

PRESS RELEASE For immediate release: May 15, 2016
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VALLEY FIRE Song Crew nails music tracks for Community Chorus recording in June.

Calpine Visitor Center in Middletown hosts 40-60 singers to record on June 7th.

The initial music tracks for the “Valley Fire” song written by Robert Battaile in January are ready. City of Light Recording Studio in Lakeport has been the site of intense work to maximize the potential of this fundraising effort. Hear the latest demo at www.valleyfiresong.org

Studio owner, Keith Gaudette is co-producing the music. “Keith has a great ear for tone and timing. He’s really kept us focused,” says Robert. “The studio is world-class. The tracks are rock solid, better than I had imagined.” Robert plays guitar and sang the “scratch vocal” the chorus will use to rehearse with. “We decided we needed to wait on the overdubs of strings, horns and the like until we had the voices recorded.”



Top L-R: Rich Elliott, drums – Rich Redding, bass – Robert Battaile, guitar/vocal. Tom Aiken, keyboard – Keith Gaudette, Co-Producer at the Board.

Rhythm section is two Lakeport musicians that have been playing together since they were kids. Rich Elliott on drums, and Rich Redding on bass. Both are monster players that were great to work with. “The song is pretty tricky in that there are several scenes taking place that each require a slightly different feel,” continues RB. Tom Aiken added piano tracks on Sunday. “Tom has inspired a lot of area musicians. He’s really added some amazing material to select from.”

The song starts in Angwin, moves on to Cobb Mountain and “hundred foot flames.” Then, to the sad and somber evacuation center in Calistoga. Finally, it rains and the community comes together to thank the “firefighters, cops and workers that rush into Hell with a pick and shovel.” Song ends with a strong chorus reminding us that “we put you out, but you’re not done.” Indeed, much work remains to heal and restore many lives.

The project is a fundraiser, and the strategy is to take the song and make a youtube musicvideo incorporating some of the horrific fire footage. The video of course, goes viral and thousands of people visit the website www.valleyfiresong.org where they easily and readily donate to local community groups that are doing excellent work.

The website includes a rough mix of the rhythm tracks. You can also hear an acoustic version with the sirens, fire engines, flames and thunder that will be in the final mix. “The sound effects really set the mood and remind us how scary it was.” There is a sign-up form online as well. “We’re hoping the singers will be a real mix of emergency responders, volunteers, families and young people that were impacted.”

Calpine has been very generous to provide their large meeting room for the Community Chorus. “We have thirty-some singers now and the room holds up to sixty. There are posters up in a few places, and we’ve reached out to the firefighters, police and others.”

The vocal rehearsal and recording sessions promise to be pretty emotional. Calpine will have tissue on hand as needed. Hardester’s Market will provide refreshments for the singers, and Pacific Union College Copy Center is helping with posters and printing. “City of Light Recording has really stepped up to the plate. My company, CALEXAS will finalize the video editing but we’re hoping to get a couple of videographers involved to capture the vocal session,” notes the Producer.