



**ACCLAIMED RAGAZZI BOYS CHORUS
KICKS OFF THE HOLIDAY SEASON WITH
*CELEBRATIONS OF THE SEASON:
STORIES OF OUR IMMIGRANT HERITAGE***

**December 7 in Palo Alto
December 8 in San Francisco
December 15 in Burlingame**

PALO ALTO, CA (9 October 2019) — Driven by a curiosity into how American music has been influenced by early 20th century migrations, **Ragazzi Boys Chorus** explores the vast range of cultural music ideas in its holiday concert series *Celebrations of the Season: Stories of Our Immigrant Heritage*. Featuring music from Poland, Italy, Ireland, Mexico, China, and Africa, *Celebrations of the Season* will highlight each culture's role in contributing to the melting pot of American music. The concert will conclude with traditional carols and an invitation for the audience to join the boys in song. *Celebrations of the Season: Stories of Our Immigrant Heritage* will be presented at 2:00pm, Saturday, December 7 in Palo Alto; 4:00pm, Sunday, December 8 in San Francisco; and 4:00pm, Sunday, December 15 in Burlingame (venues/addresses listed below). For **Palo Alto and Burlingame** tickets (\$12-\$33) and information, visit www.ragazzi.org or call **650-342-8785**. For **San Francisco** tickets (\$0-\$25) and information, visit www.olderfirstconcerts.org or call **415-474-1608**.

With a repertoire full of music from around the globe, *Celebrations of the Season: Stories of Our Immigrant Heritage* will feature an assortment of traditional seasonal songs, including *Gloucestershire Wassail*, an English carol arranged by an American, and *Noël Nouvelet*, a French carol arranged by Sofia Söderberg.

Giovanni Gabrieli's *O Magnum Mysterium* and Alan Spedding's *Dormi Jesui* will give listeners the opportunity to explore Italian music ideas representative of both the Italian (Venetian) baroque period and of a more modern Italy.

Known for his creative expansion of several musical styles, German composer Hans Leo Hassler is credited for bringing the expressive and colorful musical style of the Italian Renaissance to Germany. His exuberant four-part a cappella setting of *Cantate Domino* will be performed by the Young Men's Ensemble.

Set to the Latin *Pulchra es amica mea* text from Song of Solomon, Ola Gjeilo's *Northern Lights* is inspired by the beauty of the aurora borealis as seen by the composer from his attic outside of Oslo, Norway.

Chinese composer Qu Xixian's *Pastoral* is a wistful, longing arrangement of an Eastern Mongolian sheepherding song. Characterizations of Mongolian pastoral songs include an abundance of ornamentation, falsetto, a long and continuously flowing melody with rich rhythmical variation, an extremely wide vocal range, and a free compositional form. These songs typically praise the beauty of the steep mountains and rivers, or the love for parents or close friends, expressing reflections on human destiny.

Also featured in the program is Portuguese-Mexican composer Gaspar Fernández's 17th century motet from Mexico, *Xicochi Xicochi*. Largely written in the Nahuatl language, this piece illustrates indigenous Nahuatl culture's influence on colonial Spanish music. The Nahuatl are a group of indigenous people in Mexico who used music for enjoyment, a way of passing on culture, of sharing an understanding of religion, and of making an emotional connection with the events of life.

Polish folk songs cover all aspects of daily human life – love, work, play, and rituals – and have been handed down orally from generation to generation for centuries. Centered on the topic of love, Polish folk song *Dwa serduszka* (*Two Hearts*) has a beautiful, haunting sound also pliable enough to be performed in different permutations. *Dwa serduszka* was most recently featured on the stunning score of *Cold War*, where Polish composer and conductor Marcin Masecki arranged melodies that blended elements of traditional Polish folk music and jazz – a sound few people will have heard before.

Sprinkled with Gaelic mythology, Joseph Campbell and Herbert Hughes's collaboration piece, *The Gartan Mother's Lullaby*, is a favorite of many Irish singers. From the beauty of the haunting flute opening to the sweeping piano accompaniment, the melody of this Irish folk lullaby has been described as one of the duo's "most perfect collaborations." Boys from both the Concert Group and Choral Scholars will perform Neil Ginsberg's charming arrangement of *The Gartan Mother's Lullaby*.

The sounds of Africa will be brought to life with the bright, rhythmic African spiritual, *Noel*. Composed by Todd Smith and arranged by Brad Holmes, *Noel* captures the feeling of a tribal celebration as it expresses the joy of the birth of Christ.

For the last part of the concert, audience members will be invited to join and sing-along to familiar Christmas carols like *O Come all Ye Faithful*, *Joy to the World*, *Deck the Halls*, *Ding Dong Merrily on High* and *O Christmas Tree*.

Peninsula-based **Ragazzi Boys Chorus** is one of the San Francisco Bay Area's premiere music and performance organizations for boys. Currently, there are more than 250 singers from over 100 schools in 30+ Bay Area communities participating in the program. Ragazzi means "boys" in Italian and is the term used in opera to refer to children's voices. Ragazzi has performed with the San Francisco Opera, San Francisco Symphony, Opera San Jose, West Bay Opera, Symphony Silicon Valley, Masterworks Chorale, and the Stanford University Symphonic Chorus among others. The group has toured throughout the United States and internationally. In 2000, Ragazzi was honored for its contribution to the San Francisco Symphony's triple Grammy Award-winning recording of Stravinsky's *Perséphone*, and has five CDs available: *A Holiday Collection*, *Canciones de Alabanza*, *Magnificat: My Spirit Rejoices*, *Splendors of the Italian Baroque*, and *I Dream A World*.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

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SHOWS: **2:00pm, Saturday, December 7**
First United Methodist Church of Palo Alto, 625 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto

4:00pm, Sunday, December 8
Old First Presbyterian Church, 1751 Sacramento Street, San Francisco

4:00pm Sunday, December 15
Burlingame United Methodist Church, 1443 Howard Avenue, Burlingame

TICKETS: **Palo Alto & Burlingame tickets** (**Advance:** \$30 Reserved Seat both Adult & Child, \$21 General Adult, \$12 Child / **Door:** \$33 Reserved Seat both Adult & Child, \$24 General Adult, \$15 Child) will be available online beginning November 1 at www.ragazzi.org or by calling (650) 342-8785.

San Francisco tickets (\$25 General Admission, \$20 Seniors, \$5 Full-Time Student with ID, FREE kids under 12) will be available at www.oldfirstconcerts.org or by calling (415) 474-1608.
All San Francisco ticket prices receive a \$2 discount when purchased online.

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PHOTOS: High resolution photos of **Ragazzi Boys Chorus** can be downloaded from:
<http://cbpr.co/press/celebrationsoftheseason/>

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