

MICHELE BYRD



Soprano, Michele Byrd is best known for her work in oratorio and as a recitalist. A frequent performer of Early music, she has been heard most often in works by Bach, Handel, Schütz, Purcell and Pergolesi. Other notable performances include Mozart's Requiem, Galuppi's Nisi Dominus, and Vivaldi's Dixit Dominus; as well as many of Haydn's and Schubert's masses; also works by Britten, Mendelssohn and Beethoven. Byrd recently toured Austria and gave performances including; Solo e pensoso and Nicolaimesse by Haydn, Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 and Choral Fantasy and Mozart's Alleluia.

Known for her clarity of tone, Byrd has been sought out by many living composers and conductors to perform current works including Sonnengang by Stefan Kocsis, Voices of Light by Richard Einhorn, Bõ, by Jacob Druckman and many works by James Stephenson III. Byrd has performed under the direction of Sir David Willcocks, Jorge Mester, Christopher Seaman, Paul Leddington-Wright, Richard Zielinski, Jeff Tyzik, Erich Kunzel, Clotilde Otranto, James Cochran, Bruce Hangen, Keith Lockhart and Paul Flight.

Byrd is a graduate of Indiana University where she studied with Walter Cassell, Roger Havranek and Paul Elliott. She is a St. Louis native who performed with the Washington University Early Music Ensemble, the Bach Society of St. Louis and the St. Louis Symphony Chorus and Chamber Chorus.

In Naples, Florida, Byrd is the soprano soloist at Trinity-by-the-Cove Episcopal Church and a member of the Philharmonic Center Chorale and Chamber Choir. She also works with the Philharmonic Center Youth Chorale as the Singing-Skills Instructor. An active recitalist in the United States, she frequently collaborates with her husband, Brice Gerlach, at the piano. They are parents of a son, Colin, who is the joy of their lives.

RUTHANN LOVETANG



Ruthann Lovetang, mezzo-soprano, has sung with many Bay Area choral groups including Chora Nova, Bay Choral Guild, Consort Chorale, Festival Singers of Marin, Marin Symphony Chorus, Marin Symphony Chamber Chorus, Sanford Dole Ensemble, Sonoma Valley Chorale and Goat Hall Productions. She regularly sings with the choir at St. Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church in San Francisco. Ruthann received her Master's in Vocal Performance from the University of Missouri-Columbia. A singer by night and an oncology nurse by day she is very happy to, once again, sing with all her friends in Chora Nova.

BRIAN THORSETT



Since taking to the operatic stage in 2001, tenor Brian Thorsett has been seen and heard in over 80 diverse operatic roles, ranging from Monteverdi to Britten, back to Rameau and ahead again to works composed especially for his talents. Highlights from the 2011-13 seasons include the Sailor and Spirit of Dido and Aeneas with Philharmonia Baroque and Mark Morris Dance Company, Britten's Captain Vere in scenes from Billy Budd, the title character in Rameau's Pygmalion, and concert version of Mozart's Magic Flute.

As a concert singer Brian fosters a stylistically diversified repertoire of over 100 works, which has taken him to concert halls across the US and Europe. Future engagements include Evangelist and soloist in Bach's St. Matthew Passion, Magnificat, Mass in B Minor and Cantatas BWV 10, 21, 82a & 106, Handel's Look Down Harmonious Saint, Ode for St Cecilia's Day, Chandos Anthems and Messiah, Orff's perennial favorite Carmina Burana, Beethoven's 9th Symphony, and Mass in C, Mendelssohn's Elijah and Lobgesang (Symphony No. 2), Mozart's Requiem, Coronation Mass, Mass in C minor and Litaniae de venerabili altaris Sacramento, Berlioz's L'enfance du Christ, Barber's Knoxville: Summer of 1915, Finzi's Dies Natalis, Dvorak's Stabat Mater, Britten's Spring Symphony, Les Illuminations, Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal and Serenade for Tenor, Horn & Strings the Requiems of Verdi and Schumann and as Ishmael in the first US performance of Bernard Hermann's Moby Dick since its New York Philharmonic premiere.

An avid recitalist, Brian will be featured on the Jess Shenson series at Stanford University performing the works of Haydn, Britten, Turina, Vaughan Williams and Rebecca Clarke as well as appearing in a number of vocal-chamber recitals across the US. Upcoming projects include versions of Schubert's Winterreise and Berlioz's Les Nuits d'Ete arranged for woodwind quintet, Die Schöne Müllerin arranged for guitar, a concert featuring works for voice, piano and string quartet in addition to Alec Roth's haunting Songs in Time of War. He is a graduate of San Francisco Opera's Merola Program, Glimmerglass Opera's Young American Artist program, the Britten-Pears Young Artist Programme at Aldeburgh, England and spent two summers at the Music Academy of the West. In addition to his performing credits, Brian recently has been named Adjunct Lecturer in Voice and Opera Workshop at his alma mater, Santa Clara University.

PAUL MURRAY



Paul Murray has been living and singing in the Bay Area for the last eight years. Recent operatic highlights include the roles of Basilio (Il Barbiere di Siviglia) and Alidoro (La Cenerentola) and at Opera San Jose, the Four Villains (Tales of Hoffman) and Bluebeard (Bluebeard's Castle) at Berkeley Opera, Schaunard (La Bohème, Livermore Valley Opera), and Don Alfonso (Cosi fan Tutte, Bangkok Opera). Favorite concert credits include the roles of Paul (St. Paul, Ft. Wayne Bach Collegium), Adam (Henry Mollicone's Beatitude Mass), Jesus (St. John Passion, San Francisco Bach Choir), as well as various song cycles of Schubert and Schumann in recital. He teaches voice at Santa Clara University and privately from his home in Berkeley, and is the director of Jubilate Deo, a children's chorus in Hayward. Paul received his master's degree in 2005 from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, under the tutelage of Leroy Kromm.