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The Young Composer Competition:

In spring 2012, BCCO launched a Young Composer Competition that invited composers ages 40 and younger to write a short piece for chorus and orchestra. Entries came in from across the United States, and our panel of judges—composer John Adams (honorary judge); BCCO Music Director Ming Luke; composer and pianist Gabriela Lena Frank; composer, vocalist, and UC professor Ken Ueno; and BCCO singer and orchestra member Christian Fritze—selected five semi-finalists. The chorus then selected its own favorites, whose scores were combined with the judges' to narrow the field to three finalists—all of whom are in their mid-twenties. BCCO is flying each composer in to work with the chorus for one rehearsal, and two of them will be available to return for the first weekend of our concert series, May 3 and 5. Each finalist will receive \$500 and a recording of his performed composition. The composer of the winning composition will receive an additional \$500, and his piece will be performed again in our Fall 2013 concert series.

If you attend either our May 3 or May 5 concert, **you can help pick the winning composition!** Audience votes will combine with those of the judges, Ming, the chorus, and the orchestra to determine the winner. Come be part of this exciting process!

Here's some background about these extraordinary young composers and their compositions.

Costas Dafnis, *Carmen Vocis*

TEXT BY WILLIAM AIKIN



Costas was born in Athens, Greece, and has a BA in music composition. He has received commissions from various ensembles, including the Guam Symphony Society, Voces Capituli, and the Michigan State Honors Choir. He is a founding member of Noisi Paintn, a collaborative group of composers interested in progressive sound. He has received awards from New Music USA, the International Music Prize, and the American Prize in Composition. According to his web

site, when Costa is not composing “he spends his time playing mandolin poorly and burying himself in all of the strange, obscure poetry he pretends to like.”

Costas says that “*Carmen Vocis* is a poetic odyssey through the science of the human voice. In mist, she gives the spark: ‘My Soul is in my Breath’ (the first line of the piece). Sustained drones are punctuated by respiring swells of energy and motion. As the mist clears, these bright flourishes relax into a freely lilting dance. Understanding replaces naïveté. Gathering our tools and accepting the charge to use them we declare, ‘I am in my Breath and in my Voice, and all my countrymen will hear me and understand.’ ”

Learn more about Costas and hear some of his compositions at www.costasdafnis.com.

Michael Schachter, *Oseh Shalom Bimromav*

FROM THE JEWISH LITURGY



Growing up, Mike studied classical piano, jazz piano, and composition. He received his BA in music from Harvard University, where he studied composition and orchestration. After graduating, he traveled to Chennai, India, where he studied Karnatic music, the classical tradition of South India, and worked with his wife at an NGO that combats human trafficking. He is currently a PhD student in music theory and composition at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. He is passionate about teaching music, and some of his main musical influences (other than classical) are jazz, stride, American bluegrass, Renaissance choral, Jewish liturgical, and South Indian classical music.

Mike comments that “the text of *Oseh Shalom Bimromav* is a well-known Hebrew prayer from the Jewish liturgy. It is recited in several different places during a typical *Shabbat* (Sabbath) service, but it most poignantly concludes the Mourner’s *Kaddish*, a prayer used for remembrance of those who have passed on. . . . To me, its great expressive power comes from its profundity through simplicity and directness, qualities I tried to preserve in my musical rendering.”

Learn more about Mike and hear some of his compositions at www.michaelschachter.com

Keane Southard, *A Day of Sunshine*

TEXT BY HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

Keane received his MM in composition at the University of Colorado—Boulder. As an undergraduate, he combined his double major in music



composition and music theory with a minor in English literature. His compositions have been performed by a variety of ensembles, including the Cleveland Chamber Symphony, Tesla Quartet, and Ars Nova Singers. He has received many awards for his music, including the Lee Goldstein Composition Award from Baldwin-Wallace College, the Longfellow Chorus International Composers Cantata Competition, and the Charles B. Olson Young Composer Award. He is currently spending nine months in Brazil as a Fulbright scholar researching music education, particularly the El Sistema–inspired programs of Brazil.

Keane’s composition was originally the second of a three-movement cantata of the same name. It is “entirely a song of thanks for being alive and the gift of life in the beauty of the natural world. Since moving to Boulder, Colorado, in the middle of working on this piece, the amazing imagery and lines of poetry in this poem have taken on special meaning for me. I will now always associate the lines ‘Whose steep sierra far uplifts,/Its craggy summits white with drifts’ with hiking in Rocky Mountain National Park and being amongst some of the most beautiful natural creations the earth has made. . . I hope that when hearing my setting of (the final lines of the poem) listeners will feel like they are standing on the top of a mountain looking over the world, as if the wind would lift them off their feet and sweep them back into being a real part of the beautiful natural world that we came from.” Learn more about Keane and hear some of his compositions at keanesouthard.instantencore.com

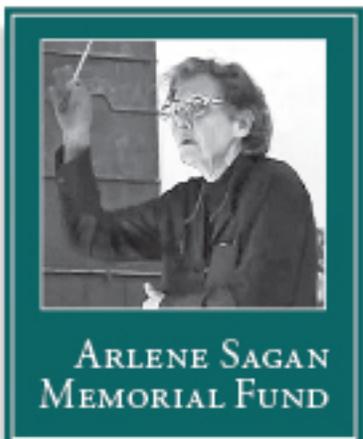
—Linda Morris and Karen Davison

The ASMF Helps Reestablish Berkeley High Choral Program

A chorus is blossoming at Berkeley High School, thanks to funds raised for the [Arlene Sagan Memorial Fund](#) (ASMF). Launched to honor BCCO’s beloved, late Music Director, who led BCCO from 1988–2011, the fund has already raised \$13,500 from generous donors.

Knowing that Arlene was both deeply committed to creating opportunities for everyone to sing and dismayed by cutbacks in music education, the BCCO Board voted to make the first ASMF project a new choral group at Berkeley High. In collaboration with the school district and Berkeley High’s music faculty, BCCO’s assistant conductor Derek Tam leads a group of 20 highly motivated students who can be found twice a week—at 7 a.m.—practicing vocal exercises as well as working on a repertoire ranging from American folk songs and

The Young Composer Competition has been fully funded by Meyer Sound, the Connemara Fund, Bennett Markel, The Fairy Godmother Society, and an anonymous donor. BCCO is grateful for their support of new music by young composers.



spirituals to Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody." Their efforts will culminate in a concert in early May in conjunction with the UC Berkeley University Chorus. They will also perform at our May 3rd concert.

BCCO plans to use the ASMF to support other outreach projects, which may include mentoring aspiring conductors, continued collaborations with public schools, giving young orchestra players the opportunity to perform alongside professional musicians, sponsoring choral composition competitions, and more.

None of this work would be possible without the generosity of our supporters. Thank you.

—Derek Tam, Mary Rogier, Betty Pigford, & Pam Miller

MING LUKE, MUSIC DIRECTOR
Carrie Hennessey, *mezzo-soprano*
Igor Vieira, *baritone*

Maurice Duruflé, *Requiem*, OP. 9

DURUFLÉ REQUIEM

Young Composer Competition Finalists:
Costas Dafnis, **CARMEN VOCIS**
Michael Schachter, **OSEH SHALOM BIMROMAV**
Keane Southard, **A DAY OF SUNSHINE**

St Joseph the Worker Church, 1640 Addison Street, Berkeley
May 3, Friday, 8:00 pm
May 5, Sunday, 4:30 pm
May 12, Sunday, 4:30 pm

Admission is FREE — Donations are appreciated.
Concerts are wheelchair accessible.
Information at www.bcco.org

NOTES FROM MING:

The Duruflé Requiem

The way that a composer sets text is very telling of his or her view of the text. This upcoming concert is exciting because of the unique settings of each of the respective texts, especially Duruflé's setting of the requiem Mass. Using traditional Gregorian chant and letting its natural flow dictate the rhythms in each of the various movements,

the Duruflé *Requiem* stands as one of the more individual settings. Whereas Verdi elongated the terrifying aspects of the requiem text, Mozart set a desolate requiem, and Brahms set a requiem to *comfort* the living, Duruflé removed most of the negative aspects of the requiem Mass. He set it as more of a Catholic rite, a beautiful setting focusing on the redeeming eternal light and the everlasting rest, rather than a depiction of destruction and terror. Immersed in performing sacred music his entire life, Duruflé allowed only fourteen pieces to be published. The perfection of craft in the *Requiem*, Duruflé's ninth published work (Opus 9), is evidence of the energy he devoted to this inspiring work.

—Ming Luke, Music Director

[Read more about the Duruflé Requiem >](#)

West Meets East(ern Europe, that is)

Imagine singing Dvořák's *Requiem*—in Dvořák Hall—in Prague!

About 100 members of our chorus will be doing just that and much more as part of our first continental European chorus tour, this June, under the direction of Music Director Ming Luke.

Our tour begins in Budapest, Hungary, where we'll sing Mozart's *Great Mass* in the gorgeous St. Stephen's Basilica and also in the Royal Palace in Gödöllő, outside Budapest, both performances accompanied by the Gödöllő Symphony Orchestra. Next we're on to Vienna for a master class with the conductor of the world-famous Vienna Boys Choir. In Bratislava, Slovakia, we'll again sing the *Great Mass*, this time in the famous Reduta Hall. Then we're on to Prague and Dvořák Hall, one of the oldest concert halls in Europe, noted for its excellent acoustics. On January 4, 1896, Dvořák conducted the Czech Philharmonic there in its first concert. We're thrilled to be performing the *Requiem* there, accompanied by a local orchestra.

Although we'll be moving fairly quickly from city to city, we'll also be sightseeing and enjoying the local culture and cuisine—and of course visiting the burial places of Beethoven, Mozart, and Brahms.

"We're very excited," says Linda Berti, BCCO Board member and tour leader. "I've done this several times with youth choirs, but I think it will be a very different experience with my fellow adult choristers—easier, I hope!"

—Pam Miller

Great Food and Conversation

Carolyn Lord, a Livermore-based artist, will find out just how quiet a good restaurant can be. By filling out the winning raffle ticket at BCCO's December 2012 concerts, Carolyn won a \$100 gift certificate to dine at Berkeley's sensational Comal. The restaurant is famous not only for its excellent Mexican food, but for its revolutionary sound (dampening) system, constructed by Meyer Sound, which happens to be the lead sponsor of our Young Composer Competition.

Congratulations to Carolyn, and thanks to Comal and to the 420 people who entered our contest by being willing to give us their e-mail addresses. We are happy to be saving trees, not to mention printing costs, by sending our newsletter to many of you by e-mail.

—Pam Miller

A Church Becomes A Concert Hall

Did you ever wonder what goes into converting St. Joe's sanctuary into our concert hall? It's a true herculean effort, involving many, many choristers, and it gives special meaning to the word "community" in Berkeley Community Chorus & Orchestra.

Teams of chorus members are on hand when the day's church activities are over. One team unearths dozens of folding chairs and music stands from the basement of the church buildings. Another team puts small strips of masking tape on the rug to mark the placement of the altar, chairs, flower stands, statues, and the like, all of which have to be moved out of the way for the concert, then returned at the end of the day to their exact places. Yet another team lugs our home-crafted heavy wooden risers out of the basement and brings them into the sanctuary. Team members put the pieces of the risers together, while others assemble metal risers. One person raises light poles and adjusts every light so it shines down on the chorus at just the right angle.

Other chorus members can be found crawling along the floor, taping down electrical cords that go to the lights, the sound systems, and the electronic keyboard. The sound engineer sets up an elaborate system of microphones that allows him to mix the concert recording that ultimately results in CDs we can enjoy months or year later. Once all the risers are up, another crew sets up the chairs, the music stands, and the stand lights for the orchestra.

At the opposite end of the church, another team stuffs envelopes into

To view BCCO
singers hard at work
converting the Church
to a concert hall and
back to a Church
[\[click here\]](#)

the concert programs while the “house front” team begins to greet audience members. A large team coordinates setting up the refreshment tables, where they will sell coffee, water, juice, and the many homemade desserts that chorus members contribute each concert.

Once the concert ends, the same teams go into action “striking” the set. Even if we are performing again the next day, everything has to be taken down and the church returned precisely to the state we found it in so that Mass can take place on Sunday morning. A “bucket brigade” of chorus members quickly passes all the folding chairs and music stands up a steep winding wooden stairway to the belfry. The cumbersome risers are taken apart and carried outside, where they are stacked to await the next concert. Statues and altars are returned to their original places, a team of three meticulously vacuums the entire church, while another group counts and double-counts the money taken in via donations and refreshments. About two hours after the concert ends, logistics manager Jarred Miyamoto-Mills has the satisfaction of turning out the lights and heading home—to prepare for doing it all again the next day.

—Linda Morris

Mark the Year 2016

Amazingly enough, in just three short years BCCO will celebrate its 50th anniversary. In 1966, Eugene Jones, an African American firefighter and bass opera singer, made good his dream of creating a chorus of non-auditioned singers and an orchestra drawn from the community that together would perform choral masterworks in free concerts for the general public. BCCO began as a Berkeley adult education class, and today’s singers are the happy beneficiaries of Eugene’s spark and tenacity. What will we do to mark the 50th anniversary? We’re not sure yet, but we know we have much to celebrate: a rich history with creative, brilliant music directors; the breadth of the repertoire we’ve sung; the innovative choral composition competitions we’ve sponsored; our conductor mentoring program; the vibrancy of our volunteer-led organization; over 200 singers who unflinchingly return season after season; our loyal audience; 50 years of free concerts; and most of all, the magic that takes place at every rehearsal. We’ll keep you up-to-date as our plans unfold. It will be a celebration you’ll want to be part of.

—Karen Davison, Board President

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 complete description, 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

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