

# quarter notes

FALL 2013

## BCCO ON TOUR: BUDAPEST TO PRAGUE

What better way to learn about a composer and a piece than by experiencing the environment where the work was created? That's what BCCO Music Director Ming Luke said he had in mind as he led nearly half the chorus members on an international tour in June. "There's something special and unique about singing Dvořák in the same hall where his works were premiered, walking down the streets that he walked, and experiencing a new culture that opens one up to his life and his compositions," Luke said.

With the help of a number of people, notably tour organizer extraordinaire and alto Linda Berti, BCCO took

*To read an engaging article about BCCO's Central European tour by Tom Clark, an ardent fan and member of our honorary advisory board, go to <http://www.bcco.org/europe-tour-tom-clark>.*

Mozart's *Mass in C minor* and Dvořák's *Requiem Mass* to appreciative audiences in four Central European cities—Budapest and neighboring Gödöllő, Bratislava, and Prague.

"The outstanding impression I took away was the extraordinarily warm audiences we had for all four concerts, in cities known for centuries to have had the very best composers composing there and the very best musicians playing there," said tenor Sherry Smith.

BCCO singers seemed unanimous about the Dvořák performance in the hall where Dvořák himself first conducted the Czech Philharmonic in 1886: "For me the highlight of the whole tour was singing the Dvořák *Requiem*, in the beautiful Dvořák Hall of the Rudolfinum. Not only was Dvořák a hometown favorite, but the *Requiem* had been selected and performed at the funeral of (former Czech President) Václav Havel. It was a very special piece. We had to be good. Then, when Ming put down his baton, the audience applauded and *applauded*. We did it!" said soprano Barbara Dilts.

BCCO President Linda Morris felt the same: "For the grand moments, nothing is likely to ever surpass the sheer joy of our singing the Dvořák *Requiem* as we sang it. I have never seen an audience so rapt, so still, so attentive (or from the chorus looking out, so large). Singing as a tenor, hearing our fantastic altos singing literally over our heads, like angels. It still sends shivers through me," she said.



Poster for the Prague concert

One of the highlights for many singers was the opportunity to observe Ming's talents up close every day. For alto Denise Hart, this included watching Ming work with the new orchestras and bringing out the very best in them, in a very short time, and not speaking

*continued on page 3*

### NOTES FROM THE BOARD:

I am writing as the newly elected president of BCCO's Board of Directors. I'm honored to be able to serve the chorus this way because BCCO has become such a major part of my life since I retired from UC Davis in 2006. Nothing I've ever experienced can compare with learning such beautiful music, joining my voice with other singers, and performing great music for our audience of friends and family. This experience brings us back year after year to sing with BCCO.

Community choruses, so the research shows, are full of good citizens, and BCCO is no exception. In an attempt to get to understand more fully just who we are as individuals, we conducted a survey last spring of the chorus. As most of you know, our organization runs almost exclusively on volunteer power, so we asked chorus members to indicate on the survey what other volunteer work they do. The results were extraordinary, from my perspective. Just to give you an idea of the range of other community activities our chorus members are engaged in, here's a sampling of the answers we received.

Many members are actively involved in religious organizations—Christian, Jewish, and Buddhist—and a number of chorus members *continued on page 3*

### FALL CONCERT SERIES:

**NOVEMBER 16, Saturday, 8:00 pm**  
**NOVEMBER 22, Friday, 8:00 pm**  
**NOVEMBER 24, Sunday, 4:30 pm**

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

*A new arrangement of An die Musik has been partially funded by The Zellerbach Family Foundation.*



## BCCO HEADS TO BING CONCERT HALL, STANFORD UNIVERSITY

bcco is delighted to be performing Mahler's *Symphony No. 2* ("Resurrection") in November under the direction of Jindong Cai and with the Stanford Symphony Orchestra. The concert will be part of the Stanford Symphony Orchestra: Masterwork Series, and will be held at the new Bing Concert Hall on the Stanford campus. Opened in 2013, the hall has been hailed as a "jewel box of a concert hall," for performers and audiences alike.

"The Bing," as it is now called, offers unusual "vineyard" seating, with 842 vertically-steep seats ringing the stage, creating a very intimate feel and providing excellent sight lines from every seat. The seats themselves are wide and comfortable, with plenty of legroom.

The all-important acoustics were designed by Yasuhisa Toyota, who also designed the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, known for its warm and extremely clear sound. Reviewers have described the Bing's acoustics as having "sonic vividness" and sound that is "bright, warm, fizzy, alive."

We hope that many of our loyal fans will make the trip to Palo Alto to share this exciting opportunity with us. From Berkeley, the Bing is about an hour's drive. The venue offers free parking and wheelchair accessibility. Bing Concert Hall is located at 325 Lasuen St., Stanford.

For more information about Bing Hall: <http://live.stanford.edu/bingconcerthall>

For directions and parking information: <http://live.stanford.edu/Venues/parkingmapsdirections>

**The concerts will be at Bing Hall on  
Friday, November 15, at 7:30 pm,  
and Sunday, November 17, at 2:30 pm.**

Tickets are \$20 for general admission, \$10 for students, \$15 for seniors, and free for Stanford students with a Stanford ID. —Pam Miller

Never before performed by bcco, Gustav Mahler's *Resurrection Symphony* is a sprawling eighty-minute work in which the chorus appears only in the last movement. Just like Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, this work would have only a slim chance of being programmed in the regular season since the chorus is so very shortly featured. However, bcco has been given the honor of joining Stanford Symphony's season as the invited chorus to provide life for this gargantuan work.

Mahler's fame during his lifetime was firmly rooted in his conducting and music director skills; indeed, when he took a draft of the first movement of the *Resurrection Symphony* to the great conductor Hans von Bülow, von Bülow clasped his hands on his ears and stated, "If that is still music then I do not understand a single thing about music!" Mahler almost gave up composition after this meeting, but spent a few years continuing to work on this grand symphony. Mahler hadn't decided how to end the symphony, but the work came full circle when von Bülow passed away and Mahler immediately knew how to end the work. In Mahler's words:

"5th movement. We again confront all the dreadful questions and the mood of the end of the first movement. The end of all living things has come. The Last Judgment is announced and the ultimate terror of this Day of Days has arrived. The earth quakes, the graves burst open, the dead rise and stride hither in endless procession. Our senses fail us and all consciousness fades away at the approach of the eternal Spirit. The 'Great Summons' resounds: the trumpets of the apocalypse call. Softly there sounds a choir of saints and heavenly creatures: 'Rise again, yes, thou shalt rise again.' And the glory of God appears. All is still and blissful. And behold: there is no judgment; there are no sinners, no righteous ones, no great and no humble—there is no punishment and no reward! An almighty love shines through us with blessed knowing and being." —Ming Luke

## GUSTAV MAHLER'S RESURRECTION SYMPHONY

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## NOTES FROM MING:

### AN DIE MUSIK

#### —TO MUSIC!

It's amazing what special meaning we give to simple vibrations traveling through air. Whether created by friction between sticky bow hair and a string, breath through a tube, or air forced past two tiny muscles in our throat, over centuries these sound waves—which seem to affect all that hear them—have had special meaning and purpose assigned to them by poets, philosophers, and all of humankind. Our fall concert set celebrates music that celebrates music, and it features Vaughan Williams's lush and gorgeous *Serenade to Music*, Charles Gounod's *St. Cecilia Mass*, and Franz Schubert's *An die Musik*. In addition, we will repeat Michael Schachter's *Oseh Shalom Bimromav* (the winner of this spring's Young Composer Competition) and premiere a special new arrangement of *An die Musik*.

Vaughan Williams's beautiful *Serenade to Music* is a setting of a short section of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* that praises music and the music of the spheres. Vaughan Williams wrote it for sixteen vocal soloists—the initials of the original singers are still written in the score, with an amusing note from Vaughan Williams that "If these soloists are not available, others may be engaged." This work is often done as a choral work, sometimes with soloists and sometimes not—we'll be doing the choral version without soloists.

St. Cecilia is the patron saint of music, and we'll be performing on St. Cecilia Day, on November 22nd! (Fun fact: when confirmed, I wanted to be named after the patron saint of music. However, the nun I asked apparently didn't know and said it was Malachi. So my confirmation name is Malachi.) Gounod's work firmly established his fame as a composer but is rarely performed. And, of course, Schubert's great work *An die Musik* will round out the program. Our baritone soloist will perform the original lied, but the chorus will perform a special new arrangement by composer Loretta Notareschi. I've had the pleasure of premiering several works by Loretta. I think that you'll enjoy her work! She's a wonderful vocal composer.

It was a long summer without rehearsals—it's been great to work with the chorus again. See you at the performances!



PHOTO: BILL HOCKER

*NOTES FROM THE BOARD, continued* volunteer with Ashby Village, an organization of seniors dedicated to helping people remain in their homes as they age. Choristers serve as writing coaches; some serve as coaches for youth sports. Well-known groups such as the Boy Scouts, the League of Women Voters, Habitat for Humanity, the Center for Independent Living, even the Daughters of Norway, are well supported by our members. One member participates in Chinese dragon boat racing, while another volunteers as a raptor observer. We have hospital volunteers, mental health group volunteers, women's homeless shelter volunteers, and a host of musical ensemble participants. And if a serious earthquake ever hits the area, BCCO "preparedness" volunteers will be there to help out. In short, people who sing in BCCO are firmly connected and committed to the larger Bay Area community. No wonder it's such a joy singing with this group.

—Linda Morris, Board President

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

BCCO is very lucky to welcome back to the Board of Directors Lisa Nelbach, who started singing with BCCO in 2002 and served on the Board from 2003–7.

A woman of many talents, including a terrific soprano voice, Lisa has had a variety of careers in education, music, and research. She currently works at Children's Hospital of Oakland Research Institute and at the Berkeley Zen Center.



Lisa is particularly adored for her willingness to jump into the fray, wherever she is needed. Within weeks of her election to the Board, Lisa agreed to become the organizer of our ad campaign, no small task.

Christian Fritze, another talented musician and new Board member, comes from a very musical family and is not only a terrific bass singer (and section leader), but also a wonderful cellist who has occasionally played in our orchestra. With a Ph.D. in molecular genetics, Christian has spent much of his professional life working in the life sciences industry, moving from scientific work to the business side. Christian, like Lisa, brings an enthusiasm to whatever he does, and fortunately for us, he has generously offered to spend much of his Board time helping to lead our development team.

We are delighted to have two new members who have not only terrific musical talent, but very high-level skills to share with BCCO. —Pam Miller

PHOTOS: RUTH WHITE



BCCO's concert in St. Stephen's Basilica, Budapest, Hungary PHOTO: BILL HOCKER

magnificent concert in this full and beautiful hall which drew a very long sustained applause, rising thunderously when Ming asked the chorus to stand. It was pretty clear that both the orchestra and the Prague choristers had gained immense respect for the job Ming did conducting us," he said. After the concert, a shy, young trumpet player got on the bus and asked, "Where is Mr. Ming?" He walked down the aisle to hug Ming and to thank him, to applause and not a few tears, Morris reported.

Deborah Kropp, a soprano section leader, added that the effects of the trip will linger and extend to the whole chorus. "Camaraderie among choir members works wonders toward unifying the choral sound and message. After experiencing what became a unity in purpose and artistic expression among the choristers, I look forward to singing together again this fall," she said.

Hart felt that the experience was beneficial for the whole chorus: "The opportunity to meet and talk to many singers outside my section, the increased confidence: all these things are beneficial to the chorus. *Just sing*, as Ming so often exhorts us," she said.

Morris agrees that those who were part of the tour bring back to the chorus as a whole "the newfound sense of ourselves as singers, as a community, as a group that can take on major new undertakings and emerge stronger for it . . . We could never have done it if we had not learned this great music together, and performed it in Berkeley together in front of our home audience—this is who we are—the first 'C' in BCCO. In Europe, we were singing for the whole chorus, and we are deeply indebted to the whole chorus." —Elaine Jackson

*continued from page 1* their languages. Bass Richard Colton said he had been concerned during the first rehearsal in Prague with a new orchestra. "With a palpable sense of relief all around we proceeded to rehearse, choruses and orchestra, and then gave a

## TOUR CONCERT SCHEDULE:

**Royal Palace, Gödöllő (Hungary), JUNE 18**  
Mozart's *Mass in C minor*,  
with Gödöllő Symphony Orchestra  
and Gödöllő City Choir

**St. Stephen's Basilica, Budapest, JUNE 19**  
Mozart's *Mass in C minor*,  
with Gödöllő Symphony Orchestra  
and Gödöllő City Choir

**Reduta Hall, Bratislava (Slovakia), JUNE 22**  
Mozart's *Mass in C minor*,  
with Gödöllő Symphony Orchestra  
and Gödöllő City Choir

**Dvořák Hall, Prague, JUNE 24**  
Dvořák's *Requiem Mass*,  
with Chamber Orchestra Academy of Prague  
and Prague Chamber Chorus

Music Director: Ming Luke

Soloists: Carrie Hennessey, *soprano*  
Megan Berti, *mezzo-soprano*  
J. Raymond Meyers, *tenor*  
Igor Vieira, *baritone*

Accompanists: Derek Tam, *assistant conductor*  
Heather Pinkham, *accompanist*

*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](http://www.bcco.org).

DESIGN: KRIS KARGO

## NEW CONDUCTING APPRENTICE

# MEET MARY DOUGHERTY

She loves to cook, reads a ton, keeps squawky chickens in her backyard, plays in a funky band, helped start a mariachi class at a junior high school, and is a full-time teacher of basic musicianship to Berkeley school children in grades 3–12, a career that brings her into weekly contact with 50 percent of the entire Berkeley school population.

For some people, that might be more than enough to keep busy, but Mary Dougherty is no ordinary woman. She is also an accomplished violinist and has played in the BCCO orchestra. She was so impressed with Ming's conducting that she decided to learn more about choral conducting by signing on as BCCO's conducting apprentice for the 2013–14 season.

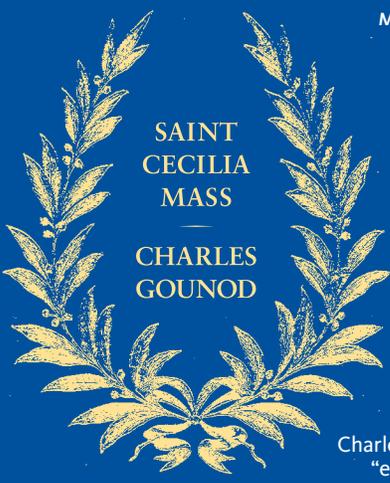
"His conducting is very expressive, but still clear and concise," says Mary. "And I enjoy the easy rapport he develops with large ensembles, quickly and with humor. On top of that, he is excellent at solving musical problems."



PHOTO: RUTH WHITE

Her personal goal? "I want to challenge myself to describe musical concepts without a musical instrument in my hand," she says. We are thrilled to have Mary working with BCCO. And for all you *Game of Thrones* or *Lemony Snicket* fans, you have a pal in Mary.

—Ruth White and Pam Miller



MING LUKE, MUSIC DIRECTOR  
Jennifer Paulino, *soprano*  
Steven Ziegler, *tenor*  
Igor Vieira, *baritone*

SAINT  
CECILIA  
MASS  
—  
CHARLES  
GOUNOD

Charles Gounod, *Messe Solennelle*  
"en l'honneur de Sainte Cécile"

Ralph Vaughan Williams, *Serenade to Music*  
Franz Schubert, D 547, *An die Musik*

THE WINNER OF THE YOUNG COMPOSER COMPETITION:  
Michael Schachter, *Oseh Shalom Bimromav*

St Joseph the Worker Church, 1640 Addison Street, Berkeley  
**November 16** Saturday, 8:00 pm  
**November 22** Friday, 8:00 pm  
**November 24** Sunday, 4:30 pm

Admission is free—Donations are appreciated.  
Concerts are wheelchair accessible. Information at [www.bcco.org](http://www.bcco.org)

## BERKELEY COMMUNITY CHORUS & ORCHESTRA

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### HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE:

- BUDAPEST, BRATISLAVA, AND PRAGUE!
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