



*Northern Lights*  
Four Centuries of Spirited Music from  
Northern Europe

The Church of the Holy Trinity  
316 East 88th Street, New York City

Friday, March 17, 2017 at 8 pm  
Sunday, March 19 at 4 pm



## PROGRAM NOTES, TEXTS, AND TRANSLATIONS

Today's program includes Northern European choral music from the early classical period to the twenty-first century. Most of the works are sacred, with many psalm settings among them, but there are two secular works for men and two for women near the end of the program.

We begin with a motet by German composer **Gottfried August Homilius**, a student of J.S. Bach, who was well known and much performed in his day. Indeed, certain of his motets were performed in churches throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and some were translated into English, French, and Norwegian. Yet his name is scarcely known in America.

The first time NAS encountered this composer was when the NAS Chamber Chorus shared a concert in April 2016 with a choir from Avignon, France that was touring New York and other cities. This excellent French choir was called Choeur Homilius, having named themselves after the German composer because they loved his music.

In the early twenty-first century, a new edition of his surviving motets was prepared, followed by a series of recordings in 2014, marking the 300th anniversary of Homilius' birth. Homilius wrote organ and chamber works, lieder, and more than 200 cantatas, Passions, and oratorios. He conducted the Dresden Kreuzkirche Choir, which had high standards for its 100 singers, and wrote about sixty motets during the years 1755-1770. Our opening motet, *Habe deine Lust*, on Psalm 37, exudes confidence and joy. In the middle section the basses are given their own dance-like melody while the upper three voices sing a chorale (verse 13 of "Ich weiß, mein Gott, daß all mein Tun" of Paul Gerhardt) in longer notes. Homilius' fluid style is what one might expect from a composer spanning two eras, the late Baroque and early Classical.

### **Habe deine Lust**

Habe deine Lust an dem Herrn;  
der wird dir geben, was dein Herz wünschet.  
Befiehl dem Herrn deine Wege  
und hoff auf ihn; er wird's wohl machen.

Du bist mein Vater, ich dein Kind;  
was ich an mir nicht hab' und find'  
hast Du zu aller G'nüge.  
So hilf nur, daß ich meinen Stand,  
wohl halt' und herrlich siege.

Delight thyself also in the Lord;  
and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.  
Commit thy way unto the Lord;  
Trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.

You are my Father, I am your child  
That which I find lacking in myself,

you have in abundance.  
Only help me to sustain my existence  
and attain glorious victory.

Translation: King James Bible (Psalm)  
David Kosviner (Chorale)

About eighty years after Homilius wrote his splendid motets, **Felix Mendelssohn** wrote an eight-voice motet on Psalm 91, *Denn er hat seinen Engeln befohlen*. Like Homilius, he was a conductor, and at one stage conducted a male-voice Cathedral choir. But in Mendelssohn's short life (he died at thirty-eight), he accomplished an astonishing amount, composing symphonies, concertos, string quartets and oratorios, and traveled extensively. At age sixteen he composed his much admired *Octet for Strings*. He became conductor of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra at age twenty-six. He founded and directed the Leipzig Conservatory. He was the first to conduct the *St. Matthew Passion* since Bach's death, and produced "historical concerts" of much early music. The motet heard today seems modeled on those of Schütz in its antiphonal character. The harmony, however, is fully Romantic.

Denn er hat seinen Engeln befohlen über dir,  
daß sie dich behüten auf allen deinen Wegen,  
daß sie dich auf den Händen tragen  
und du deinen Fuß nicht an einen Stein stoßest.

For He has commanded His angels over you,  
That they shall guard you on all your paths,  
That they shall bear you in their hands  
And keep you even from striking your foot on a stone.

While Mendelssohn can be considered a quintessential early Romantic figure, **Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky** is surely a prototypical late-Romantic one. His symphonies, concertos, operas, and ballets are part of the repertoire of every musical organization. He did not specialize in choral music, but his motets are radiant. The much-performed "Kheruvimskaya Pesn'" (Cherubim Song) was written at the height of his powers; he had recently composed *Eugene Onegin*, *Swan Lake*, and the Violin Concerto. The text comes from the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, and is in Old Church Slavonic.

Izhe kheruvimi tayno obrazuyushche,  
I zhivotvoryashchey Troytse  
trisvyatuyu pesn pripevayushche.  
Vsyakoye nĭne zhiteskoye,  
otlozhim popecheniye. Amin.

Yako da Tsarya vsekh podimem!  
Angelskimi nevidimo dorinosima chinmi,  
Alliluya!

Angel hosts of heaven appearing on earth in mystic form,  
To the life-bestowing Trinity  
Our thrice-holy hymn with one voice we sing.  
Let us now lay aside  
All our everyday cares. Amen.

That we may receive You, mighty King!  
Angelic hosts, unseen, surround You as they bear You onwards,  
Alleluia!

The chamber chorus begins its performance with a work of **Ola Gjielo**, a Manhattan-based Norwegian composer whose choral compositions are immensely popular. His music has been performed and recorded in more than thirty countries worldwide. In 2006 he completed his Masters Degree in composition at The Juilliard School. In 2007 he wrote “Northern Lights” and added this program note:

*“Northern Lights” is my most Norwegian production in years; composed in an attic outside of Oslo at Christmas time in 2007, it’s one of the few works I have written in Norway since I moved to New York in 2001. This piece and its text are about beauty. About a ‘terrible’, powerful beauty, although the music is quite serene on the surface. Looking out from the attic window that Christmas in Oslo, over a wintry lake under the stars, I was thinking about how this ‘terrible’ beauty is so profoundly reflected in the northern lights, or aurora borealis, which, having grown up in the southern part of the country, I have only seen once or twice in my life. It is one of the most beautiful natural phenomena I’ve ever witnessed, and has such a powerful, electric quality that must have been both mesmerizing and terrifying to people in the past, when no one knew what it was and when much superstition was attached to these experiences.*

*Northern Norway is one of the areas where aurora borealis is easiest to spot, thanks to the warming effects of the Gulf Stream, which makes the area habitable.*

Pulchra es amica mea,  
suavis et decora filia Jerusalem,  
Pulchra es amica mea,  
suavis et decora sicut Jerusalem,  
terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata.  
Averte oculos tuos a me  
quia ipsi me avolare fecerunt.

Thou art beautiful, O my Love,  
Sweet and beautiful daughter of Jerusalem,  
Thou art beautiful, O my Love,  
Sweet and comely as Jerusalem,  
Terrible as an army set in array.

Turn away thy eyes from me,  
For they have made me flee away.

**Antonín Tučapský** is one of several Eastern European composers whose works we sing today. This part of the world has always had great music, including a strong choral tradition and vibrant folk music. And now, in the 21st Century, there have been many recordings made by skilled choruses which have made it possible to appreciate fully a musician such as Tučapský who was born in Moravia, formerly Czechoslovakia.

He had a long, productive life and wrote some 600 works. He was music director of the famed Moravian Teachers' Male Voice Choir, and for twenty years was professor of composition at Trinity College of Music in London. Czechoslovakian government agencies reacted to his 1972 marriage to English soprano Beryl Musgrave by "restricting his artistic scope," prompting the couple to emigrate to Great Britain in 1975.

In 2008 the Czech Republic honored him as Composer of the Year. Tučapský's *Five Lenten Motets* have been audience favorites. The Chamber Choir sings the first two of the set.

### **Tristis est anima mea**

Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem:  
sustinete hic et vigilate mecum.

Deep is the sadness in my soul  
as though death had come for me.  
Remain with me here  
and let us pray together.

### **Pater Mi**

Pater mi,  
si non potest hic calix transire,  
nisi bibam illum:  
fiat voluntas tua.

My Father,  
deliver me from drinking this bitter chalice,  
but if it must be drunk,  
not as I wish but as Thou wilt,  
let Thy will be done.

**Sergei Rachmaninoff** was a Russian composer, pianist, and conductor who spent most of his adult life in the United States. His piano concertos are staples of the repertoire. At one point he was afflicted by serious depression, which was evidently cured by hypnosis. He did not specialize in choral music, but did write several large works for chorus. "Bogoróditse Dyévo" is the best-known piece from the All-Night Vigil.

Bogoróditse Dyévo, ráduysya,  
Blagodátnaya Mariýe, Ghospód s Tobóyu.  
Blagoslovyénna Ti v zhenáh,  
i blagoslovyén plod chryéva Tvoyegó,  
yáko Spása rodilá yesí dush náshih.

Rejoice, O Virgin Mother of God,  
Mary full of grace, the Lord is with You.  
Blessed are You among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of Your womb,  
for You have borne the Savior of our souls.

**Albert Becker** was a Romantic composer from Germany whose name is not well known to us. He wrote three symphonies, chamber music, songs, and choral music, and was director of choirs at the Berlin Cathedral. In his compositions he was influenced by Robert Schumann, who lived a generation earlier. *Bleibe, Abend will es werden* is set to a sacred poem of Alfred Muth.

Bleibe, Abend will es werden,  
und der Tag hat sich geneigt;  
bleibe, Herr, bei uns auf Erden,  
bis die letzte Klage schweigt.

Stay – it turns to evening,  
And the day has been laid down;  
Abide, Lord, with us on earth,  
Until the last lament falls silent.

Wer soll uns're Tränen stillen,  
wenn es deine Hand nicht tut;  
wer des Herzens Zug erfüllen,  
wenn nicht deine Liebesglut?

Who shall stanch our tears  
If your hand does not;  
Who shall fulfill our heart's course,  
If not your love's rapture?

Ach, so falsch ist ja die Erde,  
ach, so schwankend ist das Herz.  
Von der Erde voll Beschwerde  
führe du uns himmelwärts!

Ah, so false is this clay,  
Ah, so faltering is this heart.  
From the grievance-clotted earth  
Lead us heavenward!

Bleibe, Abend will es werden,  
und der Tag neigt sich zur Ruh;  
bleibe, Herr, uns hier auf Erden,  
uns im Himmel bleibe du!

Stay – it turns to evening,  
And the day lies down to rest;  
Abide, Lord, with us on earth,  
And so abide for us in heaven!

The composer of two works on today's program, **György Orbán**, was born in the province of Transylvania in Romania in 1947, but has lived in Hungary since 1979. He is associate professor of composition at the Liszt Ferenc Academy in Budapest and an editor of *Editio Musica*. While he has written an opera, chamber music, and two concertos, most of his composing energy has been directed toward choral music (ten masses, four oratorios, and over a hundred shorter works).

*Mundi Renovatio* is a restless, high-spirited piece with a catchy refrain, “renovantur.” The text is by Adam de St. Victor (Le Breton), born in 1130 in Brittany. The poem deals with two gardens of Eden, one created at the beginning of the world, and the other through the power of the Resurrection. For this very old Latin poem, Orbán has chosen a very contemporary jazzy style.

Ignis volat mobilis  
et aër volubilis,  
fluit aqua labilis,

terra manet stabilis,  
alta petunt levia,  
centrum tenent gravia,  
renovantur omnia!

Caelum fit serenius,  
et mare tranquillius,  
et spirat aura mitius,  
vallis nostra revirescunt,  
vallis nostra floruit,  
postquam ver intepuit,  
renovantur omnia!

Mundi renovatio,  
nova paret gaudia,  
resurgenti Domino,  
constresurgunt omnia!  
Elementa serviunt,  
et auctoris sentiunt,  
quanta sit potentia.

The fire glows and flickers,  
the air rises softly,  
the water rises and collects in the  
valley,  
the earth waits for rain.  
What is light forces upwards  
while heavy things sink,  
everything in the world reforms itself  
anew.

No cloud shows in the heavens,  
the sea is calm,  
the wind blows soft and quietly.  
the slopes are blooming again,  
the barren countryside is green again,  
the sun shines warmly,  
spring is here.

The whole world is born again,  
new joys are calling.  
Just as the Lord rose again,  
everything is filling with life!  
Everything feels the power of its  
creator,  
the elements serve the Lord.

Both “Die Lotosblume” and “Rastlose Liebe” were published in a set of six songs as Op. 33 for men’s voices, composed during the famous Liederjahr. In this incredibly productive period, when he finally married Clara Wieck despite her disapproving father, **Robert Schumann** wrote as many as 140 songs, including his most well-known cycles, *Liederkreis*, op. 39; *Frauenliebe und leben*, op. 42; and *Dichterliebe*, op. 48. Though Schumann is not often considered a “choral” composer, it is interesting to note that his first two compositions (neither assigned opus numbers) were for chorus.

Apparently Schumann thought particularly highly of “Rastlose Liebe,” as he published it in his *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, the same journal which helped launch Brahms’ career. And these choral pieces are not the first time he had set these texts; there are also two exquisite solo songs, though with different melodies.

### **Die Lotosblume (Heinrich Heine)**

Die Lotosblume

ängstigt sich vor der Sonne Pracht,  
und mit gesenkten Haupte  
erwartet sie träumend die Nacht.

Der Mond ist ihr Buhle,  
er weckt sie mit seinem Licht,  
und ihm entschleiert sie freundlich ihr frommes Blumengesicht.

Sie blüht und glüht und leuchtet,  
und starret stumm in die Höh',  
sie duftet und weinet und zittert vor Lieb' und Liebesweh',  
vor Lieb' und Liebesweh'.

#### **The Lotus Blossom**

The lotus flower is frightened  
before the sun's splendor,  
and with a downcast head,  
dreaming, she awaits the night.

The moon is her paramour  
He wakes her with his light  
and to him she amiably unveils  
her devout flower-face.

She blooms and glows and shines  
and stares mutely high above.  
She is fragrant, and weeps and trembles  
with love and love's pain.

### **Rastlose Liebe (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe)**

Dem Schnee, dem Regen, dem Schnee, dem Wind entgegen,  
dem Wind, im Dampf der Klüfte, durch Nebeldüfte  
dem Schnee, dem Regen, dem Wind entgegen,  
immer zu, immer zu ohne Rast und Ruh'!

Lieber durch Leiden will ich mich schlagen,  
als so viel Freuden des Lebens ertragen.  
Alles das Neigen vom Herzen zu Herzen,  
ach wie so eigen schafft das Schmerzen!

Dem Schnee, dem Regen, dem Schnee, dem Wind entgegen,  
dem Wind, im Dampf der Klüfte, durch Nebeldüfte,  
immer zu, immer zu!

Wie soll ich fliehen!  
Wälderwärts ziehen?

Alles vergebens!  
Krone des Lebens,  
Glück ohne Ruh'!  
Liebe bist du, Liebe bist du!

Krone des Lebens, Glück ohne Ruh',  
Glück ohne Ruh', ohne Ruh',  
Dem Schnee, dem Regen, dem Wind, dem Wind entgegen,  
im Dampf der Klüfte, durch Nebeldüfte,  
immer zu, immer zu, immer zu!

Krone des Lebens,  
Glück ohne Ruh'!  
Liebe bist du, Liebe bist du!  
Liebe, Liebe,  
Krone des Lebens bist du,  
Krone des Lebens!

### **Restless Love**

Against snow, rain,  
snow, and wind,  
against wind, in the chasms' steam,  
through mist fragrances,  
against snow, rain, wind,  
Always, always,  
Without rest and calm!

I would rather fight  
through suffering,  
Than endure so many joys of life.  
All the inclining  
Of heart to heart,  
Ah, how that in itself creates pain.

Against snow, rain, snow, and wind,  
against wind, in the chasms' steam,  
through mist fragrances,  
Always, always!  
How should I fly?  
Towards forests go?

All in vain!  
Crown of life,  
Happiness without calm,  
Love, that is you, love, that is you!

Crown of life,  
Happiness without calm,

happiness without calm, without calm!  
Against snow, rain, and wind, against wind,  
in the chasms' steam,  
through mist fragrances,  
always, always, always!

Crown of life,  
Happiness without calm!  
Love, that is you, love, that is you!  
Love, love,  
You are the crown of life,  
Crown of life!

**Hugo Distler's** life and death are inextricably woven into the political and cultural situation in Germany in the early years of the twentieth century. Born in Nuremberg, Distler was a leading figure in German sacred music in the 1930s. He was aligned with the Renewal Movement, a campaign to reform Protestant music by returning to the values and practices of Heinrich Schütz. He held positions as a church musician in Lübeck, Stuttgart, and Berlin. In 1933 he joined the Nazi party, at first stirred by its nationalism. But the party began to infiltrate the Lutheran Church, and Distler was accused of too much religious intensity. After a group of Hitler Youth members sabotaged his rehearsal of sacred choral music, he turned to secular music and wrote the *Mörikechorliederbuch*, containing songs for men, women, and mixed voices.

The premiere, in 1939, was the high point of Distler's career. But in the years 1940-42, the pressures on him to join the army became overwhelming, and he committed suicide in 1942 at age thirty-four. "Der Tambour," a piece for men's voices from the *Mörikechorliederbuch*, sets a charming fantasy of a drummer boy wishing his mother were a sorceress who could come to his regiment and provide him with sausage and burgundy wine.

Wenn meine Mutter hexen könnt',  
da müßt sie mit dem Regiment nach Frankreich,  
überall mit hin,  
und wär die Marketenderin.

Im Lager,  
wohl um Mitternacht,  
wenn niemand auf ist als die Wacht, und alles schnarchet,  
Roß und Mann,  
vor meiner Trommel säß ich dann:  
Die Trommel müßt ein Schüssel sein und ein warmes Sauerkraut darein,  
die Schlegel Messer und Gabel,  
ein' lange Wurst der Sabel,  
mein Tschako wär ein Humpen gut,  
den füll' ich mit Burgunderblut.

Und weil es mir am Lichte fehlt,  
da scheint der Mond in mein Gezelt;  
scheint er auch auf französisch herein,  
mir fällt doch meine Liebste ein:

Ach weh, ach weh, weh!  
Jetzt hat der Spaß ein End'!  
Jetzt, jetzt, jetzt, jetzt hat der Spaß ein End'!  
Jetzt hat der Spaß ein End'!  
Jetzt hat der Spaß ein End'!  
Ein End'! Ein End'! Ein End'!

Wenn nur meine Mutter hexen könnt'!  
Wenn sie nur hexen könnt'!  
Wenn sie hexen...

If my mother could cast spells,  
She would have to go with the regiment to France  
All around with them  
And she would be the provisioner

In the camp, say at midnight  
When no one is awake except the watch  
And everybody snores  
Steed and man,  
In front of my drum I would sit then.

My drum would have to be a bowl with warm sauerkraut in it  
The drumsticks, knife and fork  
The saber, a long sausage.  
My shako [military cap] would be a good tankard  
I fill it with Burgundian blood.

And because I lack light  
The moon shines into my tent  
And even if it shines in here in French  
Still, my darling comes to mind...

Oh woe is me, oh woe, woe!  
Now the fun is coming to an end!  
Now the fun is coming to an end!  
Now the fun is coming to an end!  
An end! An end! An end!

If only my mother could cast spells!  
If only she could cast spells!  
If she could cast spells...

translation: Robert Marlowe & Almut Trinius

The Second World War had a major impact on the life of Czech composer **Bohuslav Martinů**, but he was fortunate in that he had avoided conscription during WWI by working as a music teacher, and then moved to Paris in 1923. There he wrote a great many works ranging from opera and ballet to chamber music.

In the 1930s he began to write music reflecting his Czech roots and love of folklore. The *Czech Madrigals*, a set of eight songs for men's and women's voices on Moravian folk poetry was one of the last pieces he wrote before fleeing Paris in 1940. He had been blacklisted by the Nazis and left in haste, leaving behind all his belongings, and most of his manuscripts. After nine months of travel through Europe he ended in Lisbon, and finally made his way to New York. He lived in the United States, Nice, Rome, always an exile, always hoping to return to his homeland. The Communist regime made his return to Czechoslovakia impossible.

We sing two of the 1938 *Czech Madrigals* in German translation. The folk texts are set in a musically sophisticated manner; there are lovely melodies, counterpoint and plenty of fleeting dissonance.

### **Sag mir, Gott**

Sag mir, Gott, wer wird's sein, ei,  
Der mit mir an den roten Tisch sich wird setzen, ah,  
(Wer wird's sein, der mit mir an den Tisch sich nun setzt)  
Unter grünen Zweigen?

Sag mir auch, mein Gott, was tat ich nur,  
Als ich für einen alle gar verliess und nie mehr sehe?  
(Und sag mir auch, warum verliess alle ich für einen?)  
Hab verlassen einen Falken wegen eines Pfauen.  
(Tauschte einen Falken ein für einen Pfauen.)  
Schau' umher und kann ihn ja nicht finden!  
Ob im Walde er sitzt, in den Lüften schon schwebt?  
Ah, ging so gern ihn suchen, doch wie schmerzt mein Köpfchen, ei!

Schickt' ich das Bienchen aus, käm' es ja nicht Haus!  
Liess' sich stattdessen nieder, in jenem wissen Flieder.  
Schickt' ich den Adler gar, blieb' er ein ganzes Jahr,  
Dort, wo die Wolken wehn, ich würd' vor Gram vergehn!

Köpfchen, denk doch geschwind, ei, dass ich dann die Lösung find'!  
Liebes Köpfchen, ah, bitt' dich ja so sehr, kann dich tragen nicht mehr!  
Köpfchen klein, werde gut, nimmst mir all meinen Mut.  
Köpfchen klein, bitt' dich sehr, kann dich tragen nicht mehr!  
Werde gut über Nacht, oder falle ganz ab!

### **Tell me, God**

Tell me, God, who will it be, oh,  
Who will sit with me at the red table, ah,

(Who will it be who sits with me now at the table)  
Under green branches?

Tell me also, my God, what have I done,  
When for one person I have relinquished all others, never to see them  
again?

(And tell me also, why I relinquished all others for one?)

I have left a falcon for a peacock.

(I exchanged a falcon for a peacock.)

I look around and cannot find him at all!

Perhaps he sits in the forest, or soars in the breezes?

Ah, I would so gladly go to look for him, but how my head hurts, oh!

I sent the little bee out to look, but he didn't come back home.

Instead, he stayed below, in those white lilacs.

I even sent the eagle; he stayed an entire year

There where the clouds drift; I almost perished from grief!

Little head, think quickly, oh, so I can find the solution.

Dear little head, ah, I beg you so; I cannot carry you anymore.

Little head, become well, you're taking away all my courage.

My little head, I beg you so, I cannot carry you anymore.

Become well overnight, or else fall off entirely!

### **Gram zernagt mein Herzchen**

Gram zernagt mein Herzchen, Schmerz zerreisst mein Köpfchen,

Weiss ja den Grund gewiss, weil mein Allerliebster untreu worden mir ist.

Lässt mich hier ganz allein, liebt ein andres Mädchen.

Wusst er nur, dass ich bin, ach, in grosser Pein!

Ach, in Pein lässt er mich — Hoffnung, fliehe noch nicht!

Kniet er vor mir nieder, Sonne, du scheinst wieder! —

Und nach altem Brauch, zög den Hut er auch.

Wüрд' dir sogleich verzeihn, müsst' aber wahren den Schein, weil's ja die Welt so  
will.

Sie würde nicht einsehn, zu lieben heisst verstehn und alles vergeben.

Doch deine Augen blau, sie wissen es genau.

### **Grief gnaws at my heart**

Grief gnaws at my heart; pain tears at my head.

I know for certain the reason, because my dearest one has been untrue to  
me.

He left me here all alone, he loves another girl.

If he only knew that I am, oh! in great agony.

Oh! though he may leave me in agony — Hope, don't run away yet!

If he kneels down before me, Sun, you'll shine again! —

And, according to custom, if he also takes off his hat!

I would immediately forgive you, but we must keep up appearances,

because the world wants it so.  
Others wouldn't comprehend that to love means to understand and  
forgive everything.  
But your blue eyes, they understand this exactly.

Hungarian composer **József Karai** lived a generation before his countryman György Orbán. Born in Budapest, he studied both composition and conducting, spending almost twenty years as a choral conductor. He wrote for orchestra and soloists, but choral music was his focus, and his choral works are popular throughout the world. He wrote over 200 of these, mostly in Hungarian, but also in Latin, English, and other languages. *Ave Maria* was written in 1985.

Ave Maria, gratia plena,  
Dominus tecum:  
Benedicta tu in mulieribus  
Et benedictus fructus ventris tui,  
Jesus.

Hail Mary, full of grace,  
The Lord is with thee:  
Blessed art thou amongst women  
And blessed is the fruit of thy womb,  
Jesus.

Sancta Maria,  
Ora pro nobis peccatoribus  
Nunc et in hora mortis nostrae.  
Amen.

Holy Mary,  
Pray for us sinners,  
Now and at the hour of our death.  
Amen.

**Hjálmar H. Ragnarsson** was born in Isafjörour, Iceland and now serves as President of the Federation of Icelandic Artists. He has taught at the Reykjavik Conservatory and is a music critic. He has written opera, theater and chamber music, and music for film, but is best known for his choral music. The choir of the Hallgrímskirkju (an iconic landmark in Reykjavik) premiered Ragnarsson's *Ave Maria*, and has performed it often on tour. New Amsterdam Singers will sing it again in July 2017, on tour in Iceland and Copenhagen.

(This Ave Maria text is the same as above.)

Orbán's *Cor Mundum*, on Psalm 51, was written in 1988, and is a favorite of Hungarian choirs. It is a complex, passionate work for divided choir. There are passages of penetrating counterpoint, romantic melodies, and syncopated refrains.

Cor mundum crea in me, Deus,  
et spiritum rectum innova in me,  
in visceribus meis, Domine!  
Ne proicias mea facie tua!  
Libera me de sanguinibus,  
et exsultabit lingua mea iustitiam tuam!  
Labia mea aperies,  
holocaustis non delectaberis,  
si voluisses sacrificium:  
cor contritum et humiliatum non despicias.  
Amen.

Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
And renew a righteous spirit within me,  
Even within my innards, O Lord!  
Do not cast me away from your presence;  
Deliver me from bloodshed,  
And my tongue will extol your justice!  
Open my lips,  
You do not delight in burnt offerings;  
If you desire a sacrifice:  
A contrite and humbled heart you will not despise.  
Amen.

We return to Homilius for another lively Psalm (28, 7) setting. “Der Herr ist meine Stärke” is a graceful, exuberant piece with lively cascades of sixteenth notes. The middle section is a fugue whose text, “And I will thank him with my song,” could sum up music for a believer.

Der Herr ist meine Stärke und mein Schild;  
auf ihn hoffet mein Herz,  
und mir ist geholfen.  
Und mein Herz ist fröhlich,  
und ich will ihm danken mit meinem Liede.

The Lord is my strength and my shield;  
my heart trusted in him,  
and I am helped.  
Therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth;  
and with my song will I praise him.

Clara Longstreth ©2017

Thanks to Robin Beckhard, Susan Daum, Walter Daum, Steve Holtje, Michael Landy, Katherine Leahy, Robert Marlowe, Anne McKinney, Jay Pott, and Robert Thorpe for their work on this program.

## **NEW AMSTERDAM SINGERS**

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Pen Ying Fang, Accompanist

Nathaniel Granor, Chamber Chorus  
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NEW AMSTERDAM SINGERS is incorporated as a nonprofit charitable organization under the laws of the State of New York. Contributions are tax-deductible. Dues and ticket sales meet only half of our annual expenses. Donations of any size are gratefully accepted and can be made online ([nasingers.org/support-nas](http://nasingers.org/support-nas) or mailed to New Amsterdam Singers, Inc., Box 373, Cathedral Station, New York, NY 10025. A copy of our latest annual report is available upon written request.

## **NAS Restricted Endowment Fund**

At the conclusion of our thirtieth-anniversary capital campaign, NAS established a restricted endowment fund to help provide a steady source of income and stability. Thanks to the generosity of more than a hundred donors, we achieved a sizable beginning principal balance. Additional gifts by check, stock transfer, or bequest are most welcome.

## **NAS Online**

Visit [www.nasingers.org](http://www.nasingers.org) for the latest chorus news. The site includes a list of the many commissions and premieres that New Amsterdam Singers has been proud to present (click on "Our Music"). For updates on our concerts, tours, and benefits, photo galleries of chorus events, alumni news, etc., "like" us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter.

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\*\*Chamber Chorus only

## About the Artists

The NEW AMSTERDAM SINGERS, now in its forty-ninth 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 sixteenth century through contemporary pieces, including many it has commissioned. Recent world premieres include compositions by Paul Alan Levi, Elizabeth Lim, Robert Paterson, and Ronald Perera. American and New York City premieres in the current decade have included works by Einojuhani Rautavaara, Matthew Harris, Abbie Betinis, Steven Stucky, Kirke Mechem, Stephen Sametz, Kitty Brazelton, Clare Maclean, Alex Weiser, Sheena Phillips, and Judith Shatin.

NAS 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 with Anonymous Four and the Concordia Orchestra in Richard Einhorn's *Voices of Light* at Avery Fisher Hall, under Marin Alsop, in 1999, and in 2006 NAS performed *Voices of Light* at the Winter Garden of the World Financial Center, with Anonymous Four and Ensemble Sospeso under David Hattner, for broadcast on WNYC's *New Sounds*.

NAS appears internationally under Ms. Longstreth's direction. The chorus has sung at the Irakleion Festival in Greece; the Granada Festival in Spain; the International Choral Festival at Miedzyzdroje, Poland; the Festival of the Algarve in Portugal; Les Chorégies d'Orange in France; and the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod in Wales. Recent tours have found the chorus appearing in Turkey, Scandinavia, Croatia, Spain, Russia and the Baltics, Argentina and Uruguay, South Africa, and most recently in Greece in 2015. In 2010 NAS was pleased to receive permission from the State and Treasury Departments to tour Cuba on a cultural visa.

CLARA LONGSTRETH has conducted New Amsterdam Singers since its formation in 1968. She has served on the faculty of Rutgers University, where she conducted the Voorhees Choir of Douglass College. A student of conductor G. Wallace Woodworth at Harvard, Ms. Longstreth trained for her Masters degree at the Juilliard School under Richard Westenburg. Further study included work with Amy Kaiser and Semyon Bychkov at the Mannes College of Music, and with Helmuth Rilling at the Oregon Bach Festival.

In 1997 Ms. Longstreth guest-conducted the Limón Dance Company in performances with NAS and the Riverside Church Choir. In 2010 she again conducted the Limón Dance Company at the Skirball Center at NYU. She is a frequent guest conductor at the annual Messiah Sing-In at Avery Fisher Hall and at the summer sings of the West Village Chorale, the New York Choral Society, and other choruses. She has also served as adjudicator of choral festivals, conducted the Riverdale Country School choral groups and conducted the Juilliard Chorus and Orchestra at Alice Tully Hall. In 2006 she presented a lecture-demonstration on "Adventures in Programming" for the Eastern Division Convention of the American Choral Directors Association.

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."

DAVID RECCA is currently an Adjunct Professor of Music at the Conservatory of Music of Purchase College, SUNY. There he directs the Purchase College Chorus and Purchase Chamber Singers, and he teaches a variety of undergraduate courses including music history, music theory and ear training. He is also the director of the Southern Connecticut Camerata, a Norwalk-based early music ensemble approaching its sixtieth season, and he is in his third season as assistant director of New Amsterdam Singers. In May 2014, David completed the coursework and performing requirements for the Doctorate of Musical Arts Degree in Choral Conducting at the Yale School of Music and the Yale Institute of Sacred Music. He holds a Master's degree in Choral Conducting from the Eastman School of Music and a Performer's Certificate in Vocal Coaching and a Bachelor of Music Degree in Composition from Purchase College. He lives with his wife, Sarah, in Danbury, Connecticut.

PEN YING FANG studied with Paul Hoffmann and Barbara Gonzalez-Palmer, earning a BM and MM in Piano, at Rutgers University. Ms. Fang has accompanied many prominent artists in master classes, including Keith Underwood, Evelyn Glennie, Brian Macintosh, and Christopher Arneson. In 2007 she played at the Florence Voice Seminar in Florence, Italy. Currently she serves as a staff accompanist at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey, and teaches piano students in the central New Jersey area.

## NAS CDs

NAS's Fortieth Anniversary two-CD set compiles twenty-four concert performances dating from our Merkin Concert Hall debut in May 1983, almost two-and-a-half hours of music for just \$20. Composers represented include Bach, Schein, Schütz, Haydn, Schubert, Dvořák, Brahms, Byrd, Copland, Joplin, Poulenc, Frank Martin, Britten, Paul Alan Levi, Matthew Harris, Ronald Perera, and Irving Fine.

NAS also has available our second commercial CD, *Island of Hope*, featuring twentieth-century American choral music. It includes works by Leonard Bernstein, Ricky Ian Gordon, Paul Alan Levi, Ronald Perera, and Randall Thompson. Our first CD, *American Journey*, also focuses on American composers, among them Samuel Barber, Matthew Harris, Charles Ives, and Halsey Stevens. Both appear on the Albany Records label and are available for \$15 each at our concerts.

NAS CDs can also be obtained by mail from New Amsterdam Singers, P.O. Box 373, New York, NY 10025. Please add \$3 for shipping and handling on mail orders. CDs and tapes of selected NAS performances are also available.

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