



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Exquisite and unusual seasonal harmonies from Eastern Europe...

**Vocal ensemble Kitka celebrates the holiday season with a
WINTERSONGS TOUR**

December 1 – 17, 2011



Pictured: Kitka. Photo credit: Bryan Smith.

Dec. 1 | Cuyamaca College, El Cajon, CA
Dec. 3 | Walt Disney Concert Hall, Los Angeles, CA
Dec. 4 | Arts at St. Bede's, Menlo Park, CA
Dec. 9 | St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Oakland, CA
Dec. 10 | Dance Palace, Pt. Reyes Station, CA
Dec. 11 | St. Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church, San Francisco, CA
Dec. 17 | *Wintersongs* Community Sing: Temple Sinai, Oakland, CA

Kitka
1201 Martin Luther King Jr. Way
Oakland, CA 94612
kitka.org

*A refreshing spin on traditional seasonal choral music... thoroughly
marvelous!* – National Public Radio

OAKLAND, CA, October 19, 2011 – Internationally renowned women's vocal ensemble, **Kitka**, is pleased to announce the return of *Wintersongs*, a celebration of the winter season. Six concerts and a participatory "Community Sing" will take place this December in venues from El Cajon outside of San Diego to Kitka's home base in Oakland, CA.

Few things evoke the magic of the winter holidays like the splendor of the human voice raised in song, and for its part Kitka has discovered a treasure trove of seasonal music, from a wide variety of Eastern European ethnic and spiritual traditions. *Wintersongs* showcases material hailing from countries like Bulgaria and Belarus, Georgia and Greece, and from pre-Christian celebrations of the solstice to rousing Slavic folk carols, humorous Yiddish Chanukah songs, and lush, meditative Eastern Orthodox incantations.

“*Wintersongs* taps into something deeply essential and ancient,” says Kitka vocalist and executive director **Shira Cion**. “In our programming, we thought beyond simple tunes associated with the holidays. We wanted to evoke the mystery, the beauty—even the danger—of this time of year when the nights are so long, dark, and cold. A few of our songs capture the intensity of winter moods, while others embody the warmth, light, jubilation, and feelings of community that people everywhere summon to survive the most challenging season of the year.”

Using only the pure unaccompanied voice, Kitka -- which means “bouquet” in Bulgarian and Macedonian and is often used as a feminine symbol in Balkan women’s songs -- creates a constantly shifting landscape of sound, pulsing with angular rhythms, where dramatic dynamics leap from delicate stillness to shattering resonance, and seamless unisons explode into exotic chords.

“Much of Kitka’s repertoire utilizes an ‘open voice’ technique that contrasts markedly from Western classical ‘Bel Canto’ style and more familiar folk style,” Cion explains. “The open voice has a very forward placement, with lots of vibration in the mask of the face. The entire human body acts as a chamber for resonance producing a very big sound, rich with overtones. The sound is something like a ‘belt’ but more focused, penetrating, and shimmering. It is actually a style of vocalization that is much closer to speech than to what we typically think of as singing. And there is a huge vocabulary of extended vocal techniques and intricate ornamentation that characterizes each regional style.”

Kitka’s *Wintersongs* tour begins on December 1 in southern California before heading north to Menlo Park, Oakland, Point Reyes Station, and San Francisco. The tour concludes on December 17 in Oakland, where Kitka will host their first annual *Wintersongs* “Community Sing,” in which members of the audience are invited to learn songs and vocal techniques from the ensemble’s *Wintersongs* program and join their voices with Kitka’s in celebration of the season.

About Kitka

Kitka is an American women's vocal arts ensemble inspired by traditional songs and vocal techniques from Eastern Europe. The Oakland-based octet 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. Currently celebrating its 31st 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. The ensemble's wide-ranging performance, teaching, and recording activities have exposed millions to the haunting beauty of their unique repertoire. Kitka's ensemble for the 2011-2012 season includes: Kelly Atkins, Caitlin Tabancay Austin, Briget Boyle, Shira Cion, Janet Kutulas, Elizabeth Setzer, Michele Simon, and Corinne Sykes.

Calendar Editors, Please Note:

WHAT:

Kitka performs *Wintersongs*, exquisite and unusual seasonal harmonies from Eastern Europe.

WHEN & WHERE:

Thursday, Dec. 1 | El Cajon, CA

Special guest appearance by the Granite Hills High School Choir

7:30pm @ Cuyamaca College Performing Arts Theatre

900 Rancho San Diego Parkway

\$20/\$10

brownpapertickets.com, 619.660.4288

Saturday, Dec. 3 | Los Angeles, CA

Kitka performing with the Czechoslovak-American Marionette Theatre

11am and 12:30pm @ W.M. Keck Amphitheatre at Walt Disney Concert Hall

135 North Grand Avenue

FREE admission

musiccenter.org/events/worldcity.html

Sunday, Dec. 4 | Menlo Park, CA

4pm @ Arts at St. Bede's

2650 Sand Hill Road

Advance tickets: \$27/\$25/\$15

At the door: \$32/\$30/\$15/\$5 (children under 12)

brownpapertickets.com, 650.854.6555

Dec. 9 | Oakland, CA

8pm @ St. Paul's Episcopal Church

114 Montecito Avenue

Advance Tix: \$20/\$15

At the door: \$25/\$20

kitka.org, 510.444.0323

Dec. 10 | Pt. Reyes Station, CA

8pm @ Dance Palace
503 B Street
\$28 /\$26 (Dance Palace subscriber discounts available)
dancepalace.org, 415.663.1075
Sponsored by The Cowgirl Creamery

Dec. 11 | San Francisco, CA

7:30pm @ St. Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church
500 DeHaro Street
Advance Tickets: \$20/\$15
At the door: \$25/\$20
kitka.org, 510.444.0323

Dec. 17 | Oakland, CA

Kitka's first annual Wintersongs Community Sing
3:30pm @ Temple Sinai Chapel
2808 Summit Street
Freewill donation
kitka.org, 510.444.0323

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Hi-Res photos: kitka.org/press/photos.html

Listen to selections from Kitka's CD catalogue, including *Wintersongs*:

kitka.org/music/index.html

Kitka on YouTube: kitka.org/features/video01.html