VOICES OF HOPE
light in the dark and hope in times of despair

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light in the dark and hope in times of despair

vox musica
Daniel Paulson, founder/music director
in concert with
the choral project
Daniel Hughes, founder/music director

4.22.17 Mission Santa Clara de Asis
4.23.17 Beatnik Studios
Welcome,

Daniel Hughes (conductor of The Choral Project) and I are honored you are here at this performance to take part in a concert that reminds us of our humanity, our interconnectedness, and our need for community. Daniel and I have long spoken about collaborating in concert. Time finally gave us the opportunity to do so, and we are thrilled at the combination of sounds and collective musical talent!

The program includes music about strife, hope, loss, and light. The concert opens with three prayers in three languages: Latin, Aramaic, and Hebrew; there is something powerful about the juxtaposition of three prayers from three different times, places, and spiritual points of view that all cry out to the Divine for hope and healing.

Other selections on the concert include songs about loss (Lajos Bárdos’s dramatic “Libera Me” and Jake Runestad’s heartbreaking “And So I Go On”), songs about spiritual transformation (Heather Razo’s setting of Rumi’s mystical “I Want To Sing” and Carlos Surimach’s setting of St. John of the Cross’s ecstatic “Noche Oscura del Alma”), and songs about light (Karin Rehnqvist’s shimmering “Ljusfälten” and Brian A. Schmidt’s celestial “Lux æterna.” The centerpiece of the program is the world premiere of “Refugees”: a work that Daniel Hughes wrote in response to much of the heart-crushing hate speech around immigrants that have flooded the online and broadcast communities. It is set to the incredible poetry of online poet Brian Bilston, and seeks to changes minds by changing one’s viewpoint. The concert concludes with “Hope for Resolution” by Paul Caldwell & Sean Ivory: a song about healing and possibility when things are darkest.

We hope that this concert changes you like it has changed us. More than ever, the world needs love. To that end, we sing to you with full hearts and souls, thankful that you are here to listen to our gifts.
Vox Musica was founded in 2006 in a niche of untapped potential in Sacramento’s budding classical music scene. Vox Musica is committed to excellence in performance of diverse and challenging choral literature for women’s voices and is dedicated to promoting new works, including many premiers and commissioned works. Through collaborations with composers, conductors, choirs and musicians from around the world, Vox Musica’s featured concert projects have included collected works from the 18th century Venetian Ospedali, eastern music from India, Persia, and Georgia, a concert project for Taiko Drums and Women’s Choir, a concert project for DJ and Women’s Choir, and more recently a concert project for looping violin and Women’s Choir. Vox Musica has released one compact disc, has been a featured artist on the prestigious Old First Concert Series in San Francisco and the American Choral Directors Association’s 2011 National Convention in Chicago, IL. More recently, Vox Musica was selected as the recipient of the 2015-16 American Society of Composers and Publishers (ASCAP) National Award for Adventurous Programming.

“This new vocal ensemble is a welcome addition to the Sacramento music scene and they proved it by delivering the goods on a smartly selected program.”
- Sacramento Bee, 2006.

“The recent arrival of the choir Vox Musica to the Sacramento music scene is also indicative of the talent moving into the area that highly values new music.”

“The singers and conductor Daniel Paulson threw down a breathtaking performance of my Three Nightsongs.”

“The ensemble breathed refreshing life into three contemporary arrangements of a 15th-century hymn ‘Es Ist Ein Ros Entsprungen’.”

Sarah Henshaw, soprano I
Anne-Marie Endres, soprano I
Stephanie Tomicich, soprano I
Paige Kelly, soprano II
Susanna Peeples, soprano II
Erin Brothers, soprano II
Veronica Tonus, alto I
Dana Daggett, alto I
Heather Razo, alto I
Ema Gluckmann, alto I
Mary Frank, alto II
Jennifer Crawford, alto II
Cat Fithian, alto II

WWW.VOXMUSICA.NET
Daniel Paulson, holds a Bachelor of Music degree in voice performance from Sacramento State University, and a Masters of Music Degree in Choral Conducting from the Three-Summer Masters of Music degree program at California State University, Los Angeles. Daniel is a student of Dr. William Belan, Professor Emeritus of Choral Studies at California State University, Los Angeles, and Donald Brinegar, Professor Emeritus of Choral Studies at Pasadena City College and adjunct Professor of Graduate Choral Conducting at the University of Southern California. His extended education includes studying early music with the Western Wind Ensemble, the King's Singers, and with the American Bach Soloists. In the Summer of 2014 he spent a month teaching vocal/choral music as a guest lecturer at the National University in Costa Rica. Hailed as an “astute programmer” and a conductor who can “coax urbane performances from his singers,” Daniel has been a featured conductor on the International Festival of New American Music in Sacramento, CA, the Old First Concert Series in San Francisco, CA, the Northern Zone Music Educators Association’s High School Honor Choir in Nevada, CA, and the American Choral Directors Association’s 2011 National Convention in Chicago, IL. Recently, he was awarded the American Society of Composers and Publishers (ASCAP) 2015-16 National Award for Adventurous Programming. Currently, he is Professor of Voice and Choral Music at Sacramento City College, is a resident artist with the Tahoe Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, and serves as Founder & Music Director for Vox Musica.

“Paulson has proved himself to be an astute programmer. He’s not afraid of taking chances.”

“Stunning performance of my Desertscape; Paulson made it come to life.”

“Paulson coaxed a multi-layered sound from the singers. This gave a transcendent feel to the music, whose mysterious dimensions were delicately revealed.”
The Choral Project, founded by Artistic Director Daniel Hughes in 1996, has been hailed by San José Mercury News as “a Bay Area jewel,” stating that “there is nothing subtle about why this is one of the best choirs you will ever hear.” This group of multi-talented singers has earned an outstanding reputation for performing high-level choral literature and bridging the gap between text and music, singer and spectator. The 54-voice ensemble has performed throughout the world in concert performances and choral festivals to great acclaim. They are widely recognized for presenting and preserving great works of choral literature from a wide range of traditions from around the world that express the region’s diversity. The group is equally committed to innovative and dramatic presentations in concert, as well as promoting the choral art through the premieres of new works.

Bachtrack.com described The Choral Project’s recent concert with The King’s Singers as “…a rare opportunity to hear two internationally renowned vocal ensembles share a unique body of work. Those of us in the audience experienced the rather odd, “other-worldly” musical sensation of almost too much perfection, if that seems possible.”

The Choral Project has released eight albums: The Cycle of Life, Of Christmastide, Americana, Water & Light, Winter, One is the All, Tell the World, and Yuletide, a festive collection of holiday favorites. These recordings can be found on choralproject.org, iTunes, CDBaby.com, and in the lobby of tonight’s venue.

**SOPRANO**
- Randy Chastain
- Carolyn Derwing
- Tiffanny Dzeryn
- Valerie England
- Roxane Fedrigo
- Andria Gaskell
- Sydney LaMorte
- Summer Latimer
- Ashley Lewis
- Emily Macway °
- Sarah Nitzen
- Denise Owen *
- Josephine Taubert
- Karen Werner
- Barbara West °

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- Kathy Armstrong
- Leah Drake *
- Yoshiko Fukui
- Nicki Kerns
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* Section Leader
° On leave
Daniel Hughes founded The Choral Project in 1996. He is in constant demand as a conductor, accompanist, coach and choral clinician. Hughes has directed sessions in Vocal Pedagogy and Conducting Technique for the American Choral Directors Association, the California Music Educators’ Association, and GALA Choruses. He has been a regular adjudicator for the California Golden State Choral Competitions, and has conducted honor choirs throughout the West Coast. He regularly conducts the San José Chamber Orchestra and The Choral Project in an annual winter-themed program. Other collaborations include international performances with well-known ensembles such as Costa Rica’s Café Chorale, and creative work with award-winning Broadway composer & lyricist Stephen Schwartz. His concert appearances include performances at Lincoln Center (New York City), Gusman Concert Hall (Miami), and Davies Symphony Hall (San Francisco).

Hughes began studying piano and composition at the age of four. He has extensive training in piano and voice, and holds a Master of Arts degree in Conducting. In addition to his awards with The Choral Project, he is the recipient of the 2013 Arts Council Silicon Valley Artist Laureate Award in the “On Stage” category for his ground-breaking contributions to the arts in Santa Clara County; a 2010 Silicon Valley Arts & Business Award; the 4th place award ~ Small Ensemble Category (35th International Choral Competition, Gorizia, Italy); the 2nd place award (ACDA National Student Conducting Competition); the Christina Cadena Memorial Accompanying Scholarship; and the California Arts Scholar Awards for piano and composition. He is an accomplished composer & arranger, and has his own choral series through Santa Barbara Music Publishing. Mr. Hughes's biography is featured in Who's Who in America. He maintains a private music studio in the Bay Area.

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I. PRAYERS

Spiritus Sanctus Vivificans
Hildegard von Bingen (1098–1179)

Avoonan dbishmaya (The Lord’s Prayer)
Ilyas Iliya (b1963)

Lo yisa goy
Shalom Altman (1911–1986),
arr. Joshua Palkki (b1982)

Paige Kelly, soloist

II. STRIFE

Noche Oscura del Alma
Carlos Surinach (1915–1997)

I Want To Sing
Heather Razo (b1988)

Summer C. Latimer, soloist

III. LOSS

Libera me
Lajos Bárdos (1899–1986)

And So I Go On
Jake Runestad (b1986)

IV. LIGHT

Ljusfälten (Fields of Light)
Karin Rehnqvist (b1957)

Lux æterna
Brian A. Schmidt (b1980)

Ödi, ödi (traditional Tamil song)
arr. Stephen Hatfield (b1956)

Marc Hughes & Matt Halverson, percussion

V. STRUGGLE

Refugees (World Premiere)
Daniel Hughes (b1968)

Ashely Lewis, soloist

VI. HOPE

Hope for Resolution
Paul Caldwell (b1963) & Sean Ivory (b1969)

Marc Hughes, percussion
Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179) was a great mystic and one of history’s most influential women. After taking the veil at age fifteen, she became famous for her prophetic, symbolic visions. Popes, emperors, kings, and archbishops throughout Europe would consult her on matters of state. But what she is known for today is the lyrical poetry she began writing in her forties, almost all of it set to music in simple plainchant. The range of her written work surpasses that of most of her male contemporaries and her music often attains an ecstasy that is seldom achieved in Old Roman or Gregorian chant. This short curriculum vitae from more than eight centuries ago scarcely scratches the surface of the life of the visionary prophetess named Hildegard of Bingen. She lived in a time when visions, interior meditation, and an intimate, personal relationship with God were the stresses of a devout life.

In this opening antiphon of Symphonia’s section devoted to the Holy Spirit, Hildegard offers swift, fulsome movement to convey the Spirit’s place, both rooted and rousing, as the source and sustainer of all created life.

*Spiritus sanctus vivificans*  
*vita movens omnia,*  
*et radix est in omni creatura*  
*ac omnia de inmunditia abluit,*  
*tergens crimina ac ungit vulnera,*  
*et sic est fulgens ac laudabilis vita,*  
*suscitans et resuscitans omnia.*

The Holy Spirit: living and life-giving,  
the life that’s all things moving,  
the root in all created being:  
of filth and muck it washes all things clean—  
out-scrubbing guilty staining, its balm our wounds  
constraining—and so its life with praise is shining,  
rousing and reviving all.

*Avoonan dbishmaya (The Lord’s Prayer)*  
Ilyas Iliya

“Avoonan dbishmaya” is a transcendant setting of “The Lord’s Prayer” in the original Aramaic by Bay Area composer Ilyas Iliya, original composed for the choral group Chanticleer. The composer writes:

“In the midst of quietness, a solitary voice emerges in supplication. Surrounded by reverberating resonances, the voice soars and cries out. The Space of matter and spirit comes nearer and benevolently cradles the person praying with compassion, while also protecting their solitude.

‘The Lord’s Prayer’ is perhaps on the most familiar of prayers, having been translated into every language. I chose to use Aramaic, the predominant language of Judea (539BC – 70 AD), and believed to be the language most often used by Jesus.”

avoonan dbishmaya  
yitqaddash shmakh  
teeleh malkootakh  
yeehe sevyonakh  
heykama dbishmaya af barsa  
hab lan laHma dsoonganan yawmana  
washvoq lan Hoveynan  
heykama daf Hnan  
shbaqnan lHayoveynan  
wlat3eelan linisyoonan

Our Father in heaven  
holy be Your name  
let come Your kingdom  
let be Your desire  
even as in heaven on earth  
give to us bread that we need daily  
have compassion to us our offenses  
even as we also have  
had compassion for our offenders  
let not us enter into forgetting
illa päsyan min beeshta
mittol dilakhhe malkoota
ooHeyla ooteshbooHta
l3alam 3almeen ämeen.

but part us from error
because Yours are dominion
and authority praises
from ages to ages. Amen.

Lo yisa goy

Shalom Altman, arr. Joshua Palkki

This song takes its text from Isaiah 2:4, and has long been a scripture used to a call to action towards global peace. The song was written by the Shalom Altman, a well-respected trailblazer in the musical world—specifically in the sacred Judaic music. Arranger Josh Palkki has set this song for treble choir and mixed choir, in dedication to the civilian causalities of the Iraq war.

Lo yisa goy el goy cherev.
Lo yil m’du od milchama

A nation shall not lift sword against nation
And they shall not learn war anymore

And ev’ry man ’neath his vine and fig tree shall live in peace and unafraid.
And into plowshares turn their swords, nations shall learn war no more

Noche Oscura del Alma

Carlos Surinach

This powerful work by Argentinian composer Carlos Surinach sets the mystical poem “Dark Night of the Soul,” written by St. John of the Cross. The poem is a “journey” into what he calls “The Dark Night,” in part because darkness represents the fact that the destination, God, is unknowable. Moreover, the path towards the unknowable can also be shrouded in darkness and mystery (and is unknown until we know it through experiencing it). Surinach’s setting of the poem leaves the listener in a state of bliss and wonder as it explores colors and shades—bright and dark—in its musical language. The result is one of joy, awe, ecstasy, and stillness.

En una noche oscura
con ansias en amores inflamada
¡Oh dichosa ventura!
sali sin ser notada
estando ya mi casa sosegada,
a oscuras y segura
por la secreta escala disfrazada,
¡Oh dichosa ventura!
a oscuras y en celada
estando ya mi casa sosegada.
En la noche dichosa
en secreto que nadie me veía
ni yo miraba cosa
sin otra luz y guía
sino la que en el corazón ardía.
Aquesta me guiaba
más cierto que la luz del mediodía
adonde me esperaba
quien yo bien me sabía
en sitio donde nadie aparecía.
¡Oh noche, que guiaste!
¡Oh noche amable más que la alborada!
¡Oh noche que juntaste
amado con amada,
amada en el amado transformada!

On a dark night,
With yearnings in enflamed love
Oh happy chance!
I left without being noticed
my house now being at rest
In darkness and secure
by the secret steps disguised
Oh happy chance!
In darkness and concealed
My house now being at rest
On the happy night,
In secret, for no one saw me,
Nor did I see anything,
Without other light or guide
Than that in my burning heart.
This guided me
More surely than the light of noonday
To where he was awaiting me
I knew him so well
In a place where no one appeared
Oh night that guided!
Oh night more lovely than the dawn!
Oh night that has united
the Lover with his belovèd,
transforming the belovèd in his Lover!
En mi pecho florido,
que entero para él solo se guardaba
allí quedó dormido
y yo le regalaba
y el ventalle de cedros aire daba.

El aire de la almena
cuando yo sus cabellos esparcía
con su mano serena y en mi cuello hería
y todos mis sentidos suspendía.

Quedéme y olvidéme
el rostro recliné sobre el amado;
cesó todo, y dejéme
dejando mi cuidado
entre las azucenas olvidado.

I Want To Sing

Heather Razo (b1988), composer, is pursuing dual Master of Fine Arts degrees in Collaborative Piano and Vocal Performance at Notre Dame de Namur University. She is a staff accompanist and vocal coach at Sacramento City College, maintains a private piano and voice studio, and can frequently be found collaborating on the piano in both the greater Sacramento area and the Bay Area. The inspiration for “I Want To Sing” came from the possibility of a “massed choir” piece as part of a Sacramento Choral Festival. Its original form was an SATB “Mixed Ensemble” composition; however, it was re-voiced and rearranged so it would have its premier as part of the VOX-SING project. The text by Sufi mystic Rumi references the prophet Mohammed’s flight from Mecca to Medina when the women of Medina came out onto their rooftops and sang and played music to welcome him into the city. The piece is in F Mixolydian, a mode closely related to F Major, and one which offers colorful chords to add to the exuberance conveyed in the text.

I want to sing like the birds sing
Not worrying about
who hears or what they think.
All religions, all this singing. One song.

Remember the lips
where this wind-breath originated
And let your note be clear.
Don’t try to end it. Be your note.
I’ll show you how it’s enough.

Go up to the roof at night
In the city of the soul.
Let everyone climb on their roofs
And sing their notes!
Sing, sing loud!

~ Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī (1207–1273)

Libera me

Lajos Bárdos

This dramatic composition by Hungarian composer Lajos Bárdos portrays the turbulence of life from war and suffering. The prayers and nearly shouted out in pain and woe. The second section of the work interlaces the Gregorian chant “Dies iræ” (“Day of wrath”) in the musical writing. This chant is often used when depicting doom or destruction. The choir gives a final burst of desperation near the end of the work, and is answers by a celestial statement of hope from angelic voices.
And So I Go On

Jake Runestad

This deeply moving composition was commissioned by Dr. Jonathan Talberg (Cal State Long Beach) and Dr. Edith Copley (Northern Arizona University) in memory of Germán Aguilar, who passed away unexpectedly in the summer of 2014. Germán’s death was a huge loss to our world. He had a warm, kind personality and a love for life, teaching, and the people around him—especially his fiancé Jon Talberg. After Germán’s death, Jon was cleaning out Germán’s wallet, and found the only card inside was Jake Runestad’s (the composer of this song). Jon soon contacted Jake, and asked if he would write a piece of music in memory of Germán. This music captures an element of Germán’s life as an amazing man and lover of music, as well as serves as a form of healing to those who experience it, and who continue to suffer from this immense loss.

My lovely one
though you are gone
taken from me
I cannot leave you
I am not free
I burn in snow
and thirst in rain
there is no sea
that can drown my pain
but you would want me to live
and love again
and so I go on
always
wherever you are
lovely one
I am gone
taken from you
mine in your suffering
mine in your joy
my snow will kiss you
pouring down my love
there is no sea
that can down your pain
I want you to live
and love again
and so I go on
always
wherever you are
lovely one

~ Todd Boss

Ljusfälten (Fields of Light)

Karin Rehnqvist

Karin Rehnqvist (b. 1957), one of Sweden’s best-known and widely performed composers, studied music at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm under the tutelage of Gunnar Bucht, Pär Lindgren, and Brian Ferneyhough. Rehnqvist has explored the extraordinary vocal technique of Kulning, a high and piercing form of singing used to call across mountainous areas. In Ljusfälten, Rehnqvist illuminates the text through music to give the listener a sense of shimmering lights in an immobile landscape. The poem speaks of “powers,” “Earth’s stormy night,” and “Unyielding my power waits,” yet the music describes the inner landscape of the poet: “My bright horizons stand / above Earth’s stormy night.”
I have strength. I fear nothing.
The sky is bright for me.
If the world perishes –
I will not perish.
My bright horizons stand
above the earth’s stormy night.
Come forth out of the mysterious field of light.
Indomitable, my strength waits.

~ from The September Lyre (1918) by Edith Södergran
~ Translation by Martin Allwood

**Lux æterna**
Brian A. Schmidt

This setting of the “Lux æterna” text, which comes from the “Communion” section of the Requiem Mass liturgy, was the winner of the 2003 Raymond W. Brock Memorial Student Composition Contest. According to the composer, the piece opens by prayerfully asking God to send His eternal light to the souls for whom we pray. This opening section’s slow sustained quality symbolizes the endless nature of God’s love. The texture and dynamics elevate and brighten in the next section to represent the SAINTS in Heaven. In the third portion of the work, the treble voices symbolize the beauty of eternal light, while the men contrast this shimmering color with a broader tone, representing the swelling of our hearts with the text to “grant them rest.” The final section consists of a reverent and intimate “Amen,” conveying a sense of feeling that the prayer has been heard and understood.

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Lux æterna luceat eis Domine:  Eternal light shine upon them, O Lord:
Cum sanctis tuis in æternum, quia pius es.  with Thy saints for ever, for art merciful.
Requiem æternam dona eis Domine,  Grant them eternal rest, O Lord,
Et lux perpetua luceat eis.  and may perpetual light shine on them.
     Amen.     So be it.
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**Ödi, ödi (traditional Tamil song)**
arr. Stephen Hatfield

This song tells of those who spend their lives seeking the light of goodness, when it is already inside them awaiting discovery. Once we discover this light, we can share it and spread to others, illuminating the world with goodness.

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Ödi, ödi utkalanda Jödheeyay
Nädi, nädi nätkalaroom kalindhu poi
Vädi, väi mändru pö na mândhurul
Ködi, ködi yen nirandha ködiyay
```

Running, running the untold millions
Seeking, seeking desperately around
Fading, fading the life inside goes lifeless
Millions, millions die seeking the light within

**Refugees (World Premiere)**
Daniel Hughes

“Refugees” is a work inspired by a poem made famous on the internet by contemporary poet Brian Bilston. The text is completely about perspective. The composition begins with an aggressive musical language that captures the sense of chaotic chatter and repetitive (and mindless) repetition of ideas. The harmonic language is tense and urgent—the sound of voices inciting panic. The second half of the work is the very opposite: harmonies settle into rich, comforting sonorities; tempo and fluidity of the lines contrast the percussive angst of the first half of the work.
They have no need of our help
So do not tell me
These haggard faces could belong to you or me
Should life have dealt a different hand
We need to see them for who they really are
Chancers and scroungers
Layabouts and loungers
With bombs up their sleeves
Cut-throats and thieves
They are not
Welcome here
We should make them
Go back to where they came from
They cannot
Share our food
Share our homes
Share our countries
Instead let us
Build a wall to keep them out
It is not okay to say
These are people just like us
A place should only belong to those who are born there
Do not be so stupid to think that
The world can be looked at another way

(Now read from the bottom line to the top)

~ Brian Bilston

Hope for Resolution

This moving composition is a juxtaposition of a European chant melody, and a song from South Africa. The interweaving of these two texts and tunes results in a work that deeply celebrates our global diversity. The opening chant melody (knows as “Divinum mysterium” is adapted by permission from the composers to a universal text of love and possibility. The South African freedom song “Thula Sizwe” (“Nation, Do Not Cry”) weaves into the chant tune to make for an unforgettable musical effect.

From great Love so freely given
Love surpassing time and space
All beginnings and all endings
Love divine so full of Grace
Of the things that are that have been
And of those yet to be
Evermore, and evermore

All the heights of heav’n adoring
Angel hosts with praises sing
All creation bows before it
Love divine, celestial King.
Let no tongue on earth be silent,
Ev’ry voice in concert ring,
Evermore, and evermore.

Thula Sizwe, ungabokhala
Ujehovah wakho uzokunqobela
Hush nation, Do not cry
Our God will protect us

Inkululeko, sizoyithola
Ujehovah wakho uzokunqobela
Freedom, we will get it
Our God will protect us
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