



DECK THE HALLS

SATURDAY · DECEMBER 20 · 2025

7:30 PM

First United Methodist Church, Palo Alto

peninsulacantare.org



Jeffrey Benson, Artistic Director

**SAVE \$100 ON THE
FULL TEST PANEL
WITH CODE MUSIC!**

INTRODUCING AcuDart

**TICK-BORNE DISEASE
TESTING FROM THE
COMFORT OF HOME.**



Did You Know?

Western blacklegged ticks have been found in 56 out of 58 counties in California. A tick bite can cause Lyme disease, TBRF, Babesiosis, and Bartonellosis.



- ✓ SUPERIOR ACCURACY
- ✓ NO DOCTOR VISIT REQUIRED
- ✓ COMPLETED AT HOME
- ✓ AVAILABLE FOR LYME, TBRF, BABESIOSIS, AND BARTONELLOSIS

**BEWARE
OF TICKS!**

For more information on AcuDart tests, please visit acudarthealth.com

 **AcuDart™**

A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

On behalf of the Board of Directors, it is my pleasure to welcome you to our winter concert, *Deck the Halls*. This evening's performance is a celebration of community, creativity, and the joy that music brings—especially during this festive season.

We are deeply grateful for your continued support of **Peninsula Cantare's mission of forging connections between diverse communities in the pursuit of choral artistry**. Tonight's program reflects the dedication of our singers, the vision of our artistic staff, and the spirit of togetherness that defines Peninsula Cantare.

Thank you for joining us. May the music warm your heart and brighten your holidays.

With gratitude,



Chair, Board of Directors



STUDIO
PETALL

FLORA & GIFTS

(408) 733 - 4388

98 Paseo de San Antonio, San Jose, CA

Leyla@StudioPetall.com



WINDWARD
COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE SERVICES

Amy Nasci Worden

DRE# 01485028

Post Office Box 3243
300 Main Street, Ste. 5
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019

650.726.1031
Cell 650.619.0294

amy@windward-commercial.com

A MESSAGE FROM THE MAESTRO

Thank you for joining us tonight! We are excited to share a diverse program of holiday favorites alongside several new choral works. I promise you're in for a treat from the moment that Zach and Jeremy sing their opening solo for you!

I truly adore all the music we're performing tonight, but one of my favorites is *The Peace of Wild Things* by Jake Runestad. Although it's not exactly a holiday song, I think the poetry and the music capture our human need to slow down and learn a little something from the wild things, especially during a busy holiday season. On the other side of that calmness is the *Gloria in excelsis Deo* by Johann Sebastian Bach. It is the pinnacle of Baroque magnificence and splendor. Bach was so proud of the work that he borrowed it when putting together his magnum opus, the great *Mass in B minor*. We hope you love the music and can **explore the human experience through our musical storytelling tonight.**

Enjoy the holidays, be kind to yourself, and thank you for all of your support!

Jeffrey Benson

Artistic Director



SING Y.E.S!
Vocal Institute

"Empowering voices, inspiring confidence, and transforming performers by providing high-quality vocal training, personalized instruction, and meaningful performance opportunities."

-  Lauren Haber - CEO
-  lauren.singyes@gmail.com
-  www.singyesvocalinstitute.com



PROGRAM

Traditional
arr. Michael Engelhardt

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685–1750)

Jake Runestad
(b. 1986)

Elaine Hagenberg
(b. 1979)

AUDIENCE SING ALONG
arr. David Willcocks

Francisco Carreño
arr. David García Saldaña

Steve Cardiasmenos

Hemby, McKenna, Carlile
arr. Andrea Ramsey

Michael Gelbart
arr. Matthew Lazar & Tayku

AUDIENCE SING ALONG
arr. John Purifoy

Joni Mitchell
arr. Mac Huff, Andrew Lu

Gary Fry

Gaudete
Zach Blickensderfer, Jeremy Ryan, soloists

Gloria in excelsis Deo, BWV 191
I. Gloria in excelsis Deo
II. Et in terra pax

The Peace of Wild Things

Splendor from *Illuminare*

 **Hark! The Herald Angels Sing** 

El ángel Gabriel

Christmas is for Me (World Premiere)
Gabrielle McColgan, soprano

Crowded Table
Anne-Marie Strohman, alto

I Have a Little Dreidel
Cody Scott, tenor

 **Deck the Halls** 

River
Amy Spencer, soprano

Celtic Joy

Please join us for a reception immediately following the concert!

SING ALONG LYRICS

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With th' angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem."
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Hail! the heav'n born Prince of peace!
Hail! the Son of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Risen with healing in his wings
Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that we no more may die:
Born to raise us from the earth,
Born to give us second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Deck the Halls

Deck the halls with boughs of holly,
Fa la la...
'Tis the season to be jolly,
Fa la la...
Don we now our gay apparel,
Fa la la...
Troll the ancient Yuletide carol,
Fa la la...

Fast away the old year passes,
Fa la la...
Hail the new, ye lads and lasses,
Fa la la...
Sing we joyous all together!
Fa la la...
Heedless of the wind and weather,
Fa la la...

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Gaudete

*Gaudete! Gaudete!
Christus est natus ex Maria virgine.
Gaudete!*

*Tempus adest gratiae, hoc quod
optabamus;
carmina laetitiae devote reddamus.*

*Deus homo factus est, natura mirante;
mundus renovatus est a Christo
regnante.*

*Ergo nostra contio psallat iam in lustro;
benedicat Domino; salus regi nostro.*

Rejoice! Rejoice!
Christ is born of the Virgin Mary.
Rejoice!

At this time of grace and longed-for
blessing;
Love faithfully offers a song of praise.

God is made man in this wonderful birth;
The world is cleansed through the rule of
Christ.

Therefore we meet in pure songs of joy;
We bless the Lord, king of our salvation.



TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Gloria in excelsis Deo

*Gloria in excelsis Deo,
et in terra pax hominibus
bonæ voluntatis.*

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace and
good will to all people.

The Peace of Wild Things

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

-Wendell Berry

Splendor from *Illuminare*

*Splendor paternae gloriae,
de luce lucem proferens,
lux lucis et fons luminis,
diem dies illuminans.*

Splendor of God's glory,
brings forth light from light,
light of light, light's living spring,
Day, all days illuminates.

-St. Ambrose

El ángel Gabriel

*El ángel Gabriel anunció a María,
que al cantar el gallo
Jesús nacería.
Y a la media noche, cuando ella dormía,
se cumplió el mandato de la profecía
Para el nacimiento del Dios de Israel,
bajaron cantando los Reyes también.
Y los pastorcillos a Belén se van,
llevando hallaquitas, cachapas y pan.
José y la Virgen, la mula y el buey,
reposan debajo de un araguaney.
Y sobre una mata el Niño se mece
y un haz de cocuyos de luz resplandece*

The angel Gabriel announced to Mary
that when the rooster crows,
Jesus will be born.
And at midnight, as she slept,
this prophecy was fulfilled.
For the birth of the God of Israel,
The three kings journeyed down, singing.
And the shepherds came to Bethlehem
Bringing *hallaquitas*, *cachapas* and breads.
Joseph, the Virgin, the mule, and the ox
Rested under an *araguaney* tree.
And on a bush, the Child rocks
surrounded by a bundle of *cocuyos* glow.



TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Christmas is for Me

*The lights of Christmas sparkle like small beacons in the night.
While Yuletide songs dance on the wind before Saint Nick takes flight.*

*I will always remember those days in late December,
when Christmas worked its magic when I was just a child.*

*Yes, Christmas is for children and Christmas is for me.
When fragrant smells of pinewood, spruce, and gingerbread collide,
before the festive packages are wrapped and bows are tied,
we decorate our spaces with gold and silver laces,
recalling loved ones faces and friends we used to know.*

*Yes, Christmas is for children and Christmas is for me.
We keep our merry secrets 'til the season's tales are told,
and trade for Christmas hustle when the day to day has slowed.
The memories are waiting from times we'll be creating.*

*A Christmas fit for Dickens is what we hope to see.
Yes, Christmas is for children and Christmas is for me.*

—Steve Cardiasmenos

PENINSULA CANTARE PUZZLER

Peninsula Cantare Puzzler

by Ted Clifford

Can you figure out who said the quote...without using the internet!?

				1F	2I	3C	4F	5A		6M	7G	8F	9D	10E	11C	12G	13D
14F		15M	16G	17F	18E		19A	20D		21I	22C	23E	24E	25I	26M	27F	28M
29F	3B1	31D	32A	33G		34F	35C	36E	37M	38A		39C	40F	41I	42A	43E	44C
45F	46I	47G	48E	49A	50C		51D	52I		53I	54G	55M	56D	57E	58C	59A	

- A Husky beach fruit _ _ _ _
32 49 5 19 38 42 59
- B Like 13 or Andy Warhol O D D
57 9 51
- C At the hearts of gold and others _ _ _ _
39 58 11 22 44 35 3
- D Try to catch...a compliment? _ _ _ _
20 31 13 56
- E Not packing or like the Venus de Milo _ _ _ _
10 48 24 43 36 23 18
- F She who calls the meeting to order _ _ _ _
45 34 14 4 27 29 8 1 40 17
- G Acquire without shopping or stealing _ _ _ _
16 47 33 12 7 54 50
- H Absorb cellularly or informationally _ _ _ _
26 6 55 37 15 28
- I Sinister pugilist or pitcher _ _ _ _
25 52 2 41 30 21 46 53

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Conductor's Circle (\$5,000+)

Charlene Archibeque
Sarah & David Epstein
Ginny Grant
Ellen & Steve Hill
Amy Nasci & Stephen J. Boisvert
Ruthie Wilkins

Gold Baton (\$2,500 - \$4,999)

Anonymous
Amy & Byron Banks
Jeffrey Benson & Branson Stephens

Silver Baton (\$1,000 - \$2,499)

Shirley Gruber
Janice Gunderson
Victoria Hanson
Ronald Hodges
Rachel & Robert Janssen
Elizabeth King & Judith Powell
Lisa Royals
Anne-Marie Strohman
Colleen Vandevoorde
Andrew Wilson
Nancy Winningham

Benefactor (\$500 - \$999)

Allanah Beh
Dee Baily & Jon Heiner
Elmer Downs, Jr.
Carla Gratta
Paul Hubel
K.K. "Kay" Johnson
Timothy Kim & J. Alex Johnson
Stephanie Klein & Larry Baer
Robyn & Dave Peters
Daniel Ulyot

Patron (\$100 - \$499)

Dawn Acosta
Arlice Aguirre
Michelle Backer
Israel Beinglass
Barbara Bellaire
Anne Beneventi
Tim Billing
Maren Buettner & Konstantin Kunz
Karen Butterfield
Oliver Chiang & Edward Clifford
Jan Clayton
Landis & Kieran Coghlan

Patron (cont.)

Laurie & Steve Croft
Mary & Lou De La Rosa
Susan Dean
Claire Dikas
Kathleen Dixon
Shawn Dulaney
Sergio Elizondo
Jean Fordis
Dale Garell
Michael Gomez
Stephanie Hanson
Sterling He
Emily Hsu
Catherine Humphers-Smith
Dr. Oscar King
Alice Kleeman
Iris Litt
Joy Lu
Tina Lüdtke
Elise Maar
Elizabeth Matchett & Richard Vaughan
Angela & James Mongillo
Beth Nitzan
Rafael Ornes
David Papay
Susan Pierce
Patrick Reed
Paula & Marty Rini
Barbara & Owen Saxton
Charles Schmuck
Janie Scott
Ellen Siminoff
DeeDee & Jack Stovel
Anna Takahashi
Zelda & Robert Thomas
Kristina Vetter
Carol Vollen
Linda Votteri
Gregory Wait
Anna Maria Zara

Friend (\$1 - \$99)

Angela Acosta
Erik Bierwagen
Matthew Blum
Jonathan Boström
Jeanne Brown
Ian Carroll
Kathleen Dixon

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Friend (\$1 - \$99)

Julia Edholm
Sue & Michael Field
Barbary Grant
John Hickson
Miriam Kaplan
James Layton
Gwen Leonard
Mark Lewis
Andrew Lu
Silke Maier
Danielle Marie
Susanna Martone

Suzanne Martone
Gabrielle McColgan
Carolyn & Marvin Miller
Cheryl Passanisi
Jackie Ryan
Maria Shao
Lisa Shepherd
Chris Sherman
Kelly Underwood Rozmus
Fleur Uptegraft
Leslie & David Vallerga
Robert Versluis

Corporate Gifts

AOL
Genentech
Deloitte Foundation
Google
Lawrence Livermore National
Laboratory
Meta
SAP Company Match

Grant Funding

SVCREATES



Donations from 11/1/2024 through 12/14/2025

MAKE A LASTING GIFT

Become a member of the **Peninsula Cantare Encore Society** by including Peninsula Cantare in your estate planning. Your bequest, regardless of the amount, will make a lasting difference in our mission to create a better world through music.

With a combined 75 years of service on the board and as singers, we wholeheartedly believe in the long-term vision and mission of this outstanding organization. If you have already included Peninsula Cantare in your will or trust, or would like more information, please contact giving@peninsulacantare.org

Thank you in advance for your generous gift that will sing for years to come,

Kay Johnson, Ruthie Wilkins, & Ginny Grant

peninsulacantare.org



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kira Dixon *chair*
Mary De La Rosa
Elmer Downs, Jr.
Sarah Epstein
Ginny Grant
Ron Hodges *treasurer*
Emily Moore *recording secretary*
Jeffrey Benson *ex officio*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Brendan Lodge, *operations manager*
Andrew Ford, *chorus manager*
Jeremy Ryan, *stage manager*
Claire Dikas, *box office*
Simone Horne, *refreshments*
Kira Dixon, *silent auction*
Amy Banks
Shirley Gruber
First United Methodist Church, Palo Alto
Ruthie Wilkins
Steve Hill
Elmer Downs, Jr.
Ginny Grant
Amy Nasci

Leslie & Steve Cardiasmenos,
reception and desserts
Liz Matchett & Richard Vaughan
Andrew Lu
Kyle Sofman
Robyn Peters
Emily Moore
Lavesh Jain, *website*
Covenant Presbyterian Church
Donald Dillard
Marina Box, Pia Satana, Cody
Scott, & Truesten Tautolo,
section leaders



You're here, supporting the arts.
Thank you!
Could you support the crafts, too?
Sew, knit, crochet
for a cause you care about

Get Plugged
In!



INFO@CRAFTINGCHANGE.ORG

Matching makers to projects with
purpose, helping those in need

PENINSULA CANTARE

Jeffrey Benson, Artistic Director

Emily Hsu, Keyboard Artist

Soprano

Arlice Aguirre
Michelle Backer
Amy Banks
Marina Box*
Rebecca Bradley
Liz Brimhall
Mary De La Rosa
Kira Dixon
Melanie Flint
Toby Goldberg
Carla Gratta
Shirley Gruber
Victoria Hanson
Amanda Koobatian
Silke Maier
Danielle Marie
Elizabeth Matchett
Gabrielle McColgan
Emily Moore
Marjan Moshiri
Amy Nasci
Maria Shao
Lisa Shepherd
Kyle Dara Sofman
Amy Spencer
Colleen Vandevoorde
Lofn Young -
Sara Zoroufy

Alto

Angela Acosta
Barbara Bellaire
Sophia Bui
Leslie Cardiasmenos
Claire Collet
Sophia Dai
Amanda Davis
Halle Donovan
Holly Elizondo
Sarah Epstein
Sue Field
Ginny Grant
Elizabeth Greenfield
Ellen Hill
Simone Horne
Anna Hubel
K. K. "Kay" Johnson
Miriam Kaplan
Holly Liberatore
Tina Lüdtke
Michelle Montoya
Robyn Peters
Pia Satana*
Barbara Saxton
Samuel Siegel
Anne-Marie Strohman
Kelly Underwood Rozmus
Kristina Vetter

Tenor

Zachary Blickensderfer
Steve Cardiasmenos
James Chang
James Chantler
Troy Davis
Elmer Downs Jr.
Marcus Edholm
Michael Gomez
Hunter Henderson
Ronaldo Huang
Andrew Lu
Christopher Montoya
Travis Reece-Nguyen
Jeremy Ryan
Cody Scott*
Richard Vaughan
Erik Viovode

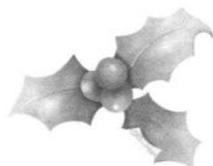
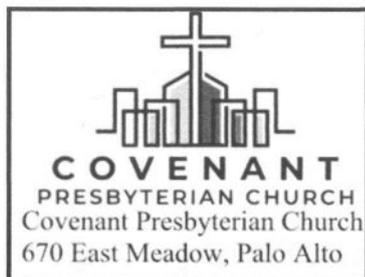
Bass

Ian Aseltine
Ashtyn Avella
Erik Bierwagen
Tim Billing
Matthew Blum
Stephen J. Boisvert
Oliver Chiang
Greg Doolittle
Shawn Dulaney
Andrew Ford
Geoff Hackman
Ronald Hodges
Robert Janssen
Scott Newbry
Dave Peters
Dylan C. Platt
Andy Sundquist
Truisten Tautolo*
Joss Thomas

* Section Leader

Our Mission: A world that explores the human experience through musical storytelling.

Our Vision: Forging connections between diverse communities in the pursuit of choral artistry.



ARTISTIC STAFF



Jeffrey Benson

Jeffrey Benson (he/him) is Artistic Director of Peninsula Cantare and Director of Choral Activities at San José State University where he serves as the Charlene Archibeque Endowed Professor of Choral Music. The *Washington Post* hails his choirs for singing “with an exquisite blend, subtlety of phrasing, confident musicianship and fully supported tone.”

Dr. Benson made his international conducting debut with the Irish Chamber Orchestra and the SJSU Choraliers in Limerick, Ireland in 2016, and made his Carnegie Hall conducting debut in 2015. He has served as cover conductor for the Grammy award-winning Washington Chorus, where he helped to prepare the ensemble for Maestros Leonard Slatkin and Marvin Hamlisch.

This season, Benson will return to Carnegie Hall to conduct Mozart's *Requiem* with orchestra and chorus, and he just recently conducted Craig Hella Johnson's *Considering Matthew Shepard* at Washington National Cathedral with Berkshire Choral International. In recent years, Benson's choirs have been invited to perform with the Rolling Stones, Josh Groban, Andrea Bocelli, and Sarah Brightman.

Dr. Benson is a published composer and arranger, and is the editor of the Jeffrey Benson Choral Series with Gentry Publications. His compositions are published with Colla Voce Music and Santa Barbara Music Publishing.



Emily Hsu

Emily Hsu began her piano and musical training at the age of three. By age ten, she had won several prestigious accolades as a soloist. After moving from Taiwan to the Bay Area in 1996, she studied with renowned pianist Rebecca-Sen Chan. In addition to having an extensive and accomplished solo career, Emily is a collaborative musician by nature. She has arranged numerous choral works for the Tzu Chi Foundation and Bo-Ai Chorus, she has performed with the Cambrian Symphony under the direction of Maestro Scott Krijnen, and she's worked with distinguished music educator Jim Yowell for over a decade.

Since 2016, Emily has performed with the California Choral Directors Association Honor Choirs, as well as with the ACDA All-State Honor Choirs. She has collaborated alongside Dr. Judy Bowers (2016), Dr. Jessica Nápoles (2017), Dr. Jeffrey Benson (2017), Dr. Anthony Trecek-King (2021), and Lori Marie Rios (2023). Emily currently resides in Los Gatos with her husband and daughter, and she works closely with Dr. Corie Brown at San José State University and Dr. Jeffrey Benson with both SJSU and Peninsula Cantare.

ARTISTIC STAFF



Brendan Lodge

A Michigander currently living in California, **Brendan Lodge** is a choral music educator, conductor, performer, and arranger. In 2014, he earned his Bachelor of Music in Vocal Music Education at Alma College under the tutelage of Dr. Will Nichols, where he had the opportunity to conduct multiple choirs as a student director. Brendan taught middle school choir for four years in Michigan and California before earning his Master of Music in Choral Conducting at San José State University in May 2023 where he was mentored by Dr. Jeffrey Benson and Dr. Corie Brown.

At SJSU, Brendan worked as an instructor in Music Appreciation, Music Fundamentals, Ear Training, and directed the Vocal Jazz Ensemble. In addition to his own coursework, he participated in all of the SJSU choral ensembles in various administrative, artistic, and performance capacities. Upon graduation, he was named the 2023 Outstanding Graduate Student in Music. Following his time at SJSU, he served for two years as the Director of Choirs at Livermore High School in Livermore, CA.

Brendan currently serves as the Associate Artistic Director of the Ragazzi Boys Chorus in Redwood City, California where he conducts the Avanti chorus and oversees the implementation and design of their music theory curriculum. He resides in San José with his husband, Tyler, as well as their two Boston Terriers, Jan and Bob.

ORCHESTRA

Violin I

Joe Edelberg
Heidi Modr
Marcella Schantz

Violin II

Joel Pattinson
Eddie Fong
Theresa Frew-Onyett

Viola

Daria D'Andrea
Cynthia Ryan

Cello

Paul Hale

Double Bass

Marie Laskin

Flute

Leslie Chin
Emily Moore

Oboe

Max Hollander
Troy Davis

Bassoon

Carla Wilson

French Horn

Kyle Ko

Trumpet

Jonathan Knight
Alia Kuhnert
Carole Klein

Timpani

Artie Storch

Percussion

Ward Spangler

Keyboard

Emily Hsu

Orchestra Contractor

Carole Klein

SAVE THE DATE



**I DREAM
A WORLD**

SATURDAY · MARCH 14 · 2026

7:30 PM

Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church

peninsulacantare.org



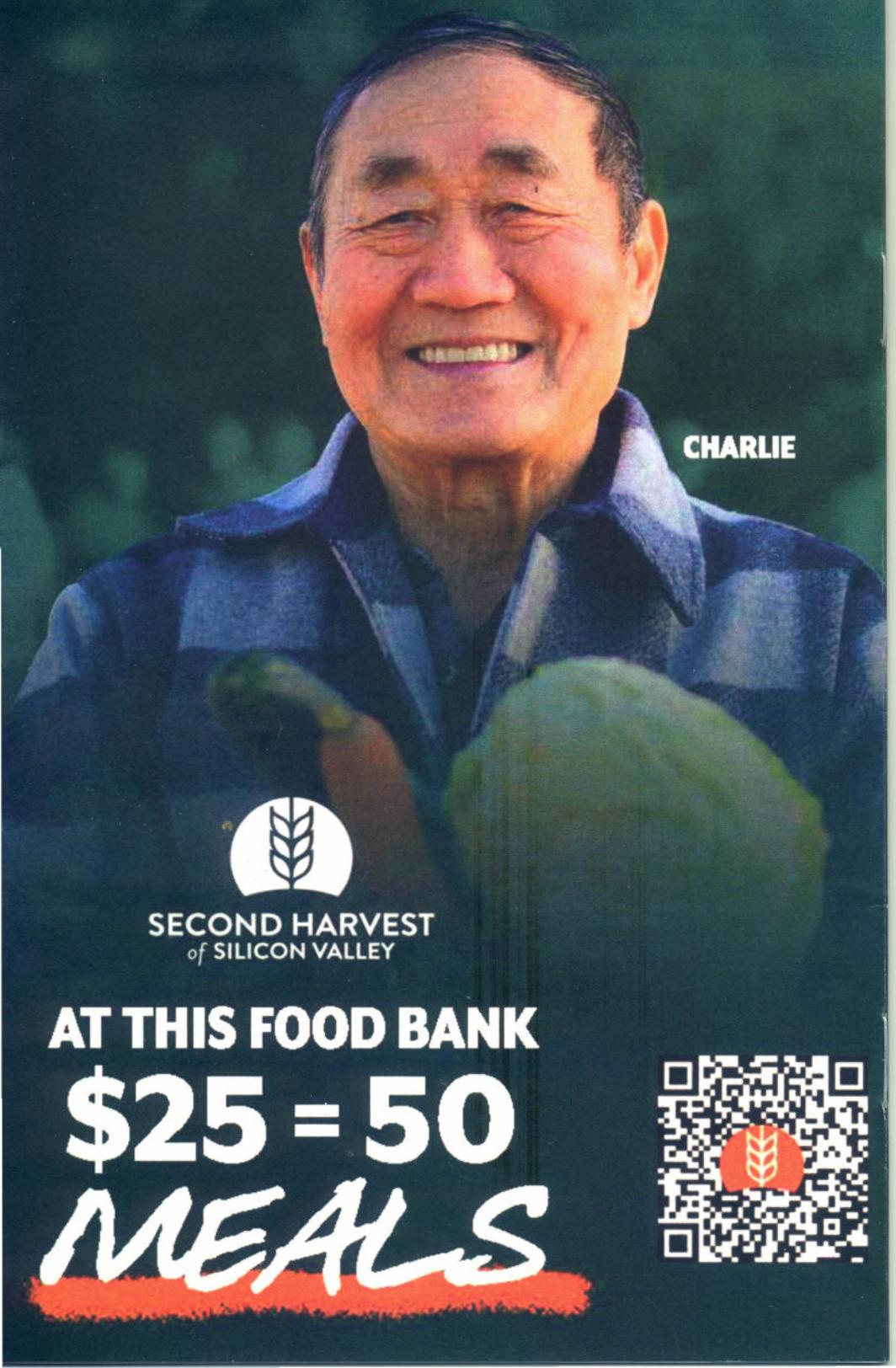
GIVE THE GIFT OF MUSIC

If you'd like to make a tax-deductible gift to help with our musical programming, it's not too late! You may do so directly through this secure donation link or via our website.



You are helping us create a better world through music!

peninsulacantare.org



CHARLIE



SECOND HARVEST
of SILICON VALLEY

AT THIS FOOD BANK
\$25 = 50
MEALS

