

KITKA • WINTERSONGS

MENLO PARK

Sunday, December 2 ❄ 4 pm
Arts at St. Bede's

SANTA CRUZ

Saturday, December 8 ❄ 7:30 pm
Veterans Memorial Auditorium

SAN RAFAEL

Sunday, December 9 ❄ 5 pm
Kanbar Center for the Performing Arts

OAKLAND

Friday & Saturday, December 14 & 15 ❄ 8 pm
St. Paul's Episcopal Church

LOS ANGELES

Sunday, December 16 ❄ 3, 5 and 7 pm
The Bradbury Building

WOODSIDE

Thursday, December 20 ❄ 5 pm
Filoli

SAN FRANCISCO

Friday, December 21 ❄ 8 pm
Old First Church

Wintersongs Community Sings

SANTA CRUZ

Saturday, December 8 ❄ 11 am
Veterans Memorial Auditorium

OAKLAND

Wednesday, December 12 ❄ 7 pm
Nile Hall in Preservation Park

www.kitka.org



KITKA

WOMEN'S VOCAL ENSEMBLE

Shira Cion, Executive Artistic Director

Kelly Atkins & Kristine Barrett, Wintersongs Co-Directors

Erin Lashnits Herman • Janet Kutulas • Hannah Levy

Maclovia Quintana • Katya Schoenberg • Lily Storm

ŠČO V PANA KHAZJAINA*

*Pekariiv, Černiv's'ka region, Ukraine,
from the repertoire of Božyči Ensemble*

A carol sung on the feast of *Malanka*, Ukrainian New Year's Eve. The birch tree in Slavic folklore is a symbol of a pure, unmarried woman. The goldsmith represents a destiny-making god. In ancient tradition, the smith required a piece of someone's body (a lock of hair, a drop of blood) to incorporate into his work to forge a positive future for his customer. In this song, the bark symbolizes this ritual sacrifice.

"At the home of the master of the house, in his courtyard, oh generous New Year's Eve, in the midst of his grapevines stood a birch, slender and tall, with a broad canopy of leaves. On the way to the birch tree was a beaten path. Who wore this path down? The girl Halochka walked this path as she went to fetch water. Reaching for the tree, she peeled off its bark, put it on a plate, and carried it to the goldsmith."

ZVEZDA VEČERNICA*

*Šop region, Bulgaria, arr. Stefan Dragostinov, from the repertoire
of the Philip Koutev Ensemble, via Tzvetanka Varimezova*

In Slavic mythology the Evening Star was a female deity associated with the planets Venus and Mercury. By some accounts she was a virgin goddess, and according to others she was the wife of the Moon god and mother of all the stars. Christian lore incorporated the Evening Star into the nativity story as the Star of Bethlehem.

"The evening star shone way up on high. It lit up the broad earth and even further afar."

LOOMINE

*Estonia, adapted from the arrangement of Margo Kõlar of
Heinavanker by Kristine Barrett*

A Runic folk hymn describing the creation of the world. Much like the spinning of fibers to create a thread, the lyrics and structure of this song work to spin into existence the world and its creatures.

"A beautiful bluebird flew into our meadow, and made a nest in a paddock. There were three bushes in the meadow: one was a blue

bush, one was a red bush, the third was a golden bush. She did not care about the blue bush nor the red bush, but she was pleased with the golden bush. The bird started to build a nest: she worked on it for a month, for a second month, for a third month, for a week in the fourth month, for a bit more in the fifth month. She started to lay eggs: she laid for a month, for second month, for a third month, for a week in the fourth month, and a bit more in the fifth month. One chick became the moon for Kurland, the second became the sun for Pärnu County, the third became the world, the fourth became the stars, and the fifth became the rainbow."

BALTIC KALEDA MEDLEY

Arranged by Lily Storm

Long before Christianity, Baltic tribes shaped their faith from the natural world. The simple cosmology of the circle of life, of death, and rebirth formed the foundation of tradition and ritual. Before Christmas existed, the Balts celebrated *Kaleda*, the Winter solstice.

Vylks Dora Olu

Latvia, from the repertoire of Grodi ensemble

"The wolf was brewing beer, and invited the goat for a drink. 'Welcome, neighbor goat!' The wolf promised not to eat her for nine summers, but he could not wait three days before he pounced."

Sidrabiņa Lietiņš Lija

Latvia, from the repertoire of Ensemble Rasa and Liga Priede

"Silver rain fell on Winter Solstice night. All the tiny twigs were covered in silver, all the candles burned in silver candlesticks. The Moon is showing the way to the drivers who are carrying the Daughter of the Sun. The Sun married off her daughter from the netherworld to this one."

Už Girių, Girių Ugnelė Dege

Lithuania, from the repertoire of Atalyja

"Beyond the forest a campfire was burning. Some brothers were grazing their horses by the fire—they fell asleep and the horses ran back to their father's manor..."

Kalėdų Rytų Rožė Inžydo

Lithuania, from the recording archive of Genovaite Cetkavskaitė

“On Christmas morning a rose bloomed; on Sunday morning a miracle occurred by the frozen lake: a young boy was breaking the ice to give his horse a drink. There came the Moose with nine horns. On the first horn a fire was burning, on the second blacksmiths were hammering...”

OJ KOLEDO, MOJ KOLEDO

Bulgarian Macedonia,

from the repertoire of Daniel Spassov and Milen Ivanov

“Oh Koleda, my Koleda! The carolers began to sing, praising God and praying: ‘May the golden wheat grow, and red wine. May this year be abundant, may the little children be healthy. We sing to you, oh master of the house!’”

ZAPELI SE DVA SLAVEJA

Serbia, village of Ošljane,

from the repertoire of Zorka Miladinović, via Svetlana Spajić

“Two nightingales sang, announcing the birth of Christ. As they were flying over the fields to his christening, the wheat bowed in reverence, but the oats did not. The Mother of God cursed the oats, saying, ‘May you not be mixed into bread, may you not be carried into church!’”

OTSDAKHUTSA DEK’EMBERSA

Kakheti, Georgia, from Ketevan Mindorashvili and Zedashvili

This Christmas carol, from Eastern Georgia’s wine growing region, refers to Shio Mghvimeli, a saint in the Georgian church, one of the thirteen Assyrian Fathers who helped spread Christianity in Georgia in the 6th century. Legend has it that the wine vessels in the wine cellar at Shio’s monastery would never empty, but keep filling to the top whenever anyone took wine from them. The obvious parallel here is to the Holy Communion, and the endless supply of blood for forgiveness. Georgian carolers often carried baskets, into which the receivers of their songs would place eggs, fruits, and sweets.

“On the 25th of December, Christ was born. Grace to those who brought us such great news and joy to those receiving it. *Alatasa Balatasa*, I shall put out a basket. Women, bring out some eggs for us, and God will give you a bountiful harvest. Oh merry host, you are our joy. Your wine cellar’s rusty door creaks as it opens and closes. Please bring out some wine for us, and fill out throats with it. May God give you the bounty he gave to Shio. May god give you plenty of wine and bread and a barn full of livestock and goods.”

CEL FĂR’ DE-NCEPUT

Romania, Byzantine carol from the repertoire of the nuns of Camarzani Monastery, arr. Lily Storm

“Today the One without beginning has descended and come to dwell with the Virgin. I pray to the Lord in Heaven! From the East the Magi have come, bringing gifts to the Lord. Gold they have brought, myrrh they have offered, and incense precious to the One Most High. The angels sang, the shepherds played their flutes; Heaven and Earth were merry. Today the whole world rejoices, singing and praising the Lord.”

AMHRÁN MHUINSE

Connemara, western Ireland,

traditional sean-nós (“old-style”) song composed in the late 19th century by Máire Ní Chlochartaigh on her deathbed

The songwriter’s request to be buried at her birthplace was to be fulfilled by her cousin. However, three days of stormy seas made the journey there impossible and she had to be buried in Leitir Calaidh. Wakes were a ritual practiced for generations even though they were forbidden by unsympathetic priests and the English. To help ward off evil spirits, family and friends would take turns sitting with the body, laid out on a table in the best room in the house—drinking, eating, singing, and keening. A woman, often the local midwife, would be hired to keen over the deceased.

“If I were three leagues out at sea or on mountains far from home, without any living thing near me but the green fern and the heather, the snow blowing down on me, and the wind snatching it off again, and if I were to be talking to my fair Taimín, I would not find the night long.

“Faithful Mary, what will I do, this winter is coming on cold. Isn’t it a pity now, to be leaving you during the fine weather? Oh bring me west to Muínis, the place I will be mourned (keened) highly. The lights will be on the dunes, and loneliness will not be on me there.”

K’VIRIA*

Svaneti, Georgia, composed by Ilia Paliani (1886-1966), from the repertoire of the Rustavi Choir and the Kartuli Ensemble

In the isolated, proud, and independent region of Svaneti, high in the Caucasus Mountains in northwestern Georgia, the pre-Christian god K’viria is still celebrated with song, dance and ritual. This piece was composed by the Svan composer Paliani and utilizes many traditional regional polyphonic motifs. A pagan hero and son of gods, K’viria served as mediator between the supreme god (Ghmerti) and humanity as protector of society and an instrument of divine justice.

“Oh, K’viria! Sun of the Heavens, K’viria! Almighty K’viria!”

IM HASHEM LO YIVNEH BAYIT

Hebrew text from Psalms 127:1 and 121:4, Song of Ascents, of Solomon. Melody by Reb Sholom Yehuda Rechnittz, from the repertoire of the Shira Choir, arr. Kitka

Interpreters of these psalms connect their messages to the cherished importance of building a home, a family, and a community with perpetual reverence and awareness of the Divine Creator. The Hebrew words *ben* (son) and *bath* (daughter) are closely related to the root word *banah* (to build) because sons and daughters make up a household, as stones and timber make up a building. While humans must sleep, God’s eyes never close on wants of the world.

“Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain. Indeed, He who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep, Guardian of Israel.”

OLE LELOILA - KULNING

Finland, arr. Kristine Barrett

A reindeer-herding song from Lapland incorporating *kulning*. *Kulning* refers to animal herding calls traditionally sung by women in the upper register to travel long distances.

OJ, DA NARUBILA BABA DROV

Russia, from the repertoire of Irina Raspopova and Zarjanka

“A granny chopped firewood and relighted her stove, then went outside to fetch water. As she dipped deeply for the water, she slipped and broke her heel. She looked back and saw Vanjushka the Cossack standing there. She said, ‘Oh, I’m not afraid of anyone and will be glad to walk side by side with you!’”

AGHNI PARTHENE

Greece, composed by St. Nektarios of Aegina (1846-1920), from the repertoire of the Monks of Simonopetra Monastery, arr. Shira Cion

St. Nektarios loved to compose hymns to the Virgin Mary to deepen his personal prayer practice. He wrote “Aghni Parthene” after having a dream in which the Mother of God asked him to notate a poem, which was about to be sung by a choir of angels. St. Nektarios’ original manuscript can still be viewed on his bedside prayer table in the monastery on the island of Aegina.

This piece is often performed in Orthodox services at the beginning of Vespers, or after the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy.

“O pure and virgin Lady, o spotless Mother of God. Rejoice, o unwedded Bride! O Virgin Queen and Mother; o dewy fleece most sacred; o height transcending heaven above; o beam of light most radiant; o joy of chaste and virgin maids, surpassing all the angels; o brilliant light of heaven above, most clear and most radiant; commanding chief of heavenly hosts, o holiest of holies... Deliver me from harm and all adversity, and by thy prayers show me to be an heir of immortality.”

IL’ JE VEDRO, IL’ OBLAČNO

Bosnia, from the repertoire of Alma Bandić, arr. Lily Storm

“Is it clear or cloudy, or is it the dark night? Is the sun or moon shining, or is it the bright day? It’s not clear or cloudy, or the dark night; it’s not the sun or moon shining, nor is it the bright day. It’s the young Ibrahim-bey Sokolović. He is obsessed with a desire to kiss the sultan’s wife, Zulejha. “Tell me, Zulka, tell me, darling, what am I to you?” “You are, Ibro, the precious sun that shines above us all!”

SZÓL A KAKAS MÁR

Hungarian and Hebrew, from the repertoire of Márta Sebestyén and Muzsikás, arr. Kelly Atkins

“The rooster is crowing. The sun will rise soon. In the green woods walks a loon. ‘Wait, you fancy bird! If God ordered me to be yours, I’ll be yours, and soon.’ ‘How soon will that be?’ ‘When the temple is rebuilt and the City of Zion is filled again. There we shall sing a new song and we will rise up joyously. I can hardly wait...’”

HULYET, HULYET, BEYZE VINTN

Yiddish, music and lyrics by Abraham Reisen (Born 1875 in Koidanov, Belarus, died in 1953 in New York), arr. Kelly Atkins

In his memoirs, Reisen recounted how scenes of dire poverty in the winter of 1900 inspired him to write the poem “Tsum vinter” (To winter), which later became the lyrics to this song. In 1904-05, Jewish Labor Bund workers in Warsaw changed the last lines of the text to express their hopes that their hardships would soon come to an end: “Winter will not last long, summer is not far off.”

“Howl, howl, raging winds! Rule the world without restraints! Smash the branches, hurl the trees. Do whatever you will. Drive the birds from the field and chase them away. Those that can’t fly, kill at once. Tear the shutters from the houses, and smash the windowpanes. If somewhere a candle burns in darkness, extinguish it with rage. Howl, howl, raging winds! Now your time has come. Winter will last a long time, and summer is still far off.”

PILENCE PEE, GOVORI

Šop region, Bulgaria, arr. Krasimir Kjurkčijski, from Dora Hristova and Le Mystère des Voix Bulgares

“Hey, battle rifle, hey, saber of war! There is a wide, vast field, and beyond the field a green forest. In the forest a tall tree, tall and massive. In the tree a little nightingale sings, and speaks: ‘You who have a true love, take care to give all your love to her now. Turbulent years lie ahead, and you don’t want to be left with regrets.’”

ZAMTARI

Kartli-Kakheti, Georgia, from the repertoire of the Tsinandali Choir via Carl Linich

“Winter is withering the rose—its petals have fallen. From the eyes of a beautiful woman tears will fall. Let peace reign there!”

ACH’ARULI MAQRULI

Ach’ara, Georgia, from Ketevan Mindorashvili and Zedashe

A fertile cultural exchange existed between ancient Egypt and Georgia. While contemporary Georgians will say that the opening text of this wedding feast song is nonsense syllables, Ketevan Mindorashvili told us that these are actually invocations to Ra, the ancient Egyptian sun god.

“*Vorera, vorerorera!* Look out, mother-in-law, we have brought your daughter-in-law. If you won’t be able to look upon her with kindness in your eyes, jackals will nibble at your bones!”

DVA ŠOPSKI DUETA

Šop region, Bulgaria, via Tzvetanka Varimezova, arr. Stefan Mutafčiev

This piece is a compilation and embellished arrangement of fragments of several traditional diaphonic folk songs from western Bulgaria. Basil holds fascinating symbolic meaning in Bulgarian folklore, and is used to adorn churches and infuse holy water during many sacred rites. It was believed that the Virgin Mary sniffed a spring of basil just before she conceived the Son of God.

“Three stars shone the earliest. / Oh, brother banner bearer,
white basil. I plant you in the dewy garden. / Dona fell sick in the
meadow. Not in the village, not close to the village. / A maiden digs
a ditch by herself, and draws water from it, *Hey, maiden, hey!* To
water the garden, to harvest basil. / And now a young grey horse is
running through the meadow, dragging his bridle through the grass.
Oh, my dear!”

ZAPOVEDI BLAŽENSTV (THE BEATITUDES)*

*Russia, composed in 1998 by Vladimir Martynov (b. 1946),
from the repertoire of the Sirin Ensemble, arranged for treble
voices by Caitlin Tabancay Austin and Janet Kutulas*

The Beatitudes are eight blessings sung as the Third Antiphon in
the Divine Liturgy in Slavic Orthodox practice. They call upon the
listener to embody the ideals of mercy, spirituality, and compassion.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.
Blessed are those who weep, for they shall be comforted. Blessed
are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those that
hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the
merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be
called sons of God. Blessed are those that are persecuted for the sake
of justice, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you when
you are offended and persecuted, and when they say all kinds of evil
lies about you for my sake; Rejoice and be glad, for your reward shall
be great in the heavens.”

*Recorded on *Evening Star*



“Truly a soundtrack for a season of awe...”
– San Jose Mercury News

Give the Gift of Music!

Kitka CDs, songbooks, and DVDs
are for sale in the lobby tonight.

Your purchases directly support Kitka's mission of
building global community through song!

Kitka's music can also be purchased online at
kitka.org/store

Behind the Scenes of Kitka and Wintersongs

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Tatyana Teodorovich, Ana Tevzadze,
Zurab Tskrialashvili, Tzvetanka Varimezova



Kitka presents:

RESILIENT CREATIVITY

Persian Singing Workshops

with the exquisite Iranian vocalist and cultural activist

Mahsa Vahdat from Tehran, Iran

Saturday and Sunday, December 29 and 30
2:00 – 5:30pm

SILK ROAD HOUSE

1944 University Avenue, Berkeley, CA
Register online at www.kitka.org



Kitka L-R: Maclovia Quintana, Shira Cion, Lily Storm, Janet Kutulas, Erin Lashnits Herman, Kristine Barrett, Katya Schoenberg, Kelly Atkins. Not pictured: Hannah Levy. Photo by Tomas Pacha

ABOUT KITKA WOMEN'S VOCAL ENSEMBLE

Kitka is an American women's vocal arts ensemble inspired by traditional songs and vocal techniques from Eastern Europe and Eurasia. Kitka has earned international recognition for its distinctive sound, exploring a vast palette of ancient yet contemporary-sounding vocal effects. The ensemble's earthy to ethereal timbres evoke an astonishing range of subtle to extreme inner states, instincts, and emotions. Kitka's commitment to presenting traditional song as a living and evolving expressive art form has led to adventurous collaborations with some of the world's most exciting indigenous musicians and contemporary composers ranging from *Le Mystère des Voix Bulgares* to Meredith Monk. Currently celebrating its 40th season, Kitka began as a grassroots group of amateur singers from diverse ethnic and musical backgrounds who shared a passion for the stunning dissonances, asymmetric rhythms, intricate ornamentation, and resonant strength of traditional Eastern European women's vocal music. Since its informal beginnings, the group has evolved into an award-winning touring ensemble known for its artistry, versatility, and mastery of the demanding techniques of regional vocal styling, as well as for its innovative explorations in new music for women's voices. Kitka's wide-ranging performance, teaching, and recording activities have exposed millions to the haunting beauty of its unique repertoire.



For more information, call or write:

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www.kitka.org
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It really does take a village...

For 40 years, Kitka's mission has been devoted to cultivating global community through the practice of cross-cultural song sharing and collective harmony singing.

In today's sociopolitical climate, Kitka's work is more important than ever. Our performances, community choirs, vocal workshops with master artists from around the globe, multicultural/multidisciplinary collaborations, and song documentation and sharing activities all serve a vision of a world in which cultural diversity is celebrated—and human connection is rediscovered—through shared experiences of creativity and beauty.

Those of us in the field of arts and culture believe that the most valuable and meaningful things in life are experiential rather than material. Still, resources are required to do our work in a manner that honors the time and skills of our artists and organizers, and allows us to provide experiences for our audiences and participants that are designed with love and conscientious care. The income Kitka earns from performances, workshops, and music sales covers less than half of our operating expenses. In honor of our 40th Anniversary, we have set a goal of raising \$40,000 in charitable gifts from our village to make ends meet and launch our 5th decade of harmony making.

This season of giving, we hope you'll contribute to Kitka and other organizations that work tirelessly to make the world a more hopeful, harmonious, and humane place to live.

Every chord our voices sing resounds as a result of your support. We thank you for all the generosity you've shared with us in so many forms over the years, and look forward to offering you another season of soul-stirring music.

In peace and music, The Women of Kitka

*Kelly Atkins, Kristine Barrett, Shira Cion,
Erin Lashnits Herman, Janet Kutulas, Hannah Levy,
Maclovía Quintana, Katya Schoenberg, and Lily Storm*

PS: Donation envelopes are available at our merchandise table.

PPS: Year-end gifts and pledges of support can also be mailed or phoned in to: KITKA

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Donate online tonight!

www.kitka.org/donate



Illustrations: Catherine Rose Crowther

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