

solstice



Music for women's voices, precisely and lovingly performed

Bay Area Regional Champions and national third-place winners of the 2007 Harmony Sweepstakes A Cappella Festival, Solstice has enthralled audiences with their technically precise and passionate treatment of music for women's voices since 1996. Each Solstice member brings her own musical tastes and talents to the group, which creates a diverse, dynamic repertoire. From Bartók to Björk, from Palestrina to Paul Simon, Solstice shares the music they love from around the world and through the ages. We are committed to performing new works for women's voices and regularly compose, commission, and arrange new songs.

A Solstice concert will transport you to new places, bathe you in beautiful harmony and fill you with the joy of music performed with passion. Solstice is music for women's voices, precisely and lovingly performed.



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Mission and History

Sheryl Kaskowitz and Krista Enos, friends who had sung together through middle and high school in Palo Alto, reunited in the Bay Area after college and wanted to create a group where they could once again share the pleasures of singing together. Kaskowitz invited Oberlin classmates Becca Burrington and Joanna Silver to join them, and Solstice was born. From the beginning, Solstice has reflected a great love of music and ensemble singing. To this day, attending a Solstice concert is an experience full of warmth and joy. You may be transported to new places and experience music you have never known before, and never knew you liked.

Solstice has performed in many Bay Area venues including The Freight and Salvage, Noe Valley Ministries, La Peña Cultural Center, the San Francisco Community Music Center, Music on the Hill, the Berkeley Arts Center, Trinity Chamber Concert Series, Montalvo Arts Center, and the San Geronimo Valley Community Center, among others. Solstice has also performed on KALW's Folk Music and Beyond On-Air Folk Festival. Solstice was a featured performer at the 2001 West Coast A Cappella Summit along with nationally known groups such as the Bobs and M-pact. Solstice has been the featured artist at concerts with Harmony Fusion Chorus, Faultline Chorus and at Palo Alto High School.

In 2006, members of Solstice participated in the debut of Amy X Neuberg's *Beliebig Fullen: Fill as Desired*, a song cycle based on recipes exchanged by women living in Terezinstadt, a concentration camp, during World War II. The song cycle was performed at the Berkeley Repertory Theater as part of the Jewish Music Festival. Then, in 2008, the whole group took on the project, performing it at multiple venues, including Freight and Salvage, Women on the Way Festival, Brava Theater, JCC of the East Bay, Subterranean Art House, San Geronimo Valley Community Center, and numerous house concerts. KQED featured Solstice and Amy X Neuberg in a news segment in 2012.

Solstice won first place in the 2007 Bay Area Regional Harmony Sweepstakes, and Becca Burrington's arrangement of Joni Mitchell's "Blue" won Best Original Arrangement. Solstice's exciting and precise performances of Wade in Water, Blue, and the Finnish folk song Kappee clinched third place in the highly competitive National competition.

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In 2005, Solstice performed the music by Patricia Brothers for *Ma kali: Fierce Mother*, a dance performance by Carmen Carnes Dance Ensemble, as part of the West Wave Dance Festival at Theater Artaud in San Francisco.

Solstice has released 4 albums: *Solstice* (2000), *Full Circle* (2004), *Rise* (2008), and *Winter Solstice* (2013). A recording of *Beliebig Fullen: Fill as Desired*, in collaboration with composer and vocalist Amy X Neuberg, is pending release.

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What people say about Solstice

“Composing for Solstice has been a highlight of my career. For starters, they are amazingly versatile and talented musicians, which is why I initially approached them, but the experience of working with them cemented my respect. They're passionate about their music, dedicated to perfection, good-natured and enthusiastic, and just all-around great women.”

—Amy X Neuberger, composer

“Working with Solstice on the albums “Full Circle” and “Rise” was both rigorous and joyful. We maintained high musical standards while sharing a deep love of the material and respect for each other. I take pride in our mutual accomplishments and I enjoy their soulful performances both live and recorded. Their repertoire, from Eastern Europe to West Virginia, is a thing to revel in.”

—Jim Hale, arranger, composer, producer

“I've been a huge fan of Solstice for many years and had the great pleasure of collaborating with them on several events. Their music is eclectic and their voices are amazing!! Don't miss a chance to experience a live performance from these wonderful singers!!”

—Barb Vander Putten, Director of the Harmony Fusion Chorus

“I've heard Solstice sing many times over the years -- both as a house concert host and as a plain old audience member -- and each time has been a uniquely memorable experience. I continue to treasure the energy, joy, beauty, and meticulous musicianship they bring to their performances.”

—Mark Schaeffer, host of the concert series Rose Avenue Acoustic Delights

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Repertoire and Programs

Solstice's ever-growing repertoire includes music in many genres spanning 10 centuries and in no fewer than 14 languages. At Solstice concerts you may hear songs from Hungary, Cuba, Japan and Appalachia; we have an especially rich repertoire from the nordic countries, especially Finland. You will enjoy beautiful choral works by composers like Debussy, Vittoria, Guerrero and Palestrina. Original works by Sheryl Kaskowitz, Amy X Neuberg, Jim Hale and other contemporary composers are frequently featured. Solstice's diverse repertoire allows us to perform comfortably in a variety of venues and concert types.

Themed Concerts

Concerts that feature particular styles are a wonderful way to get to know Solstice, and allow their concerts to be appropriate in many different venues. The following emphases are available:

Classical and Chamber Music

Including music by Vittoria, Debussy, Bartók, Kodály, Passereau and others.

Nordic Music

Featuring folk and composed music from Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Karelia.

World & Folk Music

Includes music from Hungary, Bulgaria, Japan, Cuba, Macedonia, the United States among many others.

Jazz and Pop

Hear tunes by the likes of Joni Mitchell, Paul Simon, Hazel Dickens, Sweet Honey in the Rock and more.

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Music by Women

Perfect for International Women's Day or National Women's History Month, this concert features music by women composers in multiple genres from the 12th century to today.

Music for the Winter Holidays

An eclectic program of holiday music in multiple styles. Check out our *Winter Solstice* recording to hear some of our songs.

Workshops

Solstice is available to teach a cappella singing workshops to young people and adults. We cover basic vocal techniques, singing in tune, listening across the group, and working in multiple styles.



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Recordings:

Solstice released their self-titled CD in February 2000, recorded at the Presidio Chapel in San Francisco. The CD includes music from eleven countries in nine different languages, spanning more than 900 years, and features original songs and arrangements. Primarily A Cappella called the recording "a thoughtful and intelligent debut." The album won critical acclaim and a Contemporary A Cappella Recording Award for Best Folk/World Song nomination for *Blood and Gold*. Produced by Solstice.

Full Circle, released in 2004 and also recorded at the Presidio Chapel, has a wide range of material including the Macedonian folk song *Shto Mi E Milo*; the Cuban *Bossa Cubana*; Tracy Nelson's blues tune *Down So Low*; the soaring, tambourine-accompanied *A Chantar*; and the original wedding song by a founding member Sheryl Kaskowitz, *I Carry Your Heart With Me*. Primarily A Cappella reviewed the album as having "complex, difficult harmonies, well-chosen, rarely-heard selections, sung with spirit and joy by these six very talented women." Produced by Jim Hale.

Rise, was recorded at Skyline Studios in Oakland and released in May, 2008. **Rise** continues the group's tradition of offering music from Palestrina to Paul Simon, in eight different languages. The album includes Becca Burrington's award-winning arrangement of Joni Mitchell's *Blue*, in addition to 3 nordic folksongs from Finno-Ugric Landscapes by Veljo Tormis. and Sara Webb-Schmitz's arrangement of Hazel Dickens' *West Virginia, My Home*. Produced by Jim Hale.

In response to multiple requests from our friends and fans, **Winter Solstice**, features a lovely mix of Winter and Holiday songs. Highlights include local composer Cortlandt Bender's *Rosa Mystica*, Swedish carol *Jul, jul strålande jul* (by Gustaf Nordqvist, words by Edvard Evers), and 3 modern pieces with Medieval texts by Williametta Spencer. Produced by Solstice with help from Cort Bender.

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