



April 12, 2012

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Volti: Pathways, Floods and Delusions

Water, water everywhere ... Robert Geary and the singers of Volti take you on a journey into the shimmering depths in a fascinating concert of all-Volti-commissioned new music, closing out the 33rd season for San Francisco's award-winning contemporary-music chamber chorus with performances May 4, 5 and 6, 2012.

Astrologers predict that a great flood is going to bring the world to an end in **Francisco Cortés-Álvarez's** *The day on which the World didn't end*. It may be Noah's dove from *Other Floods* that pays a visit in **Tamar Diesendruck's** setting of the cryptic poetry of Giuseppe Ungaretti, and **Ken Ueno** launches a *lettrist bottle* into the waves to send his message into the future. Perhaps that message is picked up by **Tom Flaherty's** Wayfarer as he wanders Stephen Crane's *Delusional Paths...*

Cortés-Álvarez and Flaherty are story-tellers, while Ueno and Diesendruck are playing with the sounds of words, deconstructing them into vowels and consonants.

Ken Ueno *A lettrist bottle, a fountain of everything I've ever wanted to say, may it reach you on your desert island, that we might start anew **

Francisco Cortés-Álvarez *The day on which the World didn't end
(or The Death of Count Von Igglestein) **

Tamar Diesendruck *Other Floods #*

Tom Flaherty *Delusional Paths #*

Francisco Cortés-Álvarez *Galope
(sung by guest artists Ancora from Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir)*

Friday, May 4, 2012, 8 pm
St. Mark's Episcopal Church
2300 Bancroft Way, Berkeley

Saturday, May 5, 8 pm
St. Mark's Lutheran Church
1111 O'Farrell Street, San Francisco

Sunday, May 6, 4 pm
All Saints' Episcopal Church
555 Waverley Street, Palo Alto

Advance purchase \$25 General Admission, \$20 Seniors over 65, \$10 Students under 21
Tickets at the door \$30 General Admission, \$25 Seniors over 65, \$10 Students under 21

* Volti commission, World Premiere # 2010 Volti commission, encore performance

Link to buy tickets:

<http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/202156>

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Coming up in June: **“Shining Night” – A Tribute to Composer Morten Lauridsen**

Volti presents the Northern California premiere of a stunning new documentary film about the life and music of Morten Lauridsen, in which Volti is featured prominently. See this beautiful film on the big screen, meet composer Morten Lauridsen and filmmaker Michael Stillwater, sing along with Volti on some of Lauridsen’s most beloved music, and join us for a reception and silent auction benefitting Volti’s commissioning program.

Link to trailer and more information about the film:

<http://innerharmony.com/songwithoutborders/>

Saturday, June 9, 2012, 7 PM

Brava Theater, 2781 24th Street (near Potrero Avenue), San Francisco

Tickets \$25 - \$60 thru Brava box office; will go on sale late April

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More about the music:

World Premiere, Volti commission: *a lettrist bottle ...*

A recipient of the Rome Prize and the Berlin Prize, **Ken Ueno** is a composer/vocalist who has been commissioned twice by the Fromm Music Foundation for orchestral works. As a vocalist, Ken specializes in extended techniques (overtones, throat-singing, multiphonics, extreme registers, circular singing). Currently, he is an Associate Professor at the University of California, Berkeley, and holds Ph.D. from Harvard University.

About the genesis for his new work, *a lettrist bottle...*, Ken says: “Each time we breathe, a small fraction of the air molecules are the very same ones that Julius Caesar exhaled with his last breath. This realization continues to resonate with me as an allegory that represents my relationship as an artist to the past. In reading the past, we divide it into different slices, rearrange and reassemble it. This mechanism informs my text as well as the form of my piece.”

World Premiere, Volti commission: *The day on which the World didn’t end*

“In the year 1499 a German astronomer said that in 1524 the World was going to end ...”

So begins **Francisco Cortés-Álvarez’s** *The day on which the World didn’t end, or the Death of Count von Igglestein*. Essentially a comic opera in 9 minutes, the work takes us on a dizzying tour through musical styles and effects, invoking everything from Renaissance madrigals to Schoenberg to Gilbert & Sullivan. Given the current prediction that the apocalypse is coming on December 21, 2012, Volti may be premiering this work just in time.

A native of Mexico City, Francisco is currently in the doctoral program in composition at the Jacobs School of Music, Indiana University. As the winner of Volti's young-composer competition (the Choral Arts Laboratory), Francisco worked with Volti last fall on a draft of the piece, then used the input of the singers, Bob Geary and resident composer Mark Wings as he revised, polished and finished the piece. The results are one of the most charming and genuinely funny works Volti has ever performed, without sacrificing musical sophistication and complexity.

Galope, the treble-choir piece that Francisco submitted in entering the Choral Arts Laboratory competition, was so appealing that Bob Geary has asked his young women's choir, Ancora from [Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir](#), to join Volti on these concerts to sing it.

Encore performance, Volti 2010 commission: *Other Floods*

Tamar Diesendruck currently chairs the Master of Fine Arts in Music Composition program at the Vermont College of Fine Arts. She has composed solo, orchestral, choral, wind ensemble and vocal works, but her favored compositional medium is virtuosic chamber music.

The texts of *Other Floods* are by the Italian poet Giuseppe Ungaretti (1888-1970), pioneer of the early 20th century hermeticist movement, whose writers use unorthodox structures, illogical sequences, and highly subjective language employing cryptic brevity. Tamar says: "I first read these poems twenty years ago and am still riveted by them. Miraculously, their extreme brevity and density evoke a sense of space, time, vibration..." *Other Floods* begins with isolated vowels and syllables extracted from the poems, floating in space, uttered by solo voices. As the full chorus becomes involved, the fragments form larger linguistic combinations that ultimately become the poems.

Encore performance, Volti 2010 commission: *Delusional Paths*

Tom Flaherty is Professor of Music and director of the Electronic Studio at Pomona College in Claremont, California. He is also an active cellist in Southern California.

Delusional Paths is a setting of five Stephen Crane poems concerned with paths and destinations. Tom says, "Here paths taken lead to unexpected places. Carefully considered goals prove to be illusive, unattainable, or not what they seemed. Expectations of preconceived outcomes prove futile, naively optimistic, foolhardy, or at best unrealistic. Crane addresses our common delusions with the warmth of shared experience and with humor."

American Realist writer and poet Stephen Crane (1871-1900) is generally recognized as one of the most innovative writers of his generation.

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More about Volti:

Volti's twenty professional singers, under the direction of founder and Artistic Director Robert Geary, are dedicated to the discovery, creation, and performance of new vocal music. The ensemble's mission is to foster and showcase contemporary American music and composers, and to introduce contemporary vocal music from around the world to local audiences. The group has commissioned more than 70 new works, by emerging and established composers.

Hailed by San Francisco Classical Voice as “possibly the finest collection of chamber singers in the country,” Volti boasts a 32-year record of exploring some of the most imaginative and innovative repertoire yet composed. Composers seek opportunities to partner with Volti, whose musicians are known for their sheer technical brilliance as well as their vibrant, passionate sound. Nationally recognized as a pioneer in new vocal music, Volti is the first and only ensemble to have won the ASCAP/Chorus America Award for Adventurous Programming of Contemporary Music six times, a testament to the fresh perspective and new voices the group brings to life.

Art is redefined in every generation by the best and the brightest, artists who are paying attention to the world around them. Volti seeks composers who explore timely issues of the modern human experience. At a Volti concert you might hear music addressing such topics as social justice, responsible citizenship, diverse conceptions of God/spirit, political strife, class distinctions, and internet culture. Volti explores the nexus between poetry and sound, the translation of inspiration to creation, the evocative power of an artist compelled to express this thing, at this time, in this way. At its best, it’s the aural equivalent of a sunspot -- an explosion of energy, a flash of brilliance, a glimpse of some eternal truth seen in a new and breathtaking way.

Attending a Volti concert is like visiting a museum of modern art, stimulating the mind, the imagination and the heart.

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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 the past thirty-five years has led him and his choirs to national and international prominence.

Geary has conducted first performances of more than 100 compositions. He has conducted in dozens of countries, served as a clinician and guest conductor in the US, Finland, Denmark and Singapore, and his choirs have been recognized in the United States by invitations to perform for the national conferences of Chorus America, the American Choral Directors Association, the Organization of American Kodaly Educators, and the College Music Society. His choirs can be heard on recordings with many labels including Other Minds, Harmonia Mundi, Koch International, Swiss International Radio, Ablaze, and Innova. They have performed for radio, television, opera, symphony and music festivals nationally and internationally. Geary also has prepared his choirs for some of the world’s leading conductors, including Helmuth Rilling, Robert Shaw, Kurt Herbert Adler, Edo de Waart, Krzysztof Penderecki, Herbert Blomstedt, Dale Warland, Kent Nagano and Michael Tilson Thomas.

Recipient of awards for Outstanding Conductorial Achievement in Giessen, Germany, and Artistic Interpretation from the Miedzyzdroje Festival in Poland, Geary has also received the KDFC Music Educator of the Year Award and the Lois B. Rawlings Educational Inspiration Award.

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