

San Francisco Girls Chorus

SAN FRANCISCO GIRLS CHORUS CONCLUDES SEASON WITH TRINITY YOUTH CHORUS COLLABORATION AND U.S. PREMIERE BY EMILY DOOLITTLE JUNE 4

San Francisco, CA – May 5, 2017 – The San Francisco Girls Chorus (SFGC) concludes its 2016-2017 season on **Sunday, June 4, 4pm** at Herbst Theatre in collaboration with New York’s Trinity Youth Chorus. Making their West Coast debut, the Trinity Youth Chorus from Trinity Wall Street in Manhattan will share the stage with SFGC for the U.S. Premiere of *Song of Seals* by Canadian composer and SFGC alumna Emily



Doolittle. The program, titled “Mystics and Ecstatics,” will also feature Vivaldi’s Gloria, recently performed by SFGC at the SHIFT Festival at the Kennedy Center in April 2017, and John Tavener’s *Hymns of Paradise*. Tickets start at \$26 and are available through City Box Office.

Following a highly successful, first-time collaboration at Trinity Wall Street during their New York tour in June 2016, the San Francisco Girls Chorus extended an invitation to the Trinity Youth Chorus to perform in the Bay Area as part of its debut tour. Trinity Youth Chorus is part of an extensive and renowned arts program at Trinity Wall Street in Lower Manhattan, with members ranging in age from four to eighteen. Members of the Trinity Youth Chorus regularly perform alongside the professional Choir of Trinity Wall Street and receive a rigorous music education that includes theory, sight-reading, performances skills and vocal techniques. As part of their initial collaboration together, Trinity Youth Chorus taught a unique learning technique to the San Francisco Girls Chorus described as a choral improvised Compline which will be featured on the program. After Trinity Wall Street’s initial exploration of vocal improvisation in 2010, this technique has since been utilized by the Trinity Youth Chorus, taught in workshop form for other organizations, and is continually activated in services and concerts to provide a unique musical experience. Both choruses will be led by Trinity Wall Street’s Director Melissa Attebury, soprano Melissa Hughes and bass Jonathan Woody for this artistic practice.

“As part of our ongoing artistic vision, we strive to foster a sense of community not only within the Bay Area but further afield across the United States and abroad,” said Artistic Director Lisa Bielawa. “These experiences

contribute to the ongoing development of our choristers both personally and artistically while creating a bond that is essential for reaching the heights of achievement that we strive for. Working with the incredible Trinity Youth Chorus was an unforgettable experience for everyone involved and we're delighted to have the opportunity of collaborating again. The addition of a US Premiere by our very own Emily Doolittle adds an extra special touch for us as we showcase one of many alumni talents that have achieved remarkable success in their careers."



A graduate of the San Francisco Girls Chorus ('85), Emily Doolittle has received numerous commissions including Symphony Nova Scotia, Orchestre Metropolitan (Montreal) and the New York Youth Symphony as well as receiving awards such as two ASCAP Morton Gould Awards and the Bearn's Prize. As a biologist and "zoomusicologist," much of her work derives from her scholarly interest and studies of the relationship between music and sounds from the natural world. *Song of Seals* is one such work that explores the various ways in which seals communicate with each other.

Written in collaboration with Gaelic poet Rody Gorman, *Song of Seals* also incorporates Doolittle's interest in Gaelic folklore, specifically the mythical Selkies that are said to live as seals but shed their skin to become human on land. The work was premiered in Glasgow by the Paragon Ensemble and Voice Factory Children's Choir in 2011.

On the importance between biologists and musicians, Doolittle says, "They tend to listen in quite different ways. For the most part, musicians aren't trained in biology and biologists aren't trained in music. Musicians are very quick to map things that they know—like a chromatic scale for a series of notes—onto things they hear, like a bird song. And mistakes can go in the opposite direction: 'We can't prove this bird is making music, so it's not.' I think there's a lot we don't know. We have to be more open to questions." (Excerpt from National Audubon Society interview)

CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

San Francisco Girls Chorus

Trinity Youth Chorus

Valérie Sainte-Agathe, *Music Director*

Lisa Bielawa, *Artistic Director*

Melissa Attebury, *Conductor*

Mystiques and Ecstatics

June 4, 2017

Featuring the Trinity Youth Chorus

Sunday, June 4, 2017, 4:00 p.m., Herbst Theatre, San Francisco

Emily Doolittle: *Song of Seals* (U.S. Premiere)

Antonio Vivaldi: Gloria

John Tavener: *Hymns of Paradise*

Single tickets range in price from \$26 to \$36 and can be purchased through City Box Office:

<http://www.cityboxoffice.com> and (415) 392-4400. Discounted \$18 single tickets are available to students.

For further information, please visit <http://www.sfgirlschorus.org>

ABOUT THE SAN FRANCISCO GIRLS CHORUS

Following a phenomenal 37th anniversary season, the San Francisco Girls Chorus has furthered its status as an internationally celebrated professional choral ensemble with its April 2017 performance for with The Knights orchestra at the SHIFT Festival of American Orchestras at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. Past seasons included performances at the New York Philharmonic's Biennial Festival of New Music in 2016, dual performances with KRONOS Festival in 2016 and 2017, the Inauguration of President Barack Obama and a New York debut at Lincoln Center. In 2010, the ensemble won its fourth and fifth Grammy Awards for Mahler's Eighth Symphony with Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony. In 2013 it toured to Berlin, Germany, to participate in Artistic Director Lisa Bielawa's large-scale spatial symphony, Tempelhof Broadcast, and performed as part of the San Francisco iteration of the ambitious piece, Crissy Broadcast, in October 2013. Under the direction of Music Director and Principal Conductor Valérie Sainte-Agathe, SFGC performs regularly with the San Francisco Symphony and San Francisco Opera, and has appeared with many other renowned cultural organizations including the KRONOS Quartet, Simon Bolivar Orchestra, New Century Chamber Orchestra, ODC/Dance, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, the Oregon Bach Festival, and the Tokyo Philharmonic. In February, 2018, the Chorus will perform with Philip Glass Ensemble at New York's Carnegie Hall. The organization has begun work on a collaboration with guitarist/composer Fred Frith, having won one of only six grants awarded by the Wallace A. Gerbode Foundation for commissioning of new works.

ABOUT TRINITY YOUTH CHORUS

The Trinity Youth Chorus brings together talented youth ages 4 to 18 from the five boroughs of New York City. Choristers receive both group and individual training in vocal technique, music theory, sight-reading, and performance skills from a group of dedicated professionals led by Melissa Attebury, Trinity Wall Street's Associate Director of Music and the Arts.

The choristers provide musical leadership at Sunday services alongside The Choir of Trinity Wall Street and offer concerts throughout the season. The Trinity Youth Chorus has performed Schubert's *Mass in G*, Vivaldi's *Gloria*, Benjamin Britten's *Ceremony of Carols*, *Children's Crusade*, *The Golden Vanity*, *Friday Afternoons*, and a fully staged production of *Noye's Fludde*. 2015 events included Ellen Reid's *Winter's Child* with the Prototype Festival, Ginastera's *Turbae ad Passionem Gregorionam* at Carnegie Hall and a performance with Bobby McFerrin as part of *By the Waters of Babylon*, a Trinity Wall Street festival celebrating the power of black music in America. They also performed the premiere of Diane Abdi Robertson's *Dream* and in Trinity's 2015-16 12th Night Festival.

The Chorus was recently featured in the film *Love is Strange* and performed as part of Fashion Week 2014. They were also heard in the 2008 film *Doubt*, starring Meryl Streep and Philip Seymour Hoffmann. The Chorus has sung backup for Josh Groban and The Rolling Stones, and has been heard on Public Radio International, CBS's *The Early Show*, the Tribeca Family Festival, and the Philadelphia Italian Market Festival.

ABOUT EMILY DOOLITTLE

Canadian-born, Scotland-based composer Emily Doolittle grew up in Halifax, Nova Scotia and was educated at Dalhousie, Indiana University, Princeton University, and the Koninklijk Conservatorium in the Hague, where she studied with Louis Andriessen with the support of a Fulbright fellowship. From 2008-2015 she was an Associate Professor of Music at Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle. She now lives in Glasgow, UK, where she is an Athenaeum Research Fellow at the Royal Conservatoire Scotland.

Doolittle enjoys writing for both traditional and less standard instrumentation, and has been commissioned by such ensembles and soloists as Symphony Nova Scotia, the Vancouver Island Symphony, Orchestre Métropolitain (Montreal), the New York Youth Symphony, Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, Ensemble Contemporain de Montreal, the Motion Ensemble (Canada), the Paragon Ensemble (Glasgow), soprano Suzie LeBlanc, viola da gambist Karin Preslmayer, and alphornist Mike Cumberland. Upcoming projects include a chamber opera called *Jan Tait and the Bear*, which will be performed in Glasgow by Ensemble Thing in October, 2016, and a concerto for Canadian bassoonist Nadina Mackie Jackson.

An ongoing interest for Doolittle is the relationship between music and sounds from the natural world, particularly bird and other animal songs. She has explored this in a number of compositions, as well as in her doctoral dissertation at Princeton and in interdisciplinary birdsong research with biologists and ornithologists. In 2011 she was composer-in-residence at the Max Planck Institute for Ornithology in Seewiesen, Germany, where she collaborated with ornithologist Henrik Brumm in researching the song of the musician wren and presented a concert of her birdsong-related works, performed by members of the Bavarian State Opera.

Other recurrent interests include folklore, musical story-telling, and making music for and with children. These interests are combined in her piece *Songs of Seals*, based on Scottish folklore and written in collaboration with Gaelic poet Rody Gorman, for the Voice Factory Youth Choir and the Paragon Ensemble (Glasgow), which was premiered in the fall of 2011 in Glasgow and Skye.

Doolittle has received a number of awards for her music, including the 2012 Theodore Front Prize for *A Short, Slow Life* (commissioned by Suzie Leblanc and Symphony Nova Scotia), two ASCAP Morton Gould Awards, and the Bearn's Prize. Her work has been supported by grants and commissions from the Artist Trust (Seattle), the Eric Stokes Fund, The Culture and Animals Foundation, ASCAP, the Canada Council, the Nova Scotia Arts Council, FIRST Music, the Montreal Arts Council, and the Conseil des Arts et Lettres du Québec, and with artist residencies at MacDowell, Ucross, Blue Mountain Center, Banff, and the Center for Contemporary Art in Glasgow.

PHOTO CREDITS

SFGC / Credit SFGC

Emily Doolittle / Credit New Music Box

PRESS CONTACT

Brenden Guy

415.640.3165

brendenguy@gmail.com