

THE
*P*hiladelphia *C*horus

Raquel García, Artistic Director

The Philadelphia Chorus

Raquel García, Artistic Director

Presents

The Light of Unity



Saturday, December 6, 2025

4:00 PM

Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral

19 S. 38th Street, Philadelphia, PA

PROGRAM

The Light of Unity

Tom Trenney

Solos: Rebecca Flemer, Bryan Hoyos

The Times They Are A-Changin'

Bob Dylan

*Solos: Sarah Folsom-Kovarik, Ana Mendelson,
Bryan Hoyos, Robert Flora*

Into the Light

Jake Runestad

1. The Universe of Light
2. The Lightless Dark
3. The Warm Fogs of Fear
4. Flower Into Kindness
5. Into the Light

Solo: Kristin Kalbach

*Small Ensemble: Sarah Folsom-Kovarik, Ana Mendelson
Eric Rodríguez López, Robert Flora*

Illuminare

Elaine Hagenberg

1. Splendor
2. Caritas
3. Nox
4. Munera pacis
5. Illuminare his

Solo: Zachary Chan

INTERMISSION



*The Philadelphia Chorus respectfully requests that you observe the following:
Please refrain from video recording and flash photograph during the concert.
Please silence all cell phones
or any other electronic devices that could disrupt the concert.*

PROGRAM (cont.)

Light (from Next to Normal)

Tom Kitt

Solos: Madeline Merinuk & Drew Weiss

Light Dawns on a Weary World

Mack Wilberg

Pianists: Judith Large & Benjamin Leiby

Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow

arr. Mark Hayes

Fantasia on Christmas Carols

R. Vaughan Williams

Solo: Moses Possibile

Welcome All Wonders (excerpts)

J.A.C. Redford

- 1. Welcome All Wonders**
- 2. The Nativity of Christ**
- 3. Good Is the Flesh**
- 4. Christmas Now**

This Little Light of Mine

arr. Mark Hayes

The Philadelphia Chorus
Raquel García, Artistic Director
Judith Large, Accompanist

SOPRANOS

Madeleine Cummings
Rebecca Flemer
Sarah Folsom-Kovarik
Linda Furia
Kristin Kalbach
Ana Mendelson
Madeline Merinuk
Gwen Noone
Barbara Purdom
Caroline Shelton
Amanda Strydio
Allison Terzyk

ALTOS

Danielle Cantor
Hope Comisky
Linda Corsover
Lynn DellaPietra
Patty Gilson
Jessica Lowe
Sarah McCague
Janet Perry
Julianna Ricco
Mindy Ripkin
Susan Shaman
Charli Temoney
Laraine Winter

The Philadelphia Chorus
Raquel García, Artistic Director
Judith Large, Accompanist

TENORS

Susan Best
Zachary Chan *
Debby Diserens
Nathan Folsom-Kovarik
Christopher Gill
Bryan Hoyos *
Andrew Masso *
Randy Poe
Eric Rodríguez López *
Drew Weiss

BASSES

Phil Berryman
Peter Brennan
Gordon Downing
Robert Flora *
Renard Golden *
Sean Holleran
Christopher Lenz *
Robert Noone

**Guest singer*

ORCHESTRA

PIANO/SYNTHESIZER

Judith Large

ORGAN/SYNTHESIZER

Benjamin Leiby

VIOLINS

Lenuta Ciulei-Atanasiu

Sarah Smith

June Bender

Rachel Massey

VIOLAS

David Giles

Ashley Vines

CELLOS

George Atanasiu

Patricia Daniels

BASS

Dan McCain

FLUTES

Nicholas Handahl

Roberta Goren

OBOE/ENGLISH HORN

Shawn Garrone

ORCHESTRA

CLARINETS

**Michael Smith
Donna Higgins**

BASSOONS

**Angelina Coppola
Melanie Shafer**

HORNS

**Sabrina Huber
Erika Hollister**

TRUMPETS

**Charles Megules
David Seals**

TROMBONES

**Russell Mehrrens
Samuel Turley**

PERCUSSION

**Emily Roane
Sean McWilliams**

GUITAR

Jonathan Cooper

PROGRAM NOTES

Tom Trenney is a composer, conductor, and organist known for his sacred choral works, organ improvisations. He holds degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music and the Eastman School of Music and has won prestigious awards. Mr. Trenney serves as Minister of Music at First-Plymouth Church in Lincoln, Nebraska, and as Associate Professor of Music and Director of Choirs at Nebraska Wesleyan University.

The Light of Unity offers a kaleidoscopic musical setting of a powerful prayer for light, love and unity from the Bahá'í faith tradition. This music was composed in 2017. This composition was written for an event in Pontiac, Michigan. This event was honoring the 200th anniversary of the birth of Bahá u' lláh (founder of the Bahai community).

Adam Podd is a musician, composer arranger and orchestrator. As an experience improviser who was classically trained, his work brings a fresh and soulful sound to each new piece. He is the Director of music at first Unitarian congregational society of Brooklyn, where the choir often helps him to develop and premiere new works.

The Times They are A-changing' was originally written by American singer-songwriter, Bob Dylan. This protest song was released during the Civil Rights movement. Blending biblical imagery with the form of Irish and Scottish ballads, the song's lyrics became a timeless and powerful commentary on societal change.

American composer **Jake Runestad** is one of the most prominent rising choral stars of the past couple decades. He has received numerous commissions and performances from many prominent musical groups, as well as awards including an Emmy, a Grammy nomination, and the ACDA's Raymond C. Brock commission.

Into the Light was inspired by the Reformation, but reimagined as a living concept of reform rather than a museum piece, using texts from spiritual reformers like Swami Vivekananda, Helen Keller, Martin Luther King Jr., and Gandhi. The piece explores themes of confronting fear, division, and ignorance, urging listeners to choose a path of love, wisdom, and compassion.

Mr. Runestad comments: "It is my hope that this new work allows us to be immersed in the wisdom of some of the most important and influential reformers in history, and challenges us to consider how we can move beyond fear and onto a path of love, compassion, and kindness."

The five movements guide the listener through the core themes:

- 1. The Universe of Light: A welcoming and expansive opening focused on potential and love.**
- 2. The Lightless Dark: An exploration of ignorance and its implications.**
- 3. The Warm Fogs of Fear: Addressing the pervasive and weakening effects of fear.**
- 4. Flower into Kindness: The movement toward love as a healing and guiding force.**
- 5. Into the Light: The culmination of the journey, embracing the wisdom of the universe with love.**

Elaine Hagenberg is a contemporary American composer known for her deeply expressive and universally appealing choral music, which often features lush harmonies, poignant texts, and new-romantic style melodies that blend artistic sophistication with spiritual depth. Her music has been widely recognized, with her works being performed at national conferences, All-State festivals, and major performance halls like Carnegie Hall.

Nine choral organizations commissioned Hagenberg's **Illuminare**. **Illuminare** is a five-movement composition for chorus and chamber orchestra that tells a story of darkness and confusion leading to the return of light and hope.

The piece uses a mix of Latin, Greek, and English sacred texts, including passages from the traditional Kyrie eleison and the Cantic of Zechariah, to portray the journey from sorrow to "munera pacis" (gifts of peace). The first movement, "Splendor," welcomes light with joyful energy, while the second, "Caritas," uses Hildegard von Bingen's text to evoke a tender season of beauty and peace. The third movement depicts darkness and chaos with the "Kyrie" text and "Nox et tenebrae" (night and darkness). In the fourth movement, the darkness begins to fade, allowing the peace theme to reemerge, leading to a crescendo for the words "munera pacis" (grant us peace). And the final movement restores hope through the "Illuminare his" (illuminate them) text from the Cantic of Zechariah.

The musical *Next To Normal*'s story centers on a mother who lost her son and is troubled with bipolar disorder. The song **Light** represents a turning point for the characters, a move from darkness and despair towards connection, resilience, and hope.

Light dawns on a weary world describes a hymn celebrating hope, justice, and renewal in a world needing healing. Written by Mary Louise Bringle, the text was originally set to William Rowan's "TEMPLE OF PEACE" tune, though **Mack Wilberg** later created his own setting. Drawing inspiration from biblical prophecies, particularly the book of Isaiah, the lyrics paint a picture of a renewed future where oppression is no more, nature is restored, and people experience true abundance. The central theme revolves around God's promise of this better world, inspiring listeners to embrace hope, peace, and love.

Ralph Vaughan Williams wrote music of almost every genre and for performers of all levels of expertise, often drawing on traditional English songs. The **Fantasia on Christmas Carols** weaves together four traditional English carols and fragments of other tunes.

The cello introduces the melody of the carol "The truth sent from above" (Herefordshire carol) and is followed by the entrance of the baritone soloist singing the words to the carol, which explain the sin of Adam and Eve and God's promise to redeem humankind "by his Son". The choir enters with "Come all you worthy gentlemen" (Somerset carol), followed by the soloist singing "On Christmas Night (Sussex Carol)". The orchestra in the meantime plays the "Wassail Bough" adapted to accompany him. Then the chorus to the tune of "Come all you worthy Gentlemen", sings "God bless the ruler of this house" and ends with the wish for a happy new year for all.

J.A.C. Redford is a well-known composer of both classical music and music for film and television. His works have been performed by ensembles like the London Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Master Chorale, and Chicago Symphony, along with many others, and is featured in numerous professional recordings, including *Eternity Shut in a Span*, which includes the works sung today. He composed the Raymond W. Brock Memorial Commission for the American Choral Directors Association 2017 National Conference, and has composed for over 500 episodes on TV, including for *Coach* and *St. Elsewhere*. He wrote the full scores for *Newsies* and *The Mighty Ducks II* and *III*, and orchestrated the scores for *Avatar*, *WALL-E*, *Finding Dory*, and *Skyfall*.

Welcome All Wonders: A Christmas Celebration is a work of five movements, four of which we'll be singing today. Though written in 1993 for modern orchestration and with a contemporary overall harmonic structure, the work includes many unusual harmonies and tonalities that harken back to the medieval ages. Redford utilizes poetry from Richard Crashaw (1613-49), Robert Southwell (1561-95), and Brian Wren (b. 1936), all invoking the “wonders” of God taking on human life in Jesus.

The first movement, "Welcome All Wonders," uses a 17th century poem by Crashaw. The text sees paradoxes of day and night, heaven and earth, by-passing the powerful and appearing to poor shepherds. There are two separate themes interspersed throughout the movement - one focused on the initial text, ‘welcome all wonders,’ and another melody which cycles through with each verse of the poem. The ‘welcome’ motif is reiterated throughout in between most verses, sometimes sung and sometimes just in the orchestra. Verse three stands out from the others - it uses a unique unsettling harmony when discussing the things that are NOT welcome, and then incorporates the ‘welcome’ motif when the text returns to positivity. This movement uses constantly shifting harmonics and time signatures to increase the sense of building excitement until the exuberant ending.

"The Nativity of Christ" starts with the lower voices singing melody, and the upper voices imitating instruments on a neutral syllable. This assignment flips for the next verse, then both sections return to singing text at “From death, from dark, from deafness, from despairs.” With “Man altered was,” the upper and lower voices split into two sections for a confident canon, where one voice starts and the other imitates. This movement ends with a triumphant orchestral section, playing the same material that the instrumental-mimicking voices sang at the beginning. The text by the English Renaissance poet Robert Southwell, invokes paradox and reversal as the creator enters his own creation: (“the bird that built the nest is hatched therein.”). God gives himself to humans, who respond “God’s gift am I and none but God shall have me.”

Brian Wren is an English hymn poet who wrote “Good is the Flesh”. This hymn expresses that human life (flesh) must be good if God has taken it on, particularly the body, in giving birth and nursing, feeling sunlight and the tug of gravity, “from cradle to grave.” In this movement’s music, the melody is like a freely sung lullaby, lightly drifting into different tonalities throughout. The upper voices gently sing the first verse and the lower voices the second, each with a peaceful and short instrumental intro.

The third verse is the most unmoored by tonality, with a new key basically every measure or two. The fourth verse is a return to the more familiar melody from the start, and is fuller, though still more tender than emphatic. This movement ends peacefully with a return of the instrumental theme from the beginning.

Brian Wren wrote the poem "Christmas now". The lyrics leverage the historical figures of Julius Caesar, King Herod, and Caiaphas to symbolize recurring oppressors. These figures embody typical abuses of political, religious, and economic power that endanger both love and freedom. The song calls upon the infant Jesus ("Child") to inspire a new song of resistance and hope against such tyranny.

This movement is a joyful celebration of all of Christ's victories, starting suddenly with a fanfare and a strong choral entrance. This song has two main parts, the first covering almost all the text and the second using only the word "Alleluia." The first section, starting with "Child," has two distinct themes - each verse from "Child" to "sing a new song," is more emphatic and ringing, almost trumpet-like. After two verses, there's a more lilting, softer repetition of "Sing a new song." After all four verses and a rousing instrumental section, the "Alleluia" half begins, where the music shifts into a fugue - each voice separates into distinct lines, intertwining to sing material, then developing that material into something new. Though this portion of the movement has very simple text, it is one of the most complex of the entire work, with each line building on the others toward a grand conclusion.

We are indebted for these notes to various sources:

- <https://tomtrenney.com/>
- <https://www.adampodd.com/>
- <https://www.halleonard.com/>
- <https://jakerunestad.com/>
- <https://www.elainehagenberg.com/>
- <https://www.jacredford.com/>
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/>
- Phillip Berryman
- Jean Craig
- Sarah Folsom-Kovarik

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

The Light of Unity

Tom Trenney

The utterance of God is a lamp whose light is these words:
Ye are the fruits of one tree. And the leaves of one branch.
Deal Ye with one another with the utmost love and harmony.
With friendliness and fellowship.
So powerful is the light that illuminates the whole earth.
The light of unity.

The Times They Are A-Changin'

Bob Dylan/arr. by Adam Podd

Come gather 'round people wherever you roam
And admit that the waters around you have grown
And accept it that soon you'll be drenched to the bone
If your time to you is worth savin'
And you better start swimmin' or you'll sink like a stone
For the times they are a-changin'

Come mothers and fathers throughout the land
And don't criticize what you can't understand
Your sons and your daughters are beyond your command
Your old road is rapidly aging
Please get out of the new one if you can't lend your hand
For the Times they are a-changin'

The line it is drawn, the curse it is cast
The slow one now will later be fast
As the present now will later be past,
The order is rapidly fading
And the first one now will later be last
For the times they are a-changin'!

Into the Light

Jake Runestad

1. The Universe of Light

Come out into the universe of light.
Everything in the universe is yours,
stretch out your arms and embrace it with love.

(text by Swami Vivekananda)

You are a product of your thoughts.
What you think, you become.

(text by Gandhi)

2. The Lightless Dark

The only lightless dark is the night of ignorance. (text by Helen Keller)
We differ from one another, not in our senses,
but in the use we make of them.

3. The Warm Fogs of Fear

The ice under us is very thin, (text by Frederick Douglass)
and is made weak by the warm fogs of fear.

We are driven by love or by fear. (text After Martin Luther King Jr.)
I fear you, for I do not know you.

There is no fear in love, (text by John the Evangelist)
but perfect love drives out fear.

4. Flower Into Kindness

The soul is made of love (text by Mechthild von Magdeburg)
and must ever return to love.
There is nothing so wise,
nor so beautiful,
nor so strong as love.

Above all, love. (text by Peter the Apostle)

I shed my words on the earth (text by Rabindranath Tagore, adapt. Runestad)
as the tree sheds its leaves.
Let my thoughts unspoken
flower into kindness.

5. Into the Light

We are not yet what we shall be, (text by Martin Luther)
but we are growing toward it.

Come out into the universe of light. (text by Swami Vivekananda)
Everything in the universe is yours,
stretch out your arms and embrace it with love.

I. Splendor

**Splendor paternae gloriae,
de luce lucem proferens,
lux lucis et fons luminis,
diem dies illuminans.**

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

**Splendor of God's glory,
brings forth light from light,
light of light, light's living spring,
Day, all days illuminates.**

(text by Saint Ambrose (340-397))

2. Caritas

**Caritas abundat in omnia,
de imis excellentissima
super sidera,
atque amantissima in omnia,
Quia summo regi
osculum pacis dedit.**

(text by Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179))

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

**Love abounds in all,
from the depths most excellent
to beyond the stars,
and loving toward all,
she has given the highest king
the kiss of peace.**

3. Nox

Kyrie eleison. Christe eleison.

(text- traditional Greek)

**Nox et tenebrae et nubila,
confusa mundi et turbida
Caligo terrae scinditur
percussa solis spiculo**

(text by Aurelius Prudentius Clemens (348-413))

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy.

**Night and darkness and fog,
confused world and turmoil
dark gloom tears the earth
beats and stabs the sun**

4. Munera pacis

**Ecce jam noctis tenuatur umbra,
Lux et auroae rutilans coruscat:
Supplices rerum Dominum canora
Voce precemur:**

(text by Pope Gregory (540-604))

**Ut reos culpae miseratus, omnem
Pellat angorem, tribuat salutem,
Donet et nobis bona sempiternae
Munera pacis.**

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

**Behold, already night and shadows taper off
Light and dawn sparkle and quiver
We humbly beg the Lord through song
Our voices pray:**

**Though we are guilty, view us with compassion Banish anguish,
bestow health
Grant us everlasting goodness
Give us peace.**

**Peace I leave with you,
my peace I give unto you:
not as the world giveth, give I unto you.
Let not your heart be troubled,
neither let it be afraid.**

(text by Apostle John 14:27)

5. Illuminare his

**Illuminare his qui in tenebris (text- Canticle of Zechariah (Luke 1:68 -79))
et in umbra mortis sedent:
ad dirigendos pedes nostros in viam pacis.**

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

**Illuminate those in darkness
and in the shadow of death are seated
direct our footpath in the way of peace.**

Light

Lyrics by: Brian Yorkey

**We need some light
First of all, we need some light
You can't sit here in the dark
And all alone, it's a sorry sight
It's just you and me
We'll live, you'll see**

**Night after night
We'd sit and wait for the morning light
But we've waited far too long
For all that's wrong to be made right**

**Day after day
Wishing all our cares away
Trying to fight the things we feel
But some hurts never heal
Some ghosts are never gone
But we go on
We still go on**

**And you find some way to survive
And you find out you don't have to be happy at all
To be happy you're alive**

**Day after day
Give me clouds and rain and gray
Give me pain, if that's what's real
It's the price we pay to feel
The price of love is loss
But still we pay
We love anyway**

And when the night has finally gone
And when we see the new day dawn
We'll wonder how we wandered for so long, so blind
The wasted world we thought we knew
The light will make it look brand new
So... Let it shine, shine, shine

Day after day, day after day
We'll find the will to find our way
Knowing that the darkest skies will someday see the sun

When our long night is done
There will be light

When we open up our lives
Sons and daughters, husbands, wives
Can fight that fight
There will be light!

Light dawns on a weary world

Lyrics by: Mary Louise Bringle

Light dawn on a weary world
When eyes begin to see all people's dignity.
Light dawn on a weary world:
The promised day to justice comes.

Refrain:

The trees shall clap their hands;
The dry lands, gush with spring;
The hills and mountains shall break forth with singing!
We shall go out with joy,
And be led forth in peace,
As all the world in wonder echoes shalom.

Love grows in a weary world
When hungry hearts find bread
And children's dreams are fed.
Love grows in a weary world;
The promised feast of plenty comes.

Refrain

Hope blooms in a weary world
When creatures, once forlorn, find wilderness reborn.
Hope blooms in a weary world:
The promised green of Eden comes.

Refrain

Fantasia on Christmas Carols

Ralph Vaughan Williams
text: traditional, English folk carols

**This is the truth sent from above,
The truth of God, the God of love;
Therefore don't turn me from your door,
But hearken all, both rich and poor.**

**The first thing, which I will relate,
Is that God did man create
The next thing, which to you I'll tell,
Woman was made with man to dwell.**

**Then after this, 'twas God's own choice
To place them both in Paradise,
There to remain from evil free
Except they ate of such a tree.**

**And they did eat, which was a sin,
And thus their ruin did begin;
Ruined themselves, both you and me,
And all of their posterity.
Thus we were heirs to endless woes,
Till God the Lord did interpose
And so a promise soon did run
That he would redeem us by his Son.
That he would redeem us by his Son.**

**Come all you worthy gentlemen
That may be standing by.
Christ our blessed Saviour
Was born on Christmas day.
The blessed virgin Mary
Unto the Lord did pray,
O we wish you the comfort and tidings of joy!**

**Christ our blessed Saviour
Now in the manger lay;
He's lying in the manger,
While the oxen feed on hay.**

**The blessed Virgin Mary
Unto the Lord did pray.
O we wish you the comfort and tidings of joy!**

**On Christmas night all Christians sing
To hear the news the angels bring.
On Christmas night all Christians sing
To hear the news the angels bring.**

**News of great joy, news of great mirth,
News of our merciful King's birth.**

**When sin departs before thy grace,
Then life and health come in its place.**

**Angels and men with joy may sing
All for to see the new-born King.**

**God bless the ruler of this house,
And long, on may he reign;
From out of darkness we have light,
Which makes the angels sing this night:**

**Many happy Christmases
He live to see again!
From out of darkness we have light,
Which makes the angels sing this night:**

**God bless our generation
Who live both far and near;
"Glory to God and peace to men,
Both now and evermore, Amen."**

**And we wish them a happy, a happy New Year!
God bless the ruler of this house,
And long, on may he reign;
Many happy Christmases
He live to see again!**

**God bless our generation
Who live both far and near;
And we wish them a happy, a happy New Year!
O we wish you a happy, a happy New Year!
Both now and evermore, Amen.**

1. Welcome All Wonders

(text: Richard Crashaw (1613-1649))

Welcome, all wonders in one sight
Eternity shut in a span.
Summer in winter, day in night
Heaven in earth, and God in man.
Great little one whose all embracing birth
Lifts earth to heaven, stoops heav'n to earth.

Welcome, though nor to gold nor silk,
To more than Caesar's birthright is;
Two sister-seas of Virgin-milk,
With many a rarely-temper'd kiss
That breathes at once both maid and mother,
Warms in the one, cools in the other.

Welcome, though not to those gay flies,
Gilded with beams of earthly kings;
Slippery souls in smiling eyes;
But to poor shepherds, home-spun things:
Whose wealth's their flock, whose wit, to be
Well read in their simplicity.

Yet when young April's husband show'rs
Shall bless the fruitful Maja's bed
We'll bring the firstborn of her flow'rs
To kiss thy feet and crown thy head.
To thee, dread Lamb whose love must keep
The shepherds more than they the sheep.

To thee, meek Majesty soft King
Of simple graces and sweet loves.
Each of us his lamb will bring
Each his pair of silver doves;
Till burnt at last in fire of thy fair eyes
Our selves become our own best sacrifice.

2. The Nativity of Christ

(text: Robert Southwell (1561-1595))

Behold the father is his daughter's son,
The bird that built the nest is hatched therein,
The old of years an hour hath not outrun,
Eternal life to live doth now begin,
The Word is dumb, the mirth of heaven doth weep,
Might feeble is, and force doth faintly creep.

O dying souls, behold your living spring;
O dazzled eyes, behold your sun of grace;
Dull ears, attend what word this Word doth bring;
Up, heavy hearts, with joy your joy embrace.
From death, from dark, from deafness, from despairs,
This life, this light, this Word, this joy repairs.

Gift better than Himself God does not know;
Gift better than his God no man can see.
This gift doth here the giver given bestow;
Gift to this gift let each receiver be.
God is my gift, himself he freely gave me;
God's gift am I, and none but God shall have me.

Man altered was by sin from man to beast;
Beast's food is hay, hay is all mortal flesh.
Now God is flesh and lies in manger pressed
As hay, the brutest sinner to refresh.
O happy field wherein this fodder grew,
Whose taste doth us from beasts to men renew.

3. Good Is the Flesh

(text: Brian Wren (1936-)

Good is the flesh that the Word has become
good is the birthing, the milk in the breast,
good is the feeding, caressing and rest,
good is the body for knowing the world,
Good is the flesh that the Word has become.

Good is the body for knowing the world,
sensing the sunlight, the tug of the ground,
feeling, perceiving, within and around,
good is the body, from cradle to grave,
Good is the flesh that the Word has become.

Good is the body, from cradle to grave,
growing and aging, arousing, impaired,
happy in clothing, or lovingly bared,
good is the pleasure of God in our flesh,
Good is the flesh that the Word has become.

Good is the pleasure of God in our flesh,
longing in all, as in Jesus to dwell,
glad of embracing and tasting and smell,
good is the body, for good and for God,
Good is the flesh that the Word has become.

4. Christmas Now

(text: Brian Wren (1936-)

**Child, when Herod wakes,
and hate or exploitation
swing their dripping swords,
from your cross and cradle
sing a new song.**

**Child, when Caesar's laws
choke love or strangle freedom
calling darkness light,
from your cross and cradle
sing a new song.**

**Child, when Caiaphas
sends truth to crucifixion
to protect his prayers,
from your cross and cradle
sing a new song.**

**Child, your helpless love
brings death and resurrection;
joyfully we come
to your cross and cradle
with a new song –**

Alleluia Alleluia

BIOGRAPHIES

Moses Possible - Haitian American baritone Moses Possible, praised for his warm voice and storytelling, has wowed audiences through his varying musical engagements and performances. A proud New Jersey native, specifically born in Trenton, he has performed with various ensembles in the Philadelphia tri-state area like the Delaware Valley Opera Company, Elevate Vocal Arts, Boheme Opera of New Jersey, and the L.O.T.U.S. Project professional ensemble. Recent accolades include being selected as a scholarship winner by the Marian Anderson Guild of New Jersey, and a semifinalist in Opera Ebony's Emerging Artist division of the 2025 Benjamin Matthew's Competition. Moses is incredibly grateful to be working with The Philadelphia Chorus again and is looking forward to putting on a wonderful performance of fantastic music.

The Philadelphia Chorus - was founded in 1951. For seventy-four years it has presented sacred and secular music from all periods in history. Its activities encourage, foster, and promote a wider and deeper appreciation of music with particular emphasis on the outstanding choral literature of the past and present. Its mission is to perform concerts that reveal the common threads in music from diverse musical traditions, while achieving high standards of musical excellence, sensitivity, and humanity.

Judith Large - accompanist, received her Bachelor's degree in piano performance from the Shenandoah Conservatory of Music in Virginia. She earned a Master's degree in piano performance from Temple University where she studied with Adele Marcus, Harvey Wedeen, and Lambert Orkis. She has worked as opera coach/accompanist for the Mississippi Opera Festival; assistant to the Artistic Director of the Pennsylvania Opera Theater; accompanist to the Thomas Jefferson University Chorus; accompanist for The Swarthmore Chorale in Swarthmore, PA., and, since 1984, as accompanist of The Philadelphia Chorus. She has also appeared as guest pianist with various organizations, including the Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, Montgomery County Community Chorus, and Bucks County Community Chorus.

Raquel García - is the Artistic Director of The Philadelphia Chorus. She is also the former Artistic Director of The Swarthmore Chorale in Swarthmore, PA, and is the former Assistant Conductor of the Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia. Ms. García assisted in conducting the Mendelssohn Club in Robert Moran's world premiere performance of "Chant du Cygne" for four choruses, four orchestras. She is the former director of The Chamber Singers of Harrisburg. During her tenure in Harrisburg, she participated regularly in the annual Central Pennsylvania Choral Festival and was invited by the American Choral Directors Association to conduct in the regional convention in Philadelphia.

She has prepared choruses for such conductors as Tamara Brooks, Fiora Contino, Alan Harler, Robert Page and Gregg Smith. She has led The Philadelphia Chorus in such varied works as Bach's *Magnificat* and *Mass in F*, Brahms' *Requiem*, René Clausen's *Memorial*, Duruflé's *Requiem*, Handel's *Judas Maccabæus* and *Jephtha*, Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass* and *Creation Mass*, Honneger's *King David*, Mozart's *Vespers*, Fauré's *Requiem*, Rutter's *Gloria*, Todd's *Mass in Blue*, Forrest's *Jubilate Deo*, Jenkins' *The Armed Man* and Bernstein's *Mass*. A native of Puerto Rico, Ms. García studied at the Conservatory of Music of Puerto Rico. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Music Theory and a Masters degree in Conducting, both from Temple University.

The Harrisburg Patriot News praised her as a conductor who “clearly knows music and how to bring the best of it from choral groups”. BSharp Productions’ review stated, “The most important person at this performance was Raquel García, Artistic Director. As conductor, she led the chorus through the journey of each work. García was very in tune to the music that surrounded her. García was so hypnotic in her movement that one could feel the emotion just by looking at her. It is no wonder that the choir sounded so passionate and expressive - it is because of her guidance. The music danced as she danced, and the music cried as she cried.”

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