

battle hymns

By Pulitzer Prize Winning Composer David Lang Has West Coast Premiere in April, 2013

**Arts Organizations Volti & San Francisco Choral Society in Joint Production,
featuring the Philadelphia-based Leah Stein Dance Company
and Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir**

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The must-see event of the spring arts season is a major collaboration between four performing arts groups, commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Civil War with performances of Pulitzer Prize-winning composer [David Lang's](#) masterful choral and dance piece *battle hymns*. Commissioned and premiered in Philadelphia in 2009, *battle hymns* has never been performed since, owing to its unusual and complex demands.

The Performance Schedule

Friday, April 26, 2013 at 8pm
Saturday, April 27, 2013 at 3pm and 8pm
Sunday, April 28 at 3pm, 2013
Kezar Pavilion, 755 Stanyan Street in San Francisco
Tickets: City Box Office: 415-392-4400 / www.cityboxoffice.com

More than 150 choral singers will be costumed and choreographed while they sing, joined by a group of modern dancers who dance with and among the singers, in a powerful piece of music by one of today's most important composers. This meditation on mankind's relationship with war will be presented in the site-specific setting of Kezar Pavilion in Golden Gate Park. The audience will surround the singers and dancers in "courtside seating" -- no proscenium separating the audience from the performers, but a close physical connection to the music and dance.

The collaborative project includes the 20 professional singers of [Volti](#), San Francisco's cutting-edge new-music specialists, joined by more than 100 singers from the [San Francisco Choral Society](#), one of the most accomplished auditioned choirs in the Bay Area. The

[Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir](#) will be represented by 50 young singers from its Ensemble and Ancora choirs. All three singing groups are conducted by [Robert Geary](#).

Creating the visual component is the original choreographer, [Leah Stein](#), who brings her dance troupe from Philadelphia to recreate *battle hymns* with the San Francisco singers. Stein was one of the co-commissioners of the piece, along with the Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia.

About this project, David Lang says:

battle hymns is the largest choral work I have ever written, on a topic that is unfortunately timely and for me very heartfelt, but few people know that it exists ... I am very flattered that Volti is interested in picking my piece up and I am very eager to hear what they do with it. And I am very eager to imagine what will happen to it after that.

“This is a major work by one of today’s most influential and fascinating composers,” says Artistic Director Robert Geary. “I saw the premiere of the piece in Philadelphia in 2009 and have been working ever since to present the West Coast premiere – and only the second performance of the piece anywhere – here in San Francisco. Anyone who loves music or dance will be fascinated by this performance, as will anyone who ponders on what it is that makes mankind make war, generation after generation. The Civil War texts have a timeless resonance into the 21st century and beyond, and David Lang’s music is very much a contemporary statement,” Geary adds.

About the composer:

Passionate, prolific, and complicated, composer David Lang embodies the restless spirit of invention. Lang is at the same time deeply versed in the classical tradition and committed to music that resists categorization, constantly creating new forms.

In the words of The New Yorker, "With his winning of the Pulitzer Prize for *the little match girl passion* (one of the most original and moving scores of recent years), Lang, once a postminimalist enfant terrible, has solidified his standing as an American master."

Musical America's 2013 Composer of the Year and recipient of Carnegie Hall's Debs Composer's Chair for 2013-2014, and one of the co-founders of New York's Bang on a Can collective, Lang is one of America's most performed composers. Many of his works resemble each other only in the fierce intelligence and clarity of vision that inform their structures. His catalogue is extensive, and his opera, orchestra, choral, chamber and solo works are by turns ominous, ethereal, urgent, hypnotic, unsettling and very emotionally direct. Much of his work seeks to expand the definition of virtuosity in music — even the deceptively simple pieces can be fiendishly difficult to play and require incredible concentration by musicians and audiences. alik

Links:

www.VoltiSF.org

www.leahsteindance.org

www.SFChoral.org

www.piedmontchoirs.org

www.davidlangmusic.com

City Box Office: 415-392-4400/ Cityboxoffice.com Tickets: \$30 General / \$50 Reserved