

# California Bach Society Press Release

March 3 – 5, 2023

## French Impressions:

### Fauré, Boulanger, and Badings

Friday, March 3, 2023, 8:00 p.m.

St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 1111 O'Farrell, San Francisco

Saturday, March 4, 2023, 8:00 p.m.

All Saints' Episcopal Church, 555 Waverley, Palo Alto

Sunday, March 5, 2023, 4:00 p.m.

First Congregational Church, 2330 Durant, Berkeley

Tickets: \$40 (discounts for advance purchase, seniors, students, and under 30). For discounts and to facilitate social distancing, please purchase tickets in advance at [www.calbach.org](http://www.calbach.org). For COVID-19 protocols, consult [www.calbach.org/covid](http://www.calbach.org/covid). Doors open 30 minutes prior to each performance.

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The sumptuous sonorities of post-romantic French music are ideally suited to the voices of the California Bach Society. The ensemble's March program features the beloved *Requiem* of Gabriel Fauré, with soprano and baritone soloists, chamber orchestra, and keyboard, along with two of his other treasured choral works, *Cantique de Jean Racine* and *Madrigal*. Also on the program are the rarely performed gem *Sous Bois*, by Lili Boulanger, and Henk Badings' elegantly harmonic song cycle *Trois Chansons Bretons*.

Gabriel Fauré composed his *Requiem* in D minor, Op. 48, in the late 1880s and revised it in the 1890s, finishing it in 1900. He followed a French Baroque tradition by not setting the Requiem sequence (the Dies irae), only its section Pie Jesu. In 1924 the *Requiem* was performed at Fauré's own funeral. It was not performed in the United States until 1931, at a student concert at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia.

Soloists for the forthcoming CBS performances include soprano Mara McMillan and baritone Chung-Wai Soong. Accompanying the choir and soloists are pianist Nalini Ghuman and organist Yuko Tanaka, as well as a chamber orchestra featuring strings, horns, and harp.

"The listener had the uncanny, elevating sense of hearing every voice devoted to a single purpose. It was, in the broadest sense of the term, a musically spiritual experience." — *SF Classical Voice*, 2017 (reviewing the CBS *St. Matthew Passion*)

## Biographies:

To download photos, please go to <http://www.calbach.org/press/>.

The California Bach Society, a 30-voice chamber chorus, was awarded "Best Choral Group" and "Best Early Music/Baroque Ensemble" for 2017-2018 by *San Francisco Classical Voice*, following a dazzling performance at the Berkeley Early Music Festival. Founded in 1971, CBS has specialized in historically informed performances since 1998 and has established a reputation for its interpretations of Renaissance and Baroque choral music. Leon Chisholm of *San Francisco Classical Voice* wrote: "In recent years, **the California Bach Society has become a prospector of Baroque gold**. Its concerts have brought forth exquisite, rarely heard works by forgotten masters from the lost frontier, to the delight of its audiences."

Artistic director **Dr. Paul Flight**—a noted choral conductor, teacher, and singer—is in his seventeenth season with the California Bach Society. A former member of the Waverly Consort, Theatre of Voices, Pomerium Musices, and the New York Collegium, he brings a wealth of expertise to CBS. Critics have praised Dr. Flight's conducting acumen, stating: "**Flight has made of the choral group a professional ensemble capable of every expressive nuance and glorious ensemble sound.**"

Soprano **Mara McMillan** holds a Masters in Vocal Performance from San Francisco State University. She has performed as a chorister and soloist with California Bach Society, Bay Area Classical Harmonies, San Francisco Renaissance Voices, Schola Cantorum SF, Briarbird Baroque Ensemble, and the Cathedral of Christ the Light in Oakland.

Bass-baritone **Chung-Wai Soong** has sung with companies and ensembles in Australia and the US, including West Bay Opera, Victoria State Opera, Volti, American Bach Soloists, and Philharmonia Baroque. He has sung the baritone solo in the Fauré *Requiem* with Grace Cathedral, and was bass soloist in Schubert's *Mass in A flat* and Mozart's *Coronation Mass*, both with Chora Nova.

Welsh pianist-singer **Nalini Ghuman** is the Luther Marchant Professor of Music at Mills College and an award-winning ethno/musicologist. She studied piano at the University of Oxford and at the Royal Academy of Music, and has performed solo recitals, chamber music, and works for piano and orchestra in Oxford, London, and the Bay Area. In partnership with countertenor and baritone Paul Flight, Nalini has performed French *mélodies* (Chausson, Fauré, Cécile Chaminade and Reynaldo Hahn), and German Lieder.

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