

Voci Women's Vocal Ensemble Mitchell Covington, Artistic Director
Edna Yeh, Asst. Conductor • Meredith Clark, Harp

Season of Peace

שלום

Pacem

Shalom

Sunday, December 2, 2018, 7:00 pm

St. Mary Magdalen Church, 2005 Berryman Street, Berkeley

Saturday, December 8, 2018, 4:00 pm

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 114 Montecito Avenue, Oakland



About Today's Program

Voci's concerts this December celebrate our 16th *Voices in Peace* concert series. Begun in response to 9/11, this fall tradition seeks to offer stunningly beautiful music to comfort and inspire us on a path to peace. For this year's installment, we present music from two of the world's great faith traditions, Judaism and Christianity. In a time when our world is experiencing such division and tension, we recognize the power of music to bring healing, wholeness, an understanding of our differences and an appreciation for the many things that we all have in common.

Love Abounds

We will begin our program with *Karitas habundat in omnia*. The music, by 10th century abbess, philosopher and musician Hildegard von Bingen, has a mystical quality that transcends religious dogma and soars with exceptional beauty. The text (also by Hildegard) reminds us that love is all around us: "*Love abounds in all, from the depths exalted and excelling over every star.*" This is a fitting way to begin our *Season of Peace* program.

Peace in Time of War

In 1942 British composer, Benjamin Britten and his partner Peter Pears sailed back to England after spending three years in America. The world was at war and the voyage was very dangerous, with Nazi submarines prowling the Atlantic. During this perilous journey, Britten composed his cantata, *A Ceremony of Carols*.

The danger that loomed over the composition of this work is evident in the text Britten chose for the 6th movement, "This Little Babe." Its theme is universal: the power of Good to overcome Evil. Using a variety of military images, 16th century poet Robert Southwell portrays Christianity's central theme: that a tiny babe could vanquish the full force and power of Hell. *This* babe uses the most unconventional weapons: He fights with tears. His shield is his naked breast. His bullets are the cries of babies. His warhorse is feeble flesh. His trench is a crib. His bulwark is a broken wall. His army is made up of shepherds. His arrows are the looks of weeping eyes.

Da pacem

Melchior Franck (1575-1639)

Da pa - cem Do - mi - ne, in di - e - bus
Do - mi - ne in di - e - bus nos - tris.



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Thank you to St. Mary Magdalen Church, St. Paul's Episcopal Church,
Orinda Community Church, Faith Fellowship Church, and to all the friends, family
and members of Voci who volunteer countless hours of work
to make our performances possible!

Proclaiming Peace

We will begin the second half of the program with three striking settings of Hebrew texts. As we rehearsed this beautiful and profound music, we were mindful of the shooting at the Tree of Life Synagogue on October 27. In the midst of sadness, frustration and confusion, we have been comforted and inspired as we sing these words from *Ma Navu*, "How beautiful are the feet of the messenger who proclaims peace, proclaims good," and these from *Ufros Aleinu*, "Spread your canopy of peace over us and repair us with good."

The Intersection of Two Traditions

Hosanna, by Knut Nystedt, is based on one word that has special liturgical significance to both faith traditions. "Hosanna" is a Hebrew word that confers a special kind of respect to the "One who saves." In the Christian tradition, it is associated with the commemoration of Palm Sunday when Jesus re-entered Jerusalem to shouts of "Hosanna" by a cheering crowd.

Our *Season of Peace* concerts fall during the Festival of Hanukah for Jews and the season of Advent for Christians. Both traditions hold dear the values of love and understanding. Both traditions strive for peace. Both traditions practice charity, or as Hildegard said in the 10th century, "*Karitas*."

We are so glad that you have joined us in sharing this music that celebrates, and calls us into, this *Season of Peace*. May we all be changed and brought together by this music.

—*Mitchell Covington*

Our 2018–19 season is made possible through your generous contributions
and by a grant from the Alameda County Arts Commission ARTSFUND.

Program

Karitas habundat in omnia

(Love abounds in all things)

Karitas habundat in omnia, de imis excellentissima super sidera atque amantissima in omnia, quia summo regi osculum pacis dedit.	Love abounds in all, from the lowest to the highest star and most beloved of all, for to the highest King the kiss of peace she gave.
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Hildegard von Bingen

Angelus ad pastores

(The Angel said to the shepherds)

<i>Angelus ad pastores ait:</i> “Annuntio vobis gaudium magnum, quia natus est vobis hodie salvator mundi. et vocabitur Deus fortis. Admirabili Deus fortis Princeps pacis Pater future saeculi, Cuius regni non erit finis.”	The angel said to the shepherds: “I bring you good tidings of great joy, for to you is born this day the savior of the world. and he shall be called a mighty God. Wonderful, mighty God Prince of peace Father for all ages And his kingdom will have no end.”
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A Ceremony of Carols

Procession: Hodie Christus natus est

(This day, Christ is born)

Text: Vespers for Christmas Day (Traditional)

<i>Hodie Christus natus est;</i> <i>Hodie Salvator apparuit;</i> <i>Hodie in terra canunt angeli,</i> <i>Laetantur archangeli;</i> <i>Hodie exsultant iusti, dicentes:</i> <i>Gloria in excelsis Deo.</i> <i>Alleluia!</i>	Today Christ is born; Today the Saviour has appeared; Today the angels sing, The archangels rejoice, Today the righteous rejoice, saying: Glory be to God in the highest. Alleluia!
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Benjamin Britten



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Thank you!

Voci and the **Napa Valley Community Disaster Relief Fund** thank the many members of our spring 2018 audiences who contributed over \$820 to benefit the victims of the 2017 Northern California fires.

We are saddened by the continued destruction of homes and land as fires have continued throughout our state this year. We hold the many victims in our hearts, and wish them peace and healing.

We hope that everyone will continue to send donations to support their recovery.



Consider a Contribution to Voci

Your donations are critical to Voci's success, to help us fulfill our goals of commissioning new works and bringing you fabulous performances of women's choral music from a wide variety of traditions.

Please consider joining the *Friends of Voci* by making a donation today!

Donations of any size are always welcome, but we also encourage you to consider helping to underwrite the cost of specific items, including commissioning of new works, support for guest artists, concert programs and printing costs, and the cost of recording.

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Voci is a not-for-profit charitable organization, and donations are deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

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Wolcum Yole! (Welcome Yule)

Text: Anonymous, 14th century

<i>Wolcum, Wolcum,</i>	Welcome, Welcome,
<i>Wolcum be thou hevenè king.</i>	Welcome to You, our heavenly King.
<i>Wolcum Yole,</i>	Welcome Yule,
<i>Wolcum, born in one morning.</i>	Welcome, you who was born one morning,
<i>Wolcum for whom we sall sing!</i>	Welcome, for You, shall we sing!

<i>Wolcum be ye, Stevene and Jon.</i>	Welcome, to you, Steven and John,
<i>Wolcum Innocentes every one.</i>	Welcome all innocent children,
<i>Wolcum, Thomas marter one.</i>	Welcome, Thomas, the martyred one,
<i>Wolcum, be ye, good Newe Yere,</i>	Welcome, good new year,
<i>Wolcum, Twelfth Day both in fere.</i>	Welcome Twelfth Day, both in fear . . .
<i>Wolcum, seintes lefe and dere,</i>	Welcome Saints left and dear.

<i>Candelmesse, Quene of bliss.</i>	Candle Mass, Queen of bliss,
<i>Wolcum bothe to more and lesse.</i>	Welcome both to more and less.
<i>Wolcum be ye that are here.</i>	Welcome you that are here,
<i>Wolcum alle and make good cheer.</i>	Welcome all and make good cheer.
<i>Wolcum alle another yere.</i>	Welcome all another year.
<i>Wolcum Yole, Wolcum!</i>	Welcome Yule, Welcome!

There is no Rose

Text: Anonymous, 14th century

<i>There is no rose of such vertu</i>	There is no rose of such virtue
<i>As is the rose that bare Jesu.</i>	As is the rose that bore Jesus.
<i>Alleluia.</i>	Alleluia.

<i>For in this rose containèd was</i>	For inside the Rose
<i>Heaven and earth in litel space,</i>	Were heaven and earth in a little space.
<i>Res Miranda.</i>	Miraculous thing.

<i>By that rose we may well see</i>	By that rose, we now may see,
<i>There be one God in persons three,</i>	There be one God in persons three.
<i>Pares forma.</i>	Created in the Parent's image.

<i>The aungels sungen the shepherds to:</i>	The angels sang to the shepherds,
<i>Gloria in excelsis Deo.</i>	Glory to God in the highest!
<i>Gaudeamus.</i>	We rejoice.

<i>Leave we all this werldly mirth,</i>	Leave we all this wordly mirth,
<i>And follow we this joyful birth.</i>	And follow we this joyful birth.
<i>Transeamus.</i>	We cross over to Christ's world.

That yöngē child (*That young child*)

Text: Anonymous, 14th century

Terry Meyers, solo

That yongē child when it gan weep When that young child began to weep
With song she lulled him asleep; With song, she lulled him to sleep
That was so sweet a melody It was such a sweet melody,
It passèd alle minstrelsy. It was so very merry.

The nightingalē sang also: The nightingale sang also,
Her song is hoarse and nought thereto: But her song was hoarse, it was not the same:
Whoso attendeth to her song Whoever listens to the nightingale's song
And leaveth the first then doth he wrong. Instead of Mary's, does wrong.

Balulalow

Text: John James and Robert Wedderburn

Mishaela De Vries, solo

O my deare hert, young Jesu sweit, O love of my heart, young Jesus sweet,
Prepare thy creddil in my spreit, Prepare your place in my heart,
And I sall rock thee to my hert, And I shall rock thee with great love,
And never mair from thee depart. And I shall never leave your side.

But I sall praise thee evermoir I shall praise you forever,
With sanges sweit unto thy gloir; With sweet songs of your glory
The knees of my hert sall I bow, The knees of my heart shall I bow
And sing that richt Balulalow! And sing the right "Lullaby."

As dew in Aprille (*As dew in April*)

Text: Anonymous, circa 1400

I sing of a maiden that is makèles: I sing of a maiden that is mateless,
King of all kings to her son she ches. Her son was the King of all Kings.

He came al so stille there his moder was, From his mother he came to us quietly
As dew in Aprille that falleth on the grass. As dew in April that falls on the grass.

He came al so stille to his moder bour, His mother's labor was painless and quiet,
As dew in Aprille that falleth on the flour. As dew in April that falls on the grass.

He came al so stille there his moder lay, As His mother lay there, he came quietly,
As dew in Aprille that falleth on the spray. As dew in April that falls on the branches.

Moder and mayden was never none but she; Never has there been such a mother and maiden;
Well may such a lady Goddes moder be. How fitting it is that this be God's mother.



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Read more about our Voci singers at vocisings.org/singers.php

Sing with Voci!

Voci is seeking experienced women choral singers in all voice parts to join the Ensemble for spring 2019 and beyond. **Auditions will be held through December 18**, or until all positions are filled. Visit our website (www.vocisings.org) to learn more, and contact Artistic Director Mitchell Covington at music@mitchellcovington.com to schedule an audition.

This little Babe

Text: Robert Southwell

This little Babe so few days old is come to rifle Satan's fold;
All hell doth at his presence quake, though he himself for cold do shake;
For in this weak unarmèd wise the gates of hell he will surprise.

With tears he fights and wins the field, his naked breast stands for a shield;
His battering shot are babish cries, his arrows looks of weeping eyes,
His martial ensigns Cold and Need and feeble Flesh his warrior's steed.

His camp is pitchèd in a stall, his bulwark but a broken wall;
The crib his trench, haystacks his stakes; of shepherds he his muster makes;
And thus, as sure his foe to wound, the angels' trump alarum sound.

My soul, with Christ join thou in fight, stick to the tents that he hath pight.
Within his crib is surest ward, this little Babe will be thy guard.
If thou wilt foil thy foes with joy, then flit not from this heavenly Boy.

Interlude

Meredith Clark, harp

In Freezing Winter Night

Text: Robert Southwell

Mishaela De Vries & Sarah Grace Graves, solos

Behold, a silly tender babe in freezing winter night,
In homely manger trembling lies; alas, a piteous sight!

The inns are full, no man will yield this little pilgrim bed.
But forced he is with silly beast, in crib to shroud his head.

This stable is a Prince's court, this crib his chair of State;
The beasts are parcel of his pomp, this wooden dish his plate.

The persons in that poor attire his royal liveries wear;
The Prince himself is come from Heav'n; this pomp is prizèd there.

With joy approach o Christian wight, do homage to thy King;
And highly praise his humble pomp, which he from Heav'n doth bring.

Spring Carol

Text: William Cornish

Mishaela De Vries & Sarah Grace Graves, solos

*Pleasure it is to hear iwis, the Birdès sing,
The deer in the dale, the sheep in the vale,
the corn springing.* It is always a pleasure to hear the birds sing,
To see the deer in the dale, the sheep in the vale, the
corn springing from the earth.

*God's purvayance for sustenance,
it is for man.* God supplies sustenance
For us all.

*Then we always to give him praise,
and thank him than.* Then we should always give him praise
And give him thanks.

Deo Gracias (Thanks be to God)

Text: Anonymous, 15th century

Deo gracias! Deo gracias! Give thanks to God!
*Adam lay ibounden, bounden in a bond;
Four thousand winter, thought he not too long.* Adam was bound in sin for four thousand years,
though he thought this not too long.

*And all was for an appil,
an appil that he tok,
As clerkès finden weitten in their book.* It was all for an apple
that he took,
As clerics find written in their books.

*Ne had the appil takè ben,
the appil takè ben,
Ne haddè never our lady,
a ben hevenè quene.* Had the apple never
been taken,
Then our Lady would have
Never been a heavenly queen.

*Blessèd be the time that appil takè was.
Therefore we moun singen.
Deo gracias! Deo gracias!* Blessed be the time the apple was taken.
Therefore we must sing
Thanks be to God!

Recession: Hodie

Text: Vespers for Christmas Day (Traditional)

— INTERMISSION —

at First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley for 23 years. Mitchell currently serves on the Executive Board of the American Choral Director's Association—Western Division and is the artistic director of the "Durufle in Paris" choral festival. He frequently serves as guest conductor and clinician for church and school choirs throughout the SF Bay Area and as an adjudicator and clinician for choir festivals and conferences. He is also an award-winning composer, whose compositions include works for orchestra, chorus, stage, film and television. Mitchell returned to Voci after 23 years as guest conductor for the spring 2017 season and was appointed artistic director in summer 2017.



Assistant Conductor Edna Yeh joined Voci in spring 2008. She is the founder and former director of the Pacific Women's Chorus in San Diego and Concentus Women's Chorus in Rochester, New York. Edna currently serves as assistant conductor for Sacred & Profane Chamber Chorus and performs with the Dulcet Four, an *a cappella* quartet performing repertoire from the Great American Songbook and other classics. She received her Master of Music degree from the University of Texas at Austin, where she studied conducting with Morris Beachy and Craig Hella Johnson.



Voci Accompanist Amy Belles joined the UC Berkeley Music Department staff in 2018, having worked on the CSU East Bay Music Department staff under Dr. Buddy James from 2012–17. In addition to Voci, her choral accompanying includes work with Cantare Con Vivo, Cantabile Youth Singers, Oakland Symphony Chorus, Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir, and the Mt. Eden and Monte Vista High School choirs. A lover of musical theater, she has also worked as vocal director for Woodminster Amphitheater. Favorite performances include Schumann's Symphonic Etudes, harpsichord in Handel's Messiah, alto in Brahms' German Requiem and accompanying in Davies Symphony Hall. Amy studied piano privately at post-graduate level with Zita Sandor and is a member of the Music Teachers Association of California.

Guest Artist



Meredith Clark is a San Francisco based harpist, whose varied interests have taken her all over the world to perform as a soloist, chamber musician and orchestra member. This season, Meredith has enjoyed playing concerts with chamber ensemble the Joshua Trio and will give a solo harp recital in April at Holy Innocents, Episcopal. Other recent performance highlights include performing as guest principal harpist with the San Francisco Symphony at Carnegie Hall, a residency at the Lou Harrison House for Music, Arts and Ecology. As a chamber musician, Meredith has been featured in the Other Minds Festival, San Francisco new music group Earplay and for Festival Mozaic's Wintermezzo program in San Luis Obispo. Meredith is the principal harpist for the Oakland Symphony and plays frequently with other orchestras throughout the Bay Area. Meredith earned harp performance degrees at the Oberlin Conservatory and the Cleveland Institute of Music, studying under Yolanda Kondonassis.

Cantorial soloist **Sherry F. Kosinski** is based in New Jersey, where she composes liturgical music for women's voices. Composed in 2008, the text of *Yih'yu L'ratzon* is from a Jewish prayer.

Mitchell Covington, the founding Director of Voci, returned to the Ensemble as Artistic Director in 2017. A composer of works for orchestra, chorus, stage, film, television and video games, Covington has written many new works for the ensemble. In this concert, we premiere his latest composition, *Dans les ombres de la nuit*.

Norwegian composer and organist **Knut Nystedt** (1915–2014) wrote many choral works based on texts from the Bible or sacred themes, like the *Hosanna* we sing tonight. Aaron Copland was among his teachers. He was the first Norwegian composer to be nominated for a Grammy.

Contemporary British composer **John Rutter** (b.1945) is known for his choral music, and especially his Christmas music. *Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day* is his version of a traditional English carol that has its origins in a medieval mystery play, where Bible stories are represented as tableaux accompanied by song.



About Voci

Founded in 1991, Voci Women's Vocal Ensemble is recognized as one of the finest choral groups in the Bay Area. The Ensemble continues to thrive 27 years later, holding fast to its mission of championing music written for women and by women, from all parts of the world and every century. Voci is dedicated to musical excellence in the performance of new and innovative music, as well as treasured repertoire within the classical choral tradition. It enjoys a reputation among Bay Area audiences and critics for its adventurous programming and elegant, passionate sound. Voci has performed with a wide range of artists and choruses at concerts, festivals and benefits and has commissioned and premiered over 25 new works from nationally- and internationally-recognized composers.



Artistic Director Mitchell Covington is an accomplished choral and orchestral conductor who has led many exquisite ensembles over a 30-year career. He has directed choirs and orchestras in performances in the United States and throughout Europe. Mitchell received a Bachelor of Music degree from San Francisco State university, where he studied choral conducting with Byron McGilvray and orchestral conducting with Lazlo Varga. He received a Masters degree in Conducting from the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, graduating with honors. At USC he studied choral conducting with Rod Eichenberger, orchestral conducting with Hanz Beer and choral arranging with Morten Lauridsen. He was the founding director of Voci (then Voci Women's Chamber Choir) from 1991–1995,

directed the Bay Choral Guild from 1995–2001 and led a seven-choir music program with over 300 participants

Mi Ha'Ish

Who is the Man? (who desires life)

Meredith Clark, harp

Baruch Chait

Arr. Sunita Staneslow

Ma Navu

(How Pleasant)

Ma navu al heharim How pleasant on the mountains
rag'le ham'vaser ho! Are the feet of the messenger of good tidings!
Mash'mia y'shua Proclaiming salvation,
mash'mia shalom. Proclaiming peace.

Joseph Spivak

Arr. Barbara Wolfman

Ufros Aleinu

(Spread over us)

Ufros aleinu sukkat sh'lomecha. Spread over us your shelter of peace.

Traditional Jewish Blessing

Arr. Sheryl Kaskowitz

Yih'yu L'ratzon

(May the Words)

Yih'yu l'ratzon imrei fi May the words of my mouth
V'hegyon libi l'fanecha, and meditations of my heart
Adonai Tzuri v'Goali be acceptable to You,
 Adonai, my Rock and my Redeemer.

Traditional Jewish Prayer

Arr. Sherry Kosinski

Dans les ombres de la nuit (Premiere)

(In the shadows of the night)

Dans les ombres de la nuit et sans bruit, In the shadows of the night and without noise,
Tout brillant Jesus nous luit All brilliant Jesus shines
Naissant par la seul envie Born by the only desire
de nous redonner la vie. to give us back life.

Traditional French Noël

Arr. Mitchell Covington

Il descend du firmament bien gaiement, He comes down from the firmament with joy
Vivre ici-bas pauvrement Living here below poorly
C'est pour délivrer de peines It is to deliver from sentences
À jamais, toute la nature humaine Forever, all human nature.

Anges descend des cieux en ces lieux, Angels come down from heaven to these places,
Pour l'Enfant si précieux For the child so precious
Chantez bien haut la nouvelle Sing out the news
Qui n'a eu, et n'aura pas sa pareille Who has not, and will not have, his equal.

Hosanna

Knut Nystedt

Hosanna in excelsis! Hosanna in the highest!

Tomorrow shall Be My Dancing Day

From Dancing Day

Traditional English Carol

Arr. John Rutter

Cynthia Dodge, Rose Hansen, Nicky Reed & Lisa Sanders, small group (December 2)
Julie Blade, Margaret Garms, Mina Lucacher & Katherine McStravick, small group (December 8)

Tomorrow shall be my dancing day:
I would my true love did so chance
To see the legend of my play,
To call my true love to my dance;

In a manger laid and wrapp'd I was,
So very poor, this was my chance,
Betwixt an ox and a silly poor ass,
To call my true love to my dance.

Sing oh, my love!
This have I done for my true love.

Sing oh, my love!...

Then was I born of a virgin pure,
Of her I took fleshly substance;
Thus was I knit to man's nature,
To call my true love to my dance.

Sing oh, my love!...

Save the dates for

Voci's Spring 2019 Performances!

Salut Printemps!

(Springtime in Paris)

Voci's annual house concert and fundraiser
March 3, 2019—Private home in Lafayette

Northern Lights

Voci's spring concerts—featuring rich and compelling works
by Baltic and Norwegian composers, including Karin Rehnqvist, Galina Grigorjeva,
Arvo Pärt, Ola Gjeilo and Erik Ešenvalds.
May 5 & 11, 2019, Berkeley and Lafayette



Composers

(in order of appearance in the program)

Hildegard von Bingen (1098–1179) was a mystic, composer, writer, artist, healer and naturalist. She took religious orders as a teen, became the prioress of one abbey and founded another. The chant *Karitas Habundat* is one of 77 religious poems she set to music, in addition to the morality play *Ordo Virtutum*. There are more surviving chants from Hildegard than any other composer from the Middle Ages, but there is no evidence that her music was ever heard outside her own convent.

Sulpitia Cesis was born in 1577 in Modena, Italy, and entered an Augustinian convent as a young woman. She was an accomplished performer of the lute. *Angelus ad pastores* belongs to a volume of motets for women's voices, *Motetti Spirituali*, written in 1619, which is her only known work.

English composer, conductor and pianist **Benjamin Britten** (1913–1976) wrote many sacred works for voice and organ, and also many operas. Known for his outspoken opposition to war, he was a conscientious objector during World War II, as expressed in his monumental *War Requiem*. *A Ceremony of Carols* was written in 1942 while Britten was crossing the Atlantic from the United States to England aboard a Swedish cargo vessel. At a stop in Canada, Britten purchased a copy of *The English Galaxy of Shorter Poems*, the source of many of the carols. On board, Britten worked in a cabin that his partner Peter Pears described as "miserable... very near the huge provisions ice box, and the smell & heat were intolerable & it was difficult for [Britten] as people seemed to whistle up & down the corridor all day." The work's 11 movements are sung in Middle English, Latin and early modern English. The chant *Hodie Christus natus est* starts and ends the work.

Baruch Chait is an Orthodox Jewish rabbi, musician and composer. He has composed hundreds of Jewish religious songs since the 1960s, which continue to enjoy wide popularity and appeal. His composition, *Mi Ha'Ish*, performed tonight by harpist Meredith Clark, draws its text and inspiration from Psalm 34: 13-15.

Israeli **Yossi (Joseph) Spivak** is a contemporary composer of songs based on folk music. *Ma Navu* is inspired by folk dance, with lyrics from the Book of Isaiah. Tonight's arrangement is by Barbara Wolfman, a Wisconsin-based singer, dance and pianist.

Berkeley-based composer **Sheryl Kaskowitz** arranged *Ufros Aleinu* for Solstice, a Bay Area female vocal ensemble of which she is a founding member. Her mother taught her the song when she was a child, and she was inspired to create this arrangement after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. She is pleased that Voci is performing the song now, when it has taken on added resonance in the wake of the attack on the Tree of Life Synagogue and other hate crimes across the country. Kaskowitz holds a PhD in ethnomusicology from Harvard and published her first book, *God Bless America: The Surprising History of an Iconic Song*, in 2013.