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# THE CHORAL SOCIETY

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*of Grace Church in New York*



# GRACE CHURCH IN NEW YORK

The Reverend J. Donald Waring, *rector*

The Reverend Julia Macy Offinger, *associate rector*

The Reverend James H.B. Morton III, *assistant rector*

Patrick Allen, *organist and master of choristers*

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## THE CHORAL SOCIETY AND ORCHESTRA OF GRACE CHURCH IN NEW YORK

John Maclay, *music director*

Tony Bellomy, *associate music director*

Hannah Nacheman, *assistant conductor*

Friday, May 10, 2024, at 8:00 PM

Saturday, May 11, 2024, at 3:00 PM

# PROGRAM

O CLAP YOUR HANDS (1920)                      Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

CHORAL CONCERTO NO. 31 (c. 1790)                      Dimitry Bortniansky (1751–1825)

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SAVE ME, O GOD (Op. 105, No. 2) (1968)                      Alan Hovhaness (1911–2000)

MISERERE MEI, DEUS (1591)                      William Byrd (c. 1540–1623)

MAKE HIS PRAISE GLORIOUS (Op. 105, No. 4) (1968)                      Hovhaness

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JUBILATE DEO À 8 (1597)                      Giovanni Gabrieli (1557–1612)

MIZMOR SHIR LEYOM HASHABBAT (1623)                      Salamone Rossi (c. 1570–1630)

SINGET DEM HERRN EIN NEUES LIED (SWV 35) (1619)                      Heinrich Schütz  
(1585–1672)

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RICHTE MICH, GOTT (OP. 78, NO. 2)                      Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)  
(1844)

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AND THE SWALLOW (2017)                      Caroline Shaw (b. 1982)

A SONG OF DEGREES (1986)                      Tzvi Avni (b. 1927)

I WILL LIFT MINE EYES (2006)                      Jake Runestad (b. 1986)

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CHICHESTER PSALMS (1965)                      Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990)

I. Psalm 108:2, Psalm 100

II. Psalm 23, Psalm 2:1–4

III. Psalm 131, Psalm 133:1

Soloist (*movement II*): Tyler W. Smith

Quartet (*movements I and III*):

Renee Sonnet, Hannah Nacheman, Edward C. Hayes, Rasaan Ogilvie

*In consideration of the performers and fellow audience members, please turn off all cellular phones, pagers and electronic devices upon entering the church.*

*Restrooms are for emergency use only.*

*Parents and caregivers, please take restless children to the Chantry chapel (entrance in the south transept) if they need to vocalize during the performance.*

# INTRODUCTION

The composer David Lang has called the Psalms “a catalog of all the ways you can have a conversation with God.” Whether known as the Tehillim, the Psalms (an English word derived from the Greek, for instrumental music), or the Zabur, this collection of texts that sprang from the Near East—sacred to all the Abrahamic religions—has endured for more than half of recorded human history. Against a larger body of scripture having to do with revelation, storytelling, law and lineage—the endless series of “begats,” the Psalms stand out as poetic and personal, frank expressions of human emotion. In some cases bearing detailed instructions as to melody and instrumentation, the Psalms were, above all, meant to be sung.

The singing and playing of Psalms was a focal point in early Christian worship, organized around specific chant melodies, some of which survive to the modern era. In Western music, settings of the Psalms reached a pinnacle during the Renaissance, resplendent with polyphony and dramatic effects. Later, in the Reformed churches, Psalms were re-cast as congregational hymns: in their foursquare and easily memorized incarnations, perhaps closer to the original aim of the Psalms as music for one and all.

A proper survey of choral settings of the Psalms would consume many weeks of programming, so we have had to be selective. Today’s program gathers the works of twelve composers, all in the Western tradition, writing across six centuries, in five languages—each one

representing a personal response to a poetic and sacred text. We have also tried to tap into the range of emotions expressed in this remarkable collection, from songs of uninhibited communal praise to individual laments, from joy and celebration to alienation and anxiety, from the regal to the humble.

The two opening works, by Ralph Vaughan Williams and Dimitry Bortniansky, illustrate two very different responses to the same sacred text—one flashy and extroverted, the other cerebral, but no less galvanizing. The next set sandwiches a penitential Psalm setting of William Byrd between two movements by the 20<sup>th</sup> century composer Alan Hovhaness. We were struck by this example of artists reaching across centuries to arrive at a similar affect, a parallel evolution of sorts.

In today’s era of historically informed performance, music of the Renaissance is often experienced via the exquisite perfection (verging on correctness) available only to one-on-a-part ensembles. But a whole vein of music from this period exists for larger forces—multiple choruses, expansive instrumentation. We explore this vein in a set of works by Giovanni Gabrieli, Salamone Rossi, and Heinrich Schütz, leading lights of the high Renaissance and early Baroque. The fact that Rossi’s work as a 16<sup>th</sup> century Jewish composer has even survived is something of a miracle; it is an honor to sing this music.

Mendelssohn’s gorgeous and urgent setting of Psalm 43 serves as a pivot

to three highly personalized Psalm interpretations from the modern era. Caroline Shaw’s haunting *and the swallow* and Jake Runestad’s serene *I Will Lift Mine Eyes* stand alongside a setting of Psalm 120 by the Israeli composer Tzvi Avni, who engages in a musical wrestling match with the sacred text.

Leonard Bernstein’s 1965 *Chichester Psalms*, which was the catalyst for today’s program, takes us back to origins, banging and strumming all of the instruments of Solomon’s Temple, delivering all of the vibrancy and lyricism for which he is deservedly known. America’s greatest musician, and one of the most complete artists of all time, Bernstein closes the program with a message for the ages: “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.”

—John Maclay

*Textual note: Transliterations of Old Church Slavonic and Hebrew in this program booklet follow those supplied by the editors of the versions the choir is using for this performance. The German text for the Schütz and Mendelssohn works is from the Luther Bible. Works on the program written in English follow the text as given by the composer; otherwise, translations follow the King James Bible, the inner logic of English literature. Robert Alter’s excellent *Book of Psalms* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2007) renders the Psalms in clean, unadorned language that conveys both the starkness and vulnerability one imagines from the original.*

# NOTES, TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

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O CLAP YOUR HANDS  
1920

Ralph Vaughan Williams  
1872–1958

Vaughan Williams's work spanned the reigns of Victoria and Elizabeth II. His buoyant setting of Psalm 47, a text suitable for kingship and enthronement, has been described as "apt to its purpose of filling a great cathedral with joyous sounds."

O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph.  
For the Lord most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth.  
God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.  
Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises.  
For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises every one that hath  
understanding.  
God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.

—Psalm 47:1–2, 5–8

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CHORAL CONCERTO NO. 31  
c. 1790

Dimitry Bortniansky  
1751–1825

Dimitry Bortniansky was born into a Ukrainian Cossack family, studied in Italy, and came to prominence as *kapellmeister* to Catherine the Great, the first native Slavic musician to serve the Russian imperial court in that role. His collection of 35 "choral concertos," lavish Psalm settings for unaccompanied chorus, was well known outside of Russia, and found a later champion in Tchaikovsky, whose 1882 edition of Bortniansky's works lasted to the present day. With so much of the source material destroyed during the Soviet era, it is difficult to pin down the exact composition dates of the different choral concertos. They were likely written throughout the 1780s and 1790s, and would have been sung at moments of high drama and mystery in the liturgy. Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff, and Stravinsky looked to Bortniansky as a model for their later settings of Russian church music, even as they departed from his Western-influenced style. Criticized by Russians as too Western, suppressed by the Soviets for their religiosity, and eschewed by modernists for their sentimentality, Bortniansky's Psalm settings remain an impressive and inspiring body of work.

Vsi jazyzstsy vosplesčite rukami,  
i voskliknite Bohu hlasom radovanija.  
Jako Hospod' Vyšnjij strašen,  
Tsar' velij po vsej zemli.  
Pojte Bohu našemu, pojte,  
Pojte Tsarevi našemu, pojte.  
Jako Tsar' vseja zemli Boh,  
Pojte rozumno.

*O clap your hands, all ye people;  
shout unto God with the voice of triumph.  
For the Lord most high is terrible;  
he is a great King over all the earth.  
Sing praises to God, sing praises:  
sing praises unto our King, sing praises.  
For God is the King of all the earth:  
sing ye praises with understanding.*

—Psalm 47:1–2, 6–7

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**SAVE ME, O GOD (Op. 105, No. 2)**  
1968

**Alan Hovhaness**  
1911–2000

Author of more than 500 works, the American composer Alan Hovhaness felt an almost compulsive urge to create music—writing in diners, on trains, amid crowds. His 1970 work, “And God Created Great Whales,” wove recorded humpback whale calls into a symphonic composition, with memorable effect. The two works we hear on this program (flanking William Byrd’s famous *Miserere*) are drawn from a four-movement collection for brass quartet, organ, and chorus. “Save Me, O God,” is an austere and imposing setting of a prayer for vindication, a text adaptable to many life situations. An insistent lament for voices and instruments, drawing on ancient, non-Western modal scales, skirls over an organ pedal tone—recalling the great setting of Psalm 90 by Charles Ives.

Save me, O God, by thy name, and judge me by thy strength.  
Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth.

—*Psalm 54: 1–2*

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**MISERERE MEI, DEUS**  
1591

**William Byrd**  
c. 1540–1623

Nearly as prolific as Hovhaness, the composer William Byrd navigated decades of religious and political upheaval as England veered, often violently, between Catholic and Protestant regimes. Together with his mentor, Thomas Tallis, Byrd was responsible for continuing the Catholic tradition into Anglican sacred music—the essence of polyphony, its rich harmonic language, a clear and poignant relationship to the text. Psalm 51, the best known of the seven “penitential Psalms,” calls on God’s purifying mercy to render the reader “whiter than snow.” Musically, Byrd accomplishes this through tension and dissonance; the purification is hard-won.

Miserere mei, Deus, secundum  
magnam misericordiam tuam;  
et secundum multitudinem  
miserationum tuarum, dele  
iniquitatem meam.

*Have mercy upon me, O God, according  
to thy lovingkindness:  
according unto the multitude  
of thy tender mercies blot out my  
transgressions.*

—*Psalm 51:1*

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**MAKE HIS PRAISE GLORIOUS (Op. 105, No. 4)**  
1968

**Hovhaness**

Music of praise and redemption brings this introspective set to a close. The opening lines of Psalm 66, an enumeration of God’s endless accomplishments, are repeated almost as a mantra. In contrast to the otherworldly character of “Save Me, O God,” Hovhaness employs a soaring, “open” pentatonic melody for solo trumpet and a choral setting that could have come straight out of a Shaker hymnal.

Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands  
Sing forth the honor of his name: make his praise glorious.

—*Psalm 66: 1–2*

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**JUBILATE DEO À 8**  
1597

**Giovanni Gabrieli**  
1557–1612

Giovanni Gabrieli spent his heyday as principal organist of the Basilica of San Marco in Venice. With its four choir lofts, San Marco lent itself to extravagant display, with groups of musicians dispersed around the church to create daring spatial effects. This joyous, eight part motet, a compendium of sacred texts having to do with kingship and enthronement, is a distillation of the high Venetian style.

Jubilate Deo omnis terra, quia  
sic benedicetur homo qui timet  
Dominum.

*Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands,  
as the man who fears the Lord is blessed.*

—*Psalm 100:1, Psalm 128:5*

Deus Israel conjungat vos et ipse sit  
vobiscum.

*May the God of Israel bind you together  
and himself be with you.*

—*Tobit 7:15*

Mittat vobis auxilium de sancto et de  
Sion tueatur vos.

*May he send you help from his holiness  
and watch over you from Zion.*

—*Psalm 20:2*

Benedicat vobis Dominus ex Sion, qui  
fecit caelum et terram.

*The Lord blessed you out of Sion,  
he who made heaven and earth.*

—*Psalm 134:4*

Servite Domino in Laetitia.

*Serve the Lord with gladness.*

—*Psalm 100:1*

Northern Italy in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century was an island of tolerance, home to flourishing synagogues with significant vocal and instrumental establishments, and, in Mantua, a famous Jewish theater troupe, for which Salamone Rossi was the principal composer. Rossi thoroughly absorbed the musical style of the High Renaissance, publishing a major collection of Psalm settings and other unaccompanied choral works in 1623 under the title *The Songs of Solomon*, a biblical double-entendre. Rediscovered by Baron Edmond de Rothschild in the 1830s, and published in Paris in 1876, *The Songs of Solomon* are a compelling, even inspiring, survival of a proud tradition that later generations sought to erase. Psalm 92 follows a familiar trope: praising God, recounting his defeat of the evildoers and exaltation of the faithful, concluding with an image of paradise (here an allegory of a fertile garden) and reaffirmation of strength. Rossi writes the Psalm for two SATB choirs, sometimes alternating verses, sometimes joined together for maximum splendor.

Mizmor shir leyom hashabbat.

*A Psalm, a Song. for the sabbath day.*

Tov lehodot Ladonai, ulzamer  
leshimcha elyon.

*It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord,  
and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High:*

Lehagid baboker chasdecha ve-  
emunatcha, baleylot.

*To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning,  
and thy faithfulness every night,*

Alei asor va-alei-navel; alei heegayon  
bekinor.

*Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the  
psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound.*

Ki simachtani adonai befoalecha;  
bema'asei yadecha aranen.

*For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy  
work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands.*

Ma-gadlu ma'asecha Adonai, meod,  
amku machshevotecha.

*O Lord, how great are thy works!  
and thy thoughts are very deep.*

Ish ba'ar lo yeda,  
uchsil lo yavin et zot.

*A brutish man knoweth not;  
neither doth a fool understand this.*

Bifroach reshaim, kemo esev,  
vayatzitzu, ko-poalei aven.  
Lehishamdami adei-ad.

*When the wicked spring as the grass, and when  
all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that  
they shall be destroyed for ever:*

Veatah marom—leolam Adonai.

*But thou, Lord, art most high for evermore.*

Ki hineh oyvecha, Adonai—ki hineh  
oyvecha yo veidu. Yitpardu ko  
poalei aven.

*For, lo, thine enemies, O Lord, for, lo, thine  
enemies shall perish; all the workers of iniquity  
shall be scattered.*

Vaterem kirem karni; baloti,  
beshemen ra'anani.

*But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an  
unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil.*

Vatabet eini beshurai.  
Bakamim alay me'ra'eem—  
tishma'eina oznai.

*Mine eye also shall see my desire on mine enemies,  
and mine ears shall hear my desire of the wicked  
that rise up against me.*

Tzdik katamar yifrach; ke-erez  
balvanon yisgeh.

*The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree:  
he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.*

Shetulim beveit Adonai; bechatsrot  
eloheinu yafrichu.

*Those that be planted in the house of the Lord  
shall flourish in the courts of our God.*

Od yenuvun beseiva;  
desheininim ve'ra'ananim yihyu.

*They shall still bring forth fruit in old age;  
they shall be fat and flourishing;*

Lehagid, ki-yashar Adonai; tzuri,  
ve-lo avalatah bo.

*To shew that the Lord is upright: he is my rock,  
and there is no unrighteousness in him.*

—Psalm 92

What the painter Albrecht Dürer did for the visual arts, the composer Heinrich Schütz did for German music, transmitting the style of the High Renaissance from Northern Italy across the Alps, where he explored and extended it through an impressive career at the Saxon court at Dresden. From 1609 to 1612, Schütz apprenticed with Giovanni Gabrieli, under whose teaching he perfected the grand Venetian polychoral style. Part of a magnificent 26-work collection published in 1619 as the *Psalmen Davids*, this version of Psalm 98 sets Martin Luther's complete translation for two SATB choirs and unspecified instrumental ensembles. (In this performance, we have divided the instrumental material among two string ensembles and a quartet of brass players to achieve a sense of contrasting textures that underscore the sacred text.) With its rhythmical impulse and vivid word-painting, this piece also looks forward to the early Baroque. In the Psalm's central image, the sounds of human voices and instruments actually cause the entire natural world to vibrate in response, resounding with unbridled praise.

Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied;  
denn er tut Wunder. Er siegt mit  
seiner Rechten und mit seinem  
heiligen Arm.

*O sing unto the Lord a new song; for he hath  
done marvellous things: his right hand,  
and his holy arm, hath gotten him  
the victory.*

Der Herr läßt sein Heil verkündigen;  
vor den Völkern läßt er seine  
Gerechtigkeit offenbaren.

*The Lord hath made known his salvation: his  
righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight  
of the heathen.*

Er gedenkt an seine Gnade und  
Wahrheit dem Hause Israel; aller Welt  
Enden sehen das Heil unsers Gottes.

*He hath remembered his mercy and his truth  
toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the  
earth have seen the salvation of our God.*

Jauchzet dem Herren, alle Welt;  
singet, rühmet und lobet!

*Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth:  
make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.*

Lobet den Herren mit Harfen, mit  
Harfen und Psalmen!

*Sing unto the Lord with the harp; with the harp,  
and the voice of a psalm.*

Mit Drommeten und Posaunen  
jauchzet vor dem Herrn, dem König!

*With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful  
noise before the Lord, the King.*

Das Meer brause und was darinnen  
ist, der Erdboden und die darauf  
wohnen.

*Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof;  
the world, and they that dwell  
therein.*

Die Wasserströme frohlocken, und  
alle Berge seien fröhlich vor dem  
Herrn;

*Let the floods clap their hands:  
let the hills be joyful together  
before the Lord;*

Denn er kommt das Erdreich zu  
richten. Er wird den Erdboden  
richten mit Gerechtigkeit und die  
Völker mit Recht.

*For he cometh to judge the earth:  
with righteousness shall he judge  
the world, and the people  
with equity.*

Ehre sei dem Vater und dem Sohn  
und auch dem Heiligen Geiste.  
Wie es war im Anfang jetzt und  
immerdar, und von Ewigkeit zu  
Ewigkeit, Amen.

*Glory be to the Father and to the Son  
and also to the Holy Spirit.  
As it was in the beginning, is now  
and always, and forever and ever.  
Amen.*



This urgent and vivid setting of Psalm 43 comes from a portfolio of music composed by Mendelssohn during a brief stint as head of music for the Berlin Cathedral. Frederick William IV, who acceded to the Prussian throne in 1840, embarked on a program to upgrade the cultural life of his capital city, and in the world of German music, Mendelssohn was the biggest prize. In keeping with the royal family's Calvinist preference for simplification in sacred worship, Mendelssohn's works for the Berlin Cathedral are mainly *a cappella*, modeled on the works of the Italian and German Renaissance, especially those of Palestrina and Schütz. The text is a prayer of an individual in crisis, perhaps in the context of exile or dispossession. Anxiety and rootlessness give way to hope and groundedness in the closing stanza.

Richte mich, Gott, und führe meine  
Sache wider das unheilige Volk, und  
errette mich von den falschen und  
bösen Leuten.

*Judge me, O God, and plead my cause  
against an ungodly nation:  
O deliver me from the deceitful  
and unjust man.*

Denn du bist der Gott meiner Stärke:  
warum verstößest du mich? Warum  
lässest du mich so traurig geh'n, wenn  
mein Feind mich drängt?

*For thou art the God of my strength:  
why dost thou cast me off? why go I  
mourning because of the oppression  
of the enemy?*

Sende dein Licht und deine Wahrheit,  
dass sie mich leiten und bringen zu  
deinem heiligen Berge, und zu deiner  
Wohnung.

*O send out thy light and thy truth:  
let them lead me unto thy holy hill,  
and to thy tabernacles.*

Daß ich hineingehe zum Altar Gottes,  
zu dem Gott, der meine Freude und  
Wonne ist, und dir, Gott, auf der  
Harfe danke, mein Gott.

*Then will I go unto the altar of God,  
unto God my exceeding joy: yea,  
upon my harp will I praise thee,  
O God my God.*

Was betrübst du dich, meine Seele,  
und bist so unruhig in mir? Harre  
auf Gott! denn ich werde ihm noch  
danken, daß er meines Angesichts  
Hilfe, und mein Gott ist.

*Why art thou cast down, O my soul?  
and why art thou disquieted within me?  
Hope in God: for I shall yet praise him  
who is the health of my countenance,  
and my God.*

— Psalm 43

Youngest ever recipient of the Pulitzer prize for music, the American composer Caroline Shaw wrote this paraphrase of Psalm 84 for a 2016 Lincoln Center festival called *The Psalms Experience*, an artistic response to what turned out to be a terrible year. Working in response to the Syrian refugee crisis, Shaw identified in this piece “a yearning for home that feels very relevant today. The second verse is: ‘The sparrow found a house and the swallow her nest, where she may place her young,’ which is just a beautiful image of a bird trying to keep her children safe—people trying to keep their family safe.” The work is based on a repeated chord progression, heard in the haunting opening measures, and organized in three sections, each concluding with a wordless meditation. At the end, the chorus intones a “n-n-n-n” pattern to evoke the gentle sound of raindrops.

how beloved is your dwelling place, o lord of hosts  
my soul yearns, faints, my heart and my flesh cry  
the sparrow found a house and the swallow her nest, where she may raise her young  
they pass through the valley of bakka, they make it a place of springs  
the autumn rains also cover it with pools

—after Psalm 84

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**A SONG OF DEGREES**  
1986

**Tzvi Avni**  
b. 1927

Born in Saarbrücken, Germany as Hermann Jakob Steinke, Tzvi Avni emigrated to what was then Mandatory Palestine in 1935, after the Nazi reoccupation of the Saar region. One of the most beloved and prolific Israeli composers of his era, Avni has worked in a variety of styles and genres ranging from large scale orchestral works to electronic music, with a notable contribution to the world of Jewish sacred choral music. His setting of Psalm 120—a prayer of pilgrimage and deliverance—is characterized by vivid word painting and a haunting, almost atonal musical language. Through calculated repetition, the word “peace” is given the ultimate victory, triumphing quietly but insistently over slander and ostracism.

Shir hammalot:

*A song of ascents:*

El Adonai batzarata li karati,  
vaya-aneni.

*In my distress I cried unto the Lord,  
and he heard me.*

Adonai hatzila nafshi misfat sheker  
milashon remiya.

*Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips,  
and from a deceitful tongue.*

Ma yiten lecha uma yosif lach lashon  
remiya?

*What shall be given unto thee? or what shall be  
done unto thee, thou false tongue?*

Chitzey gibor shenunim im gechaley  
retamim.

*Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals  
of juniper.*

Oya li ki garti Meshech shachanti im  
ohaley Kedar!

*Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech,  
that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!*

Rabat shachna la nafshi im sone  
shalom.

*My soul hath long dwelt with him that  
hateth peace.*

Ani shalom: vechi adaber shalom,  
adaber hema lamilchama.

*I am for peace: but when I speak,  
they are for war.*

—Psalm 120

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**I WILL LIFT MINE EYES**  
2006

**Jake Runestad**  
b. 1986

The works of the Midwestern composer Jake Runestad are suffused with the spirituality suggested by the natural world. Best known for his Emmy-winning *Earth Symphony* (2022), Runestad’s work is mainly choral, bearing the imprint of his studies at the Peabody Institute with Kevin Puts. Another “song of ascents,” designed around pilgrimage, the text of Psalm 121 (like that of Psalm 23) evokes a landscape strewn with danger, but also uplifting. Runestad had a compelling mental-aural image in mind as he wrote the piece, shaping the melodic lines “to mimic that of a mountainous landscape and the tone colors to the bold hues of where the hills meet the sky.”

I will lift mine eyes unto the hills, from whence comes my help.  
My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.  
He will not let your foot be moved. He who keeps you will not slumber nor sleep.  
The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.  
The sun shall not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.  
The Lord will keep you from all evil: He will keep your soul.  
The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this day forth  
forever more.

—Psalm 121

Leonard Bernstein remarked on more than one occasion that he would rather be remembered as a composer than a conductor. Indeed, in recent years, his classical compositions have come to be viewed as on a par with the megahits he contributed to the American musical theater. Apart from (and far less problematic than) the 1971 *Mass*, *Chichester Psalms* is his most extended choral work. Bernstein wrote the piece in 1965 while on sabbatical from the New York Philharmonic, in response to a commission from Walter Hussey, the Dean of Chichester Cathedral. This visionary and arts-minded cleric also commissioned Benjamin Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb*, as well countless paintings and sculptures by contemporary visual artists. These artworks included a magnificent stained glass window (on Psalm 150) in Chichester by Marc Chagall, one of whose many images of King David adorns the cover of this program booklet.

*Chichester Psalms* opens with a clamorous introduction that summons all the ancient instruments of the Temple (psaltery, harp, timbrel, lyre – the percussion complement is extensive) and culminates in a primal shout from the choir. Bernstein's ebullient setting of Psalm 100 ("Make a joyful noise unto the Lord") combines thematic and harmonic material from the introduction; the 7/4 rhythm conveys a sense of almost drunken celebration. In the second movement, a haunting setting of Psalm 23 for soloist and harp (the instrument of David), is brutally interrupted by the men's chorus,

singing a warlike text. The women re-enter above the savagery; the composer's score indication at this point is "blissfully unaware of the threat." Bernstein lore has it that the men's chorus was a discard from *West Side Story* (1957).

The tense and overwrought orchestral prelude that opens the third movement is of a piece with Bernstein's poetic spirit, his quest to resolve the crisis of modernity that figured so prominently in his symphonic works. The anxiety subsides as the harp, strings and choir introduce a swaying 10/4 melody; the text also offers a soothing balm to the crisis that came before. In the postlude, Bernstein circles back to the opening chorus, a muted trumpet intoning the original theme with spare eloquence above the final "Amen."

All of Western choral music can be traced to the singing of Psalms in Solomon's Temple, and Bernstein here takes us right back to the source. By choosing to render the most familiar of all the Psalms in their original tongue, but in today's musical language, Bernstein lends them freshness and immediacy, a communicative power that can be lacking in rote observance. Closing with a statement that is both highly personal and highly universal in character, ancient and modern at the same time, Bernstein is at his very best—showing us how, through music, to make sense out of a confusing world.

## I.

Urah, hanevel, v'chiner! A-irah shahar!

Hariu l'Adonai kol ha-arets.  
Iv' du et Adonai b'simha  
Bo-u l'fanav bir'nanah.  
D'u ki Adonai Hu Elohim.  
Hu asanu v'lo anahnu.  
Amo v'tson mar'ito.  
Bo-u sh'arav b'todah,  
Hasteirotav bit'hilah,  
Hodu lo, bar'chu sh'mo.  
Ki tov Adonai, l'olam has'do,  
V'ad dor vador emunato.

## II.

Adonai roi, lo ehsar.  
Bin'ot deshe yarbitseini,  
Al mei m'nuhot y'nahaleini,  
Naf'shi y'shovev,  
Yan'heini b'ma'aglei tsedek,  
L'ma'an sh'mo.  
Gam ki eilech  
B'gei tsalmavet,  
Lo ira ra,  
Ki Atah imadi.  
Shiv't'cha umishan'techa  
Hemah y'nahamuni.  
Ta'aroch l'fanai shulchan  
Neced tsor'rai  
Dishanta vashemen roshi  
Cosi r'vayah.  
Ach tov vahesed  
Yird'funi kol y'mei hayai  
V'shav'ti b'veit Adonai  
L'orech yamim.

*Awake, psaltery and harp: I will rouse the dawn!*

—Psalm 108:2

*Make a joyful noise unto the Lord all ye lands.  
Serve the Lord with gladness.  
Come before his presence with singing.  
Know that the Lord, he is God.  
It is he that has made us, and not we ourselves.  
We are his people and the sheep of his pasture.  
Come unto his gates with thanksgiving,  
And into his court with praise.  
Be thankful unto him and bless his name.  
For the Lord is good, his mercy is everlasting,  
And his truth endureth to all generations.*

—Psalm 100

*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.  
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures,  
He leadeth me beside the still waters,  
He restoreth my soul,  
He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness,  
For His name's sake.  
Yea, though I walk  
Through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil,  
For Thou art with me.  
Thy rod and Thy staff  
They comfort me.  
Thou preparest a table before me  
In the presence of my enemies,  
Thou anointest my head with oil,  
My cup runneth over.  
Surely goodness and mercy  
Shall follow me all the days of my life,  
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord  
Forever.*

—Psalm 23

Lamah rag'shu goyim  
Ul'umim yeh'gu rik?  
Yit'yats'vu malchei erets,  
V'roznim nos'du yahad  
Al Adonai v'al m'shiho.  
N'natkah et mos'roteimo,  
V'nashlichah mimenu avoteimo.  
Yoshev bashamayim  
Yis'hak, Adonai  
Yil'ag lamo!

III.

Adonai, Adonai,  
Lo gavah libi,  
V'lo ramu einai,  
V'lo hilachti  
Big'dolot uv'niflaot  
Mimenu.  
Im lo shiviti  
V'domam'ti,  
Naf'shi k'gamul alei imo,  
Kagamul alai naf'shi.  
Yahel Yis'rael el Adonai  
Me'atah v'ad olam.

Hineh mah tov,  
Umah nayim,  
Shevet ahim  
Gam yahad.

*Why do the nations rage,  
And the people imagine a vain thing?  
The kings of the earth set themselves,  
And the rulers take counsel together,  
Against the Lord and against His anointed.  
Saying, let us break their bonds asunder,  
And cast away their cords from us.  
He that sitteth in the heavens  
Shall laugh, and the Lord  
Shall have them in derision!*

—Psalm 2:1–4

*Lord, Lord,  
My heart is not haughty,  
Nor mine eyes lofty,  
Neither do I exercise myself  
In great matters or in things  
Too wonderful for me to understand.  
Surely I have calmed  
And quieted myself,  
As a child that is weaned of his mother,  
My soul is even as a weaned child.  
Let Israel hope in the Lord  
From henceforth and forever.*

—Psalm 131

*Behold how good,  
And how pleasant it is,  
For brethren to dwell  
Together in unity.*

—Psalm 133:1

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**John Maclay** is in his 25<sup>th</sup> season as music director of the Choral Society. Major choral-orchestral works offered under his baton include the Verdi *Requiem*, Vaughan Williams *Sea Symphony* (at Carnegie Hall) and *Dona Nobis Pacem*, Bach *Mass in B minor*, Brahms *Requiem*, Duruflé *Requiem*, Bernstein *Chichester Psalms*, Barber *Prayers of Kierkegaard*, and Fauré *Requiem*, as well as Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and Haydn's *Creation*, *Harmoniemesse*, and *Mass in Time of War*. The Choral Society's 2005 debut at the Metropolitan Museum of Art as part of its prestigious Concerts & Lectures Series was noted by critics for its "carefully considered" programming and the "discipline and passion" of the chorus. John accompanied and conducted choruses at Haverford and Bryn Mawr colleges. While in graduate school, he was assistant conductor of the Harvard Glee Club, America's oldest collegiate chorus. John is the General Counsel of Crédit Agricole Corporate and Investment Bank in the Americas.

**Tony Bellomy**, associate music director, holds degrees in piano performance, vocal accompanying and opera coaching. He has coached and played for the Florentine Opera Company, the Skylight Opera Theatre, the Milwaukee Ballet Company, American Ballet Theatre, New York Lyric Opera, and Encompass New Opera Theatre. A full-time resident of Norwalk, Connecticut, Tony also fulfills his second love of musical theater by music directing many productions each year throughout Fairfield, Westchester, and Rockland counties. By day, he is the

Director of Operations for Gurr Johns, Inc., a global appraisal and advisory firm headquartered in New York. This is Tony's 17<sup>th</sup> season with the Choral Society.

**Hannah Nacheman**, assistant conductor, is a conductor, vocalist, and educator based in New York City. A lifelong musician and arts advocate, she serves as director of mixed chorus and adjunct professor at St. John's University and teaching artist for the VOCES8 Foundation. She is one of the co-creators of Girls Who Conduct, a mentorship program for women and non-binary musicians whose mission is to foster diversity and inclusion in classical music. She also serves as guest faculty for the Juilliard School Preparatory Division, resident assistant conductor for City Lyric Opera, and this season serves as guest conductor with the New Conductors Orchestra. Hannah holds music degrees from Bryn Mawr College and Manhattan School of Music, with continued studies at the Juilliard School. This is her ninth season with the Choral Society.

**The Choral Society** is a nonsectarian ensemble of 166 experienced professional and avocational singers who volunteer their time and talents in the service of the choral art form. *The New York Sun* claims that in a number of recent hearings no other chorus in town "has been even close to the level of professionalism of this strictly volunteer group." The chorus's repertoire spans seven centuries, from the Renaissance masters to the

great oratorios. Supported by some of New York's finest freelance orchestra players, the group reaches thousands of listeners each year through the uniquely inclusive medium of choral singing. The Choral Society was profiled in 2015

by the nationally televised PBS-WNET magazine *Religion and Ethics Newsweekly*, and in 2024 will celebrate its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary as an independent arts organization.

## ORCHESTRA

### VIOLIN I

Jorge Àvila, *concertmaster*  
Alexander Sharpe  
Max Moston  
Victor Schultz  
James Tsao

### VIOLIN II

Louise Owen  
Cenovia Cummins  
Susan Dominguez  
Paula Flatow  
Sarah Badavas

### VIOLA

David Gold  
Edward Malave  
Nikki Federman  
Judith Insell

### CELLO

Sarah Hewitt-Roth  
Daniel Miller  
Benjamin Whittenburg

### BASS

Troy Rinker

### TRUMPET

Thomas Hoyt  
Todd Walker  
Thomas Verchot

### TROMBONE

Richard Clark  
Mark Broschinsky  
Jonathan Greenberg

### HARP

Nina Kellman

### TIMPANI

Joseph Tompkins

### PERCUSSION

David Mancuso  
Barry Centanni  
John Ostrowski  
Matthew Smallcomb  
Taylor Goodson

### ORGAN

Patrick Allen  
*Organist and Master of Choristers,  
Grace Church in New York*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank Mary Horenkamp for the design of our season publicity materials and this program booklet; our volunteer management team, Molly Kemper, Tim Bohn, Alecia Baucom-Ortiz, and Traci Gallagher; our management associate, Frank Russo; Hannah Nacheaman and Sarah Weiss for their concert promotional efforts; the Sextons and Staff of Grace Church and Grace Church School for their unflinching help behind the scenes; our volunteer ushers; the board members of Friends of the Choral Society; and the countless Choral Society volunteers who helped prepare, promote and execute all aspects of this public performance.

We gratefully acknowledge the pro bono contributions of our law firm, Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP.

The Choral Society's community outreach would not be possible without the support of the Clergy, Vestry, Wardens and People of Grace Church.

The Choral Society is a proud member of the New York Choral Consortium.

[www.newyorkchoralconsortium.org](http://www.newyorkchoralconsortium.org)



# THE CHORAL SOCIETY

John Maclay, *music director*

Tony Bellomy, *associate music director*    Hannah Nacheman, *assistant conductor*

## SOPRANOS

Elizabeth Abrams  
Miranda Alquist  
Jessica Azani  
Alecia Baucom-Ortiz  
Karen Chan  
Michelle Chang  
Amy Daley  
Sarah Fitzharding  
Monica Gallagher  
Megan Gearheart  
Joanne Giordano  
Mary Goetz  
Deborah Grant  
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Katherine Willis  
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Kerry Grace Benn  
Emma Berry  
Emma Borjigin-Wang  
Michelle Bowen  
Chelsea Brite  
Lauren Campbell  
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Emily Higgins  
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Angelika Mendes-Lowney  
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Yoobin Noh  
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Kevin Doyle  
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Mark Evans  
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Edward C. Hayes  
Cameron R. Hernandez  
Douglas Houston  
Richard Jaime-Bettan  
Esta Joy Kroten  
Noah Kudman  
Jack Liufu  
Chris Lowden  
John Muller  
Stephen Nemeth  
Jesse Pennington  
Michael Read  
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Morgan Wolbe  
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Boaz Halaban  
Noah Henyon  
Michael Horton  
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Nicolas Kemper  
Jonah M. Knobler  
Stephen Koffler  
Douglas Krehbiel  
Edis Levent  
Kenneth Li  
Tony Majewski  
John Mattera  
Myles McDonnell  
Drew McLelland  
Brandon McQueen  
Nikolai Mishler  
Tim Moore  
Andrew Nichols  
Rasaan Ogilvie  
George Yasuhara Oliver  
George Ordiway  
Henry Parkhurst  
Michael Pugliese  
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# UPCOMING EVENTS

## ANNUAL SPRING BENEFIT

You are invited to celebrate with us at a festive cocktail reception in the Tribeca home of Kevin Roon and Simon Yates. Tickets start at \$150 and are on sale through our website at [www.thechoralsociety.org/event-listing/](http://www.thechoralsociety.org/event-listing/)

All proceeds from this important fundraising event go to maintain the depth and quality of the Choral Society's musical offerings. Most of the ticket price will be tax-deductible. We hope you can join us for a fun and festive evening of cocktails, appetizers, raffle prizes, and a private performance of a wonderful string quartet!

Thursday, June 13, 2024, from 6:30 to 9:00 PM



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## CHRISTMAS CONCERTS 2024

Join us for our annual holiday programs at Grace Church,  
with orchestra, guest soloists and audience carol sing.

Friday, December 6, 2024, at 8:00 PM

Saturday, December 7, 2024, at 3:00 PM

Grace Church in New York

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## SPRING CONCERT 2025

The Choral Society and Orchestra return to Carnegie Hall  
with another masterwork—program to be announced!

Friday, April 11, 2025, at 8:00 PM

Stern Auditorium/Perelman Stage  
Carnegie Hall  
881 Seventh Avenue



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MARC CHAGALL (1887—1985).

*David and his Harp*, 1956

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