

quarter notes

FALL 2012

A TALE OF TWO VENUES

This December, we're trying an experiment—performing in two very different venues. For those of you who regularly come to

our concerts, you already know St. Joseph the Worker Church, in Berkeley, with its beautiful stained-glass windows and high ceilings, its grace and serenity a meaningful setting for the masses and requiems we love to sing. On December 2, we will again perform there—this time with Mozart's "Great" *Mass in C minor*. We are ever grateful for our long, fruitful association with this lovely church.

But our second and third concerts—on December 15 and 16—will be at Hertz Hall, on the UC Berkeley campus. These will be our first performances in a professional concert hall, with concert acoustics and comfortable seating for more than 650 concertgoers! Cal's Music Department has only recently begun offering Hertz Hall to community performance groups, and we are honored to have this opportunity. So many of us have attended concerts at Hertz, never dreaming that we would be on that stage! We don't yet know whether this is the only time we'll sing at Hertz or whether we might do so again in the future, but we very much hope that you'll support our December adventure by coming to one of our Hertz Hall concerts and checking out how we look and sound in these very different digs.

With one venue for the BCCO traditionalists who look forward to the peaceful church setting, and another for those who want to try the concert hall acoustics and atmosphere, there will be ample seating and no good excuse for skipping our concert season. Better yet, come to both venues, see which you prefer! —Karen Davison, Board President

HERTZ HALL is on the UC Berkeley campus, near Bancroft and College. Parking and transit info at: www.calperformances.org/visit/venues



Arlene conducting Poulenc's Gloria, Dec. 2005 PHOTO: PATRICIA POWERS-RISIUS

BCCO'S MUSIC DIRECTOR, 1988–2011

ARLENE SAGAN 1928–2012

BCCO into the vibrant community resource it is today. Arlene generously shared her knowledge, creative energy, and joyful love of music with everyone who sang or played under her direction. Her special genius made an amazing difference in our lives, helping us not only to understand the chords and musical structure of the great choral works but also to discover the deeper meaning that great music can convey. Her enthusiastic commitment to building a true community of singers, orchestral musicians, and local composers will always be part of her legacy.

Arlene was an extraordinary person who lived her vision and contributed immeasurably to the community.

— Mary Rogier, BCCO Board member

— Join Arlene's family and friends in an evening celebration of her life and musical legacy:

Saturday, November 3, at 5 PM,
at St. John's Presbyterian Church,
2727 College Avenue, Berkeley
A reception will follow. All are welcome.

**INSIDE BCCO:
AN INTERVIEW WITH TENOR**

RHISHIKESH LIMAYE

In Indian classical music, the drone of a *tanpura* defines the tonic. For tenor Rhishikesh Limaye, who learned to play *tabla* (Indian drums) and *bansuri* (bamboo flute), Western classical music is not always so predictable.

“I’m always looking for the tonic,” he says. “And it keeps shifting. But it’s there most of the time.”

Rishi, as he is known, joined BCCO last year to learn to read music better and to have the opportunity to sing. He came to Berkeley six years ago from Mumbai, India, to study engineering at UC Berkeley, where he got a master’s degree. His family instilled a love of music—his mother learned classical Indian singing, and his maternal grandfather played *tabla*. But he had little formal training besides studying *tabla* in high school and *bansuri* in college in Mumbai. (One flute is in E, one in F, and one is between E and F. “It doesn’t matter as long as everyone agrees on one tonic,” he says.) He can’t read music fluently, but says he has a pretty good ear, which helps him to learn the music.

Just four years ago, Rishi heard a symphony live for the first time—Mozart’s *Symphony no. 41 in C major* (“Jupiter”), conducted by Kent Nagano, former Berkeley Symphony music director. And he found other musical treasures in Berkeley and the Bay Area. At Cal, he took an introduction to music course to learn how to sight-read. He felt he was no singer, but thought he’d like to try singing in a chorus. A friend



who sings in Chora Nova, a Berkeley-based chorus, suggested BCCO. Then a group of young classical music fans who find each other through meetup.com decided to attend BCCO’s concert in the spring of 2011 to hear the Brahms *Requiem*.

Rishi joined BCCO at the same time Ming Luke took over as music director, and he is delighted that there’s a lot going on, such as the Young Composer Competition (YCC). He loves the openness and the inclusive spirit, and the fact that singers represent all levels of ability.

At the age of 31, Rishi recognizes that he is a bit of an anomaly. “Not many look my age,” he says. But he thinks that’s a plus. His extended family all live in India—including his father, who’s also an engineer, his mother, and his only sibling, a sister who’s an M.D. Because he came here as a graduate student and works in a small Berkeley office of National Instruments, which is based in Austin, Texas, his community consists mostly of younger people. He likes being able to connect with people his parents’ age.

Rishi appreciates the opportunity to spend time learning a piece. Going to a concert, he says, “you hear it once, and just forget about it. You don’t realize the intricacies of it until you’re doing it for four months.”

Rishi is looking forward to learning Mozart’s *Mass in C minor*, but he has some apprehension about singing the works of the YCC finalists in the spring: With contemporary music, will he be able to find the tonic?

— Elaine Hooker Jackson, singer

ASK MING:

**IS A CONDUCTOR
REALLY NECESSARY?**

The art of conducting has to be one of the biggest enigmas in the music profession, starting with the fact that the conductor is the only person in the ensemble that does not actually (intentionally) make a sound!

For a long time, ensembles had no need of

the conductor, and even today the greatest orchestras can keep themselves together without help and obviously have no need for somebody to tell them when to play. So what is the actual purpose? Bernstein famously “conducted” a Haydn symphony with the Vienna Philharmonic with his eyebrows alone. Arthur Nikisch was said to mesmerize orchestras with his eyes. What is the purpose of the arm gestures if they don’t seem to have as much importance as we think?

While the basics of conducting involve patterns in the air, the role of the conductor is simply to inspire the musicians to perform at their best. It is said that a good orchestra or chorus can perform at 85 percent of its ability without a conductor. A conductor can add to that percentage . . . or detract from it. A good conductor can inspire with his words (during rehearsal), his arms, his face (in Bernstein’s case, his eyebrows), or with a certain *je ne sais quoi*. Sometimes what ensemble members need are entrance cues; sometimes they need to know how to phrase together; sometimes they need clean conducting, especially with new music; sometimes they need energy and personality from the podium to play their best—every group each day is different. The best conductors know from day to day, from ensemble to ensemble, how to conduct and rehearse. That is 90 percent of what makes a great conductor—the arms have very little to do with the actual art of conducting.

— Ming Luke, Music Director



PHOTO: ANGELA LANDRIGAN

ARLENE SAGAN JUNE 25, 1928–JULY 5, 2012

Music Director, Berkeley Community Chorus
& Orchestra, 1988–2011

Music starts in silence and ends in silence
—Arlene’s life mirrors a great masterwork of any great composer, with the “notes” of her life inspiring thousands along the way. Just like the great masterworks that we bring to life each rehearsal and performance, Arlene’s passion, commitment, and vision live on each time the Berkeley Community Chorus & Orchestra comes together to make music. As was true for Mozart, the greatest music comes from our hearts. There are no better ways to honor Arlene’s life than to be true to our music making, to not take any moment for granted, and to commit to allowing ourselves to make music when we have the chance.

—Ming Luke, Music Director



PHOTO: AMA TORRANCE

REMEMBERING ARLENE

by Nancy S. Wolfe, singer
and past President of BCCO

Arlene was a unique individual. She was brilliant, strong-willed, and genuine, and she had great integrity. She cared about connecting with others and bringing the joy of music to all she could reach. She worked tirelessly for BCCO, which she said was her family.

Arlene made each choral piece an occasion for exceptional learning—like being in class. She offered music classes every semester to help singers who had little or no music background. “If you need to be perfect, don’t be a musician,” she was fond of saying. Arlene shared the podium with outside music specialists in order to enrich the meaning of the work. We learned how Gregorian chants relate to the Duruflé *Requiem*, how to add drama to the Verdi *Requiem*. Arlene had always wanted to conduct Poulenc’s *Gloria*, and when that happened, in 2005, **continued >**



PHOTO: PATRICIA POWERS-RISIUS



PHOTO: PATRICIA POWERS-RISIUS



PHOTO: WILLIAM HOCKER

➔ **IN RECOGNITION OF ARLENE SAGAN**, our Music Director for 23 years, the Board of Directors is establishing the Arlene Sagan Memorial Fund. Through BCCO’s artistic endeavors, the Fund will foster values that Arlene held dear—community, education, mentoring, free concerts—while honoring her determination to challenge herself and the chorus to reach ever higher. For more details, please go to our web site, www.bcco.org.

➔ **Arlene had the uncanny ability to create gold from straw.** She gave BCCO countless hours of her life and, more important, she gave us her heart!

Liz Raymer, singer

➔ **I picture Arlene conducting** with her new big wings . . . waving the clouds back and forth, arranging the layers this way and that, experimenting with the play of light. Of course we can't know exactly what shape her new creations will take, but we can be sure they will be deeply considered, filled with passion, playfulness, mischievousness, and color (. . . thinking here of the colored markers she used to highlight her scores). Thank you, Arlene, for your insightful interpretations, for your generosity of spirit and convictions toward the inclusive. Here on earth we miss you, dear friend.

Robin Eschner, composer

➔ **I was profoundly affected by Arlene**—she welcomed me back to BCCO after my 27-year absence and created a wonderful and fulfilling musical experience that has become a central part of my life. I was continually astounded by the length, breadth, and depth of her knowledge of music and her ability to communicate and inspire our community. I am very sad to have lost someone so dear to so many—I will miss her.

Jarred Miyamoto-Mills, Board member

➔ **I will be forever grateful to Arlene** for her inclusivity, her conviction that all who wished to sing could have the opportunity to do so by participating in her “one-room schoolhouse.” Because of Arlene so many of us were able to reclaim our musical selves after decades of not singing. Arlene was a remarkable woman, brilliant, dedicated to community, passionate about music. I am grateful for having known her.

Johanna Clark, singer

➔ **Arlene was a devoted and passionate teacher** urging people to become independent, thinking musicians. For me, she was an historic link to the early Berkeley music scene, helping shape today's musical organizations. Hardly a rehearsal goes by that I don't use her teaching techniques.

Debra Golata, vocal coach

➔ **While saddened by Arlene's death,** we must remember it was the joy of making marvelous music that she wanted us to feel and embrace above all. At our concerts, Arlene expressed this joy at the podium, for while her baton may have lacked vigor, her singular smile and upward gaze had us musically reaching those celestial stars. We'll surely remember her at the concerts, and as Arlene used to say reassuringly, “Ad astra per aspera”—to the stars through difficulty.

Sheila Singleton, singer

REMEMBERING ARLENE, continued she lovingly and tenderly cradled the score in her hands. She had equal enthusiasm for modern works and helped the singers appreciate and understand modern pieces. Despite how much she loved the pieces she conducted, Arlene would change a word or two in the text if it offended her sensibilities.

Arlene loved the bass line, the foundation on which the chorus depends, and would have liked to be able to sing in the bass section. She loved to read poetry, her voice filled with intensity and drama. When the chamber singers performed in community outreach, such as in nursing homes, Arlene's tenderness in communicating with the patients or residents was touching. She always showed concern for the downtrodden and oppressed.

Arlene's mind, which was creative as well as brilliant, often seemed to go faster than her speech. She cared little about material things and even once forgot to bring her skirt to a concert performance. She was down to earth and thought nothing of bringing her socks that needed darning to a board meeting. But she had her favorite things: her face would light up when someone gave her a gift of chocolate.

To her admirers, the Berkeley Community Fund Individual Award, given in 2006, was a time for great celebration. Despite her accomplishments, Arlene was modest when her talents were recognized.

Arlene had hoped in her early years to go to medical school and become a pediatrician, but brought well-being to the community in her own way through her activities in music—with BCCO, with other groups she led, and with her private students.

Arlene never complained about her health and minimized any illness she had. As the aging process and chronic health problems began to take a toll on her, Arlene fought mightily to continue working. Although her body became frail and her eyesight was failing, her brain and her spirit yearned to express the music in her heart.

Not only has the community benefited from Arlene's work—free concerts of great music—but each person who has been part of Arlene's chorus family has grown individually from the relationship with her. Arlene will always be in the heart and spirit and memory of her BCCO family.



PHOTO: WILLIAM HOCKER

WELCOME TO OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Bcco is thrilled to welcome Kathy Cross back to the Board of Directors after a five-year absence. As former Vice President of Stores for Discovery Channel Stores, Kathy brings extensive business acumen to the Board. She serves on the Development, Finance, and Marketing Committees, and co-chairs the housefront activities at our concerts. Known for her problem-solving ability and her willingness to pitch in and get things done, Kathy comes from a musical family (her sister has played flute in the BCCO orchestra) and has sung alto with BCCO since 2000.

Marjorie Cox has been very busy since retiring several years ago from her legal work at the California Attorney General's Office. Not only did she embark on her first choral experience by becoming a tenor in BCCO (and begin taking banjo lessons), but she also serves on two community boards: the Downtown Berkeley YMCA (where she has



Marjorie Cox (left) and Kathy Cross (right) PHOTO: RUTH WHITE

been Chair for four years), and the Board of Commissioners for the Berkeley Housing Authority. We are delighted to put Marjorie to work for BCCO, knowing that she'll bring her sound judgment and legal expertise, as well as her Southern charm, humor, and maybe a few banjo tunes.

— Betty Pigford @ Pam Miller, Board members

While many people are familiar with the story of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Requiem*, which was left unfinished upon Mozart's death, far fewer are aware that Mozart left an even more ambitious vocal work—the "Great" *Mass in C minor* (K. 427)—incomplete as well.

If the tale of the *Requiem* is the stuff of great drama—as demonstrated in the 1984 Academy Award-winning film *Amadeus*—then the mystery of the *Mass in C minor* is its musical equivalent. After two hundred years of sleuthing and speculation, it remains unclear why Mozart composed the mass and why he never completed it.

One thing is clear: Mozart's works in a minor key were always written with great emotion, as heard in the pounding chords of the *Sonata in A minor*, written after the death of his mother, or in *Don Giovanni*, inspired by the shadow of his father. The *Mass in C minor* is an immense work of power and beauty that Mozart spent much care crafting. The "Et incarnatus est" was written especially for his wife, Costanza, and features intricate play between the orchestra and the virtuosic soprano solo, performed by Costanza herself at the premiere of a partial performance of the work. The opening "Kyrie," with its otherworldly yearning, is perhaps one of the most famous movements in classical music. Though the exact reason for the *Mass's* composition has not been clearly determined, the craft of the *Mass in C minor* shows Mozart at his deepest and most powerful.

Even more amazing are the complexity and the structure of the fugues in the *Mass*. Always enamored of Handel and Bach, Mozart also loved a great fugue. The first time he heard Bach's motets, he stood up and exclaimed, "Now that's something we can learn from!" And indeed, the fugues in the *Mass* rival the complexity of Bach's fugues, with the main motives dissected, staggered, and rearranged in myriad ways that are simply dizzying. That Mozart composed all his music in his head makes the creation of the fugal sections even more impressive. The last fugue is a double fugue, with two interwoven motives twisting their way through the various voices in the chorus before stampeding to a triumphant finale.

Despite never being completed, the "Great" *Mass in C minor* is a shining testament to Mozart's compositional powers. From the impossibly brilliant fugues to the unabashedly direct emotions and the clarity of Mozart's voice leading, the *Mass*—finished or not—is a work not to be missed!

—Ming Luke, Music Director, @ Derek Tam, Assistant Conductor

MOZART'S UNFINISHED "GREAT" MASS

HOW TO DONATE

BCCO seeks to raise funds from a variety of sources and to find new ways of meeting our financial needs. Several ways to donate are available:

ARLENE SAGAN MEMORIAL FUND

This new fund is in honor of our remarkable Music Director for 23 years. For a description, see the Tribute insert in this newsletter, or go to www.bcco.org.

CREDIT CARD

It's easy! Simply visit www.bcco.org/donate and follow the link.

BEQUESTS/ESTATE PLANNING

The recently established BCCO Legacy Society encourages members of our community to include BCCO in a will or living trust, or to make BCCO a beneficiary of a life insurance policy or retirement account. Please contact legacysociety@bcco.org for more information.

STOCK DONATIONS

With our brokerage account now in place, BCCO can receive donations of stock. Please contact BCCO's Chorus Manager for more information: manager@bcco.org

CHECKS AND CASH ARE ALWAYS WELCOME.

We remain ever grateful for your support. BCCO, P.O. Box 310, Berkeley, CA 94701

BERKELEY COMMUNITY CHORUS & ORCHESTRA

P.O. BOX 310 BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94701-0310

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT ORG.

U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

BERKELEY, CA

PERMIT NO. 778

HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE:

- **TRIBUTE TO ARLENE SAGAN (1928–2012)**
- **HERTZ HALL, HERE WE COME!**
- **MOZART!**

DAMAS VINEYARDS— OFFICIAL WINE SPONSOR OF BCCO

Damas Vineyards, located in Amador County, is now the official wine sponsor of BCCO, our first such sponsor. Damas wines have won numerous medals in California wine competitions, including a Double Gold at the 2012 San Francisco International Wine competition. Proprietors Mara Feeney and Deborah Grady will be pouring from their wine selections at our next public celebration. For more information, visit www.damasvineyards.com.

Linda Morris, Board member

→ *BCCO gratefully acknowledges the continued financial assistance of the City of Berkeley and the Alameda County Arts Commission.*

Quarter Notes is the newsletter of the Berkeley Community Chorus & Orchestra (BCCO), a community arts group that presents free concerts of great choral music. Information at (510) 433-9599 or www.bcco.org.

NEWSLETTER DESIGN BY KRIS KARGO

Jennifer Paulino, *soprano*
Megan Berti, *mezzo-soprano*
J. Raymond Meyers, *tenor*
Igor Vieira, *baritone*

GREAT MASS IN C MINOR

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, K. 427



St. Joseph the Worker Church

1640 Addison Street, Berkeley

December 2, Sunday, 4:30 pm

Hertz Hall, UC Berkeley campus

near Bancroft and College

Parking & public transit info:

www.calperformances.org/visit/venues

December 15, Saturday, 8:00 pm

December 16, Sunday, 4:30 pm

All concerts are FREE.
Donations are appreciated (\$5–\$20 suggested).

All concerts are wheelchair accessible.
More information at www.bcco.org

BERKELEY COMMUNITY CHORUS & ORCHESTRA

MING LUKE, MUSIC DIRECTOR