

NEW AMSTERDAM SINGERS

CLARA LONGSTRETH, Music Director

2024-2025 Season



A WINTER TAPESTRY

FRI, DEC 13 • 7:30PM + SUN, DEC 15 • 4PM

*Broadway Presbyterian Church
114th Street and Broadway
New York City*

Photo: Mark DeTroia

NEW AMSTERDAM SINGERS

Clara Longstreth, *Music Director*

T.J. Barnes, *Assistant Conductor*

Nathaniel Granor, *Chamber Chorus Assistant Conductor*

Pen Ying Fang, *Piano*

A Winter Tapestry

Ich lasse dich nicht

J.S. Bach
(1685-1750)

Julie Kim, *Cello*
Pen Ying Fang, *Organ*

O Magnum Mysterium

Morten Lauridsen
(b. 1943)

T.J. Barnes, *Conductor*
Full Chorus

Mid-Winter Songs

Morten Lauridsen
(b. 1943)

1. *Lament for Pasiphaë*
2. *Like Snow*
3. *She Tells Her Love While Half Asleep*
4. *Mid-Winter Waking*
5. *Intercession in Late October*

Pen Ying Fang, *Piano*

Chamber Chorus

INTERMISSION

Please turn off all phones and other devices during the performance. The use of cameras (including smartphones) and recording devices during the performance is prohibited.

A Ceremony of Carols

Benjamin Britten
(1913-1976)

1. Procession

2. Wolcum Yole!

3. There is no Rose

4a. That yongë child

Robin Beckhard, *Soprano*

4b. Balulalow

Kate Leahy, *Soprano*

5. As dew in Aprille

6. This little Babe

7. Interlude

8. In Freezing Winter Night

Laura Klein, *Soprano*; Charlotte Rocker, *Mezzo-Soprano*

9. Spring Carol

Fri 12/13: Michelle Neary, *Soprano*; Robin Beckhard, *Soprano*

Sun 12/15: Susan Daum, *Soprano*; Elisa Peimer, *Mezzo-Soprano*

10. Deo Gracias

11. Recessional

Jennifer Hault, *Harp*

Treble Voices

Ave Maria

Franz Biebl
(1906-2001)

Nate Mickelson and Paul Parsekian, *Tenors*; Fred Nangle, *Bass*

Three Yiddish Folksongs

arr. Victor Ullmann
(1898-1944)

The Rabbi Elimelech

Quiet! Still!

The World Asks

T.J. Barnes, *Conductor*

Lower Voices

The Word Was God

Rosephanye Powell
(b. 1962)

Full Chorus

A Winter Tapestry

Today's program begins a triple "swan song" – my last three concerts before retirement. For this concert, I decided to focus on musicians whose choral compositions are a major part of their life work. This is as true for Bach as it is for the two living American composers, Morten Lauridsen and Rosephanye Powell.

The Second World War was experienced in profound ways by three of this program's composers. Two of the German composers, Franz Biebl and Viktor Ullmann, were imprisoned for two years, but under vastly different conditions. As a captured German soldier, Biebl spent 1944-1946 as an American prisoner of war in Michigan. Ullmann was deported from Prague by the German government to the concentration camp Theresienstadt in 1942. Benjamin Britten, meanwhile, spent several months in 1942 on board a ship heading home to England. He had spent three years in America and was now composing major choral works en route.

Our concert begins with **Johann Sebastian Bach**. *Ich lasse dich nicht* is probably Bach's earliest motet, composed in 1712-1713 when he was employed at the Ducal court in Weimar. The structure is simple: an extended double-chorus section followed by a shorter Andante, ending with a chorale harmonization. In the first section, Chorus II echoes Chorus I much of the time.

In the second section, the choirs are united: The lowest three parts sing lively imitative counterpoint while the sopranos are given a chorale melody as a cantus firmus. The third section is a transcription of an organ piece on that same chorale, now in four-part harmony.

The text combines a phrase from Genesis (32:26) with a stanza from a Lutheran hymn. The passage from Genesis tells of Jacob's return to Canaan. He was approached by a mysterious

figure who engaged him in a wrestling match. Jacob prevailed and insisted that the stranger bless him before he would let him go: "I will not leave you before you bless me."

The motet has a complex history. It was first performed as a motet by J.S. Bach, and some 19th-century scholars later thought it should be attributed to Johann Christoph Bach (Bach's father's cousin); it was so described by the Bach-Gesellschaft (Bach Society) in 1892, and the Neue Bach-Ausgabe (the second complete edition of the music of J.S. Bach) omitted it in 1954. But in 1988, Daniel Melamed, Professor Emeritus of Music at Indiana University, read a paper to the American Bach Society that convincingly identified the motet as a work of J.S. Bach. Then in 1999 the scholar Christoff Wolff rediscovered *Ich lasse dich nicht* in Kyiv in a collection that included the motet written in Bach's hand. Many scholars agree that the final chorale was probably added in the 19th century. While we now believe this to be Bach's earliest motet, it was not counted among the standard six of earlier collections.

*Ich lasse dich nicht,
du segnest mich denn!
Mein Jesu, ich lasse,
ich lasse dich nicht!*

*Weil du mein Gott
und Vater bist,
dein Kind wirst
du verlassen nicht,
du väterliches Herz.
Ich bin ein armer Erdenkloß,
auf Erden weiß
ich keinen Trost.*

*Ich dank dir, Christe,
Gottes Sohn,
daß du mich
solchs erkennen lan*

*I will not leave you
before you bless me!
My Jesus,
I will not leave you!*

*Because you are my God
and Father,
you will not
abandon your child,
you fatherly heart.
I am a meager clod of earth,
on this earth I know
of no consolation.*

*I thank you, Christ,
Son of God,
that you reveal
such things to me*

durch dein göttliches Wort;
verleih mir auch
Beständigkeit
zu meiner Seelen Seligkeit.

through your divine word;
grant me also
steadfastness
for the salvation of my soul.

Lob, Ehr und Preis
sei dir gesagt
für alle dein' erzeigt
Wohltat,
und bitt demütiglich,
laß mich nicht
von dein'm Angesicht
verstoßen werden ewiglich.

Praise, honor and
glory to you
for all the good
you have done me.
And I humbly beg you
not from your
presence
to banish me forever.

— Genesis 32:27, chorale by Erasmus Alber (1557)

Morten Lauridsen has achieved a remarkable position in the choral world: he has now overtaken Randall Thompson as America's most frequently performed choral composer. Several of his individual works are the all-time best-selling choral octavos published by Theodore Presser. His music is recorded on more than 100 albums and sung all over the world.

Born in Washington State and raised in Portland, Oregon, in a family that had emigrated from Denmark, Lauridsen divides his time between California and a remote island off the coast of Washington. He has been Professor of Composition at the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music for more than 30 years. There he begins each of his lectures by reading a poem. From 1994 to 2001 he was composer-in-residence with the Los Angeles Master Chorale. Lauridsen was named American Choral Master by the National Endowment for the Arts in 2006, and was given the National Medal of the Arts at a White House ceremony in 2007.

Today we sing two contrasting works by Lauridsen back-to-back. *O Magnum Mysterium*, the later work, is based on a famous Responsory for Matins on Christmas Day. Lauridsen writes that

he chose to create “a deeply felt religious statement, at once uncomplicated and unadorned yet powerful and transformative in its effect upon a listener. I also wanted to convey a sense of the text’s long history and theological importance by referencing the constant purity of sacred music found in High Renaissance polyphony, especially in works by Josquin des Prez and Palestrina.”

The simple beauty that Lauridsen created has made this work hugely popular, with thousands of performances throughout the world since its premiere in 1994. Musical features to note are the use of inverted chords, which give the music a suspended feel; phrases similar to Gregorian chant; and the use of a single dissonance on the word “virgo,” which Lauridsen calls the most important note in the piece, denoting Mary’s suffering at the death of her son.

*O magnum mysterium,
et admirabile sacramentum,
ut animalia viderent
Dominum natum,
jacentum in praesepio!
Beata Virgo, cujus viscera
meruerunt portare
Dominum Christum.
Alleluia!*

*O great mystery,
and wondrous sacrament,
that animals should see
the newborn Lord,
lying in their manger!
Blessed is the Virgin whose womb
was worthy to bear
the Lord Jesus Christ.
Alleluia!*

— *Traditional Latin chant*

In contrast to the simple beauty of *O Magnum Mysterium*, Lauridsen’s choral cycles use complex harmonies with abundant dissonance. He has written seven vocal cycles, most very challenging. NAS sang his *Mid-Winter Songs* in March 2011, and the Chamber Chorus will perform it again in this program. The first version of *Mid-Winter Songs* was commissioned by the University of Southern California and written in 1981 for chorus and piano. The next year, Lauridsen received a second

commission to create an orchestral version. At this time, he dropped the last movement and added an orchestral interlude near the end of the fifth. Lauridsen wrote,

"... I took volumes of poetry to my island home in search of possible texts, including the complete works of the English poet Robert Graves (1895-1965). In reading Graves, I became very much taken with the richness, elegance and extraordinary beauty of his poetry and his insights regarding the human experience. Five diverse poems with a common 'winter' motif (a particular favorite of mine, rich in the paradoxical symbolism of dying/rejuvenation, light/darkness, sleeping/waking) suggested a cohesive cycle and led to the composition of Mid-Winter Songs. ... The cycle is cast in an overall arch form, framed by the intensely dramatic and passionate setting of the Lament for Pasiphaë and the gentle, prayerful Intercession in Late October."

Lauridsen has explained that the piano part is not an accompaniment in the sense of being subordinate to the voices, but an equal partner. Some of the terms often used to describe his music are "mystical," "luminous," and "spiritual," whether in a sacred or secular sense. Yet this cycle also contains two movements which are breathlessly fast-paced, with frequently changing meters.

I. Lament for Pasiphaë

*Dying sun, shine warm a little longer!
My eye, dazzled with tears, shall dazzle yours,
Conjuring you to shine and not to move.
You, sun, and I all afternoon have laboured
Beneath a dewless and oppressive cloud—
a fleece now gilded with our common grief
That this must be a night without a moon.
Dying sun, shine warm a little longer!*

*Faithless she was not: she was very woman,
Smiling with dire impartiality,
Sovereign, with heart unmatched, adored of men,
Until Spring's cuckoo with bedraggled plumes
Tempted her pity and her truth betrayed.
Then she who shone for all resigned her being,
And this must be a night without a moon.
Dying sun, shine warm a little longer!*

II. Like Snow

*She, then, like snow in a dark night,
Fell secretly. And the world waked
With dazzling of the drowsy eye,
So that some muttered 'Too much light,'
And drew the curtains close.
Like snow, warmer than fingers feared,
And to soil friendly;
Holding the histories of the night
In yet unmelted tracks.*

III. She Tells Her Love While Fast Asleep

*She tells her love while fast asleep,
 In the dark hours,
 With half-words whispered low:*

*As Earth stirs in her winter sleep
 And puts out grass and flowers
 Despite the snow,
 Despite the falling snow.*

IV. Mid-Winter Waking

*Stirring suddenly from long hibernation
I knew myself once more a poet
Guarded by timeless principalities
Against the worm of death, this hillside haunting;
And presently dared open both my eyes.*

*O gracious, lofty, shone against from under,
Back-of-the-mind-far clouds like towers;
And you, sudden warm airs that blow*

*Before the expected season of new blossom,
While sheep still gnaw at roots and lambless go—*

*Be witness that on waking, this mid-winter,
I found her hand in mine laid closely
Who shall watch out the Spring with me.
We stared in silence all around us
But found no winter anywhere to see.*

V. Intercession in Late October

*How hard the year dies: no frost yet.
On drifts of yellow sand Midas reclines,
Fearless of moaning reed or sullen wave.
Firm and fragrant still the brambleberries.
On ivy-bloom butterflies wag.*

*Spare him a little longer, Crone,
For his clean hands and love-submissive heart.*

— Robert Graves

After intermission, we come to **Benjamin Britten**. Of Britten's many choral works, his *Ceremony of Carols*, which sets medieval and Renaissance carol texts to original tunes, is probably his best-loved work in this country. The 29-year-old Britten wrote it at sea, on that 1942 voyage home. This piece marks Britten's return to England in many ways; after setting French, Italian and American texts, he returned on this ocean voyage to English verse, setting both the English carol texts of this piece and the poetry of his countryman W.H. Auden (the *Hymn to St. Cecilia*, which Britten also completed before landfall). More importantly, this Christmas piece marks a musical return to all that was associated with his childhood — bells, boy choirs, modal harmony, and plainsong from the English Church tradition.

Written for treble voices and harp, *A Ceremony of Carols* is a cycle of twelve movements containing great variety within a broadly unified formal scheme. The processional, recessional

and harp interlude are based on Gregorian chant. Both the joyful second movement and the ethereal third movement are based on bell-like ostinato figures for the harp. In "There is no Rose," the harp's constant repetition of C, F, C, F changes only once, at the word "transeamus" ("we transcend").

The next three movements are on texts about Mary. An eerie solo recitative comparing Mary's song to that of the nightingale is followed by the cradle song itself, "Balulalow," for solo and chorus. The idea of rocking is intensified by alternating 6/8 and 3/4 rhythms and the major-minor tonalities. In "As dew in Aprile," rhapsodic choral passages frame a gentle middle section in which three voices dovetail to form a two-voice canon.

The first half of the cycle reaches a fiery conclusion with Robert Southwell's colorful poem, "This little Babe," in which the baby Jesus is imagined in battle against Satan; warlike verses are set to a driving rhythmic accompaniment. The martial subject is heard first in unison, then as a two-voice canon and then as a three-voice canon, with the musical entrances piling up like increasing troops joining in wild pursuit.

The "Interlude" (marked *andante pastorale*), for harp alone, is based on the chant melody of the opening "Hodie," and is remarkable for its use of a pentatonic scale and a bell-like ostinato similar to the sound of the gamelan orchestras of Java and Bali to which Britten had recently been introduced. With its gentle, improvisatory quality, the "Interlude" provides a total contrast to the fiery combativeness of the previous movement.

"In Freezing Winter Night" combines ostinato patterns for harp and alto voices with a canon for sopranos. Harp tremolo and dissonance represent shivering cold; the shadowy beginning and end depict the homely details of Jesus' birth; a passionate middle section in a new key evokes the princely court imagined at the stable.

The "Spring Carol," a soprano duet in a lighter mood, provides an example of the many English carols written for other seasons. The 15th-century poem "Deo Gracias" ("Adam lay ibounden") is a delightful bit of medieval philosophy linking the events of the Old and New Testaments ("ne had the appil takè ben, ne haddè never our lady a ben hevenè quene"). The recessional "Hodie" ends the cycle in symmetrical fashion. Selected translations in the text below are by Albert Hart and Ulla Dydo.

1. Procession

*Hodie Christus natus est:
hodie Salvator apparuit:
hodie in terra canunt angeli
laetantur archangeli:
hodie exsultant justi
dicentes:
Gloria in excelsis Deo,
Alleluia!*

1. Procession

*Today Christ is born,
today the Savior has appeared,
today on earth angels sing
and archangels rejoice;
today the just joyfully
exclaim:
Glory to God on high,
Alleluia!*

— Traditional Latin chant

2. Wolcum Yole!

*Wolcum be thou hevenè king,
Wolcum Yole!
Wolcum born in one morning,
Wolcum for whom we sall sing!
Wolcum, Thomas marter one,
Wolcum seintes lefe and dere,
Wolcum Innocentes every one,
Wolcum, Twelfth Day both in fere,
Wolcum be ye Stevene and Jon,
Wolcum be ye, good New Yere.
Wolcum Yole!
Candelmesse, Quene of bliss,*

hevenè = heavenly

*Tomas, first marty
seintes = saints, lefe = lovable
children massacred by Herod
fere = companion*

Wolcum bothe to more and lesse.
Wolcum be ye that are here,
Wolcum alle and make good cheer.
Wolcum alle another yere,
Wolcum Yole. Wolcum!

— Anonymous, 14th century

3. There is no Rose

There is no rose of such vertu
As is the rose that bare Jesu.
Alleluia.

For in this rose containèd was
Heaven and earth in litel space,
Res miranda.

miracle

By that rose we may well see
There be one God in persons three,
Pares forma.

all of one substance

The aungels sungen
the shepherds to:
Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Gaudeamus.

The angels sang

let us rejoice

Leave we all this werldly mirth,
and follow we this joyful birth.
Transeamus.

let us cross over (transcend)

— Anonymous, 14th century

4a. That Yongē Child

That yongē child when it gan weep
With song she lulled him asleep:
That was so sweet a melody
It passèd alle minstrelsy.
The nightingale sang also:
Her song is hoarse
and nought thereto:

gan weep = began to weep

Whoso attendeth to her song
And leaveth the first then
doth he wrong.

— Anonymous, 14th century

4b. Balulalow

O my deare hert, young Jesu sweit,
Prepare thy credil in my spreit,
And I sall rock thee to my hert,
And never mair from thee depart.
But I sall praise thee evermoir
With sanges sweit unto thy gloir;
The knees of my hert sall I bow,
and sing that richt Balulalow!

sweit = sweet

spreit = spirit

mair = more

sanges = songs, gloir = glory

richt = right and proper

— James, John, and Robert Wedderburn

5. As Dew in Aprille

I sing of a maiden
That is makèles:
King of all kings
To her son she ches.
He came al so stille
There his moder was,
As dew in Aprille
That falleth on the grass.
He came al so stille
To his moder's bour,
As dew in Aprille
That falleth on the flour.
He came al so stille
There his moder lay,
As dew in Aprille
That falleth on the spray.
Moder and mayden was
never none but she:

makèles = immaculate/matchless

ches = chose

there = where, moder = mother

bour = bower

flour = flower

*Well may such a lady
Goddess moder be.*

Goddess = God's

— Anonymous, c. 1400

6. This Little Babe

*This little Babe so few days old
Is come to rifle Satan's fold;
All hell doth at his presence quake,
though he himself for cold do shake;
For in this weak unarmèd wise
The gates of hell he will surprise.*

*With tears he fights
and wins the field,
His naked breast stands for a shield;
His battering shot are babish cries,
His arrows looks of weeping eyes,
His martial ensigns Cold and Need,
And feeble Flesh his warrior's steed.*

*His camp is pitchèd in a stall,
His bulwark but a broken wall;
The crib his trench,
haystalks his stakes;
Of shepherds he his muster makes;
And thus, as sure his foe to wound,
The angels' trumps alarum sound.*

*My soul, with Christ
join thou in fight;
Stick to the tents that he hath pight.
Within his crib is surest ward;
This little Babe will be thy guard.
If thou wilt foil thy foes with joy,
Then flit not from this heavenly Boy.*

*pight = pitched
ward = protection*

flit = flee

— Robert Southwell

7. Interlude

8. In Freezing Winter Night

*Behold a silly tender babe
In freezing winter night,
In homely manger trembling lies
Alas, a piteous sight!*

silly = humble

*The inns are full; no man will yield
This little pilgrim bed.
But forced he is with silly beasts
In crib to shroud his head.*

*This stable is a Prince's court,
This crib his chair of State;
The beasts are parcel of his pomp,
The wooden dish his plate.*

*The persons in that poor attire
His royal liveries wear;
The Prince himself
is come from heau'n;
This pomp is prizèd there.*

*With joy approach,
O Christian wight,
Do homage to thy King,
And highly praise his humble pomp
wich he from Heau'n doth bring.*

wight = being

— Robert Southwell

9. Spring Carol

*Pleasure it is to hear iwis,
the Birdès sing,
The deer in the dale,
The sheep in the vale,
The corn springing.*

iwis = indeed

*God's purveyance for sustenance.
It is for man.*

Then we always to give him praise,
And thank him than.

— William Cornish

10. Deo Gracias

Deo gracias! Deo gracias!

*Adam lay ibounden,
bounden in a bond;
Four thousand winter
thought he not to long*

ibounden = tied up

*And all was for an appil,
an appil that he tok,
As clerkès finden
written in their book.*

*Ne had the appil takè ben,
The appil takè ben,
Ne haddè never our lady
A ben hevenè quene.*

*ne had = had not
takè ben = been taken*

*Blessèd be the time
That appil takè was.
Therefore we moun singen.
Deo gracias!*

*moun singen = do well to sing
Thanks be to God!*

— Anonymous, 15th century

11. Recession

*Hodie Christus natus est:
hodie Salvator apparuit:
hodie in terra canunt angeli:
laetantur archangeli:
hodie exsultant justi
dicentes:
Gloria in excelsis Deo,
Alleluia!*

11. Recession

*Today Christ is born,
today the Savior has appeared,
today on earth angels sing
and archangels rejoice;
today the just joyfully
exclaim:
Glory to God on high,
Alleluia!*

— Traditional Latin chant

Britten's contemporary, **Franz Biebl**, was born in Bavaria and studied composition in Munich. He was choir director in a Catholic church there from 1932 to 1939, when he became an assistant professor of choral music at the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria. Biebl was drafted into the military in 1943, during World War II. He was a prisoner of war from 1944 to 1946, held in a P.O.W. camp in Michigan for captured German soldiers. Freed in 1946, he returned to Germany and became again a director of the church choir and head of the town chorus in Pursruck.

A fireman in his church choir asked him to compose something for a firemen's choir. This was the *Ave Maria!* The piece became famous after it was brought to America by the Cornell University Glee Club in 1970. Eventually, Chanticleer recorded it and it became a big hit. (In four versions, it sold 670,000 copies between 1992 and 2016.) *Ave Maria* is set for double chorus of lower voices with three soloists. It alternates between the story of the annunciation and incarnation and the *Ave Maria* prayer.

*Angelus Domini nuntiavit
Mariae et concepit de
Spiritu sancto.*

*The Angel of the Lord made his
annunciation to Mary, and she
conceived by the Holy Spirit.*

*Ave Maria, gratia plena,
Dominus tecum,
benedicta tu in mulieribus
et benedictus fructus
ventris tui, Jesus.*

*Hail, Mary, full of grace,
Lord be with you,
blessed are you among women
and blessed is the fruit
of your womb, Jesus.*

*Maria dixit: Ecce ancilla
Domini, fiat mihi
secundum verbum tuum.*

*Mary said: Behold the
handmaiden of the Lord, let it be
unto me according to your word.*

*Et verbum caro factum est
et habitavit in nobis.*

*And the word was made flesh
and dwelt among us.*

*Sancta Maria, mater Dei,
ora pro nobis peccatoribus*

*Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners now*

*nunc et in hora
mortis nostræ.
Amen.*

*and in the hour of
our death.
Amen.*

— *Traditional Latin chant*

Our lower voices will also sing *Three Yiddish Songs*, arranged by **Viktor Ullmann**. Ullmann was born in 1898 in Cieszyn, which belonged then to Austrian Silesia in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. His parents were of Jewish descent but had converted to Catholicism before Viktor's birth. He has been described as culturally Austrian, professionally Czech, German-speaking, and an outsider everywhere.

He studied composition with Arnold Schoenberg and Alexander Zemlinsky, and served as conductor of operas in Prague and Aussig an der Elbe and later in Zürich. He composed up to twenty major works between 1925 and 1942, when he was deported to the Theresienstadt concentration camp. The particular nature of the camp enabled Ullmann to remain active musically; he was a piano accompanist, organized concerts, wrote critiques of musical events and composed. He wrote, "By no means did we sit weeping on the banks of the waters of Babylon. Our endeavor with respect to [the] arts was commensurate with our will to live."

Among the twenty works Ullmann composed in the camp were ten Yiddish and Hebrew choruses for treble, lower, and mixed voices in 1943. Ullmann arranged these three pieces from a set which had been published in Berlin as Yiddish folk songs by Jüdischer Verlag in 1930. They are lighthearted and humorous, and were preserved as transcripts by Theresienstadt copyists.

In October 1944, Ullmann was deported to the camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau, where he was killed in the gas chambers two days later.

Der Rebe Elimelech

*Az der Rebe Elimelech
Iz gevorn zeyer freylech
Iz gevorn zeyer freylech,
Elimelech,
Hot er oysgeton dos kitl
Un hot onsgeton dem hitl
Un geshikt noch di fidlers
di tsvey,
Un az di fideldike fidlers
hobn fideldik gefidlt
Hobn fideldik gefidlt
hobn zey.*

*Az der Rebe Elimelech
Iz gevorn noch
mer freylech
Iz gevorn noch
mer freylech, Elimelech
Hot er opgemacht haudole
Mitn shames Reb Naftole
Un geshikt noch di paiklers
di tsvey,
Un az di paikeldike paiklers
hobn paikeldik gepaiklt
Hobn paikeldik gepaiklt
hobn zey.*

*Az der Rebe Elimelech
Iz gevorn gor shtark
freylech
Iz gevorn gor
shtark freylech, Elimelech
Hot er oysgeton dos kitl
Un hot onsgeton dem hitl
Un geshikt noch di tsimblers
di tsvey.
Un az di tsimbeldike*

The Rabbi Elimelech

*When the Rabbi Elimelech
Felt a happy mood upon him.
Felt a happy mood upon him,
Elimelech,
He took off his long coat,
And put on his yarmulke,
And sent for the
two fiddlers,
And the fiddling fiddlers
fiddled in a fiddling way,
In a fiddling way
they fiddled.*

*When the Rabbi Elimelech
Felt happier
still,
Felt happier still,
the Rabbi Elimelech
He said Haudole [end of Sabbath],
Called for the beadle, Reb Naftole,
And sent for the
two drummers,
And the drumming drummers
drummed in a drumming way,
In a drumming way
they drummed.*

*And when the Rabbi Elimelech
Felt very happy
indeed,
Felt very happy
indeed, did Elimelech,
He took off his long coat,
And put on his yarmulke,
And sent for the two
cymbal players
And the cymbaling cymbal players*

*tsimblers hobn tsembeldik
getsimblt
Hobn tsembeldik getsimblt
hobn zey.*

*played the cymbals in a
cymbaling way,
In a cymbaling way they
played.*

— Moshe Nadir

Sha! Shtil!

*Sha! Shtil! Macht nisht
kayn gerider!
Der Rebe geyt shoyn
tantsen vider.
Sha! Shtil! Macht nisht
kayn gevalt!
Der Rebe geyt shoyn
tantsen balt.

Un az der Rebe tantst
Tantsen mit di vent;
Lomir ale plesken
mit di hent.*

Quiet! Still!

*Quiet! Still! Make no
commotion!
The Rabbi is going to
dance again.
Quiet! Still! Stop the
noise!
The Rabbi is about
to dance.

And when the Rabbi dances
The wind dances with him;
So let us all clap
our hands.*

— Leo Kopf

Freygt di Welt

*Freygt di welt an alte kasha
Tra la tra di ri di rom
Tra la la tra di ri di ri rom
Oy, oy, tra di ri di rom.
Un Az men vil, ken men
doch zogn Tradim
Blaybt doch vider di
alte kasha
Tra la tra di ri di rom?*

The World Asks

*The world asks an old question

And if you want, then you
can say Tradim
The old question remains.*

— Folk Song

For our closing piece, the high and low voices join forces again on a stirring and lively piece by **Rosephanye Powell**, who has

been hailed as one of America's premier women composers of solo vocal and choral music. Dr. Powell's works have been conducted and premiered by nationally and internationally renowned conductors and have been premiered at distinguished halls around the country, including Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center.

Dr. Powell serves as Professor of Voice at Auburn University. She holds degrees from Florida State University (D.M. in vocal performance, University Fellow), Westminster Choir College (M.M. in vocal performance and pedagogy, with distinction) and Alabama State University (B.M.E., summa cum laude).

Recent commission and premiere highlights include: *Quiet Revolutionary*, a three-movement work for SATB chorus and piano commissioned by Harvard University choirs; *A Christmas Medley* (SATB), commissioned by Chanticleer; *With What Shall I Come* (SATB), composed for the St. Olaf Choir and premiered at Carnegie Hall; and *Eu'ry Time I Feel the Spirit*, an SSAA spiritual arranged for the Sofia Chamber Choir "Vassil Arnaudov" in Bulgaria.

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.*

The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by Him that have been made.

Nothing was made He has not made.

— John 1

I am immensely grateful that our singers are enthusiastic about a great variety of music, such as what we have sung today.

Program Notes © 2024 Clara Longstreth

New Amsterdam Singers

Soprano

Orren Alperstein
Robin Beckhard*
Martha Beckwith
Laura Cohen**
Dana Crowell**
Susan Daum
Naomi Draper
Lillie Dremeaux
Rebecca Harris
Laura Klein
Abigail Kniffin
Dana Kramer
Alyssa Lafosse
Kate Leahy
Jaime Leifer**
Michelle Neary*
Andrea Olejar*
Lauren Osborne
Judith Pott*
Clara Schuhmacher**
Elizabeth Stein
Elspeth Strang
Miki Takebe
Obi Taswell
Jennifer Trahan
Barbara Zucker-
Pinchoff

Alto

Gabi Barton
Cindy Brome
Isabel Colman

Alto (cont.)

Johanna de la Cruz
Rebecca Dee**
Jenny Delson
Stephanie Golob
Sally Hoskins*
Nora Isacoff
Eva Karolczak
Hannah Kerwin
Betty Kulleseid
Elisa Peimer
Charlotte Rocker*
Bernardica Sculac
Stern
Ellen Stark*
Vera Sziklai
Donna Zalichin

Tenor

Paul Blanchard
Nathaniel Granor**
James Gregory
Thomas Haller
Jason Lowenhar
Robert Marlowe
Nate Mickelson
Paul Parsekian*
John Pinegar
Adam Poole
Benj Prud'homme**
Tim Sachs**
Hsin Wang

Bass

Richard Abel
Bendix Anderson*
T.J. Barnes
Michael Berger
James Crowell
Walter Daum
Jethro Eisenstein
Eli Enenbach
Brian Farrell
Steven Hanna
Philip Holmgren**
Steve Holtje*
Michael Landy*
John Leuenhagen
Fred Nangle
Robert Palmer
Raymond Wells*
Rafael Yuste

*Chamber Chorus
**Chamber Chorus
Only

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T.J. Barnes, *Assistant Conductor*

Pen Ying Fang, *Accompanist*

Stefanie Izzo, *Manager*

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New Amsterdam Singers

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About the Artists

New Amsterdam Singers, now in its 57th year, is known for the breadth and variety of its repertoire. Specializing in a *cappella* and double-chorus works, the chorus sings music ranging from the 16th century through contemporary pieces, including many it has commissioned. In addition to works by Carol Barnett, Lisa Bielawa, and Ben Moore commissioned for the group's 50th anniversary, recent world premieres include compositions by Matthew Harris, Paul Alan Levi, Elizabeth Lim, Robert Paterson, and Ronald Perera. Our most recent independent commission, *The World of Dreams* by Dale Trumbore, was presented in March 2023. NAS also co-commissioned Michael Dellaira's folk opera *Arctic Explorations* with the cell theatre and performed its world premiere in March 2024.

American and New York City premieres in the previous decade included works by Robert Paterson, Einojuhani Rautavaara, Matthew Harris, Abbie Betinis, Steven Stucky, Kirke Mechem, Steven Sametz, Kitty Brazelton, Clare Maclean, Alex Weiser, Sheena Phillips, and Judith Shatin. In 2016 NAS performed Frank Martin's oratorio *Golgotha* with professional orchestra and soloists as guests of Trinity Church Wall Street, under the direction of Clara Longstreth, the first time the work was heard in New York City in over 60 years.

NAS has performed with the New York Philharmonic under Leonard Bernstein, at Alice Tully Hall as a guest of Clarion Concerts, and with the American-Russian Youth Orchestra under Leon Botstein at Tanglewood and Carnegie Hall. NAS appeared twice with Anonymous 4 in Richard Einhorn's *Voices of Light* - in 1999 at Avery Fisher Hall with Concordia Orchestra under Marin Alsop, and in 2006 at the Winter Garden of the World Financial Center with Ensemble Sospeso under David Hattner, for broadcast on WYNC's *New Sounds*.

NAS has also appeared internationally under Ms. Longstreth's direction. The chorus has sung at the Heraklion Festival in Greece; the Granada Festival in Spain; the International Choral Festival at Międzyzdroje, Poland; the Festival of the Algarve in Portugal; Les Chorégies d'Orange in France; and the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod in Wales. The chorus has performed in Turkey, Scandinavia, Croatia, Spain, Argentina and Uruguay, South Africa, Greece, Iceland, Denmark, and, most recently, in Bulgaria in 2019. In 2010 NAS was pleased to receive permission from the State and Treasury Departments to tour Cuba on a cultural visa.

Clara Longstreth, Conductor, is the founder and Music Director of New Amsterdam Singers, and has led the group for its past 57 seasons. Under her direction, NAS has become known as one of the premier avocational choruses in New York City. Of Ms. Longstreth's programs, Allan Kozinn wrote in *The New York Times*, "When a director takes up the challenge of building a cohesive program around a broad theme, we are reminded that programming can be an art." And in June, 2018, Times critic Anthony Tommasini wrote, "You think von Karajan's 35-year reign at the Berlin Philharmonic and Eugene Ormandy's 44-year association with the Philadelphia Orchestra were impressive runs? Well, at a concert on Wednesday night [May 30, 2018], Clara Longstreth concluded her 50th season as music director of the...New Amsterdam Singers.... Ms. Longstreth conducted with undiminished energy and focus."

Ms. Longstreth studied conducting with G. Wallace Woodworth at Harvard University and with Richard Westenburg at The Juilliard School, from which she received her master's degree. She also studied with Amy Kaiser and Semyon Bychkov at Mannes College of Music, and with Helmuth Rilling at the Oregon Bach Festival. Ms. Longstreth has been a frequent adjudicator at choral conferences, and was selected to present a lecture-demonstration on "Adventures in Programming" at the

Eastern Division Convention of the American Choral Directors Association. In 2009 she received an Alumnae Recognition Award from Radcliffe College for her founding and longtime direction of New Amsterdam Singers. Ms. Longstreth has also served on the faculty of Rutgers University, and as a guest conductor of the Limón Dance Company, the Mannes College Orchestra, and the popular Messiah Sing-In performances at Avery Fisher Hall. She has led the chorus on 17 international tours.

T.J. Barnes, Assistant Conductor, a native of Buffalo, NY, is a NYC-based conductor, educator, performer, pianist, and arranger. He is the Director of Music at Flushing High School, where he revived and developed programs in Chorus, Piano, Guitar, and Music Appreciation.

T.J. holds a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance and a graduate certificate in K-12 Music Education from the Aaron Copland School of Music at CUNY Queens College. Performance credits include Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte* at Queens College and Joe Hardy in *Damn Yankees* at the Kupferberg Center of the Arts. He also served as Music Director of the Queens College iTones, a coeducational *a cappella* group, writing numerous pop SATB arrangements, including their award-winning set at the 2019 ICCA Northeast Regional Semifinal Championships.

T.J. is a recipient of the first Maurice Peress Memorial Award in conducting and the American Choral Directors Association's 2019 Next Direction Collegiate Leadership Award.

Nathaniel Granor, Chamber Chorus Assistant Conductor, has been a member of NAS since 2013. He is also the Music Director of The Lost Keys, a NYC-based contemporary *a cappella* group that released their newest album, *11th & Waverly*, in April. Nathaniel is a graduate of Yale University, where he directed several ensembles including the Yale Spizzwinks(?) and the

Davenport Pops Orchestra. By day, he works as a freelance consultant in technology and education.

Pen Ying Fang, Accompanist, has performed widely in the New York and Philadelphia metropolitan areas, building an extensive repertoire of solo and chamber music. Currently, she serves as a coach and accompanist at Westminster Choir College, where she has worked with many prominent artists and renowned voice programs such as the CoOPERative summer program and the Florence Voice Seminar in Italy. As an accompanist, Pen Ying has also performed and toured with several choirs from the New York area, in which capacity *The New York Times* has praised her performances as "vivid" and "deft." In 2018 she was honored to be a featured performer in a Philip Glass opera workshop in North Adams, MA.

Pen Ying is a native of Taiwan, where she began studying piano at age five. There she attended an experimental music-focused grade school until moving to the United States. Here she studied with Paul Hoffmann and Barbara Gonzalez-Palmer, earning Bachelor and Master of Music degrees in Piano at Rutgers University.

Stefanie Izzo, Manager, is a classically trained soprano, educator, nonprofit administrator, and longtime resident of Queens, NY. She received a Master of Arts in vocal performance from the Aaron Copland School of Music at CUNY Queens College and a Bachelor of Music from NYU. Stefanie has been hailed as possessing a "gorgeously rich and full sound" for her work in opera and musical theater, in roles such as Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Anne Truelove in *The Rake's Progress*, Maria in *West Side Story* and Mozart heroines Pamina, Susanna, and Despina.

In addition to operatic repertoire, Stefanie devotes a significant amount of her performance time to art song, particularly that of women composers, and maintains an active concert schedule in

the NYC area. She is a frequent collaborator with living composers, and is a co-founder of the chamber ensemble The Astoria Music Project. Stefanie is the Manager of Education Partnerships at the Metropolitan Opera.

Julie Kim, Cello, hails from sunny California, and her musical versatility has culminated in a delightfully multifaceted career. Feeling equally at home in a wide variety of styles ranging from classical performance to contemporary improvisation, she has become a frequent flyer at venues across NYC such as Lincoln Center, Roulette, and The Stone. She has also made appearances at a number of festivals including the Bowdoin International Music Festival, The Next Festival of Emerging Artists, and the Internationales Jazzfestival Bern. She completed her undergraduate degree in the studio of Fred Sherry at the Mannes School of Music and is currently studying in the MM Performer-Composer program at The New School.

Jennifer Hoult, Harp, has appeared as a professional soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral musician in 26 U.S. states, Canada, Europe, Morocco, and Egypt. Her two solo CDs, *The Eve of Christmas* and *Golden Quadrilateral*, received rave reviews in *Fanfare Magazine*. Her live recording of the world premiere of Carlos Salzedo's *Second Concerto* can be found in the Library of Congress. This year, she celebrated 29 years of appearances on Broadway. She holds degrees in Harp (Manhattan School of Music), Computer Science and Religion (Barnard College), and Law (New York University School of Law, *magna cum laude*).

Alongside her musical work, Ms. Hoult has enjoyed careers as an AI software engineer, a NYC prosecutor, a court appointed Children's Lawyer, and an internationally cited legal scholar. Her volunteer efforts include rape crisis counseling and lobbying in support of passage of state and federal legislation to hold sex offenders accountable. In her free time, she reads voraciously and enjoys the splendor of Central Park.

Contributors

Our concerts are made possible by the generous support of our donors. Although our annual fund campaign has only recently begun, we are enormously grateful to our early contributors. This donor list reflects contributions received during the fiscal year so far, from July 1, 2024 to December 2, 2024. If we have inadvertently omitted or misspelled your name, we apologize; please let us know by email at manager@nasingers.org.

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Watch & Listen Online

Visit www.nasingers.org for the latest chorus news, recordings, and videos. You can also see the many commissions and premieres that New Amsterdam Singers has been proud to present (click on "our Music").

Upcoming Concerts

An Invitation to the Voyage, March 21 & 23, 2025
A Few of My Favorite Things, May 16 & 18, 2025

Sing With Us!

Music Director Clara Longstreth invites singers with choral experience and sight-reading ability in all voice parts to audition for New Amsterdam Singers. We rehearse Tuesday evenings at Broadway Presbyterian Church. Email info@nasingers.org to arrange an audition.

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