



Pacific Boychoir Academy Backgrounder

In September of 1998 three people met and decided to form the Pacific Boychoir. Kevin Fox, Stella Brown, and Marcia Roy provided the founding direction of the choir. Six boys decided to join the fledgling organization and the choir has never looked back.

The Pacific Boychoir Academy (PBA), a 501 (c) (3) corporation, has provided music education and performance opportunities to the boys with 19 tours in the last 10 years. Tours include; Australia, New Zealand, Italy (2 times), Germany, Austria, Czech Republic, France, Brazil (2 times), Denmark, Argentina, Hungary and throughout the United States. The choir has performed with several of the top boy choirs in the world including the Vienna Boys Choir, the Victorian Boys Choir (Melbourne, Australia), American Boychoir, and Boni Pueri Czech Boys Choir. PBA performed with the University of Michigan Men's Glee Club and the Harvard Glee Club. The choir is well known internationally for excellence in phrasing, diction, multiple language capability and outstanding boy soloists. Several of the boy soloists have been featured on internationally broadcast radio and television. In the spring of 2006, PBA Artistic Director Kevin Fox was honored with a Heritage Keepers Award from the Friends of Negro Spirituals. The boychoir has been honored with the coveted Trebby (an international award) and Justin S Cummins Memorial Scholarship Award for Excellence in the Performing Arts and for the Preservation of Gospel Music. PBA received the U.S. Department of State Hungarian Embassy Award for Diplomatic Excellence in Music in 2008 from the U.S. Ambassador to Hungary.

The PBA has appeared frequently with the San Francisco Symphony (SFS), performing under the direction of Michael Tilson Thomas, Kurt Masur, Robert Spano, David Robertson, and Vance George. PBA has also sung with Kent Nagano, D. Kern Holoman, and Jeffrey Thomas. The PBA recorded Mahler's *Third Symphony* with the SFS and won a Grammy Award for Best Classical Album in February 2004. The PBA appeared with the SFS to perform Britten's *War Requiem*, Wagner's *Kinderkatechismus zu Kosels Geburtstag*, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, and Britten's *Spring Symphony*. The San Francisco Symphony tradition continues with the announcement of the 2008-2009 concert schedule with the Pacific Boychoir the boychoir of choice for the SFS. PBA sang in the concerts and recording of Mahler's Eighth Symphony, the final symphony of the Michael Tilson Thomas project of recording all of the Mahler symphonies. The PBA joined American Bach Soloists in their performances of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* in May 2006. PBA was the choice of choirs by Dmitri Hvorostovsky and the Moscow Chamber Orchestra under the direction of Constantine Orbelian in Los Angeles and San Francisco in January of 2006.

Locally, PBA has performed with the UC Davis Choir and Orchestra, the UC Berkeley Chorus and Orchestra, and have participated in the Berkeley Symphony's Choral

Festival several years under the direction of Vance George. PBA was featured with Children's Hospital of Oakland and the Berkeley First Church of Christ Scientist Benefit (multiple times for each organization). The Boychoir sings regularly in self-produced concerts at Grace Cathedral and various well-known venues. PBA makes regular appearances to sing the National Anthem for such professional sports teams as the Giants, A's, Raiders, and Warriors. Soloists from the Boychoir have sung with the San Francisco Symphony, San Francisco Opera, and American Bach Soloists. PBA sings and records regularly with the Pacific Collegium (*Benjamin Britten*). The PBA also produces several concerts a year. PBA has attracted gifted soloists from the international community of boy choirs. The choir maintains an active recording schedule with solo CDs to its credit: two of Bach's Lutheran Masses (2007) (BWV 235 and BWV 236), "That Promised Land" (2006), a compilation of American Spirituals and gospel songs, "Benjamin Britten" (2005), featuring *Ceremony of Carols*, "Cantate" (2004), featuring Bach's Cantata 150, on the Titanic label and it is in a second pressing. "Live Down Under" was produced in 2001. In addition PBA was the boychoir of choice for composer Michael Mauldin's 2008 CD "Enchantment." In addition they are in process of recording a second spirituals CD.

The choir has grown to 130 boys, ages 5-18, representing 13 communities in four counties surrounding Oakland, California. The boys are broken into six different groups depending on the ability and experience of the chorister. The boys are taught how to sing using the vocal techniques to promote healthy voice. They are taught music theory and how to sight sing musical compositions. Some of the techniques that are used are proprietary to the Pacific Boychoir. There are specific objectives that each boy must reach before moving forward to the next group. Each one of the groups has a musical director who specializes not only in music but also in working with boys. Boys work not only in the large choir, but in small groups to enhance individual attention needed by each boy. Boys are promoted from choir to choir based on achievement.

In the fall of 2004, the PBA started a day school (grades four through eight) with a full academic program, the only school of its kind on the west coast. Taking the best-for-boys approach, the boys receive 15 hours of musical instruction integrated into the academic curriculum. Differentiated curriculum is used in the classroom for each boy emphasizing his strengths while addressing the total boy. PBA uses the latest in boy brain research as demonstrated by Mel Levine, Michael Gurian, Michael Thompson and other cutting edge educators. The day school is a member of the East Bay Association for Independent Schools (EBISA).

The PBA is non-denominational, non-sectarian boychoir focused on excellence in education, music education and performance. Admission to the PBA is by audition. Auditions are held monthly and by special arrangement. For further information, please visit us at www.pacificboychoir.org or call 510.652.4722.