since 1979.

In addition to presenting concerts and creating recordings of leading-edge unaccompanied music for vocal ensemble, Volti enjoys frequent collaborations. Earlier this season we premiered *Denial*, an oratorio on climate change themes by Michael Gilbertson, with the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra, and *Angel Island Oratorio* with the Del Sol Quartet, in which composer Huang Ruo set poetry carved into the walls of the Angel Island detention center by Chinese immigrants held there during the years of the Chinese Exclusion Act. During the pandemic shutdown, Volti presented four online mini-concerts, each a commission from a Bay Area composer -- Anne Hege, Danny Clay, Joel Chapman and Pamela Z -- specifically created to be rehearsed and performed online.

Other recent collaborations include the premiere of *Dreamers*, an oratorio on immigration themes by Jimmy Lopez and Nilo Cruz, with the Philharmonia Orchestra of London conducted by Esa Pekka Salonen for Cal Performances; performing and recording Terry Riley's *Sun Rings* with the Kronos Quartet (GRAMMY Award for Best Engineered Classical Album, 2019); the second performance of John Luther Adams' *Become Desert* with the Seattle Symphony for Cal Performances; and a two-year collaboration with ODC/Dance performing *Path of Miracles* by Joby Talbot in Grace Cathedral and the Presidio Theater in San Francisco as well as on tour to Arizona. Upcoming projects include participation in a nationwide consortium of vocal ensembles in a commission from Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Caroline Shaw. and a revival of *Path of Miracles* with ODC/Dance in Grace Cathedral in 2023.

Listening to Volti is like visiting a contemporary art gallery, stimulating the mind, the imagination and the heart.

www.VoltiSF.org



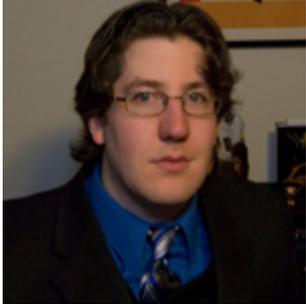
Robert Geary, founding Artistic Director of Volti, the Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir, and the Golden Gate International Choral Festival, also serves as Artistic Director of the San Francisco Choral Society. His multi-dimensional commitment to the choral arts over more than forty years has led him and his choirs to national and international prominence. Under his direction since its founding in 1979, Volti has become recognized as one of the most important and accomplished new music ensembles in the USA.

For 37 years, until stepping down as Artistic Director in 2019, Geary oversaw the development of the Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir, an innovative education and performance program whose record of success in competition is at the highest international standard. With his guiding vision, the Golden Gate International Children's and Youth Choral Festival has become part of the international choral environment, bringing thousands of young singers from dozens of countries to California for a thrilling series of performances and competitions. For more than 25 years he has led the San Francisco Choral Society to a robust position as a keeper of the traditional repertoire and an innovative force in the commissioning and performance of new works for chorus and orchestra.

Geary's dedication to today's choral music has encouraged the careers of several leading composers and has led to more than 200 new works. He has conducted and served as a clinician in dozens of countries. His choirs have performed with symphony orchestras and opera companies and for many musical conferences and festivals, both internationally and here in the United States, and can be heard on recordings with many labels. Geary has prepared choirs for leading conductors including JoAnn Falletta, Helmuth Rilling, Robert Shaw, Kurt Herbert Adler, Edo de Waart, Krzysztof Penderecki, Herbert Blomstedt, Dale Warland, Kent Nagano, Michael Morgan, Michael Tilson Thomas, Ludovic Morlot, and Esa-Pekka Salonen.



Ben Barr, tenor, has been singing off-and-on with Volti since 1992. He received his B.A. in Vocal Performance in 1994 from San Francisco State University. He has been seen on the stages of the Lamplighters, West Bay Opera, Santa Cruz Opera, and other companies, although it has been a few years since he slapped on the grease paint. He is the father of three wonderful children, and the husband to the most amazing wife ever. He is also the owner of B-Squared Consulting, a firm that specializes in tech support for small businesses.



Will Betts studied low brass and voice while at the University of the Pacific, graduating with a degree in Music Management. As a singer, he has performed with a variety of ensembles throughout the Bay Area, including AVE, Clerestory, Volti, and the Kronos and Saint Lawrence String Quartets, and has toured internationally with Pacific Boychoir Academy and The Choir of Oxford. In his other life as a jazz trombonist, he has performed with such artists as Dave Brubeck, Christian McBride, Phil Woods, and Wayne Bergeron. During the day, Will works as the manager of the Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra.



Sidney Chen, whose bass-baritone voice has been described by the San Francisco Chronicle as “expressive and richly mellifluous,” is passionate about creating new work through collaboration with artists of all disciplines. Recent projects include touring with ODC/Dance as a guest performer in KT Nelson’s *Path of Miracles*, and creating roles in Anne Hege’s “laptopera” *The Furies* with SLOrk (Stanford Laptop Orchestra) and Lisa Mezzacappa’s serial podcast opera *The Electronic Lover*. As a member of composer/choreographer Meredith Monk’s Vocal Ensemble, he has performed internationally and recorded for ECM Records. His solo performances often include DIY music boxes, which have been featured in a SF Chronicle Datebook cover story. He has performed with Volti since 2000. sidneychenarts.com



Mezzo-soprano Megan D’Andrea completed her vocal technique and performance training at the University of Puget Sound under Dr. Lehmann & Dr. Padula and continued her studies with Matthew Worth at the SF Conservatory of Music. Megan performed her first role as Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at the Manhattan Opera Studio and was a Young Artist in the CoOperative intensive program. She has been a member of both the Opera San Jose and West Bay Opera choruses, sang in San Francisco Symphony Chorus as well as Convivium, and recently was the mezzo soloist at the Swedenborgian Church. This is her second collaboration with Volti to date and she is thrilled to be joining them again.



Elizabeth Kimble is a composer, conductor, and soprano. Her music explores the sacred and psychological facets of the human experience, and often combines poetry and theater with instrumental forms. She is Music Director of Tactus SF and has sung with SF Symphony Chorus, Volti, 21V, Cappella SF, Gaude, and the California Bach Society. Her music has recently been performed by the Swedish Radio Choir, St Paul’s Episcopal Church in Burlingame, CA, Cappella SF, and the International Orange Chorale. She holds a master’s degree in Composition from the SF Conservatory of Music and bachelor’s degrees in Composition and Vocal Performance from Baldwin-Wallace College. She is currently pursuing a MA in Counseling Psychology at Pacifica Graduate Institute.



Emily Ryan Kusnadi, alto, has performed with Volti for over ten seasons and is excited to continue collaborating with this group of artists. Since singing as a child with the San Francisco Girls Chorus, Emily has served in a variety of roles with that organization and is currently a Director of the SFGC Prep Chorus. She works with the school partnership program of the East Bay Center for the Performing Arts, bringing music education into elementary schools in Richmond, CA. Additionally, she is on faculty at the Pacific Boychoir Academy, where she teaches musicianship at the day school and directs after-school choirs. Emily sings with the Schola Cantorum octet of the Cathedral of Christ the Light and was a founding member of the chamber ensemble Endersnight.



Tenor John Mansfield is thrilled to join Volti for the 2022 season. A professional choral singer in his hometown of San Francisco, John has performed throughout the Bay Area with many choral ensembles, including the San Francisco Symphony Chorus, Cappella SF, PBO, and SF Renaissance Voices. Upon receiving his Bachelor of Music Education and teaching credential from SF State University, John was hired by the SF Unified School District. He currently teaches instrumental and general music to students ranging in age from kindergarten to eighth grade. During the pandemic, many of his original songs were featured on KTVU's "SF Loves Learning" television show. When he isn't teaching or performing classically, John enjoys playing in his band, "The Letterboxers."



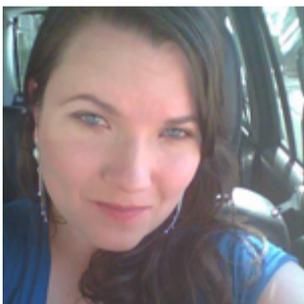
Andrea Mich, soprano, earned her Bachelor's degrees in Music and in Molecular and Cellular Biology from UC Berkeley, where she was actively involved in Perfect Fifth, Chamber Chorus and Symphony Orchestra. She frequently performs throughout the Bay Area as both a soprano and a flautist, in chamber ensembles and as a soloist, and has performed under the batons of Gustavo Dudamel, Esa-Pekka Salonen, and Marin Alsop, among others. When not performing, Andrea works as a product manager for laboratory software, and does her own experiments through baking pastries and cakes.



Bass-baritone Eric Newell, hailing from Nashville, Tennessee, is the Director of Choirs at the Kirby School in Santa Cruz, where he conducts four ensembles and teaches other various music classes. He has sung in a variety of solo and choral settings, performing with the Atlanta Baroque Orchestra, the Atlanta Master Chorale, and at the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, SC. He also serves as Director of Music at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Walnut Creek, CA. Eric has degrees in business administration from Emory University and choral conducting from the University of Georgia, and has enjoyed performing new music on the west coast with Volti since 2020.



Jefferson Packer is currently the Bass Soloist at Calvary Presbyterian Church, and a member of Jeffrey Thomas's American Bach Choir. He has performed as soloist with Marin Baroque, San Francisco Renaissance Voices, and the Lesbian Gay Chorus of San Francisco, and has sung with the Grace Cathedral Choir of Men and Boys, San Francisco Symphony Chorus, and many other church and synagogue music programs. Jefferson is also an active vocal accompanist and coach, holding a Masters Degree in Piano Performance from San Francisco State University. He lives in San Francisco with his husband Marcel, a violist, and their Corgi mix Figaro.



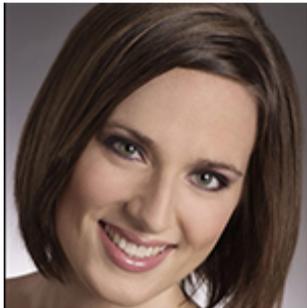
Rachel Rush, mezzo-soprano, has sung with Volti since 2013. A Bay Area native, she completed her B.A. in music at UC Santa Cruz in 2013, where she appeared as a soloist with several ensembles and sang roles in the UCSC opera program. Recently she has appeared with the San Francisco Conservatory of Music's New Music Ensemble, served as faculty for Volti's Choral Institute for high school singers, and participated in the American Bach Soloists Academy, as well as singing with Bay Area opera companies including Opera Parallèle and West Edge Opera. She is currently the alto section leader at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in San Francisco.



Philip Saunders, who has sung low bass for Volti for more than twenty seasons, studied trombone and voice at Indiana University. He played four years for the Fresno Philharmonic, and in various Los Angeles and San Francisco area orchestras. He sang with the Fresno Lyric Opera, Los Angeles Opera Chorus, L.A. Master Chorale, S.F. Symphony Chorus, Creative Voices, AVE and the Josquin Singers, and has twice been guest soloist at the Mendocino Music Festival. He is the bass soloist and Assistant Music Director for St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Oakland (for whom he has composed two masses and several motets), and is a founding member of Pacific Collegium. Philip works with computers to keep the lights on.



Tim Silva, tenor, is a proud native of the East Bay. When he's not making art, he's playing with plants. He sings regularly with Volti and Gaude. He recently appeared as a soloist with the California Bach Society. Tim is an assistant conductor for the Piedmont East Bay Children's Choirs, and music director of the Throckmorton Theatre Chorus. He has performed and/or recorded with Artists' Vocal Ensemble, Briget Boyle, Chalice Consort, Foreignfire, Iron Henry, Katy Stephan, Kronos Quartet, Marin Symphony, Michael Bang, Nick Hours, ODC/Dance, Russian National Orchestra, San Francisco Choral Artists, and others.



Colby Smith has had the privilege of performing across the United States with celebrated ensembles such as New York Philharmonic, Kronos Quartet, New Century Chamber Orchestra, and The Knights while at the Ojai Music Festival. Her interest in new music was sparked in 2008 while performing at the Spoleto Festival in Anthony Davis' opera *Amistad*. As a member of Volti since 2012, she has continued to explore the complexity of new music and joy of collaborating with composers. A proud New Jersey native, Colby earned a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from Westminster Choir College.



Korean-American soprano Jessica House Steward has sung with Volti since 2021. She has been recognized for her voice's outstanding flexibility, range, and warm, yet vibrant timbre. Jessica made her Carnegie Hall debut singing the world premiere of two song cycles by composer Gerald Busby. She has received performance awards from Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, National Opera Association, and The National Society of Arts & Letters. Jessica holds vocal performance degrees from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Manhattan School of Music. She is the executive director of SF Choral Society and lives in Oakland with her husband Lee and their two teenage daughters.



Blythe Tai is a mezzo-soprano who has been singing with Bay Area choirs for over 25 years. In addition to Volti, she currently sings with the chamber choir Convivium. Recently, she has been an ensemble member and featured soloist with local groups such as Opera San Jose, Bay Area Classical Harmonies, the San Francisco Lyric Chorus, and Waffle Opera. Blythe is also an active volunteer for music arts organizations and was a founding member of Opera Theater Unlimited. Blythe studied music and English at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and is a proud alumna of the Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir.

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