

IT'S TIME

MENDELSSOHN CHORUS OF PHILADELPHIA'S 151ST SEASON

Dominick DiOrio, Artistic Director & Conductor

Heather Mitchell, Associate Artistic Director



Artwork by Barbara Berry.

A Feast of Carols

It's time to celebrate the season

December 7, 2024 / 2pm & 5pm

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Chestnut Hill

MCCHORUS.ORG

A Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Welcome to Mendelssohn Chorus of Philadelphia's annual *A Feast of Carols*! This cherished concert has long been the true herald of the holiday season in Philadelphia. Whether this is your first time joining us or your thirtieth, you'll discover that our program offers something for everyone.

Music has a unique power to unite us, transcending differences and nurturing our well-being. Research consistently shows that choral music in particular can reduce stress, anxiety, and depression while fostering a sense of community and connection. During the holiday season, festive carols and seasonal melodies amplify this effect, creating cherished memories and warming hearts as familiar tunes fill homes and public spaces alike. It's this transformative power that brings us together today.

I'm particularly proud of our commitment to commissioning new seasonal works. This year, we're thrilled to present a piece by Michael R. Smith, our former tenor section leader and accomplished composer. His work explores "the anonymous child" – a powerful meditation on our collective responsibility to nurture every child's potential. This moving composition is set to beautiful text crafted by poet and fellow Mendelssohn Chorus singer Kyle Conner. It's a universal theme that resonates deeply with our mission and values.

We're also delighted to reprise our 2021 commission, "The New Year's Magpie Song" by Texu Kim. This remarkable piece was commissioned by Mark Pinzur in celebration of his 50th season singing with Mendelssohn Chorus – a testament to the enduring bonds formed through music.

At Mendelssohn Chorus, commissioning new music isn't reserved for a select few – it's a cherished tradition open to everyone. We believe that creating new music is both our heritage and our duty, and we're honored to make this opportunity accessible to all who wish to contribute to the choral arts.

Our tradition of Postcard Carols, brilliantly crafted by Artistic Director Dominick DiOrio, continues to grow. This season features four new carols, commissioned in memory of loved ones, in celebration of families coming together through marriage, and in gratitude for the gifts of our community. We're especially excited to present "The Chestnut Hill Carol" with full chorus – a piece commissioned in honor of Tom and Ellie Elkinton, whose gracious hospitality in opening their Chestnut Hill home after this concert for many years exemplifies the warm spirit of our community. I invite you to consider commissioning your own carol – a lasting musical tribute to honor someone special in your life.

Thank you for being part of our musical family. Let the feast begin!

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Flo Gardner". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Flo" and last name "Gardner" clearly legible.

Mendelssohn Chorus of Philadelphia
Dominick DiOrio, Artistic Director & Conductor
Heather Mitchell, Associate Artistic Director

A Feast of Carols

Dominick DiOrio, conductor
Andrew Kotylo, organ
Ting Ting Wong, piano
The Timberdale Brass

The audience is invited to sing along in the carols marked with a snowflake (*).

Choral-Improvisation on "In Dulci Jubilo" (1912) Sigfrid Karg-Elert

Andrew Kotylo, organ

Mi Zeh Y'Maleil (1990) arr. Joshua Jacobson

Jeff Schwartz, tenor
Erik Potteiger, tambourine
James Lamb, tof
Heather Mitchell, conductor

There Shall a Star Come Out of Jacob (1846) Felix Mendelssohn

* **O Come, All Ye Faithful (1743)** John Francis Wade

A Spotless Rose (1919) Herbert Howells

Ian Martin, tenor

Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day (1966) John Gardner

Ariel Alvarado, tambourine
James Lamb, snare drum
Shawn Anderson, conductor

Hallelujah Chorus from Messiah (1741) Georg Frideric Handel

Ariel Alvarado, conductor

Four Postcard Carols (2023) Dominick DiOrio

world premiere

The Oak-Grove Carol

Commissioned by Dr. Josh Atkins and Priscilla Lo in memory of
Eileen Atkins, Josh's mother, and Krista Atkins, Josh's sister.

Joyous Family, Love's Bouquet

Commissioned by Kyle Sheehan and Rebecca Roberts and dedicated
to their parents, Brenda & Kim Sheehan and Neal & Diane Roberts,
to honor and celebrate their families' union, November 10, 2023.

A Heart is Turned at Christmas

Commissioned by Donald M Kurtzman (Esq.) in memory of his father,
Eddie Kurtzman, for whom the Christmas season brought him
a reminder of how much he was loved.

Katy Avery, soprano

The Chestnut Hill Carol

Commissioned by the singers and board of Mendelssohn Chorus
of Philadelphia in honor of Tom and Ellie Elkinton,
for their extraordinary dedication to our community.

Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas (1943) Hugh Martin & Ralph Blane
arr. Frank Comstock
trans. Russell C. Hair

The Timberdale Brass

* **Angels We Have Heard on High** (1937) traditional French carol
arr. William Shippen Barnes

What Sweeter Music (1988) John Rutter

Heather Mitchell, conductor

Carol of the Stranger (2013) Abbie Betinis

Sophia Santiago, soprano

The New Year's Magpie Song (2020) Texu Kim

Heather Mitchell, triangle

James Lamb, bongos

Erik Potteiger, bass drum

Ariel Alvarado, conductor

The Christmas Song (1945) Mel Torme
arr. Jeffrey Biegel

Ting Ting Wong, piano

The Anonymous Child (2024) Michael Robert Smith

world premiere

Lucas DeJesus, baritone

Sophia Santiago, soprano

Rachael Lipson, soprano

Jennifer Rafferty, alto

* **There's A Wideness in God's Mercy** (1977) Calvin Hampton

Eric Schweingruber, trumpet

The Birth of a Promise (2018) Diane L. White-Clayton

Katy Avery, soprano

Heather Mitchell, conductor

* **Silent Night** (1818) Franz Gruber

* **Hark! The Herald Angels Sing** (1855) Felix Mendelssohn

Program Notes

The hymn *In dulci jubilo* (In sweet rejoicing) is attributed to the German monk and mystic Heinrich Seuse (1295–1366), who recounted a vision in which he was met by a band of angels. The leader told him he was sent by God to bring him joy amidst his sufferings, and that he should “cast off all his sorrows from his mind,” and join them in dancing to *In dulci jubilo*, a recipe that holds up well even after 700 years. We open our concert with that same angelic hymn, heard here in a virtuosic organ arrangement by Sigfrid Karg-Elert (1877–1933). Karg-Elert was an exceptional pianist, but also mastered the oboe, organ and harmonium (a reed-organ powered by foot pedals), and taught music theory and composition at the Leipzig Conservatory. As you will hear in this 1912 ***Choral-Improvisation on In Dulci Jubilo***, he was a superb musical colorist with a very expansive treatment of tonality.

Mi Zeh Y'Maleil is a traditional Hanukkah text, set here in a richly harmonized arrangement by Joshua Jacobson. A highly-regarded expert on Jewish music, Jacobson served 45 years on the faculty of Northeastern University and currently is a Visiting Professor and Senior Consultant at Hebrew College. He is also founder and director of the Zamir Chorale of Boston, an acclaimed ensemble specializing in Jewish music of all genres, and has written over 100 arrangements, editions and original compositions. The melody Jacobson used in setting *Mi Zeh Y'Maleil* is based on a Sephardic folksong sung by the Jews of Tétouan, Morocco. When the Jews were expelled from Spain in 1492, many made their way to Tétouan, just across the Mediterranean Sea, and a Sephardic community flourished there for nearly 400 years, earning the Jewish quarter the name “Little Jerusalem.”

Felix Mendelssohn's (1809–1847) English-language oratorio *Elijah* was an enormous success at its 1846 premiere, and he immediately began work on a new oratorio on the life of Jesus, with a German libretto drawn from Biblical passages. When he suddenly died at the age of 38, he left the new oratorio unfinished. His younger brother Paul collected and ordered the completed sections of the oratorio, which was published as *Christus* in 1857. The existing material has a Bachian flavor to it. The best-known part, the chorus ***There Shall a Star Come Out of Jacob***, opens with an ascending line to the word “star,” the type of word painting that Bach might have used. And the chorus ends with a chorale tune, Philipp Nicolai's *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern* (How brightly shines the morning star), on which Bach based his cantata of the same name.

O Come, All Ye Faithful began life as a Latin hymn, *Adeste Fideles*, written about 1743 by the Englishman John Francis Wade (1711–1786), a music copyist and teacher of Latin and church music. The original melody was in triple meter – it scans well in 6/8, like a pastoral hymn – and first appeared (uncredited) in its current 4/4 meter in Samuel Webbe's 1782 *Essays on Plainsong Chant*. It was popularized by Vincent Novello, who featured it in his own arrangement at the Christmas concerts at the Portuguese embassy, where he was organist. There have been many English translations, but the most familiar was created in 1841 by Frederick Oakeley (1802–1880), an Anglican cleric turned Catholic priest.

Herbert Howells (1892–1983) was diagnosed with a fatal autoimmune disease in 1915, and he spent several years undergoing a debilitating but unexpectedly

successful experimental radiotherapy treatment. During his recovery, he assisted in a project to assemble a compilation of Latin Tudor music, and his immersion in music of the English Renaissance informed his own compositional style. **A Spotless Rose** was one of three carol anthems written in 1919 and remains one of his most popular works. The anonymous 14th century German text, with a wonderful singing translation by Catherine Winkworth, is based on the medieval trope of Mary as the rose in winter. Howells' long, sinuous lines suggest both the viny plant bearing the rose and the blowing of the winter wind. Parallel chords create a harmonic ambiguity, slipping between major and minor, modal and tonal, and frequent changes in meter both accommodate the text and propel the music forward. Howells extends the final cadence, allowing the music to travel from A minor to E major through a wonderfully idiosyncratic harmonic pathway.

Tomorrow shall be my dancing day first appeared in print in 1833, but the text dates back at least to the 15th century. Jesus recounts the details of his life using the dance as a metaphor for his mission of salvation. The repeated invitation to join the dance may have been literal – the word carol originally meant a festive circle dance accompanied by song, and the reference to “the legend of my play” suggests it may have been performed as part of a masque. John Gardner (1917-2011) was a prolific composer in many genres, but is best known for his choral and vocal music. He succeeded Gustav Holst and Herbert Howells as Director of Music at St. Paul's Girls' School and wrote this energetic, syncopated setting of *Tomorrow shall be my dancing day* for the girls' choir in 1965.

The ***Hallelujah Chorus*** from *Messiah* is one of the best known pieces of choral music ever written. Georg Frideric Handel (1685–1759) received the unsolicited libretto in 1741 from Charles Jennens, a frequent collaborator. He completed the composition in 24 days, which was not atypically fast for him. It was premiered at a charity concert to raise money for the release of imprisoned debtors in Dublin in 1742, not at Christmas but during Lent, and somewhat scandalously, in a theater rather than a church. Handel's vocal forces numbered 16 men's voices, 16 treble voices, and the two women soloists, a far cry from the hundreds of voices that would be marshalled in later British choral festival performances. The custom of standing during the *Hallelujah Chorus* is first mentioned in 1756, and it is not clear when it began. It probably did not begin with King George II standing at the 1743 London premiere, transfixed by the beauty and majesty of the music (or suddenly awakening after snoozing through Part II and mistaking it for a closing anthem!) – the king had little interest in the arts and there is no evidence that he was even present at the concert.

This afternoon we present the third installment of Dominick DiOrio's ***Postcard Carols***, which has become one of Mendelssohn Chorus's most popular fundraisers. DiOrio always looks forward to the opportunity to craft both the lyrics and melody, and to personalize the carols not only with the text but also with details in the composition. For example, *The Oak-Grove Carol* was commissioned as a memorial, and the title reflects the use of oak groves as memorials, with the long life-span of that tree signifying an equally long time of remembrance. DiOrio also quotes lyrics and a line of melody from *The Last Rose of Summer*, an enduring song with a text by Irish poet Thomas Moore, set in 1813 to a traditional Gaelic melody, *The Young Man's Dream*. In *Joyous Family, Love's Bouquet*, DiOrio clev-

erly works the initials of the commissioners and their parents, whom they honored with the commission, into the first letters of each line. The commissioner of *A Heart Is Turned at Christmas* is Jewish, and while his family never celebrated Christmas, he found that his father invariably warmed to the Christmas season, shedding his cares and finding unexpected peace and happiness. DiOrio adds a Hebrew phrase to the refrain, *Shalom v'laila tov* (peace and good night), a greeting or farewell, a wish and a prayer all in one.

Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas was the hit song in MGM's 1944 musical *Meet Me in St. Louis*, sung by Judy Garland. Despite the rather melancholy lyrics, it has become one of the most frequently performed Christmas songs. It was the work of the songwriting team of Ralph Blane and Hugh Martin. Blane was credited with writing the melody, but it actually was a reworking of a tune that Martin had originally conceived and then discarded as unusable.

Angels We Have Heard on High was identified as a traditional Languedoc carol when it first appeared in print in 1842 under the title *L'Écho des Montagnes de Béthléem* (The Echo of the Mountains of Bethlehem). The English version is an 1860 paraphrase of the French text by James Chadwick, a Catholic priest who spent much of his life as an academic before being elevated to Bishop of Hexam and Newcastle. The most commonly used tune is an arrangement of the 1842 melody (whose composer was identified only as "A.M.") by American organist and composer Edward Shippen Barnes, written in 1937 while he served as music director at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Philadelphia.

The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols has been a Christmas Eve tradition at King's College, Cambridge since 1918. It consists of nine scriptural readings which outline the Christmas story, interspersed with choir carols and congregational hymns. In 1982, Director of Music Stephen Cleobury began another tradition of commissioning a new carol each year for the festival. In 1987, he tapped John Rutter (b. 1945), who composed the exquisite ***What Sweeter Music***. A composer, conductor, arranger, editor and producer, Rutter is best known for his choral music and in particular for his wonderfully singable and tuneful Christmas music. The text is taken from a short masque, *A Christmas Carol sung to the King in the presence at White-Hall*, by the prolific poet and Anglican vicar Robert Herrick (1591–1674). The poem was published in 1647 but the performance must have taken place before 1641, while Charles I still sat comfortably upon the throne and his head upon his shoulders.

Award-winning composer Abbie Betinis is the third generation of Burt Family Carol composers. In the 1920s, Rev. Bates Burt began the tradition of writing a Christmas carol each year and sending it as a greeting card to friends and family. He handed down the tradition to his son Alfred, a jazz trumpeter and arranger, who wrote 15 carols before his untimely death in 1954. Through Alfred's Hollywood connections a commercial recording of his carols was released and enjoyed enormous popularity, and his carols have been recorded by singers from Nat King Cole to James Taylor to Julie Andrews. In 2001, Betinis, Alfred's great niece, picked up the tradition. Her 2013 ***Carol of the Stranger*** is set in the style of a folk carol, with a text by poet Michael Dennis Browne.

Texu Kim's ***The New Year's Magpie Song*** was a Mendelssohn Chorus commission funded by former Chorus President Mark Pinzur in honor of his 50th season as a

singer, along with contributions by singers Frank Cassell, Jon Kochavi, John Kohlhas and Rich Tolsma, and was premiered at the 2021 Feast of Carols concert. Korean-born Texu Kim (b. 1980) is an enormously versatile composer whose music has been performed by leading orchestras, instrumental ensembles and choruses around the world. He is a frequent collaborator with choreographers, filmmakers and educators and his music often explores cross-cultural elements. Kim received undergraduate degrees in chemistry and music from Seoul National University, a doctorate in composition from Indiana University, and currently serves on the music faculty of San Diego State University. His theme of welcoming New Year's Day also served as a metaphor for the post-pandemic era. The magpie is considered a messenger of good news in Korea, and Kim was inspired by a Korean children's song for New Year's Day, "Magpies' New Year's Day is yesterday, Ours is tomorrow." He researched New Year's customs in other cultures as well and rolled all that into his own text, some in Korean and some in English, set in the style of a highly rhythmic folk-tune.

Mendelssohn Chorus is delighted to present the world premiere of ***The Anonymous Child***, a commissioned piece from MCP alumnus Michael Robert Smith with a text by current singer Kyle Connor. Smith (b. 1989) is an award-winning composer of contemporary concert music. He has been commissioned and performed by soloists and ensembles across the country, including The Crossing, Chorosynthesis, Mouthscape, Convoco, violinist Sam Weiser and soprano Winnie Neih, to mention but a few. Awards include the American Prize for Large Scale Choral Works and an honorable mention from the National Association of Teachers of Singing. He is currently pursuing his DMA in composition at the University of Texas at Austin. Kyle Connor holds a Master's in Creative Writing from Temple University, has published four chapbooks of poetry, and serves as co-editor-in-chief of *Evanescent: A Journal of Literary Medicine*. This is his second libretto for MCP, having previously collaborated with Dominick DiOrio on the 2021 *A Yuletide Carol*.

Smith has provided the following program notes: "Many of us spend the end of our year celebrating the birth of a child. A child born in the lowest of circumstances, known to so few. He was basically anonymous. Regardless of this, he would eventually grow into a man who would change the history of our world.

"What interests me the most in this story is his anonymity. The idea that if I were there I could have walked by him and barely registered his existence. It often makes me think of all the unknown children around the world that I will never meet and all of the potential that they have. I then think of how many of them will never be able to realize that potential due to the circumstances of their lives. Circumstances they and their parents often have no control over.

"In *The Anonymous Child*, I was interested in exploring the potential that all children are born with the responsibility that both parents and society have in helping children realize that potential. The text, written by my dear friend and poet Kyle Conner, is a dialogue between a mother (the choir), her child (baritone soloist), and the Earth (a trio of high voices). It follows the child as they are guided gently by their mother through many of life's difficulties while the Earth comments on the nature of the relationship between mothers and their children. The

last lesson the mother gives her child is that her love is a recognition of them as two individuals, become their own person.

"I see this piece as a celebration of dedicated people who take on the impossibly hard task preparing their children for this complex world. But I also hope that it pushes us to reflect on how we as a society support them. They may not end up changing the world, but the world will certainly be a better place if we provide for them the resources, care, and compassion that they all deserve."

Frederick Faber (1814–1863) was another Anglican vicar turned Catholic priest. He missed the richness of Anglican hymnology and was determined to remedy that. He wrote over 150 hymns with beautifully crafted texts designed to facilitate congregational singing, including his 1862 *There's a Wideness in God's Mercy*. This beautiful setting was written in 1977 by Calvin Hampton (1938-1984), an exceptional and highly individual organist and a prolific composer of hymns. This setting may be unfamiliar to some, but it has made its way into a number of hymnals.

Diane White-Clayton (b. 1964) is a composer, vocalist, choral conductor, minister and acclaimed classical and gospel performer. She holds a BA from Washington University in St. Louis, Master's and Doctorate degrees from University of California at Santa Barbara, and studied piano at the Ecole Normale de Musique in Paris. In her composer's notes, she writes, "*The Birth of a Promise* is a work leaning towards the classical tradition with flavors of impressionism in the piano accompaniment and contrasting textures in the choral writing. Although the subject is centered on the Virgin birth, its message far exceeds the season of Christmas. It speaks of the struggle often associated with the great promises of God."

Silent Night was written in 1818 for a Midnight Mass service by Joseph Mohr and Franz Gruber, assistant pastor and choir director, respectively, of the aptly named St. Nicholas Church in the Bavarian town of Oberndorf. Mohr and Gruber sang it as a duet to the accompaniment of a guitar, with the choir echoing the final line of each verse. It is in the form of a ländler, a traditional Austrian folk dance, although many of the dotted rhythms have disappeared from the melody over the years. It spread widely when it entered into the repertoire of two traveling folk ensembles and reached America in 1839, when the Rainer Family Singers performed it outside Trinity Wall Street Church on Christmas Day. The English version is a paraphrase written in 1859 by Episcopal priest John Freeman Young while he was assistant rector of that same church.

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing takes its melody from a cantata, set for men's chorus and two brass bands, which Felix Mendelssohn composed for a celebration of the 400th anniversary of Gutenberg's invention of movable type. He singled out the second movement as a piece that could stand alone with the right text, suggesting something patriotic rather than sacred. It is fortunate that William Cummings (1831-1915) was unaware of Mendelssohn's comments. An ardent admirer of the composer ever since singing in the 1847 performance of *Elijah*, he found he could fit the text of the Charles Wesley hymn to Mendelssohn's music by moving back and forth between the melody and the accompaniment.

– Michael Moore

Jacobson: Mi Zeh Y'Maleil

*Mi zeh y'maleil nisei Eil yitbonan,
Bi-y'mei Matityahu ben Yochanan,
Anochi esmach asis badonai
Higdil laasot im b'nei Chashmonai!*

I sing of the wonders the Lord has done
To save Mattathias and Judah his son.
Give thanks to the Lord, rejoice and be glad!
Sing praise to the Maccabees who set
our people free!

Refrain:

*Ram hu al ramim nigla v'sinai,
Richbo ribotayim alfei shinan.
Anochi esmach asis badonai,
Higdil laasot im b'nei Chashmonai!*

High above the heavens, enthroned is
our God,
His glory, His majesty revealed for all
to see.
Give thanks to the Lord, rejoice and be glad!
Sing praise to the Maccabees who set
our people free!

*Dor vador rabim kamim aleinu
lechalot zeicher sh'eiriteinu,
lulei Adonai ts'vaot malkeinu
marom laaretz hishlich karnan.*

Year after year as they tried to enslave
us,
We prayed to God the He would come
and save us.
In each generation oppressors arose,
But who could oppose the Lord of
Hosts?

Refrain

*Vay'hi bimeit Yavan bnei avla,
Heirimu sod ei tsa v'tachbula,
Gazru al shabat rosh chodesh umila,
V'yachad shloshtan ya'avru minan.*

Long, long ago, Antiochus decreed
All people must bow down to idols made
of stone.
He tried every torture, but could not
succeed!
We worship none other but God alone!

Refrain

*Darchu et kashtam oivim a zei fanim,
Elisha v'Tarshish, Kitim v'Dodanim,
Goi mam'lechet kohanim,
Bau tim'u mikdash ham'chunan.*

Powerful the armies, outrageous the
foe!
From Asia, from Africa they came to
draw the bow.
God's chosen people, the priests of the
Lord;
To God's holy temple they marched in
bold accord.

Refrain

– English translation
by Joshua Jacobson

Mendelssohn: There Shall a Star Come Out of Jacob

There shall a star come out of Jacob,
and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel;
With might destroying princes and cities!

*Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern!
So welch ein Glanz geht auf vom Herrn,
Licht und Trost zu geben!
Dein Wort, Jesu,
ist die Klarheit, führt zur Wahrheit und zum
Leben.*

Wer kann dich genug erheben?

As bright the star of morning gleams,
So Jesus sheddeth glorious beams
Of light and consolation,
Thy Word, O Lord,
Radiance darting, truth imparting, gives
salvation:
Thine be praise and adoration.

– Christian Karl Josias von Bunsen
translation by William Bartholomew

✱ O Come, All Ye Faithful

O come, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant.
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.
Come and behold him
Born the King of Angels.
O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above:
Glory to God
In the highest:

O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.

Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
Born this happy morning,
Jesu, to thee be glory giv'n;
Word of the Father,
Now in flesh appearing:
O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.

– English translation by Frederick Oakeley

Howells: A Spotless Rose

A Spotless Rose is blowing,
Sprung from a tender root,
Of ancient seers' foreshowing,
Of Jesse promised fruit;
Its fairest bud unfolds to light
Amid the cold winter,
And in the dark midnight.

The Rose which I am singing
Whereof Isaiah said,
Is from its sweet root springing
In Mary, purest Maid;
For through our God's great love and
might.

The Blessed Babe she bare us
In a cold, cold winter's night.

– anonymous German text
translated by Catherine T. Winkworth

Gardner: Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day

Tomorrow shall be my dancing day;
I would my true love did so chance
To see the legend of my play,
To call my true love to my dance;
*Sing, oh! my love, oh! my love, my love,
my love,
This have I done for my true love.*

Then was I born of a virgin pure,
Of her I took fleshly substance;
Thus was I knit to man's nature,
To call my true love to my dance.
Refrain

In a manger laid, and wrapped I was,
So very poor, this was my chance,
Betwixt an ox and a silly poor ass,
To call my true love to my dance.
Refrain

Then afterwards baptized I was;
The Holy Ghost on me did glance,
My Father's voice heard I from above,
To call my true love to my dance.
Refrain

Handel: Hallelujah Chorus

Hallelujah!
For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.
Hallelujah!
The kingdom of this world is become
the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.

And he shall reign forever and ever.
King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.
Hallelujah!

– Charles Jennens
Extracts from
Revelation 19:6, 11:15, 19:16

DiOrio: Four Postcard Carols

The Oak-Grove Carol

Across the oak-grove flows my soul,
Rememb'ring days of bonnie best.
With you, I knew a heart made whole,
Now empty laid in sadden'd chest.
*So soon may I follow
When friendships decay...*
On Derry's banks with you I rest.

Across the oak-wood rings my cry,
Rememb'ring nights in brighten'd camp.
With you, I stopped 'neath moonlit sky
Now cold and darken'd without lamp.
*Thus kindly I scatter
Thy leaves o'er the bed...*
On Derry's banks o'er grown and damp.

Joyous Family, Love's Bouquet

Rally, all, for love's great aim
Rising now from fairest art
Kindled passions of the start
Set within heart's temper'd flame:
Light and music, cherished day,
Joyous fam'ly, love's bouquet.

Notice, all, love firmly hone
Ready seed of music's pow'r
Deepest root bursts forth to flow'r
Rarest bounty fully grown:
Light and music, cherished day,
Joyous fam'ly, love's bouquet.

A Heart Is Turned at Christmas

A heart is turned at Christmas
A smile begins to form
A fleeting glance, a lilting dance,
A lifted cloud transformed.
Shalom, Shalom, v'Laila tov...
His heart-hurt chill here warmed.

A bell rings out at Christmas
A chime uplifts the soul,
A change of tone, a glimmer shown
Of happiness made whole.
Shalom, Shalom, v'Laila tov...
His steadfast toil console.

Across the oak-copse lingers here
The faintest 'pression of your print.
With you, I sensed a world made clear,
Now foggy, misty firmament.
*No flow'r of her kindred
No rose-bud is nigh...*
On Derry's banks at dawn gray pier.

And yet the oak-holt brightens me,
As I remember how we grew,
Together sharing times of glee
Now warmed as I think back on you.
*From love's shining circle
The gems drop away...*
On Derry's banks grows rooted tree.

Beckon on, all, for love's new form
Sewn this day within our oath
Knitted fam'lies fresh out-growth
Surest future now transform:
Light and music, cherished day,
Joyous fam'ly, love's bouquet.

Keep us, kindly, love most fair
Sealed withing a promised life
Recognized as man and wife
Radiate now with our prayer:
Light and music, cherished day,
Joyous fam'ly, love's bouquet.

A love affirmed at Christmas
A fam'ly joined as one
An easy yoke, a time evoked
Or merriment hard won.
Shalom, Shalom, v'Laila tov...
His sadness here undone.

Vouchsafe the vow of Christmas
Of darkest wounds made light,
Of magic seen, of spirit clean,
Of wrongs now turned upright.
Shalom, Shalom, v'Laila tov...
And peace to him this night.



Please use this QR code to access the full e-program, which includes staff and donor lists. It is designed specifically for ease of use with your mobile device.

The Chestnut Hill Carol

Behold our love in fairest form,
Made whole this day on moon-draped
morn!

White winter's song sings rare and warm,
Remembrant muse of new babe born.
Noel, noé, all lives reform:
True bearers of your love adorn'd.

Behold our light in highest tow'r,
Made gold this day at sunbloom'd hour!
Dark winter's frost flows forth in show'r,
Refreshing seed of nascent flow'r.
Noel, noé, all sin devour:
True stewards of your light empow'r'd.

* Angels We Have Heard on High

Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly singing o'er the plain,
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strain,
Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heav'nly song?
Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Rutter: What Sweeter Music

What sweeter music can we bring
Than a carol for to sing
The birth of this, our heav'nly king?
Awake the voice! Awake the string!

Dark and cold night, fly hence away,
And give the honour to this day
That sees December turned to May.

Why does the chilling winter morn
Smile like a field beset with corn?
Or smell like a meadow newly shorn
Thus on a sudden? Come and see
The cause, why things thus fragrant be:
'Tis he is born, whose quick'ning birth
Gives life and lustre, public mirth,
To heaven and the underearth.

Betinis: Carol of the Stranger

Peace and grace be to this house
Where all are welcomed in;
Receive the guest, receive this heart:
Tell the stranger, tell.

Behold our neighbor meek and prone,
Made one this day through kindness
shown!

Pale winter's pallor over thrown,
Resplendent promise newly sown.
Noel, noé, all bells intone:
True servants of your grace full-grown.

Sing out all people gather'd here,
Made one this day in fondness near!
Warm winter's hall rings round with cheer,
Rejoicing throng 'cross joyous sphere.
Noel, noé, all folk appear:
True 'ttendants of your heart sincere.

Come to Bethlehem, and see
Christ, whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria in excelsis Deo!

– James Chadwick

We see him come, and know him ours,
Who, with his sunshine and his showers,
Turns all the patient ground to flowers.

The darling of the world is come,
And fit it is we find a room
To welcome him. The nobler part
Of all the house here is the heart,
Which we will give him; and bequeath
This holly and this ivy wreath,
To do him honor; who's our King,
And Lord of all this revelling.

– Robert Herrick

Tell the stranger what you cannot tell
Those who love you and desire your
joy:
Tell.

Make tall your walls, make long these
beams,

Who once believed alone;

Make wide the circle, feed the fire:

Tell the Silence, tell.

Tell the Silence what you cannot tell

Those who love you and desire your
joy.

Tell.

Blessings be upon this place,

Let every wound be healed,

Let every secret, every dream:

Tell the Angel, tell.

Tell the Angel what you cannot tell
Those who love you and desire your
joy.

Tell.

Peace and grace be to his house,

All will be returned;

Let every soul be called your own,

Tell the Mystery, tell.

Tell the Mystery what you long to tell

Those who love you and desire your
joy.

Tell.

– Michael Dennis Browne

Kim: The New Year's Magpie Song

Wild is the parting year,
we await its closure.

“Coming is a welcome visitor,”

To us the magpies sing.

Some meditate,
some decorate their homes,
some celebrate with fireworks,
some write, some dance,
and we sing this Magpie song:

Kkachi, kkachi, sulkkachi,

johoon sohnnim ohndago

kkachi, kkachi, sulkkachi,

gibboon noreh hahneh.

(Magpie, magpie, New Year's magpie

A welcome guest is coming,

Magpie, magpie, New Year's magpie,

It sings pleasantly.)

Some fast, some feast,
some clean, some make a mess.
Some make a noise, some stay quiet,
And we sing the Magpie song.

Kkachi, kkachi, sulkkachi,

johoon sohnnim ohndago,

kkachi, kkachi, sulkkachi,

gibboon noreh hahneh,

hahmkkeh noreh hahneh!

(Magpie, magpie, New Year's magpie,

A welcome guest is coming,

Magpie, magpie, New Year's magpie,

It sings pleasantly,

It sings together.)

Smith: The Anonymous Child: A Modern Masque

The entire poem is printed here; the text in bold type has been set by the composer.

The Child says:

Who am I?

Do I belong?

Why am I born?

The Mother says:

You are my child and so you belong.

You are my child and so you are loved.

Child of Earth, to which you are born.

I'm glad you've come to join the dance

Accepting your inheritance

Of love, nature, wander and joy.

The Earth says:

Mother and Child,

A pair in perfection,

Welcome.

The Child says:

What shall I do?

Can I love too?

Show me how–

I want to!

The Mother says:

It's easy, Child,

And then it's hard.

First, unclothe your eyes to feel the light;

Attune your ears to follow the song;

Open your heart to touch the world:

Stand and spread your arms and sing!

This is the way to welcome all things

**And see what the sound of your own
voice brings.**

The Earth says:
Each seed deserves the time and place
To nutrify and grow its shoot
And then to root and show its face
In nascent bloom and sun's embrace.

The Child says:
I am grateful, Mother, for what you
provide.
You teach me how to swim the tides;
Some people are giving, and some
people not;
Some people are loving, and others not.

I know which to seek and find;
For I choose those who are kind of my
kind!

The Earth says:
The Child learns well as
As a mollusk of the sea observes
the contours of its nautilus shell
with equanimity.

The Mother says:
My Child, you grow in complexity!
You reach, expand and come to be.
You potentiate your possibilities.

Now remember, I said two things of
love:

It's easy, then it's hard.
For when your heart is open
For all the world to see
You show your strength of character
in your vulnerability.

And when your heart is open
It opens to everything:
So while you sow the fruits of love
you also bear their sting.

For a heart that loves
Is a heart that gives
Is a heart that takes
Is a heart that breaks.

It's strange that love can bring one pain
But that's the risk of loving.
Yet after loss and after hurt
A (yet) healing comes and then a calm,
A knowing of vicissitudes
that spurs us on
to gain strength to love again.

The Child says:
Mother, you are wise.
And with your wisdom I arise
To take the measure of each day.

The Earth says:
The spring of motherhood ever flows,
Ever guides, ever knows.

Things move in currents
And tides eternal come and go
Yet all is recognizable
In the rhythms of life's ebb and flow.

The Mother says:
Now one last thing, my Child
As you are of the age
Where you can find kind of your kind
You must go from me, and I from you
So you can make your own way through
With my fuss and bother.

And know my saying I love you
Affirms to us that we are two:
I am I, and you are you;
this makes all the difference.

Go in peace, and I the same
and may you find your own TRUE NAME!

The Child says:
Goodbye my Mother! It is time
to walk the earth in my own rhyme
And grow my fruit in my own clime
And (to) be the gardener of my (own)
vine.

– Kyle Connor

✳ Hampton: There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

There's a wideness in God's mercy
Like the wideness of the sea;
There's a kindness in his justice
Which is more than liberty.
There is plentiful redemption
In the blood that has been shed:
There is joy for all the members
In the sorrows of the Head.

For the love of God is broader
Than the measures of our mind,
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.
If our love were but more simple
We should take him at his word,
And our lives would be all sunshine
In the sweetness of our Lord.

Fearful souls, why will you scatter
Like a crowd of frightened sheep?
Foolish hearts, why will you wander
From a love so true and deep?

White-Clayton: The Birth of a Promise

One night the angel Gabriel was sent from
God on high
To tell the Virgin Mary of a gift that would
change her life.
A baby boy named Jesus, the long-awaited
King,
Would soon be inside of her, a miracle
unseen.
The road would not be easy but she chose
to receive
the pain and the promise so that others
could be free.

✽ Silent Night

Silent night, holy night,
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child,
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night,
Shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heav'nly hosts sing Alleluia:

✽ 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.

Christ, by highest heav'n adored,
Christ the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold him come,
Offspring of a virgin's womb:
Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see,

There is welcome for the sinner
and more graces for the good;
There is mercy with the Savior,
There is healing in his blood.

Like Mary, you may be called to a promise
linked with pain.
Like Mary, let the Holy Ghost overshadow
you.
Just hold on through your labor, push
through the pain.
For some promises, certain promises, are
birthed in pain.

Christ the Saviour is born,
Christ the Saviour is born!

Silent night, holy night,
Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord at Thy birth,
Jesus, Lord at Thy birth.

– paraphrase by John Freeman Young

Hail th'incarnate Deity,
Pleased as man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! The herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King.

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Risen with healing in his wings;
Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King.

– Charles Wesley & George Whitefield

The Performers

Mendelssohn Chorus of Philadelphia

Mendelssohn Chorus of Philadelphia, now in its 151st season under Artistic Director & Conductor Dominick DiOrio, stands as one of America's most enduring musical institutions. Originally founded in 1874 as an eight-part male chorus by William Wallace Gilchrist, Mendelssohn Chorus now includes over 150 voices of diverse age, background, gender, and profession. Since its inception the chorus has balanced tradition with innovation, presenting beloved classics while championing new works.

Throughout its history, the chorus has collaborated with world-renowned conductors, including Leopold Stokowski, Eugene Ormandy, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Riccardo Muti, and most recently Fabio Luisi. Its longstanding partnership with The Philadelphia Orchestra, dating back to the orchestra's founding, underscores its significance in the city's rich musical landscape. Mendelssohn Chorus' discography contains numerous commercial recordings with The Philadelphia Orchestra including a prize-winning recording of Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 13 "Babi Yar"*, and its own GRAMMY-nominated 1985 recording of Persichetti's *Winter Cantata*.

Mendelssohn Chorus has been at the forefront of introducing groundbreaking works to American audiences. From the Philadelphia premiere of Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem* to the first U.S. performance of Mahler's *Symphony No. 8 "Symphony of a Thousand"*, the chorus has consistently pushed boundaries. Under the leadership of Conductor Laureate Alan Harler, the chorus gained recognition for its innovative, cross-genre performances. This pioneering spirit continues today with over 100 commissions from contemporary composers including Rollo Dilworth, Jennifer Higdon, David Lang, and Caroline Shaw.

The chorus's commitment to excellence has garnered prestigious accolades, including ASCAP/Chorus America Awards for Adventurous Programming and a Pulitzer Prize in Music for Julia Wolfe's *Anthrax Fields*, commissioned by the chorus in 2014. Beyond performances, the Mendelssohn Chorus serves as an incubator for emerging talent through its section leader and apprenticeship programs, and recently launched *Joyful Abundance*, a commissioning program for emerging composers and poets. Centering its mission to foster artistry, beauty and belonging, the chorus is dedicated to enriching Philadelphia's cultural tapestry by illuminating our shared human experiences.



Mendelssohn Chorus of Philadelphia

(singing in this concert)

Soprano

Maryl Apadula
 Katy Avery*
 Barbara Berry
 Mia Castro-Diephouse
 Rachel Castro-Diephouse
 Courtney Comar
 Shiloh Cooper
 Amanda Leah Davis
 Kelsey DeJesus
 Roberta Fischer
 Teri Gemberling-Johnson
 Miriam Goldberg
 Lindsey Graham
 Elizabeth Hohwieler
 Anna Juliar
 Emily Grace Kane
 Lynn Kirby
 Maya Kociba
 Kelsey Lewis*
 Carolyn Linarello
 Rachael Lipson*
 Fay Manicke
 Juliana Melara
 Ilene Miller
 Andrea Nestman
 Kate Philips-Kaiser
 Gabrielle Rinkus
 Roberta Rote
 Sophia Santiago*
 Leila Schwartz
 Mary Kate Suhy
 Marie Tavianini
 Jessica Vega
 Deanda Wilson
 Kathryn Wadsworth
 Lisa Wooldridge

Alto

Ariel Alvarado
 Rachele Armstrong

Jenna Camacho
 Christine Chaapel
 Hannah Davis
 Erin Donovan
 Robin Eaton
 Abigail Ehret
 Eloise Flood
 Shannon Foley
 Rebecca Fülöp
 Tammara Gary
 Anne Gold
 Lilah Gosman
 Katherine Haas
 Sharon Kempin
 Deborah Laird
 Allison Levine
 Susan Lin
 Priscilla Lo
 Deborah McIntosh
 Heather Mitchell
 Florence Moyer
 Margaret Oravetz
 Jennifer Rafferty*
 Sharon Rhinesmith*
 Rebecca Roberts
 Alana Schreibman
 Julia Scott
 Jennifer Sheffield
 Maria Sisto
 Jane Uptegrove
 Samantha Will
 Heather Wismer

Tenor

Shawn Anderson
 Louis Bartholomew
 Andrew Beck
 Christopher Carriero
 Kyle Conner
 Mark Davidson
 Rich Galassini
 Campbell Holder
 Frank Kanther

Viv Kaye
 Jim Light
 John H. Luttenberger, III
 Ian Martin*
 Joshua Matthias-Long
 Daniel Ojserkis
 Mark Pinzur
 Eric Rodriguez-Lopez
 Roy Schmidt
 Jeffrey Schwartz
 Kyle Sheehan
 D'quan Tyson*
 Steve Ullman

Bass

Patrick Beck
 Evan Birnholz
 Will Budreau
 Paul Burgmayer
 Michael Carson
 Mark Cordova
 Lucas DeJesus**
 Brendan Fullam
 Steven Glasser
 Jon Kochavi
 John Kohlhas
 James Lamb
 George Leone
 Martin Levitas
 Jacob Lynn-Palevsky
 Sean Martin
 Michael Moore
 Erik Potteiger*
 Jeffrey Pufahl
 Cleveland Rea
 Matthew Reese
 Daniel Rosen
 Daniel Simpson
 Erik Stenswold*
 Thomas Sutton
 Richard Tolsma
 Alexander Varghese

* Section Leaders

** Senior Vocal Artist & Section Leader

Dominick DiOrio, Artistic Director & Conductor

Dominick DiOrio is the 14th Artistic Director and Conductor of the Mendelssohn Chorus of Philadelphia, one of the most historic choral organizations in the United States. In this role, he regularly prepares the chorus to sing with The Philadelphia Orchestra, including a “near ideal” (The Philadelphia Inquirer) performance of *Carmina burana* in March 2024 with conductor Fabio Luisi. His artistic vision for the Mendelssohn Chorus of Philadelphia has been regularly supported with multiple grants from the William Penn Foundation, the Presser Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts.



Synthia Steinman

Recognized with The American Prizes in both Choral Composition (2014) and Choral Performance (2019, with NOTUS), DiOrio is an energetic conductor and composer who has won widespread acclaim for his contributions to American music. He is also professor of music and chair of the department in choral conducting at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, where he joined the faculty in 2012, and where he serves as director of NOTUS, Indiana University’s storied contemporary vocal ensemble.

DiOrio’s combined role as a composer-conductor has led to many unique opportunities and collaborations. In April 2024, he had the honor of writing original music for William Shatner, part of a spoken-word performance at IU’s Memorial Stadium moments before the total solar eclipse. DiOrio conducted the collaboration, which featured Mr. Shatner, NOTUS and twenty instrumentalists from the IU Jacobs School of Music. DiOrio’s guest conducting appearances regularly feature his original compositions, including with civic and professional ensembles such as the Choral Arts Society of Washington (*SOLARIS*), Houston Chamber Choir (*I Am*), Choral Arts Initiative (*All Is*), and the Young Naperville Singers (*Young Today*).

DiOrio’s original music has been hailed for its keenly intelligent, evocative style, which shows “a tour de force of inventive thinking and unique colour” (Gramophone). His over 60 published works have appeared at major venues around the world including the Sydney Opera House, Lincoln Center, and Carnegie Hall—as well as internationally in Austria, Canada, China, Denmark, Finland, Hong Kong, Italy, Norway, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, and the U.K.

He composes for musicians of all ages and experiences and maintains an active writing schedule—completing over 70 commissions in the last decade. Some of his recent commissioning partners include the San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus and the San Francisco Symphony, the Children’s Chorus of Washington, the Cincinnati Vocal Arts Ensemble & Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra, The Choral Arts Society of Washington, “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band, and many academic institutions, including Macalester, Oberlin, Princeton, Smith, and the Universities of Michigan, Oregon, and Illinois.

DiOrio’s love for contemporary music is reflected in his conducted repertoire, including such path-breaking works from the 20th and 21st centuries as James

MacMillan *Seven Last Words*, Steve Reich *The Desert Music*, Alfred Schnittke *Requiem*, Sarah Kirkland Snider *Mass for the Endangered*, Joel Thompson *Seven Last Words of the Unarmed*, and Krzysztof Penderecki *St. Luke Passion*, which he prepared for the composer in November 2017. Equally at home with music of earlier eras, he has also conducted choral-orchestral performances of Bach *Magnificat*, Haydn *Mass in Time of War*, Mozart *Great C Minor Mass*, Vaughan Williams *Five Mystical Songs*, and Leonard Bernstein *Chichester Psalms*, among others.

DiOrio is deeply committed to strengthening the profession by empowering others, and he recently completed a four-year term as president and president-elect of the National Collegiate Choral Organization (2018-22). For his leadership during the pandemic, he was honored with NCCO's inaugural Distinguished Service Award. DiOrio also previously served as chair of ACDA's Composition Initiatives Standing Committee and as a member of the Board of Directors for Chorus America.

He earned the Doctor of Musical Arts in Choral Conducting from the Yale School of Music, as well as an M.M.A. and an M.M. in Conducting from Yale and a B.M. in Composition *summa cum laude* from Ithaca College. He proudly credits his mentors Janet Galván, Simon Carrington, and Marguerite Brooks for serving as model leaders and for making him the person he is today.

Andrew Kotylo, organ

Andrew Kotylo has been Director of Music and Organist at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Chestnut Hill since 2019. Previously he had served as Organist/Choirmaster at the Basilica of St. Peter in Columbia, South Carolina and Associate Director of Music at the historic Trinity Episcopal Church on the Green in New Haven, Connecticut.

A native of Binghamton, New York, Andy holds degrees from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music where he studied organ with Christopher Young and Larry Smith and choral conducting with William Jon Gray. Other teachers have included Carolyn Albaugh, the late Searle Wright, Jonathan Biggers, and John Schwandt. His doctoral dissertation concerns the life and organ works of Searle Wright, for which he received a citation of excellence from Indiana University.



Kotylo has concertized throughout the United States and in England, with performances at conventions of the American Guild of Organists and Association of Anglican Musicians that have earned critical acclaim. A top prize-winner in numerous competitions, including the American Guild of Organists' National Young Artists Competition and Poister Competition, his performances have been featured several times on American Public Media's *Pipedreams*. He is also active as a private teacher, competition adjudicator, and workshop clinician.

Ting Ting Wong, piano

Ting Ting Wong is a highly regarded vocal coach and collaborative pianist in the Philadelphia area. Her performances are noted for their clarity, precision, and emotional resonance, earning her a reputation as a dynamic and versatile artist. Musical America has said her “nuanced pedaling and voicings painted some of the richest backdrops.” Currently, she is on the faculty of The Curtis Institute of Music, staff accompanist for The Academy of Vocal Arts and Senior Artist-in-Residence and Collaborative Pianist for the Mendelssohn Chorus of Philadelphia. She regularly collaborates with singers at Haverford College, Bryn Mawr College and maintains a busy schedule with her private coaching studio. She has served as chorus pianist with Opera Philadelphia, assistant conductor with ConcertOPERA Philadelphia, and pianist for the Opera Theater of Pittsburgh and Castleton festivals.



Ms. Wong made her debut as a collaborative pianist at the Kennedy Center in 2016 and performed with IlluminArts in Miami in 2019. Recently, she was part of Princeton Festival 2022, and served as faculty at The Mediterranean Opera Studio Festival in Italy. She also recently worked as associate pianist (Otello) for 2022 with Opera Philadelphia. Ms. Wong finished a national tour with Curtis on Tour in 2022, performing with talented students and renowned bass-baritone Eric Owens. Ms. Wong just returned from Ravinia Steans Music institute in Highland Park, Illinois, where she was the resident collaborate pianist for the third season.

Born and raised in Hong Kong, Ms. Wong holds a master's degree in piano performance from Carnegie Mellon University, where she also earned a piano pedagogy certificate. She continued her studies receiving a master's degree in piano accompanying and coaching from Temple University, where she studied with Lambert Orkis and Charles Abramovic.

The Timberdale Brass

Timberdale Brass is an ensemble committed to engaging listeners of all ages, convinced that if they enjoy the music they play, the audience will leave their performances smiling and wanting more. Consisting of the region's most sought after brass musicians, they have become a common presence on many concert series throughout the region, with recent performances in Mt. Gretna (PA), Wilmington (DE), Blue Bell (PA) and Margate (NJ). Individually members hold principal positions in many of the Delaware Valley's preeminent ensembles and have performed with The Philadelphia Orchestra, Opera Philadelphia, Philly Pops, Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, Philadelphia Ballet, Delaware Symphony, Opera Delaware, Iris Chamber Orchestra, and with Philadelphia's premiere theater companies.

The Timberdale Brass members are Eric Schweingruber and Darin Kelly, trumpets; Karen Schubert, horn; Jarred Antonacci, trombone; and Brian Brown, tuba.

Heather Mitchell, Associate Artistic Director & Director of Operations

Heather Mitchell serves as Associate Artistic Director and Director of Operations for the Mendelssohn Chorus of Philadelphia, Assistant Director of Choral Activities at The College of New Jersey, Adjunct Faculty at Temple University, and is Director of Operations and a founding board member of the Dallas Girls Chorus. She is often sought out as a guest conductor, clinician, and adjudicator for many major choral festivals including the Arizona Music Educators Association, All American Music Festival, OrlandoFest, Bach Festival Society of Winter Park, NJ Choral Consortium, and more throughout New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Florida, and Arizona.



Mitchell has conducted in prestigious venues like Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the Vatican, and others across Philadelphia, Minneapolis, Canada, Germany, France, and Italy. As a choral mezzo, Mitchell regularly performs with the Philadelphia Symphonic Chorus and has sung with many professional groups all over the country including the Manhattan Chorale, Manhattan Choral Ensemble, Coro, True Concord Voices and Orchestra, and the Tucson Symphony Orchestra Chorus.

Specializing in unknown repertoire by known composers, Mitchell is the Founder and Artistic Director of the new professional vocal ensemble FIVE LINES to bring attention to pieces by major composers that have been overlooked. In the spirit of FIVE LINES, she made her Carnegie Hall debut, conducting the vastly unfamiliar *Schumann Requiem*, Op. 148.

As a Bach scholar, Heather is the author of “A Reconsideration of the Performance of the Chorales in J.S. Bach’s *Passio secundum Johannem*, BWV 245,” a featured article in the renowned *Choral Journal*, published by the American Choral Directors Association.

Mitchell holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in choral and orchestral conducting from the University of Arizona, a Master of Music degree in choral conducting from Saint Cloud State University, in Minnesota, and has studied and sung under notable conductors such as Alfred Mann, Christoph Wolff, Helmuth Rilling, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Nicholas McGegan, Nathalie Stutzmann, Fabio Luisi, Donald Palumbo, Joe Miller, and Bruce Chamberlain.

Ariel Alvarado, Assistant Conductor & Director of Community Programs

Ariel Antoinette Alvarado is a conductor, vocalist, and scholarartist dedicated to restorative justice and student empowerment through culturally responsive pedagogy. Having grown up with little representation of her identities, Ariel’s work focuses on centering the voices of the marginalized and making connections across cultures. Ms. Alvarado is stepping into her role as Assistant Conductor and Director of Community Programs of the Mendelssohn Chorus of Philadelphia.

She will also serve as the Assistant Conductor of the Wilmington Children's Chorus, a member of the Delaware Academy of Vocal Arts flagship ensemble 'Elevation', and the Early Years Music Teacher of Wilmington Friends School beginning Fall 2024. She earned a Master of Music in Choral Conducting from The Ohio State University and a Bachelor of Arts in Music from Spelman College in Atlanta, GA. Ms. Alvarado makes meaning with the world around her through music and is journeying to leave the world a more beautiful place than she found it.



Shawn Anderson, John P. Leonard Conducting Apprentice

Corey Nashawn Anderson (Shawn) hails from Chicago, "The Windy City." He earned a Bachelor's Degree in Music Education from the University of Southern Mississippi, a Bachelor's Degree in Voice from North Park University Chicago, and a Master of Music in Voice with an emphasis in Choral Conducting from Temple University. Shawn loves music and loves to sing! He also plays clarinet and has since he was 5 years old. Mr. Anderson taught high school for 14 years in the Chicago Public School System, has taught many private lessons (instrumental and voice), and has sung in numerous choirs over the years. Shawn is a Preachers Kid (PK), so he grew up singing in church which is where he discovered his love for singing! He was drum major in high school which led to a love for conducting and the rest is history!



Katy Avery, soprano

Multiple Grammy Award-winning Katy Avery, with her "beautifully pure tone" (*Classical Voice of North Carolina*), is a soloist and ensemble singer based in Philadelphia. Regularly appearing at home and abroad, Katy has most frequently performed as a core member of three-time Grammy winning new music choir, The Crossing. Katy has also enjoyed engagements with Roomful of Teeth, Conspirare, Choral Arts Philadelphia, Les Canards Chantants, The Thirteen, and Opera Philadelphia, among many others. Recordings of Ms. Avery have been featured on the ECM, Parma, Innova, and Albany labels. Katy received her Bachelor of Music degree from East Carolina University in 2009, where she studied jazz and classical vocal performance, and completed her Masters of Music in Vocal Pedagogy and Performance from Westminster Choir College under the tutelage of Dr. Christopher Arneson. She currently maintains a private voice studio in Philadelphia and is actively curating new performances with ballet companies and other disciplines. When she's not performing or teaching, you can find Katy sewing her own couture, dancing, or cooking creative meals.



Rachael Lipson, soprano

Rachael Lipson, soprano, enjoys frequent collaboration with opera companies, churches, and professional choirs located throughout the Tri-State area. She received her Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance at Westminster Choir College, and her Master of Music in Voice Performance at the University of Delaware in 2016, where she studied under Noël Archambeault. Since then, she has explored diverse repertoire as both a soloist and as a choral scholar, with a passion for new music, specifically. Rachael is currently a staff singer at Saint Mark's Church, Philadelphia, a member of the Philadelphia Symphonic Choir's roster, and a member of Vox Amadeus. She can be heard on classical guitarist

Kevin Cope's CD *Origin Unknown* performing his sets "Three Sephardic Songs" and "In the Sky," released in October of 2020. Rachael is very excited to continue her musical journey with the Mendelssohn Chorus of Philadelphia!



Sophia Santiago, soprano

Described as a singing actress, lyric soprano Sophia Santiago has performed as a soloist and chorister across the New York metropolitan area. She studied voice with Faith Esham at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, NJ. During her time there, she performed Mozart opera roles Pamina from *Die Zauberflöte* and Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro*.

After receiving her Bachelor's degree, Sophia studied for her Master's Degree in Vocal Performance at Manhattan School of Music under voice teacher Shirley Close. Recently Sophia won first place at the Spazio e Musica competition in Vicenza, Italy and performed a recital of Monteverdi, Vivaldi, and Strozzi with baroque ensemble I Musicali Affetti headed by Fabio Missaggia in Vicenza and Modena. She was a District winner of New York in the Laffont competition of 2023 and recent engagements include the American Bach Soloist Academy of 2023 and singing as a soloist in Joby Talbot's *Path of Miracles* with the LOTUS project. Outside of music, she enjoys baking, hiking, and going to see performances of new works.



Jennifer Rafferty, alto

Jennifer Rafferty, mezzo soprano, is a lifelong vocalist in the greater Philadelphia region. She holds a Bachelor of Music Education from the Boyer College of Music and Dance at Temple University. Since graduating, she has done a great deal of solo and quartet work as a church musician at various churches in the area. Currently, she is a section leader at the Washington Memorial Chapel at Valley Forge National Historic Park. She also works in music publishing at the esteemed Theodore Presser and Carl Fischer music companies.



Ian Martin, tenor

Ian Martin is a classically trained tenor vocalist and music teacher. An alumnus of Philadelphia's High School for the Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA), he graduated magna cum laude from West Chester University, receiving his Bachelor of Music degree in Music Education with a concentration in voice. During Ian's time at West Chester, he earned the Hilary H. Parry Memorial Junior Voice Scholarship, and was an honors soloist for the WCU Symphony Orchestra. He was also a member of the Concert Choir, and the WCU Opera Theater Company, having performed in Poulenc's "Dialogues of the Carmelites", as well as Penhorwood's "Too Many Sopranos", and Caccini's "La liberazione di Ruggiero".



Ian has continued to perform as a freelance singer (having sung background for artists like Sarah Brightman and Bobby McFerrin), as a tenor section leader for the Mendelssohn Chorus of Philadelphia, and as a member of the Philadelphia Symphonic Choir. When he's not performing, he's in the classroom, teaching general music to children from kindergarten to eighth grade, and directing his own elementary school chorus.

Jeff Schwartz, tenor

Jeff Schwartz has been a stalwart member of the Mendelssohn Chorus of Philadelphia's tenor section since 2020. He also sings baritone and arranges music for his barbershop quartet, Prior Engagement. Jeff has sung previously with other mixed-voice and TTBB choirs, including Rittenhouse Sound, the Cornell University Chamber Singers, and the Cornell University Glee Club, as well as with a variety of a cappella groups and barbershop quartets. Jeff grew up in Jenkintown, PA and has worked for Vanguard in Malvern, PA since 2017.



Lucas DeJesus, bass

Lucas DeJesus, bass-baritone is a multi-disciplinary vocalist, arts administrator, and voice teacher based in his hometown: Philadelphia, PA. He holds the position of National Director of Program Operations and Regional Coordinator (Philadelphia) for ArtSmart, where he has been a voice mentor since 2017. Lucas specializes in choral music performance and is an active member of the Opera Philadelphia Chorus, EXIGENCE (Sphinx Organization), Mendelssohn Chorus of Philadelphia (Lead Section Leader & Senior Vocal Artist), Philadelphia Symphonic Chorus, Convoco (founding member), Glassbrook Vocal Ensemble (founding member & Chorus Manager), The Same Stream (founding member), and the Delaware Choral Scholars.



He received his Bachelor of Music degree in voice performance from Westminster Choir College in 2014. Lucas is committed to providing under-represented youth access to equitable music education and mentorship as well as fighting for the dignity, respect, and fair working conditions of professional choral musicians.

James Lamb, percussion

James Lamb is a baritone located in South Philadelphia. He has been singing bass in The Mendelssohn Chorus since he moved to Philadelphia in the Fall of 2021. James is also an avid barbershopper, singing with his quartet, True North Chorus in Wilmington, and serving as a section leader and board member for Philadelphia's barbershop chorus, Rittenhouse Sound. He studied percussion and vocal performance at Gettysburg College's Sunderman Conservatory of Music, and is currently studying opera and musical theater with Angela Gilbert.



Erik Potteiger, percussion

Erik Potteiger is a professional singer, percussionist, pianist, and composer currently based in Philadelphia, PA. He received his Bachelor's of Music in Choral Music Education and Vocal Performance from the University of South Carolina. Erik has performed vocally as a bass in ensembles and solo settings across a plethora of cities and states in the US, as well as eight countries across three continents. A few of the professional vocal ensembles Erik has worked with include the Voces8 US Scholars Ensemble (London, England), The Cathedral Singers (Columbia, SC), The Cecilia Ensemble (Augusta, GA), Choral Arts Philadelphia, CORO Vocal Artists (Des Moines, IA), Coro Vocati (Atlanta, GA), Philadelphia Symphonic Choir, The Princeton Singers (Princeton, NJ), The Red Shift (Baton Rouge, LA), Tenão (Philadelphia, PA), Vox Fidelis (Bordentown, NJ), The Washington Chorus (Washington, D.C.) and Women's Sacred Music Project (Lafayette Hill, PA). He is also a founding member of Convoco, a professional choral ensemble based in the Philadelphia region.



An active church musician, Erik appears frequently as both a cantor and staff singer in the Tri-state area. He has also musically collaborated with instrumental ensembles nationally, including The Philadelphia Orchestra, Brandywine Brass, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Germantown Oratorio Orchestra, North Carolina Baroque Orchestra, Philadelphia Bach Collegium, Philadelphia Brass, Philharmonia Orchestra of New York, Quartetto Ogrigado, Reading Symphony Orchestra and members of Tempesta di Mare. Away from his multi-genre performing engagements he enjoys teaching, video and audio editing, producing, recording, as well as creating virtual ensemble content and practice tracks.



Save the Date

MENDELSSOHN MEDLEY

Saturday, May 10, 2025

An afternoon of artistic delights awaits! Join us for dazzling cabaret performances, delectable food & drinks, and an exciting silent auction at the Historic Oaks Cloister.

All proceeds benefit Mendelssohn Chorus and the Joyful Abundance commissioning program for emerging poets and composers.

Invitation to follow.



About the Cover

The cover art for this afternoon's concert was created by Barbara Berry. "Illustrating the divine connection between music and spirituality, I created a paper stencil for this original design of an illuminated stained glass window and I rendered the vibrant window and angels with soft pastels on black sanded paper. The central rosette of the rose window, a symbol of the Virgin Mary and Christ, represents the perfection and unity of creation, while the angels evoke a celestial choir, reminding us of the human experience of spirit made manifest in art of the highest order."

Berry is a critically acclaimed soprano, having appeared in leading opera roles as principal lyric soprano with Theater Trier in Germany, and as a soloist on the concert stage across the U.S. For the past two decades, she has pursued a self-guided art education, taking courses and workshops with esteemed artists throughout the country. Her contemporary impressionist paintings have received awards at national and international juried competitions and art shows.

IT'S TIME

MENDELSSOHN CHORUS OF PHILADELPHIA'S 151ST SEASON

Dominick DiOrio, Artistic Director & Conductor

Heather Mitchell, Associate Artistic Director



Artwork by Barbara Berry, Robin Eaton, and Jonathan J. Wallace.

Mass for the Endangered

It's time to protect our neighbors

October 26, 2024 / 4pm

The Church of the Holy Trinity
1904 Walnut Street, Philadelphia PA 19103

A Feast of Carols

It's time to celebrate the season

December 7, 2024 / 2pm & 5pm

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
22 E. Chestnut Hill Avenue, Philadelphia PA 19118

On the Horizon

It's time to forge a better world

April 5, 2025 / 4pm

Girard College Chapel
2101 S. College Avenue, Philadelphia PA 19121

Never One Thing

It's time for reflection, change, and action

February 22, 2025 / 4pm

Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral
19 S. 38th Street, Philadelphia PA 19104