

MENDELSSOHN CHORUS OF PHILADELPHIA'S 151ST SEASON

Heather Mitchell, Associate Artistic Director



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

It's time to protect our neighbors

The Church of the Holy Trinity
Rittenhouse Square

Pre-Concert Discussion / 3:15pm

MCCHORUS.ORG

Welcome to the 151st Season of Mendelssohn Chorus of Philadelphia!

On behalf of the entire Board of Directors, I am thrilled to welcome you to the opening concert of our 151st season! Whether you are a cherished longtime patron or a newcomer to our musical family, we are grateful for your presence and support.



Today's concert offers a taste of the captivating performances you can expect throughout the season. We are thrilled to showcase the talents of Heather Mitchell, our newly appointed Associate Artistic Director, as she conducts Antonio Caldara's *Missa Dolorosa*. Heather's appointment reflects our commitment to nurturing emerging talent and fostering artistic growth within our organization. We are proud to provide a platform for Heather to share her artistic vision later this season with her very own concert, "Never One Thing."

As we gather in the audience, I anticipate that the Philadelphia-premiere of Sarah Kirkland Snider's *Mass for the Endangered* will illuminate a bond between environmental stewardship and choral artistry, exemplifying how the arts can serve as a beacon for our era's most pressing issues. Through its ability to stir emotions and provoke thought, this performance promises to cast light on the complexities of our world, compelling us to confront and contemplate them. My hope is that you, too, will be overwhelmed by the same sense of wonder and awe that I consistently experience during Mendelssohn Chorus performances, as we witness the power of music to address critical challenges of our time.

We stand at the threshold of a new era for the Mendelssohn Chorus. Our 151st year is not just a milestone — it is a launching pad for the next century and a half of musical excellence. We carry with us the rich legacy of our past, even as we lift our voices to shape the future of choral music in Philadelphia and beyond.

Our vision for the coming years is bold and bright:

- To nurture a chorus that is as diverse and dynamic as the city we call home
- To push the boundaries of choral performance, blending tradition with innovation
- To use our art as a catalyst for community engagement and social change

Under the inspired leadership of Artistic Director Dominick DiOrio, and the steadfast guidance of Executive Director Flo Gardner, we are poised to turn this vision into a resounding reality.

We invite you to be more than an audience — become a part of our ongoing story. We hope that the music you hear today resonates within you long after the final note fades, inspiring you to return and explore the full breadth of our upcoming season.

With deepest gratitude,

Julie Cohen

Chair, Board of Directors

Mendelssohn Chorus of Philadelphia

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

Mass for the Endangered

PROGRAM

Mass in E Minor "Dolorosa" (1735)

Antonio Caldara

Kyrie

1. Kyrie I
2. Christe
3. Kyrie II

Gloria

4. Et in terra pax
5. Domine Deus
6. Domine Fili
7. Qui tollis peccata mundi
8. Quoniam tu solus sanctus
9. Cum Sancto Spiritu

Credo

10. Credo in unum Deum
11. Crucifixus
12. Et resurrexit
13. Et vitam venturi sæculi

Sanctus

14. Sanctus
15. Benedictus

Agnus Dei

16. Agnus Dei
17. Dona nobis pacem

Sophia Santiago, soprano
Sharon Rhinesmith, alto
Stephen Ng, tenor
Lucas DeJesus, bass

Heather Mitchell, conductor
Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia

Intermission

Mass for the Endangered (2018)

Sarah Kirkland Snider

1. Kyrie

Willow Swidler Notte, soprano
Jen Rafferty, alto
D'quan Tyson, tenor
Erik Stenswold, bass

2. Gloria

3. Alleluia

Kelsey Lewis, soprano

4. Credo

Willow Swidler Notte, soprano
Kelsey Lewis, soprano

5. Sanctus/Benedictus

Willow Swidler Notte, soprano
Kelsey Lewis, soprano
D'quan Tyson, tenor
Erik Stenswold, bass

6. Agnus Dei

Jen Rafferty, alto
Dominick DiOrio, conductor
Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia
Ting Ting Wong, piano

About the cover:

Complementing the musical performance, we are proud to present "Art for the Endangered," a collaborative, multi-media piece by Mendelssohn Chorus singers and artists Barbara Berry, Robin Eaton, and Jonathan J. Wallace. Inspired by Sarah Kirkland Snider's remarkable composition, this visual journey showcases and celebrates various species across many degrees of conservation status. The artwork features watercolor foliage, pencil-drawn and oil-painted animals, and includes a critically endangered Orange Breasted Falcon whose survival has been facilitated by the work of Barbara Berry's father over the past 30 years.

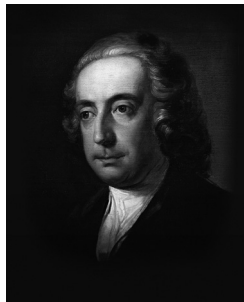
Program Notes

Missa in E minor "Dolorosa" (1735)

Antonio Caldara (1670-1736)

Antonio Caldara lived in a golden age of Baroque composers, with contemporaries including Bach, Vivaldi, Telemann, Scarlatti *pere* and *fiis*, Corelli and Handel. In an age of compositional overachievers, he may have bested them all, writing an astounding 3500 works over a 50-year career. He was highly regarded both for the expressiveness of his musical line and for his consummate mastery of contrapuntal music, creating complex, perfectly constructed fugues and canons with ease.

Caldara was born in Venice, a city with a vibrant musical life. Caldara studied with his father, a professional violinist, and as a chorister at the Basilica di San Marco, where he studied voice, string instruments, and composition. By the time he finished his training, he was able to embark on a free-lance career as a singer (contralto) and instrumentalist (viola and viola da spalla, the latter being a five-string instrument, intermediate in size between the viola and cello, but supported by the shoulder rather than tucked under the chin.) His first opera was produced when he was 18, and over the next decade he wrote two more operas, a handful of oratorios, and published 24 trio sonatas and 12 cantatas. In 1699, he obtained the post of *maestro di cappella da chiesa e da teatro* at the court of the Duke of Mantua.



Antonio Caldara

Caldara's career trajectory was greatly influenced by the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714), which involved most of the European states and even spread to the North American colonies (where it was known as Queen Anne's War.) The claimants for the Spanish throne were Philip of Anjou, grandson of Louis XIV, and Archduke Charles of Austria, brother of the Holy Roman Emperor Joseph I. Both were in the succession for their respective thrones, although it was not thought either would actually accede. Spain was no longer a world power, but alliance with either France or Austria would disrupt a century-long balance of power, and European states calculated which claimant was the lesser of two evils and chose up sides. Louis, always willing to stir the pot, proclaimed that Philip and his issue would continue to be in the French succession in perpetuity, and the war was on. Charles declared himself Charles III, King of Spain, and set up court in Barcelona, where he enjoyed strong support.

Mantua was a client of France and the duke supported Philip's claim, effectively enough that the emperor sent an army to Mantua in 1708. The duke was deposed and sent into exile, and the duchy was dissolved and the land ceded to Savoy, the Prince of Savoy being the empire's most gifted general. The emperor decreed that the property of anyone who followed the duke into exile would be confiscated. Caldara took the hint and relocated to Rome.

Rome had become a mecca for musicians, and Corelli, Handel, Vivaldi and the Scarlattis were already in residence. While there was a papal ban on most public performances, music was instead featured at *conversazioni*, salons

where the *literati* and *glitterati* of Rome enjoyed good food, good conversation, and exceptional music. Caldara quickly became part of this musical scene. An oratorio of his was performed during Lent in 1708 at the palace of Cardinal Ottoboni, who hosted one of the most important *conversazioni*, putting him in contact with Corelli, who conducted the cardinal's orchestra. And Caldara almost certainly was present for the epic keyboard competition between Handel and Domenico Scarlatti hosted by Ottoboni.

With the imperial army still lurking in the vicinity of Rome, Caldara had the inspired idea to visit Charles III's court in Barcelona in 1708. He arrived in time to mount one of his operas for Charles' wedding festivities and served as an informal director of chamber music, giving a more than adequate demonstration of his mastery of counterpoint, much to Charles' delight. While he returned to Rome after a few months, he had made an excellent impression on Charles and they parted on good terms. On this return to Rome, he became *maestro di cappella* for Prince Ruspoli, another prominent patron of music. He thrived in his new position. His music was widely heard, and he completed some 150 cantatas, four operas and nine oratorios, including a cantata commissioned for the 1713 Christmas Eve service presided over by the Pope.

In 1711, Joseph I succumbed to smallpox and died without having produced an heir. Charles became Holy Roman Emperor, now as Charles VI, and returned to Vienna. Caldara, remembering his close ties to Charles, took a leave from his duties with Ruspoli and traveled to Vienna to apply for the *kapellmeister* position. But Charles had already promoted the *vice-kapellmeister* Ziani (an old colleague of Caldara's from his Venice days) to *kapellmeister*, and named Johann Joseph Fux, who had served the Hapsburgs in various capacities for the past 20 years, as *vice-kapellmeister*. Caldara did have two of his oratorios performed in the imperial chapel, but he eventually returned to Rome to resume his duties with Ruspoli, and bided his time. Ziani died in 1715, Fux was promoted to *kapellmeister*, and Caldara was engaged as *vice-kapellmeister*. It became his dream job, and he remained in that position until his death.

The Imperial Court had an insatiable appetite for music, both sacred and secular – commemorations of name-days, birthdays, betrothals, weddings, secular festivities, theatricals, operas, masses, vespers, saints' days, holy days, and music for Advent, Lent and Holy Week. Fux, ten years older than Caldara, transferred some of his duties to Caldara, in part so that he could concentrate on his magnum opus *Gradum ad Parnassus* (Ascent to Parnassus), a comprehensive treatise on music theory that became the text of choice for composers from Haydn to Mozart to Beethoven. Caldara did not mind the extra work because Charles increased his salary accordingly. Caldara also took on many commissions from the nobility, and earned enough to live a fairly luxurious lifestyle. He wrote quickly, fluidly, and with an exceptional mastery of counterpoint, and shortly became Charles' favorite composer.

The *Mass in E Minor "Dolorosa"* was written in 1735 to be performed on the Feast of the Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a 1727 addition to the church calendar by Pope Benedict XIII that was celebrated on the Friday between Palm Sunday and Passion Sunday in Lent. It derived from the prophecy of Simeon as recounted in the Gospel of Luke that Mary will experience sorrow as if pierced

with a sword. The Church eventually settled on seven specific sorrows (the first one was hearing the prophecy itself), four of them occurring during the passion and death of Jesus. Its placement in the calendar makes it clearly part of the Lenten observance, and it was considered a major feast day (a “double” in the Church’s inscrutable argot.) Caldara added the title “Dolorosa” to the manuscript, possibly referencing the hymn *Stabat mater dolorosa*, which was added to the liturgy by Benedict expressly for this feast.

Caldara sets the mass in E minor, a key representing sorrow and grief according to the Baroque doctrine of affects, musical features which suggest certain feelings or emotions. Caldara could have drawn on the full forces of his 84-piece *hofkapelle* orchestra, but he chose a very light scoring with an orchestra consisting of just the high strings (violins and violas) and continuo, the spare orchestration emphasizing the pathos of the suffering mother. One movement features a solo bassoon (or optional cello) replacing the string orchestra. The tutti choral movements also have the soprano and alto lines optionally doubled by trombones. The soprano and alto parts would have been sung by boy choristers and the trombones would provide a bit more presence if needed. These would probably have been alto trombones, which Caldara used frequently to accompany solo soprano or alto voices as they matched the register better.

The *Missa dolorosa* is a cantata mass, one in which the five principal mass parts (Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus and Agnus Dei) are divided into smaller sections, which are given to various combinations of solo voices or the tutti chorus. Caldara often adds solo voices to the tutti sections, allowing him to explore a wider range of vocal textures. The Kyrie and Gloria comprise about two thirds of the music in the *Missa dolorosa*, which seems strangely out of proportion. The Gloria is divided into six movements, while the much longer Credo, with the more dramatic texts about the incarnation, suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus, is divided into only four movements. This has led some commentators to suggest that Caldara started composing at leisure and finished in haste, but that is unlikely. He completed the *Missa dolorosa* on February 5, 1735 and the Feast of the Seven Sorrows fell on April 1 that year, almost two months later. This pattern is not uncommon in his other masses (and he possibly wrote as many as two hundred) and may represent a compromise for liturgical use. In practice, the sung masses were fairly disconnected from the underlying liturgy, rolling along at their own pace, and if a movement ran on too long, the celebrant would have to wait for it to end before continuing. Perhaps Caldara was trying to time the Credo and Sanctus more closely in line with the liturgy. At any event, there is certainly no skimping in the beauty of line or contrapuntal ingenuity in the latter movements of the mass.

The *Missa dolorosa* is tightly constructed, with each of the five principal mass parts beginning in E minor and closing with a fugue ending with a Picardy third, changing the final chord to E major. This tradition began in the Renaissance, when a minor triad was not considered consonant enough for a final chord. By this time, it was no longer *de rigueur* in secular Baroque music, but it persisted in sacred music. There is a sense of summation or accord with the change to the major key, a sort of musical “amen.” Caldara does end the beautifully set *Crucifixus* with a minor chord to emphasize the grief associated with Jesus’ death.

The *Resurrexit* is scored for unison violins and continuo, and leads into the *Et vitam venturi sæculi* without pause. In the *Resurrexit*, the orchestra has worked its way to B major as expected, but the continuo drops out and the violins settle on a single, held B note. You begin to hear it as a half cadence, waiting to resolve to E minor, which happens at the opening of the *Et vitam*. It is a clever way to support the required modulation, and helps propel the music forward, reinforcing the brisk allegro of the *Et vitam* fugue. Caldara uses a similar half cadence to link the *Agnus Dei* to the *Dona nobis pacem* fugue. You will recognize that *Dona nobis* fugue as the same music from the opening *Kyrie II* fugue. It is a recognition of the symmetry of the opening and closing prayers of the Mass, three-fold pleas for mercy and peace. This cyclic musical form was not particularly common in the Baroque era, but provides a comforting feeling of unity to the *Missa dolorosa*.

***Mass for the Endangered* (2018)**

Sarah Kirkland Snider (b. 1973)

Sarah Kirkland Snider's *Mass for the Endangered* was written for the Trinity Wall Street Church's "Mass Re-imaginings" project. It was her first large-scale choral work and was premiered to great success in 2018. In 2020, a recording featuring the English ensemble Gallicantus and instrumentalists from the Decoda Ensemble under the direction of Gabriel Crouch was released jointly by Nonesuch and New Amsterdam Records, a non-profit label co-founded by Snider in 2008 and dedicated to contemporary composers whose work defies typical genre and style categorization, much like her own. *Mass for the Endangered* has become one of her best-known and most frequently performed works.



Snider's path to composition was a bit circuitous. She was always fascinated by music and eventually studied piano and cello, but it was choral music that made the biggest impression. She sang in choirs, attended the American Boychoir School summer camps, and sang in the nationally recognized Princeton High School Choir. She had been writing down music since about the age of seven, but kept that private, finally showing some of her compositions to her piano teacher when she was a junior in high school. She attended Wesleyan University, studying psychology and sociology. She wryly describes her musical style at the time as a cross between early Debussy and Joni Mitchell, and didn't think it would pass muster with the music department there. After graduation, she found work as a paralegal, but also began writing music for experimental theater. She became convinced that composition was her true vocation, and began taking night classes (she calls herself the poster child for continuing education) and studying privately until she cobbled together enough coursework to apply to the graduate program at New York University, eventually transferring to Yale, where she obtained a Master of Music and Artist Diploma in composition. She has written extensively for voice, chamber ensemble, orchestra, and choir and recently completed her first opera. Her music has become widely known through a series of recordings released in partnership with Nonesuch and New Amsterdam Records. Her music

has been commissioned and performed by major orchestras, vocal artists and choral groups around the world and she has been critically acclaimed as one of the most significant composers of the 21st century.

While considering a composition for the “Mass-Reimagining” project, Snider turned to poet, novelist and talented graphic artist Nathaniel Bellows, a frequent collaborator, for a libretto. He suggested a text on endangered animals and the global environmental crisis, and she immediately agreed. The natural world figures strongly in her creative process – long walks outdoors provide musical ideas and help her organize her music – and she and Bellows had already written the song cycle *Unremembered* about childhood memory and the natural world. Snider describes the *Mass for the Endangered* as “a celebration of, and an elegy for, the natural world – animals, plants, insects, the planet itself – an appeal for greater awareness, urgency, and action.” She explains further, “The origin of the *Mass* is rooted in humanity’s concern for itself, expressed through worship of the divine – which, in the Catholic tradition, is a God in the image of man. Nathaniel and I thought it would be interesting to take the *Mass*’s musical modes of spiritual contemplation and apply them to concern for non-human life – animals, plants, and the environment. There is an appeal to a higher power – for mercy, forgiveness, and intervention – but that appeal is directed not to God but rather to Nature itself.”

Snider describes her music as largely driven by harmony and melody, in support of creating immersive atmospheres and vivid narratives. Her writing is fundamentally tonal, but expansive, and she counts as influences composers ranging from Byrd and Bach to Simon & Garfunkel and Sufjan Stevens. Her music is quite expressive, marked with directions like *pensive*, *with understated urgency*, *ethereal*, *serene*, *impassioned*, *plaintive*, *introspective*, and *gently joyous*. She brings a singer’s perspective to writing vocal and choral music, singing through every line to ensure that it “makes sense in the body, that the prosody is natural, that the line has a shape to it, that the meaning of the text is legible...music that feels good to sing.”

The *Mass for the Endangered* is set in six movements, the traditional five major parts of the mass (Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus and Agnus Dei) plus an Alleluia movement, which was added during substantial revisions following the premiere. Snider sets the Latin text of the Gloria and Sanctus, a condition of the commission with the idea that Trinity Wall Street could use them in a service. The other movements feature Bellows’ poetry, with bits of the Latin text interwoven. It forms a cohesive narrative, moving from repentance to a statement of principles to a plea for change in behavior from exploitation of the natural world to stewardship.

This narrative is briefly interrupted by the inserted Alleluia. We usually consider alleluias to be joyous and exuberant, but this Alleluia contains the darkest and grittiest of Bellows’ texts, projected onto the jumbled landscape of a dream or vision. It opens with terse but powerful description of the spoiling of the oceans and the land, set to music marked *introspective*, *gently brooding*. After an invocation to Mother Earth/Nature, there is a cleansing and renewal, but it is described with the same terse and violent language, and set to the same music. The alleluias which flank this final section are soft and muted, and there is little sense of comfort. In the end, nature will always restore its own balance, but in

ways that may be painful and not to our liking. It may be far better for us to take action now, heeding the awareness and principles we find in the *Mass*. Perhaps this is the message, and one worth hearing.

– Michael Moore

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A Public Service Announcement from Mendelssohn Chorus

Tuesday, November 5, is Election Day!

For Pennsylvania voters:

- Go to vote.pa.gov for registration status, polling place information, and other resources.
- Check out the nonpartisan Committee of Seventy (seventy.org) for a 2024 voters' guide.
- If you are using a mail-in ballot, make absolutely sure to follow instructions about the secrecy envelope, and signing and correctly dating the outer envelope, to ensure your vote is counted.
- Pay attention to state and local races as well as the presidency!

For voters outside Pennsylvania:

- Go to vote.gov or vote.org for election information by state/territory.

Please make plans to vote!



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

The Texts

Caldara: *Missa dolorosa*

1. Kyrie I

Kyrie eleison

Lord, have mercy

2. Christe

Christe eleison

Christ, have mercy

3. Kyrie II

Kyrie eleison

Lord, have mercy

4. Et in terra pax

(Gloria in excelsis Deo,)

*et in terra pax hominibus bonæ
voluntatis.*

*Laudamus te, benedicimus te,
adoramus te, glorificamus te.*

*Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam
gloriam tuam.*

*(Glory to God in the highest,)
and peace on earth to men of good
will.*

*We praise you, we bless you, we
worship you, we glorify you.*

*We give you thanks for your great
glory.*

5. Domine Deus

*Domine Deus, Rex cœlestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens.*

Lord God, Heavenly King,
God the Father almighty.

6. Domine Fili

Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe.

Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.

Lord Jesus Christ, only begotten Son.

Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the
Father.

7. Qui tollis peccata mundi

*Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere
nobis.*

*Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe
deprecationem nostram.*

*Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,
miserere nobis.*

You who take away the sins of the
world, have mercy on us.

You who take away the sins of the
world, receive our prayer.

You who sit at the right hand of the
Father, have mercy on us.

8. Quoniam tu solus sanctus

*Quoniam tu solus sanctus, tu solus
Dominus,
tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe.*

For you alone are holy, you alone are
the Lord,
you alone are the most high, Jesus
Christ.

9. Cum Sancto Spiritu

*Cum Sancto Spiritu in gloria Dei
Patris.
Amen.*

With the Holy Spirit in the glory of God
the Father.
Amen.

10. Credo in unum Deum

*Credo in unum Deum Patrem
omnipotentem,
factorem cœli et terræ,
visibilium omnium et invisibilium.
Et in unum Dominum, Jesum
Christum,
Filium Dei unigenitum.
Et ex Patre natum ante omnia
sæcula.
Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine,
Deum vero de Deo vero.
Genitum, non factum,
consubstantialem Patri,
per quem omnia facta sunt.
Qui propter nos homines et propter
nostram salutem
descendit de cœlis.
Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex
Maria virgine:
Et homo factus est.*

I believe in one God, the Father
almighty,
creator of heaven and earth,
of all things seen and unseen.
And in one Lord, Jesus Christ,

only begotten Son of the Father.
Born of the Father before the world
was made.
God of God, light of light,
True God of true God.
Begotten, not made, of one being with
the Father,
by whom all things were made.
Who for us men and for our salvation

came down from heaven.
And was conceived by the Holy Spirit
of the Virgin Mary
and became man.

11. Domine Deus

*Crucifixus etiam pro nobis:
sub Pontio Pilato passus et sepultus
est.*

He was also crucified for us:
Through Pontius Pilate he suffered
death and was buried.

12. Et resurrexit

*Et resurrexit tertia die secundum
Scripturas.
Et ascendit in cœlum:
sedet ad dexteram Patris.
Et iterum venturus est cum gloria
iudicare vivos et mortuos:
cujus regni non erit finis.
Qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur
et conglorificatur:
qui locutus est per Prophetas.
Et in unam sanctam catholicam et
apostolicam Ecclesiam.
Confiteor unum baptisma in remissio-
nem peccatorum.
Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum*

*And he arose on the third day in
accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And he will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead:
his reign will never end.
Who with the Father and the Son is
worshipped and glorified:
who has spoken through the Prophets.
And in one, holy, catholic and apostolic
Church.
I confess one baptism for the forgiveness
of sins.
And I await the resurrection of the dead*

13. Et vitam venturi sæculi

et vitam venturi sæculi.
Amen.

and the life of the world to come.
Amen

14. Sanctus

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus
Deus Sabaoth,
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.
Osanna in excelsis.

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of your
glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

15. Benedictus

Benedictus qui venit in nomine
Domini.
Osanna in excelsis.

Blessed is he who comes in the name
of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

16. Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins
of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins
of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins
of the world,

17. Dona nobis pacem.

Dona nobis pacem.

Grant us peace.

Snider: Mass for the Endangered

1. Kyrie

Kyrie Eleison

On earth, air, and water,
have mercy.
On stone, tree, and flower,
have mercy.
World have mercy.

Kyrie Eleison

Give mercy to all wing and paw,
mercy to all creed and claw,
on flower, seed, leaf, and root.
Give mercy to all broods and tribes,
mercy to all nests and prides;
to tide and spring, squall and breeze,

to those who plead for calm and peace,
not hunted, hounded, poisoned,
fleece.

To barren, poisoned land:
Forgive us.
To the vanished, and the left:
Forgive us, world forgive us.

Mercy on this refuge,
this braided boundless stone.
Mercy for their old,
mercy for their young.
And mercy now
for what we've done.

Kyrie Eleison

– Nathaniel Bellows

2. Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo,
et in terra pax
hominibus bonæ voluntatis.

Laudamus te, benedicimus te,
adoramus te, glorificamus te.
Gratias agimus tibi
propter magnam gloriam tuam.

Domine Deus, Rex cœlestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens.
Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe.
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei,
Filius Patris.

Qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
suscipe deprecationem nostram.
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,
miserere nobis.

Quoniam tu solus sanctus,
tu solus Dominus,
tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe.
Cum Sancto Spiritu
in gloria Dei Patris.
Amen.

3. Alleluia

Sea of cradle, foundling,
current, cold and quelled as morning.
Braid of vapored ashes,
shadowed creche, collapsing.

Contour, carve, corrode—
breathe through camphor, coal,
seed each breeze with gold.
Poison, parch, pollute—
plow the coast, the dune,
flow toward constant moon.

Alleluia

Hearth of stone, of tar, of lava,
shelter shielding mother.
Oh, save us mother!

4. Credo

We believe in stone and moss,
sand and grass. Land limned on loam,
haven to the harmed and the whole,
the lesser and the left, the spirit
housed
in the opposite.

We believe in all who are offset.

We believe in the blessing of wing,
angelic, ingenious—every
soaring thing. We believe in the holy
pelt and fin, hoary hide and shell.
The armor of every beast is blessed,
adorned in their own regalia.

She who is sleeping,
Is she who will wake.

Fracture, foist, defoul—
shatter cliff and shoal,
sand each stone to whole.
Harbored, held, unharmed—
she'll wake, rise, rejoin,
her daughters and her sons.

Alleluia

– Nathaniel Bellows

Mercy, now,
on all animalia.

Take no tooth or tusk, steal no
heart, hair, or husk.

Et expecto...

No shark robbed of its fin, no mink
denied its skin.

*resurrectionem mortuorum et vitam
venturi saeculi...*

No bath in bowls of salted blood
*And I await the life of the world to
come...*

no cove for corpse, no reddened veldt.

A flora fashioned, valued, known
to heal the mind and mend the bone.

We believe in all who are voiceless.
We believe in all who are at risk.
We believe in all who are helpless.
We believe in all who are at risk.

Lay down the spear, lay down the
hook,
lay down the gun, the knife, the net.
No majesty in poison. No virtue in
the snare. No salvation in a strangled
spirit.

We believe in songs at daybreak,
cries and calls at dusk.
In quell and coo, drone and hum,
in hovel, hollow, river, pond.

We believe in listen. We believe
in wish. And to be worthy of
their gift: this chance to look
within ourselves and change how
we have lived, to change
how we have lived.

5. Sanctus/Benedictus

*Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus.
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.
Osanna in excelsis.*

6. Agnus Dei

*Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi*

Lamb of God,
of longing, loss,
have mercy on us.
Accept, embrace
these sins—release
the callous,
the conquering,
replace this
hardened wrath,
with calm.

Lamb of God,
in calling, call,
grant them peace.
The deepest sleep

We believe in all who are offset.
We believe in all who are outcast.
We believe in all who are voiceless.
We believe in all who are stranded.
We believe in all who are stalwart.
We believe in all who are fearless.
Expecto vitam venturi saeculiæ...
We believe in all who are dauntless.
*And I await the life of the world to
come...*

We believe in all offset, outcast,
voiceless, stranded,
stalwart, fearless, dauntless,
promised.

We believe in all who are silenced.
We believe in all silenced.
We believe in all who are promised.
We believe in all promised.
And I await...

– Nathaniel Bellows

*Benedictus qui venit in nomine
Domini.
Osanna in excelsis.*

of safety, the unencumbered
yawn. To bathe and breed
with no threat or risk—
trade our sins,
our trespasses,
for bliss.

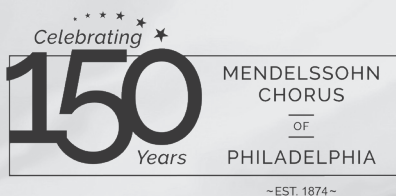
Let, allow, admit, accord:
The slumbering of gods
The wandering unbound
The hunted hunting whole
The grazing under moon
The breathing boundless breath
The freedom found in self
The feeling life is whole
The meaning known, unknown

Lamb of God,
of goodness, gold,
share your mercy.
Enslaved by sordid
time—the inward-turning
eye, in scarcity, with
lie. They who take our
basest acts—Lamb of
God—no
punishment
no cruel attack.

They who rise from
all we lack—Lamb of
God—give wonder, wish,
give kindness back.

Agnus Dei

– Nathaniel Bellows



It's not too late to donate to our 150th Anniversary Campaign!

This major milestone reflects the incredible dedication of generations who have sustained MCP over the past century and a half.

As we emerge from the pandemic's challenges, rebuilding our financial safety net is crucial to ensuring MCP's resilience for the next 150 years.

Our goal is to raise \$150,000 toward our annual fund and reserve funds to invest in groundbreaking productions, introduce more people to choral arts, take artistic risks, and prepare for any disruptions.

Help us reach our goal today!

For more information and to donate, please visit us at
www.mcchorus/support

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 *Anthracite 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
Barbara Berry
Mia Castro-Diephouse
Rachel Castro-Diephouse
Courtney Comar
Shiloh Cooper
Kelsey DeJesus
Roberta Fischer
Caroline Fitch
Teri Gemberling-Johnson
Lauren Gilmore
Miriam Goldberg
Lindsey Graham
Elizabeth Hohwieler
Emily Grace Kane
Maya Kociba
Kelsey Lewis*
Carolyn Linarello
Fay Manicke
Juliana Melara
Andrea Nestman
Lynn Petroski
Gabrielle Rinkus
Roberta Rote
Sophia Santiago*
Leila Schwartz
Mary Kate Suhy
Willow Swidler Notte*
Marie Tavianini
Laura Temoyan
Kathryn Wadsworth
Jessica Vega
Deanda Wilson
Lisa Wooldridge

Alto

Ariel Alvarado
Rachele Armstrong

Jenna Camacho
Christine Chaapel
Hannah Davis
Erin Donovan
Robin Eaton
Abigail Ehret
Shannon Foley
Rebecca Fülöp
Tammara Gary
Anne Gold
Lilah Gosman
Katherine Haas
Jody Hagler
Jennifer Hay
Mari Kawakatsu
Sharon Kempin
Katie Kershaw
Susan Lin
Deborah McIntosh
Heather Mitchell
Florence Moyer
Margaret Oravetz
Jennifer Rafferty*
Shannon Rafferty
Rebecca Rendsburg
Sharon Rhinesmith*
Alana Schreibman
Julia Scott
Jennifer Sheffield
Heather Wismer

Tenor

Shawn Anderson
Andrew Beck
Michael Cabán
Christopher Carriero
Kyle Conner
Mark Davidson
Rich Galassini

Campbell Holder
Jim Light
John H. Luttenberger, III
Joshua Matthias-Long
Nicholas Petroski
Roy Schmidt
Jeffrey Schwartz
D'quan Tyson*

Base

Patrick Beck
Evan Birnholz
Paul Burgmayer
Michael Carson
Mark Cordova
Lucas DeJesus**
Brendan Fullam
Steven Glasser
Lowell Hoyt
Jon Kochavi
John Kohlhas
James Lamb
Martin Levitas
Jacob Lynn-Palevsky
Matthew McConnell
Sean Martin
Michael Moore
Erik Potteiger*
Jeffrey Pufahl
Cleveland Rea
Matthew Reese
Daniel Rosen
Daniel Simpson
Erik Stenswold*
Thomas Sutton
William Thomas
Alexander Varghese
Jonathan J. Wallace

* 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.

Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia

The Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, a founding resident company of The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, is a 33-member professional ensemble led by Music Director, David Hayes. Established in 1964 by Marc Mostovoy, and originally named Concerto Soloists, the orchestra has a well-established reputation for distinguished performances of repertoire spanning the Baroque period through the 21st century.

The inception of the ensemble was motivated, in part, by the desire to provide performance opportunities for young professional musicians emerging from the Curtis Institute of Music and other regional training programs, as well as the intention to contribute meaningfully to the region's cultural life. Over time, its mission and programming have broadened, inspired by a desire to help secure the future of classical repertoire by placing it in a broader context of contemporary works (including new commissions), other musical genres and traditions, and lesser-known pieces from the traditional repertoire which deserve modern audience attention. Creative collaborations with other major arts institutions, including the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Clef Club of Jazz, and the Annenberg Center, have been a key focus of those ambitions – all with the intention of enriching the musical experiences of Philadelphia audiences through original programming choices that stretch boundaries and invite fresh perspectives. In total, the organization has commissioned and premiered over seventy new works. It remains committed to showcasing emerging young performers of exceptional talent.

Ignat Solzhenitsyn, a concert pianist and conducting graduate from the Curtis Institute, was named Principal Conductor in 1998 and Music Director in 2004. As Conductor Laureate (since 2010), Maestro Solzhenitsyn has gone on to a

distinguished international career as a concert pianist and conductor but remains closely associated with the Orchestra.

The current Music Director is Maestro David Hayes, a conductor known for his extensive repertoire spanning symphonic, oratorio/choral, and operatic genres, who holds significant roles in the music world. His passion for pushing boundaries and his dedication to showcasing diverse musical expressions have earned him recognition as a transformative force in the classical music scene, inspiring audiences and musicians alike.

Over the course of the ensemble's rich and diverse history, the Chamber Orchestra has performed with a remarkable roster of world-renowned artists, including Luciano Pavarotti, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Mstislav Rostropovich, Isaac Stern, Rudolf Serkin, The Eroica Trio, Jean-Pierre Rampal, Steven Isserlis, Joseph Silverstein, and Catherine Michel, as well as virtuosos of contemporary music genres such as Julie Andrews, Bernadette Peters, Mark O'Connor, Elvis Costello, and Sylvia McNair.

Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia

Concertmaster Meichen Liao-Barnes	Principal Bass Brent Edmondson	Principal Bassoon Zach Feingold
Principal Violin 2 Catherine Kei Fukuda	Principal Flute David DiGiacobbe	Principal Harp Andre Tarantiles
Principal Viola Ren Martin-Doike	Principal Oboe Geoffrey Deemer	Principla Percussion Barry Dove
Principal Cello Thomas Kraines	Principal Clarinet Rie Suzuki	Principal Harpsichord Joyce Chen

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

022 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 masters 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.

Heather Mitchell, Associate Music 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 the states of 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.

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 Musicalli 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.

Willow Swidler Notte, soprano

Willow Swidler Notte, soprano, is a native Philadelphian and graduate of Bryn Mawr College with an A.B. in Music and a special emphasis in historical performance practice. In the greater Philadelphia area, she has recently appeared with the Princeton Singers and the Temple Early Music Ensemble and is currently a staff singer at St Thomas, Whitemarsh. This past summer she was part of Amherst Early Music's Codex Las Huelgas project with Benjamin Bagby and sang the role of Venus in Cambridge Early Music's summer workshop production of *L'Europe Galante* by André Campra. When she is not singing, Willow enjoys reading and is an avid Scottish Country dancer. She's so excited to be singing this concert with the Mendelssohn Chorus!



Kelsey Lewis, soprano

Kelsey Lewis, soprano, recently earned a dual M.M. in voice pedagogy and performance from Westminster Choir College, where she performed roles of Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), Silvana (Missy Mazzoli's *Flourish of Green*), scenes as title role in Janáček's *Jenůfa*, and study-covered Elisetta (*Il matrimonio segreto*) at Spoleto Festival USA.

She sang on Westminster Choir's most recent album, Frank Martin's *Mass for Double Choir*. Kelsey is a music teacher in central NJ and maintains a private studio for voice instruction, piano, and dramatic coaching.



Paul Sirochman Photography

Sharon Rhinesmith, alto

Mezzo-soprano Sharon Rhinesmith is a frequent performer of oratorio, opera and recital. Her solo performances include appearances with The Philadelphia Orchestra at the Mann Music Center and The Philadelphia Singers at Merkin Hall in New York. Other solo appearances include performances with Vox Amadeus, The Music Group of Philadelphia, The Philadelphia Chorus, The Pennsylvania Sinfonia Orchestra/Camerata Singers, The Princeton Pro Musica and The Bach Aria Festival of New York. She has also sung major roles with the ConcertOpera Philadelphia and the Lake George (New York) Opera Festival, among many others. Sharon is an alto section leader with Mendelssohn Chorus and has appeared with them in recent seasons as alto soloist in the Bach *Magnificat* and the *Durufle Requiem*.



As a recitalist Sharon's list of venues includes the Temple University Noonday Arts Series, The Art Alliance of Philadelphia, The Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Lively Arts Series at Montgomery County Community College and the Concerts by Candlelight Series in Cape May, New Jersey. Collaborating with classical guitarist Thomas Smith, she also performed on numerous concert series including the Philadelphia Classical Guitar Society and Concerts on the Square at the Church of the Holy Trinity in Philadelphia.

Sharon received her Bachelor and Master's of Music degrees in Voice Performance from Temple University's Esther Boyer College of Music. She is currently on the voice faculty at Settlement Music School and Temple University Music Preparatory in Philadelphia.

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.



Stephen Ng, tenor

Heralded for his “powerfully expressive voice” (*Washington Post*), and “a superb singer...with a soaring voice in the extreme registers that could be simply described as amazing” (*New York Concert Review*), Stephen Ng is known as an opera, oratorio, recital, and new music performer. He has been featured as tenor soloist with Amsterdam’s De Nederlandse Opera, in the staged version of Stravinsky’s *Threni*, directed by renowned Peter Sellars. His portrayal of Evangelist in Bach’s Passions has received much acclaim, and he has performed as soloist with Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Orchestra Iowa, Washington Bach Consort,

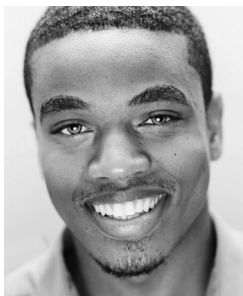


The Bach Choir of Bethlehem, City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong, and Lucerne, Tanglewood and Aspen Festivals, working with conductors such as James Levine, Nicolas McGegan, Pierre Boulez, Paul Hillier, and Daniel Reuss. Ng has premiered two operas: Jeffrey Ching’s *Before Brabant* for the Hong Kong Arts Festival, and Chuck Holdeman’s *Young Meister Bach* for the Bethlehem Bach Choir. He has also made his Carnegie Hall debut performing Argento’s *To Be Sung Upon the Water*. His CD Janáček’s *The Diary of One Who Vanished* was released by Clear Note Publications. Of this, *Journal of Singing* writes “Ng, a tenor with an impressively eclectic resume, is simply superb in every respect. His voice is gorgeous and distinctive.” His second CD, titled *A Soft Florida Rain: Ng sings Juusela*, was released in 2013.

Born and raised in Hong Kong, Stephen graduated with First Class Honour at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Subsequently, he received his Master of Music at New England Conservatory and Doctor of Music at Indiana University. From 2002-2010 he was Associate Professor at Florida’s Stetson University, and is currently Professor of Voice at West Chester University of Pennsylvania. He has served as member of the artistic faculty at the InterHarmony International Music Festival in Sulzbach-Rosenberg, Germany, music directing their opera productions *La coronazione di Poppea* and *Die Zauberflöte*. Stephen was awarded a sabbatical in Spring 2019, and served as Musician-in-Residence at Lingnan University in Hong Kong.

D'quan Tyson, tenor

D'quan Tyson, tenor, is a performer, educator, and administrator based in Philadelphia. In 2016, he graduated with his Bachelor of Music, Vocal Performance degree from Ithaca College and has actively been pursuing outlets to express his passion for music. He is a section leader with Mendelssohn Chorus of Philadelphia & Old Pine Presbyterian Church. In addition, he is a roster singer with the Philadelphia Symphonic Choir and substitute chorister at Opera Philadelphia. Currently, D'quan works at The Victor Café, where you can find the staff singing opera roughly every half an hour, as well as some freelance administration and education work.



Durst, Brenner

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.

Erik Stenswold, bass

Erik Stenswold is a dedicated musician with a deep passion for choral music. He currently serves as the Artistic Director of Rittenhouse Sound, the Director of Music and Choral Activities at Church Farm School, and the Music Director of Paoli Presbyterian Church. Stenswold performs extensively as a professional singer; he first appeared as a soloist at Carnegie Hall in 2017, and continues to perform with notable ensembles Choral Chameleon and Mendelssohn Chorus of Philadelphia; and has appeared with The New York Philharmonic and The Philadelphia Orchestra. As a composer, Stenswold has had works performed by ScapeTrio, Concordia College Choir, and churches across the country.



Stenswold holds a Bachelor's Degree in Vocal Performance from Concordia College, NY, and a Master's Degree in Choral Music Education from Hunter College.

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