

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Media Contact:
Kevin Kopjak | Charles Zukow Associates
415.296.0677 | kevink@charleszukow.com



SAN FRANCISCO GAY MEN'S CHORUS PRESENTS
BRIDGES

This one-night-only concert features an evening of songs that look at the past, celebrate the present, and builds the bridge for a better future

Special guests include Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir, Oakland Interfaith Community Choir, Oakland Interfaith Youth Choir, and activist and singer/songwriter Holly Near

MARCH 29, 2018, 8 P.M.
DAVIES SYMPHONY HALL

SAN FRANCISCO (February 13, 2018) – The **San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus (SFGMC)**—under the leadership of **Dr. Timothy Seelig, Artistic Director** and **Christopher Verdugo, Executive Director**—continues **Season 40: Unstoppable** with ***Bridges***, a one-night-only homecoming concert centered around music's ability to move hearts and minds and catalyze momentous change. Presented by the **John C. Kish Foundation**, ***Bridges*** will take place at **Davies Symphony Hall** (201 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco) on **Thursday, March 29 at 8 p.m.** Tickets range in price from **\$25–\$125** and are available now by visiting www.sfgmc.org or by calling City Box Office at 415-392-4400.

"We live in a city of bridges," says **Dr. Tim Seelig**, SFGMC Artistic Director. "Over the last 40 years, the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus has been an integral part of bridging together the LGBTQ community in the Bay Area and worldwide. Last fall, we took our music and message on the road to five states in the Deep South for our Lavender Pen Tour. During that week, we learned so much about our country, our LGBTQ brothers and sisters, and most of all, ourselves. We want to share those stories and experiences with our Bay Area audiences with ***Bridges***."

Seelig continues, "The 275 members of the Chorus are joined by the three Oakland Interfaith choirs and iconic folk activist Holly Near for this show. We're interspersing videos and photos from the tour with shared stories and glorious music that will bring the house down. Additionally, we're presenting the California premiere of Joel Thompson's stunning new choral work 'Seven Last Words of the Unarmed,' which deals with police brutality and social justice in our divisive political climate."

Adds **Christopher Verdugo**, SFGMC Executive Director: "As our 40th anniversary season progresses with *Bridges*, SFGMC continues to push the boundaries of storytelling even further. Through the power of music, we are able to challenge ideas, generate conversations, and create positive change for our community and communities around the nation. The Chorus has always tackled work that challenges who we are and forces us to be more aware and radically inclusive, and Thompson's piece is essential for us in the wake of the Lavender Pen Tour."

"John C. Kish and Jack Pleva were loving partners for 43 years without the hope of being able to marry each other," says **Melina Nicolatus**, Co-Trustee of the **John C. Kish Foundation**. "The John C. Kish Foundation is thrilled and honored to present *Bridges* at Davies Symphony Hall. We believe that through music, we have the ability to bridge the past to our bright future and fill it with understanding, acceptance, love and equality for all."

Joined by **The Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir (OIGC)**, *Bridges* features a look back at some of the most poignant moments from the **Lavender Pen Tour**, SFGMC's groundbreaking tour which took place in October 2017 and featured 23 appearances in nine churches and four major concert venues throughout Mississippi, Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. Interspersed with photos, videos, and stories gathered while on the road, the program includes soul-stirring renditions of Avalon's "Orphans of God," the Judds's "Love Can Build a Bridge," as well as quintessential favorites such as a Cyndi Lauper/Sara Bareilles medley "Truly Brave," "We Shall Overcome," and more. The **Oakland Interfaith Community Choir** and **Oakland Interfaith Youth Choir** will join SFGMC and OIGC, resulting in over 500 singers on-stage at one time.

Bridges will also feature a special performance of "**Singing for Our Lives**," a protest folk song written by activist and singer/songwriter **Holly Near** and first performed in 1978 by SFGMC at the candlelight vigil mourning the assassination of Supervisor Harvey Milk and Mayor George Moscone. Near will join SFGMC to perform this iconic song.

Additionally, SFGMC will present the California premiere of **Joel Thompson's "Seven Last Words of the Unarmed,"** a monumental multi-movement choral work that honors the last words of seven unarmed African-American men killed by authority figures—**Michael Brown** ("I don't have a gun. Stop shooting."), **Kenneth Chamberlain** ("Why do you have your guns out?"), **John Crawford** ("It's not real."), **Amadou Diallo** ("Mom, I'm going to college."), **Eric Garner** ("I can't breathe."), **Oscar Grant** ("You shot me! You shot me!"), and **Trayvon Martin** ("What are you following me for?"). Using the text structure of Joseph Haydn's "Seven Last Words of Christ," Thompson chose seven last words from Shirin Barghi's #lastwords artwork project to form the structure of this work.

#

About San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus

For 40 years, the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus has courageously served as the international standard bearer for a powerful and accomplished mix of high-caliber performance, human rights, community activism, empowerment and inclusiveness, establishing it as an icon among LGBT organizations. Founded in 1978, it was the first organization of its kind and is credited with starting the LGBT choral movement, galvanizing and changing the course of LGBT history. It continues to rally and inspire other arts-based community organizations around the world. Under the leadership of Artistic Director and Conductor Dr. Timothy Seelig, SFGMC has in recent seasons established a heightened level of performance standards receiving audience and choral acclaim, increased its touring and recording profile and broadened its impact and reputation in the community while maintaining its signature blend of humor, personality and high-voltage performances. For more information, visit www.sfgmc.org and @sfgmc (Facebook/Twitter/Instagram).