



Akathist

TRINITY CHURCH WALL STREET



Akathist

Music

Benedict Sheehan

Text

Tryphon Turkestanov
(1861-1934)

The Choir of Trinity Wall Street

Artefact Ensemble

NOVUS NY

Downtown Voices

Trinity Youth Chorus

Elaine Kelly, *conductor*

November 10, 7:30pm

November 11, 6pm

Trinity Church

PROGRAM

PART 1

1. FIRST KONTAKION | INTROIT
“Incorruptible King of the Ages”
2. FIRST IKOS
“I Was Born in This World”
Fotina Naumenko, *soprano*
3. SECOND KONTAKION
“How Lovely It Is To Be Thy Guest”
4. SECOND IKOS
“We Have Seen the Sky”
Pamela Terry, *mezzo-soprano*
5. THIRD KONTAKION
“The Meadow”
6. THIRD IKOS
“The Triumph of Spring”
Paul D’Arcy, *tenor*
7. FOURTH KONTAKION
“A Living Torrent”
8. FOURTH IKOS
“Evening”
Neil Netherly, *bass*

PART 2

9. FIFTH KONTAKION
“The Dark Storm Clouds of Life”
10. FIFTH IKOS
“I See Thy Heavens”
Tynan Davis, *mezzo-soprano*
11. SIXTH KONTAKION
“How Wonderful Thy Greatness”
12. SIXTH IKOS
“The Camp Dining Hall”
Aine Hakamatsuka, *soprano*
13. SEVENTH KONTAKION
“In the Wondrous Blending of Sounds”
Elizabeth Bates, *soprano*
14. SEVENTH IKOS
“The Genius of the Human Mind”
Edmund Milly, *baritone*
15. EIGHTH KONTAKION
“In Days of Sickness and Pain”
16. EIGHTH IKOS
“When in Childhood”
Helen Karloski, *mezzo-soprano*

PART 3

17. NINTH KONTAKION
“On a Feast Day”
18. NINTH IKOS
“I Have Seen Thy Face” Enrico Lagasca, *bass-baritone*
19. TENTH KONTAKION
“Into Dust”
20. TENTH IKOS
“Night” Steven Hrycelak, *bass*
21. ELEVENTH KONTAKION
“The Cold Chains of the Centuries”
22. ELEVENTH IKOS
“A Calm Haven in a Tortured World” Timothy Parsons, *countertenor*
23. TWELFTH KONTAKION
“In the Faces of the Dead” Miriam Sheehan, *soprano*
24. TWELFTH IKOS
“Glory to God for All Things” Stephen Sands, *tenor*
25. THIRTEENTH KONTAKION
“Receive This Thanksgiving” Savannah Porter, *soprano*
Helen Karloski, *alto*
Nathan Hodgson, *tenor*
Brian Mextorf, *bass*

COMPOSER'S INTRODUCTION

At the height of Stalin's "Great Purge" of 1937 and '38—a brutal campaign of state-sponsored terror that wiped out more than a million religious and cultural "dissidents" over the course of 18 months, with millions more to follow in the years ahead—the text of a hymn was found on the body of a murdered priest in one of Stalin's labor camps. This hymn, a 27-stanza ode of the most heartfelt gratitude, was found together with a note from its author, Met. Tryphon Turkestanov (1861–1934), who apparently knew the priest personally. Little is known about either the author or the murdered clergyman (whose name is sometimes recorded as "Fr. Grigory Petrov"), but the hymn, now known by Eastern Orthodox Christians as the *Akathist "Glory to God for All Things"* or the *Akathist of Thanksgiving*, stands as a testament to gratitude for the ages. Glorifying God for birth, life, childhood, the earth, mountains, meadows, sunrises, science, art, music, family, friends, animals, suffering, and even death, the text weaves together the totality of human experience into a single jubilant cry of thanksgiving. Yet, as joyful and full of gratitude as the hymn is, the fact that it emerged out of one of the most horrific periods in human history reveals it to be among the most powerful pieces of religious poetry of the modern, or perhaps any, era.

Though I myself have known and loved this text from childhood—my parents often used to read it aloud at home when I was a child—the darkest months of the COVID-19 pandemic made it a particularly important source of comfort, encouragement, and inspiration for me and my family as we gathered to pray it together each Sunday morning during the lockdowns, singing it to a plain Slavic melody known simply as the "Akathist Melody" (the basis for the final movement of my piece). As we watched the world slip ever deeper into fear, anger, grief, and resentment over the succeeding months of 2020 and 2021 (often for very good reasons), I became convinced that I wanted to set these words to music in a way that might offer some of that same comfort, encouragement, and inspiration to others. In my experience, gratitude is always a thing I have to

choose consciously; it's never something that just comes automatically. Having lots of good things in my life is no guarantee that I will be grateful for them, so if even at the best of times I have to remind myself to be grateful, and how much more must I do so when confronted by a host of genuine causes for despair. The Akathist helped me see that even in that place of fear and pain, gratitude was still something I could choose. No matter how crushing the loss, there is "no grief without hope" (Eighth Ikos); no matter how "dark the storm clouds of life" (Fifth Kontakion), I still have within me the power to create light.

The music I have written for *Akathist* draws on a diverse array of sound-worlds, most of which have little to do with the Eastern Orthodox musical tradition. This was quite deliberate on my part. I see this text as a sort of universal anthem, a cry of hope arising perennially from every human heart, even from nature herself, and therefore not limited to a specific expression of faith. I have therefore enlisted a range of compositional techniques and styles in order to suggest that, in some way, all music is sacred and every musical style has something to tell us about God and about one another. Running through the piece from beginning to end is also a ninth-century Gregorian chant melody from the *Missa de Angelis* that serves as both a refrain and a thematic matrix for each movement in the work. While I first lit upon this melody from hearing a recording of it sung to the text "Deo gracias" ("thanks be to God")—which I thought made sense for a piece about thanksgiving—I realized that this melody could serve as a kind of leitmotif for Western culture, in all its beauty and ugliness, and might therefore help me to tell a story about some of the struggles of our modern world. Thus, the chant appears, disappears, reappears in different modes and fragments, and is at last reborn, gloriously transfigured, thereby evincing a pattern of birth, death, and rebirth that is mirrored both in the Akathist itself and—I dare to believe—in human life and culture more generally.

In its overall structure, *Akathist* is loosely chiasmic. Chiasmus is an ancient poetic device named for the Greek letter *chi* (X) and employed throughout the psalms as well as in many books of the Bible. Loosely defined, it functions a little like a palindrome where the first line of a section is mirrored by the last, the second by the second to last, and so on toward a center point. I have used this structure before in other works, most notably in *Vespers*, but *Akathist* is my most ambitious attempt at creating a large-scale chiasmic work. Far more than just being a convenient way to organize a musical work, chiasmus offers a profound symbol of the interconnectedness of all things—of the cosmos and space-time itself—and the fundamental nonlinearity of our strange and unaccountable universe. Chiasmus is an image of the eternal *now*, of the already complete “beingness” of everything. Though we creatures may still experience life and reality as a process of unfolding—and often as an unfolding tragedy—chiasmus helps us see that the recapitulation of all things into an eternal experience of joy for all creation is not just *going* to happen, but in fact already *is*.

Yes, *Akathist* is a work founded in Christian faith and tradition, but for me, it is also a piece about struggling with that faith. A good deal of hymnography, at least the kind I frequently encounter in Orthodoxy, oscillates between the poles of religious triumphalism (fear of the “other”) and esoteric penitential spirituality (fear of the self). The *Akathist* appears to me to occupy a different space altogether. Taking the stuff of everyday life—snow, birdsong, stars, sky, love, loss, birth, and death—the *Akathist* transforms all of it into an encounter with the Divine, and thereby into a cause for profound joy. This is a kind of faith that I feel has space in it for everyone, regardless of creed, and leaves room for both doubt and creative exploration. I have tried as best I could to capture this spirit in my music.

Finally, *Akathist* is also a piece about struggling with injustice, both past and present. Arising as it does out of a context of some of the most horrific persecution of innocent people known to history—i.e., Stalinist Russia—the text of *Akathist* seems to me to send out threads of connection into other times and places where injustice and cruelty have been allowed to flourish. While countless themes presented themselves to me as I worked on the piece, some of the specific motifs I hoped to bring out were the Native American experience with colonization, the African American experience with slavery and racism, and the Jewish experience throughout the ages and specifically in the 20th century. And finally, running through the work as a whole are the twofold themes of love of nature and the injustice that we humans have perpetrated against it over the centuries. In this way, therefore, *Akathist* is a response to injustice—one that acknowledges injustice for what it is without glossing over it—but a response that, I hope, offers a way forward into a wider space of wisdom, understanding, and gratitude for the beautiful world we have been given and for the radiant beings with whom we have been blessed to share it.

—Benedict Sheehan

TEXT WITH NOTES BY THE COMPOSER

Text

Tryphon Turkestanov

English translation

John Mikitish

PART 1

1. FIRST KONTAKION | INTROIT

“Incorruptible King of the Ages” (chorus)

[Modeled on a “French overture” such as would typically open an opera from the Baroque period. This solemn beginning to the epic journey of life—a journey punctuated by innumerable sorrows and joys—introduces the Chant (a plainsong melody from the *Missa de Angelis*) that will become the main theme of the work, present in some form in every movement.]

Incorruptible King of the ages, thy right arm controls the whole course of human life by the power of thy saving providence. We give thee thanks for all thy benefits, those known and those hidden from us, both for this earthly life and for the heavenly joys of the future kingdom. Extend thy mercy to us who sing thy praise:

Glory to thee, O God, from age to age!

2. FIRST IKOS

“I Was Born in This World” (soprano solo)

[The beginning of our journey through life. A song of childlike innocence, wonder, and play, though still mysteriously haunted by the specter of time. Note the sol-mi-la-sol-mi pattern in the piano, a figure common in children’s chants around the world, and the tight imitation between the soprano and the violin solo, like a child mirroring the world around her.]

I was born in this world a weak, defenseless child, but thine angel spread his bright wings over my cradle to defend me. From then on thy love hath illumined my path, wondrously guiding me toward the light of eternity; from birth until now the generous gifts of thy providence have been marvelously showered upon me. I give thee thanks together with all who have come to know thee, who call upon thy Name:

Glory to thee for calling me to life.

Glory to thee, showing me the beauty of the universe.

Glory to thee, spreading out before me heaven and earth like the pages in a book of eternal wisdom.

Glory to thee for thine eternity in this fleeting world.

Glory to thee for thy mercies, seen and unseen.

Glory to thee through every sigh of my sorrow.

Glory to thee for every step of my life, for every moment of joy.

Glory to thee, O God, from age to age!

3. SECOND KONTAKION

“How Lovely It Is To Be Thy Guest” (chorus)

[A hymn of confidence and optimism, imbued with the joy and hopefulness of childhood along with a profound love for the world we find ourselves in. The Chant ends the movement with the certainty of a young child’s dogmatism and self-assurance. Inspired by Sacred Harp music and the painters of the American West.]

O Lord, how lovely it is to be thy guest: breeze full of scents; mountains reaching to the skies; waters like boundless mirrors, reflecting the sun’s golden rays and the scudding clouds. All of nature murmurs mysteriously, full of tender love. Birds and beasts bear the seal of thy love. Blessed is Mother Earth in her fleeting loveliness, which awakens our yearning for our eternal fatherland, in a place where, amid beauty that grows not old, the cry rings out: Alleluia!

4. SECOND IKOS

“We Have Seen the Sky” (mezzo-soprano solo)

[As we grow, we see more detail, experience deeper pleasures, and become more deliberate in our play. Complex, slow-moving polyrhythms in sparse harmonies mix with melodies from actual birdsong that I remember from my childhood. These give way to a light, dancing, mixed-meter romp through the sweet things of life.]

Thou hast brought me into this life as into an enchanted paradise. We have seen the sky like a chalice of deepest blue, where the birds sing in the azure heights. We have heard the soothing whisper of the forest and the sweetly singing music of the streams. We have tasted sweet and aromatic fruit and fragrant honey. We can live very well on thy earth. It is a pleasure to be thy guest.

Glory to thee for the feast day of life.

Glory to thee for the perfume of lily and rose.

Glory to thee for the sweet variety of berries and fruits.

Glory to thee for the sparkling silver of early-morning dew.

Glory to thee for the smile of dawn’s awakening.

Glory to thee for life in this age, a foretaste of heaven.

Glory to thee, O God, from age to age!

5. THIRD KONTAKION

“The Meadow” (soprano & alto chorus)

[A song of youthful wonder at the sheer unaccountability of beauty—the sheer unaccountability of life. It is in youth that our hearts are often first pierced by how inexplicable the world actually is. Ascending G-minor scales rise to a passionate outpouring of gratitude in a lyrical B-flat-major melody. The Chant remains audible but is present now only in fragments.]

By the power of the Holy Spirit doth each blossom breathe with fragrance: it gives forth its exquisite scent, shows its delicate color, and reveals the beauty of the Great in the tiniest of things. Praise and honor to the life-giving God who spreads out the meadows like a carpet of flowers, who crowns the fields with the gold of wheat and the blue of cornflowers, and who crowns our souls with the joy of contemplation. Let us rejoice and sing to him: Alleluia!

6. THIRD IKOS

“The Triumph of Spring” (tenor solo & semi-chorus)

[Maturity, like the spring, emerges tentatively at first and then in an onrush of exuberance and passion. Along with the intense sweetness comes an awareness of mortality and the inevitability of loss. Birdsong quotes intermingle with feverish dance rhythms. The movement ends with an ardent love song in bittersweet unstable harmonies.]

How wondrous art thou in the triumph of spring, when every creature rises and joyfully greets thee in a thousand modes. Thou art the source of life, the destroyer of death. By the light of the moon nightingales sing, and the valleys and woods lie clad in a wedding garment white as snow. All the earth is thy promised bride awaiting her incorruptible Bridegroom. If the grass of the field is clothed in this way, how gloriously shalt thou transfigure us in the future age of the resurrection! How splendid our bodies shall be, how radiant our souls!

Glory to thee, bringing up from the dark depths of the earth an endless variety of colors, tastes, and scents.

Glory to thee for the warmth and tenderness of the natural world.

Glory to thee for the thousands of creatures thou hast placed all around us.

Glory to thee for the depths of thine understanding, whose seal thou hast stamped on all the world.

Glory to thee: I reverently kiss the traces of thy invisible steps.

Glory to thee, kindling before us the clear light of eternal life.

Glory to thee for the hope of the ideal, imperishable beauty of immortality.

Glory to thee, O God, from age to age!

7. FOURTH KONTAKION

“A Living Torrent” (chorus)

[A triumphal hymn of accomplishment, of labors undertaken and fulfilled. We know we are mortal, but we also know our strength. We learn as well, in moments of fear, that we need not be alone in the world. The Chant returns to the foreground, but now as the fruit of struggle.]

How thou dost delight them that contemplate thee! How life-giving thy holy Word! Converse with thee is smoother than oil and sweeter than the honeycomb. Prayer before thee lifts up and enlivens. And then, what trembling fills the soul! How majestic nature becomes; how clearly it points to thee! Where thou art not, there is only emptiness; where thou art, the soul is filled with abundance, and there song resounds in a living torrent: Alleluia!

8. FOURTH IKOS

“Evening” (bass solo)

[Like a radiant sunset, the fading of youth brings new joys, hitherto unsuspected. Darker colors pervade this movement, reminiscent of the knowledge that even in pain there is still a rich sweetness. The flute weaves sinuously around the soloist’s lines, tantalizingly close but always just out of reach.]

When evening comes over the earth, when the peace of the night’s sleep and the silence of the spent day reign, then in the splendor of the sun’s declining rays, filtering through the clouds, I see the image of thy bridal chamber. The fire and porphyry, the gold and sapphire speak prophet-like concerning the ineffable beauty of thy dwellings, and they call out in triumph: ‘Let us go the Father.’

Glory to thee at the hushed hour of night.

Glory to thee, pouring out thy peace upon the world.

Glory to thee for the last ray of the setting sun.

Glory to thee for the rest of a grace-filled sleep.

Glory to thee for thy goodness even in the time of darkness when
all the world is hidden from our eyes.

Glory to thee for the fervent prayers offered by a trembling soul.

Glory to thee for the pledge of our reawakening to joy on that
eternal Day that knows no evening.

Glory to thee, O God, from age to age.

PART 2

9. FIFTH KONTAKION

“The Dark Storm Clouds of Life” (chorus)

[When real tragedy strikes—whether an individual, a community, or a nation—we are never ready. Even in the midst of utter chaos and terror, however, we can learn to find sources of light. This is not because the darkness isn’t real, but rather because there is no other way to survive it. A tone row built on the opening tetrachord of the Chant serves as the harmonic matrix of the movement, opening out to sparkling quintal harmonies on the words “light and peace.”]

The dark storm clouds of life bring no terror to those in whose hearts thy lamp is burning brightly. Outside is darkness and rain, the terror and howling of the storm, but in the soul, in the presence of Christ, there is light and peace—silence. The heart sings: Alleluia!

10. FIFTH IKOS

“I See Thy Heavens” (mezzo-soprano solo)

[A song to the vastness of the universe and the paltry insignificance of our own existence, things we often only begin to appreciate once we know real fear. The star-filled void is depicted in a pointillistic, minimalist texture based on inversions of the opening tetrachord of the Chant. This then gives way to an intimate jazz “scene,” suggestive of our wise—and necessary—human tendency to create warm spaces of meaning and belonging in response to existential dread.]

I see thy heavens glistening with stars. How rich thou art, how much light is thine! Eternity watches me by the rays of the distant stars. I am small, insignificant, but the Lord is with me. Thy loving right hand keeps me everywhere and always.

Glory to thee, ceaselessly watching over me.

Glory to thee for my providential meetings with other people.

Glory to thee for the love of family, for the faithfulness of friends.

Glory to thee for the meekness of the animals who serve me.

Glory to thee for the bright moments of my life.

Glory to thee for the innocent joy of the heart.

Glory to thee for the happiness of living and moving and having our being in thee.

Glory to thee, O God, from age to age.

11. SIXTH KONTAKION

“How Wonderful Thy Greatness” (chorus)

[A driving gospel/funk anthem to the power of nature. We humans have always been helpless in the face of the elements, but we also have always possessed the ability to find within these terrifying forces a conscious—and even a benevolent—presence. As we grow in wisdom and experience, we can also learn to use the awe they inspire in us as a source of self-knowledge.]

How great and how close art thou in the powerful track of the storm! How mighty thy right arm in the blinding flash of the lightning! How wonderful thy greatness! The voice of the Lord is heard over the fields; it speaks in the rustling of the trees. The voice of the Lord is in the crash of the thunder and the downpour; the voice of the Lord is upon many waters. Praise be to thee in the roar of mountains ablaze. Thou dost shake out the earth like a garment; the waves of the sea dost thou pile up to heaven. Praise be to thee, humbling the pride of man and rousing in him a cry of penitence: Alleluia!

12. SIXTH IKOS

“The Camp Dining Hall” (soprano solo & treble semi-chorus)

[When we experience the mysterious joy of true connection with the Other— of seeing deeply and deeply being seen—even the sweetest pleasures of life pale in comparison. Such moments are fleeting, though, and may happen only a few times in a person’s life. But the memory stays with us and spurs us toward further growth. The movement begins with a single exposed voice, like an isolated “I,” and then expands into a slow sarabande-esque dance as the “I” learns to move with and adapt to the “Thou.”]

When the lightning flash has lit up the camp dining hall¹, how feeble seems the light from the lantern. And thou, like the lightning, dost flash in my soul at the time of life’s most intense joys. After the brightness of thy lightning flash, how drab, how colorless, how illusory all else seems! And so my soul cleaves to thee.

Glory to thee, the furthest bound and limit of man’s dreaming.

Glory to thee for our unquenchable thirst for fellowship with God.

Glory to thee, inspiring in us dissatisfaction with earthly things.

Glory to thee, bathing us in thy subtle rays.

Glory to thee, subduing the power of the spirits of darkness and condemning every evil to naught.

Glory to thee for thy revelation, for the happiness of perceiving thee and living with thee.

Glory to thee, O God, from age to age!

13. SEVENTH KONTAKION

“In the Wondrous Blending of Sounds” (chorus & soprano solo)

[The central movement of the piece (though not of the original text) and the quiet beating heart of my musical vision. A four-bar ostinato based on the Chant undergirds a gently ornamented melody inspired by South African folk music. When humans can look beyond their differences and collaborate on creating beauty—even if only for a moment—the world can feel like a paradise.]

In the wondrous blending of sounds it is thy call we hear. In the harmony of many voices, in the sublime beauty of music, in the glory of the works of great composers, thou art there showing us the threshold of the paradise that is to come. All true beauty has the power to draw the soul towards thee, and to make it sing in ecstasy: Alleluia!

¹ It is unclear what “camp dining hall” means here to the author. Some assume that he must have had experience with a Stalinist prison camp—certainly a possibility—but the connection with “intense joys” would seem to suggest something more positive. Others have argued this is a mistranslation of the Russian and that “feasting hall” would be a more accurate rendering in English, though this term seems rather anachronistic for a 20th-century writer. I have opted to retain the current translation and to let the ambiguity stand in honor of the many who have experienced imprisonment (or enslavement) and yet have still managed to find causes for joy.

14. SEVENTH IKOS

“The Genius of the Human Mind” (baritone solo)

[The chiastic center of the original text, this movement revels in the rich capacities of human reason and the immense blessings it can bestow, so long as it is guided by love. The movement begins with an aria section in canon cancrizans (literally “crab canon,” an imitative contrapuntal form that’s essentially a palindrome) based on the Chant in retrograde inversion, with countersubjects in retrograde and normal forms. The second half is a recitative, also a palindrome, based on inversions of the Chant. The two sections are separated by a 13-beat, X-shaped transition based on the opening tetrachord of the Chant and its various inversions and retrogrades.]

Catching them up in the Holy Spirit, like the dawn thou dost break over the thought of artists and poets and the great minds of science. By the power of thy supreme knowledge they prophetically comprehend thy laws, descrying for us the depths of thy creative wisdom. Their works speak unwittingly of thee. How great art thou in thy creation! How great art thou in man!

Glory to thee, manifesting thine inconceivable power in the laws of the universe.

Glory to thee, for all nature is filled with thy laws.

Glory to thee for all thou hast revealed to us in thy mercy.

Glory to thee for all thou hast hidden from us in thy wisdom.

Glory to thee for the genius of the human mind.

Glory to thee for the dignity of man’s labor.

Glory to thee for the fiery tongues that bring inspiration.

Glory to Thee, O God, from age to age!

15. EIGHTH KONTAKION

“In Days of Sickness and Pain” (chorus)

[Illness is never welcome, but it does sometimes have the capacity to simplify our lives and help us appreciate more deeply those things that truly matter to us. A plangent viola solo sits within a heavily plodding choral texture like a voice of comfort in the midst of the relentless drudgery of disease. The melody is an unadorned minor-mode analog to the ornamented melody of Movement 13.]

How near thou art in days of sickness and pain. Thou thyself dost visit the sick; thou thyself dost stoop beside the bed, and the sufferer’s heart doth converse with thee. In the throes of sorrow and suffering thou bringest peace and unexpected consolation. Thou dost comfort; thou art the Love that tries men’s hearts and saves them. To thee we sing the song: Alleluia!

16. EIGHTH IKOS

“When in Childhood” (mezzo-soprano solo & treble semi-chorus)

[Part of maturity is remembering that we never stop being children and that we are never so strong that we don't sometimes need to ask for help. The solo line here is supported by gentle echoes from the chorus, even as the piano swirls incessantly like a host of obligations, reminding us that we always have support available to us if we can only find the humility to ask for it.]

When in childhood I called upon thee consciously for the first time, thou didst fulfill my prayer and overshadow my heart with reverent peace. At that moment I understood: thou art good, and blessed are those who turn to thee in prayer. I began to call upon thee again and again, and even now I cry out:

Glory to thee, satisfying my desires with good things.

Glory to thee, keeping vigil over me day and night.

Glory to thee, treating pain and loss with the healing passage of time.

Glory to thee, with whom there is no grief without hope, O Giver of life to all.

Glory to thee, who has made immortal all that is lofty and good and who dost promise us
that longed-for meeting with those who have died.

Glory to thee, O God, from age to age!

PART 3

17. NINTH KONTAKION

“On a Feast Day” (tenor & bass chorus)

[As we age we come to realize how dependent we are on routines and systems, even if they might sometimes be confining or oppressive. This movement celebrates the stability—and the joy—that come from powerful institutions and complex structures and the benefits they confer.]

How is it that, on a feast day, the whole of nature mysteriously smiles? How is it that a wonderful lightness is spilled out in our hearts, a lightness that cannot be compared with anything earthly, and the very air in the church and in the altar becomes luminous? This is the breathing of thy grace; this is the reflection of Tabor's light. Then heaven and earth sing thy praise: Alleluia!

18. NINTH IKOS

“I Have Seen Thy Face” (bass solo)

[In doing good for others, we find meaning. We see one another and ourselves more clearly. We see that no one is truly “other.” A bass and cello duet, punctuated at intervals by tubular bells, wanders through disjunct motifs from the Chant, then gives way to a slowly ascending 3/4 trek to “love” as the fruit of long and patient labor.]

When thou didst inspire me to serve my neighbors and didst fill my soul with humility, then did one of thy numberless rays of light fall upon my heart, making it luminous, like iron glowing in the furnace. I have seen thy face: elusive and full of mystery.

Glory to thee, transfiguring our lives with virtuous deeds.

Glory to thee, sealing ineffable pleasure in each of thy commandments.

Glory to thee, clearly abiding with us wherever the sweet scent of mercy wafts.

Glory to thee, sending us failure and misfortune that we may understand the suffering of others.

Glory to thee, making good to be its own reward within us.

Glory to thee, welcoming the impulse of the feeling of our heart.

Glory to thee, exalting love beyond all things that are in heaven or on earth.

Glory to thee, O God, from age to age!

19. TENTH KONTAKION

“Into Dust” (chorus)

[With wisdom and age comes the realization of how many things in our lives have been irretrievably lost as a result of our own mistakes. Rather than despairing, however, we can choose to take the path of forgiveness—forgiveness of ourselves, and of accepting forgiveness from others. A sparse, disjointed texture built on fragments of the Chant expands once again to an arrival on “love,” this time experienced as a gift from those we have wronged and who yet continue to love us in spite of all.]

No one can restore what has crumbled into dust, but thou canst restore a conscience turned to ashes. Thou canst restore to its former beauty a soul whose beauty is hopelessly lost. With thee, there is nothing that cannot be made right. Thou art all love. Thou art Maker and Restorer. We praise thee with the song: Alleluia!

20. TENTH IKOS

“Night” (bass solo)

[The only true barrier to love—the only total darkness—is believing that we are unworthy of love. “Pride” here is not the belief that we are better than others, but rather the belief that we are capable of rightly assessing our own inherent value and can thus deem it to be nothing. A low, brooding, self-reflective recitative opens the movement, interrupted by mocking whole-tone echoes in the woodwinds like the relentless voices of self-reproach and resentment. This then gives way to a militant, overconfident march that, in its final moments, rushes headlong into the abyss of self-annihilation.]

Thou knowest, my God, the fall of the angel Lucifer, full of pride: save me by the power of thy grace. Grant me not to fall away from thee; grant me never to doubt thee. Sharpen my hearing that I may hear thy mysterious voice every minute of my life and may call upon thee, who are everywhere present:

Glory to thee for the timing of every circumstance.

Glory to thee for what thou speakest in my heart.

Glory to thee for the command of thy mysterious voice.

Glory to thee for thy revelations that come both when I sleep and when I wake.

Glory to thee for unraveling our vain designs.

Glory to thee for shaking us free of passion’s frenzy through our experience of suffering.

Glory to thee for humbling the pride of our heart for the sake of our salvation.

Glory to thee, O God, from age to age!

21. ELEVENTH KONTAKION

“The Cold Chains of the Centuries” (soprano, alto, tenor chorus)

[Every human life is a link in an unbroken chain of lives, stretching from the dawn of time until now. For any one of us to exist depends on that chain having remained perfectly intact, in exactly the right combination of elements, through countless ages of the universe. In a very real sense, then, every single person—every living thing, every molecule, everything that ever was or will be—is absolutely essential. We are each of us the culmination of the centuries. The lower strings here gently unfold in densely interlocked patterns of six, five, four, and three notes—each cycle repeating in “centuries” of 10 iterations—as the upper voices of the choir sing a hymn of gratitude.]

Across the cold chains of the centuries, I feel the warmth of thy divine breath, I sense thy blood flowing. Part of time has already gone, but thou art present. I see thy Cross—I was the cause of it. I cast my spirit down in the dust before it. Here is the triumph of love and salvation. Here the centuries themselves cannot remain silent, singing thy praises: Alleluia!

22. ELEVENTH IKOS

“A Calm Haven in a Tortured World” (alto solo & semi-chorus)

[A “church” is many things, but it is first and foremost a gathering of people who have mutually identified a common vision, agree to work together to realize that vision, and then celebrate together what they have achieved. As my wife, Talia, explains, this sequence—common vision, common work, common feast—is at the foundation of culture. The solo voice opens with a gentle recitative, like a proposal of collective purpose, and is then joined by the choir in fluid, chant-like passages of common consent and cooperation. Both then arrive together at “heaven’s height” in a moment of shared celebration. The moment passes, however, because the cycle must continue into a new articulation of vision. Thus culture persists.]

Blessed is he who shall taste of the supper in thy kingdom, but already on earth thou hast given me part in this blessedness. How many times with thine own divine right hand has thou held out to me thy Body and thy Blood? And I, though a miserable sinner, have received the Sacred and sensed thy love: ineffable and supernatural.

Glory to thee for the incomprehensible, enlivening power of grace.

Glory to thee, raising up thy Church as a calm haven in a tortured world.

Glory to thee, regenerating us in the life-giving waters of the baptismal font.

Glory to thee, restoring to the penitent the purity of a spotless lily.

Glory to thee, the bottomless abyss of forgiveness.

Glory to thee for the cup of salvation, the bread of eternal joy.

Glory to thee, raising us to heaven’s height.

Glory to thee, O God, from age to age!

23. TWELFTH KONTAKION

“In the Faces of the Dead” (soprano & alto chorus)

[No one has any more choice about leaving this world than they do about coming into it. Echoing the music of Movement 5 and its celebration of the sheer unaccountability of life, this movement, like a soft and solemn funeral procession, presents us with the sheer unaccountability of death. It also offers us, however, the possibility of accepting death as a gift—as a thing of mysterious and awful beauty—just as we accept the gift of life. It presents the gently glimmering hope that perhaps life and death are not two things, but one.]

How often have I seen the reflection of thy glory in the faces of the dead! How resplendent they were with joy and beauty not of this earth! How ethereal, how radiant their features! This is the triumph of the felicity and peace that they obtained; by their silence they called out to thee. At the hour of my end, illumine my soul as well that it may cry out to thee: Alleluia!

24. TWELFTH IKOS

“Glory to God for All Things” (tenor solo & semi-chorus)

[The summation of all that has gone before, this movement presents us with the opportunity to respond to all the wonders of earth and sky, fire and water, life and death, with a single cry of thanksgiving. As the movement unfolds, the Chant evolves gradually into In Paradisum, a closely related plainchant from the Requiem Mass, opening a door from a life lived in gratitude to a death infused with hope. Quintal harmonies slowly build, one on top of the other, to the climax on “Glory to thee for all things,” where all 12 tones of the chromatic scale enigmatically harmonize with one another in a flood of color. The movement winds down to a simple statement of “requiem” (rest) on a G-D perfect fifth.]

What is my praise before thee? I have never heard the song of the cherubim—this is the lot of exalted souls. But I know the praises that nature sings to thee. In winter, I have contemplated how the whole earth offers thee prayer in moonlit silence, clad in its white mantle of snow, sparkling like diamonds. I have seen how the rising sun rejoices in thee, how the choirs of birds thunder forth to thy glory. I have heard the forest murmur of thee mysteriously, and the winds sing thy praise as they stir the waters. I have heard choirs of stars preach thy glory as they keep their tracks in the depths of infinite space. What then is my praise? All nature obeys thee—I do not. Yet while I live, I see thy love, and I long to thank thee, to pray, and to call upon thee:

Glory to thee, who has shown us the light.

Glory to thee, loving us with love profound, divine, and infinite.

Glory to thee, overshadowing us with light, with the host of angels and saints.

Glory to thee, Father all-holy, who hast commanded thy kingdom to be ours.

Glory to thee, Redeemer and Son, who hast shown us the way to salvation.

Glory to thee, Holy Spirit, life-giving Sun of the age to come.

Glory to thee for all things, O Trinity, divine and all-good.

Glory to thee, O God, from age to age!

Additional text from the Requiem Mass:

In paradisum deducant te angeli; in tuo adventu suscipiant te martyres, et perducant te in civitatem sanctam Jerusalem. Chorus angelorum te suscipiat, et cum Lazaro quondam paupere æternam habeas requiem.

[May the angels lead you into paradise; may the martyrs receive you at your arrival and lead you to the holy city Jerusalem. May choirs of angels receive you and with Lazarus, once (a) poor (man), may you have eternal rest.]

25. THIRTEENTH KONTAKION I FINALE

“Receive This Thanksgiving” (chorus)

[The triumphant final hymn of thanksgiving and acceptance based on the “Akathist Melody,” a simple Slavic chant traditionally used for singing an Akathist in church. Beginning in G major, the melody is passed from section to section of the chorus with the orchestra playing a soaring countermelody based on the Chant, until all come together for a final, victorious shout of “Alleluia” in E major.]

Life-giving and merciful Trinity, receive this thanksgiving for all the mercy thou hast shown toward us. Make us worthy of thy benefits, so that, multiplying the talents thou hast entrusted to us, we may enter into the eternal joy of our Lord with a shout of victory: Alleluia!

BENEDICT SHEEHAN, COMPOSER



Two-time GRAMMY® nominee and American Prize-winner Benedict Sheehan has been called “a choral conductor and composer to watch in the 21st century” (*ConcertoNet*) and “a remarkable musician and composer” (*Choral Journal*). He is artistic director and founder of

Artefact Ensemble and the GRAMMY®-nominated Saint Tikhon Choir, and Artist in Residence at Saint Tikhon’s Monastery. His works have been described as “brilliant” (*Choir & Organ*), “otherworldly” (*Boston Musical Intelligencer*), “evocative” (*Gramophone*), “extraordinary” (*Limelight*), and “simply beyond praise for excellence” (*Fanfare*). His music is published by Oxford University Press and others and has been performed by many of the world’s leading vocal ensembles, including Skylark, Conspirare, the Houston Chamber Choir, the Kansas City Chorale, the BBC Singers, and many others.

In some of his recent works, Sheehan has delved into issues of current sociopolitical significance. Among these are his 2022 setting of the African American manifesto *Credo* by W. E. B. DuBois for Conspirare and his recently completed *Ukrainian War Requiem*, written for Axios Men’s Ensemble and Pro Coro Canada in honor of those slain in the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine. Sheehan is also a person who stutters. In recent years he has become a passionate advocate for people in the arts with disabilities and speech differences, and his projects and ensembles have become known within the choral community as welcoming, inclusive, and life-affirming spaces for musicians and audiences alike. He lives and works in Pennsylvania with his wife and longtime musical collaborator, Talia Sheehan, and together they have seven daughters ranging in age from 6 to 22.

ELAINE KELLY, CONDUCTOR

"Irish conductor Elaine Kelly is a discovery, tracing the musical lines with exactitude." (*Los Angeles Times*, 2023)

Irish conductor Elaine Kelly is the Resident Conductor and Chorus Director of Irish National Opera (INO). She is an advocate for discovering contemporary operas, conducting works by Donnacha Dennehy, David Cooney, Amanda Feery, and Evangelia Rigaki and this year premiering an operatic double bill by composer Emma O'Halloran in the PROTOTYPE Festival New York (January) and with LA Opera (April). She conducted nine new works by Irish composers in INO's internationally praised *20 Shots of Opera* in 2020, praised in *The Wall Street Journal* as "an exhilarating jaunt through up-to-the-minute lyric creativity."

Most recently, she conducted *Faust* (Gounod) and performances of *Così fan tutte* (Mozart) with Irish National Opera in the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin and *Dawn to Dusk: The Moon Is Listening* (Richard Taylor) with Garsington Opera, U.K.

She has also worked on the operas *Cenerentola* (Rossini), *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (Mozart), *La Bohème* (Puccini), *Elektra* (Strauss), *Alice's Adventures Under Ground* (Barry), *Fidelio* (Beethoven), *Carmen* (Bizet), *Maria Stuarda* (Donizetti), *William Tell* (Rossini), and *Der Rosenkavalier* (Strauss) as well as a nationwide tour of *The Lighthouse* (Peter Maxwell Davies) with Irish National Opera and on *L'Elisir d'Amore* (Donizetti) with Opera National de Bordeaux.



Kelly has guest appeared with the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, RTÉ Concert Orchestra, Cork Concert Orchestra, and Cork Opera House Concert Orchestra and held the position of Music Director with the Dublin Symphony Orchestra and the University of Limerick Orchestra.

In 2014, Kelly won First prize in the inaugural ESB Feis Ceoil Orchestral Conducting Competition.

THE CHOIR OF TRINITY WALL STREET



Peerless interpreters of both early and new music, The Choir of Trinity Wall Street has redefined the realm of 21st-century vocal music, breaking new ground with artistry described as “blazing with vigour...a choir from heaven” (*The Times*, London). This premier professional ensemble can be heard live, online, and in services, recordings, and performances described as “thrilling” (*The New Yorker*), “musically top-notch” (*The Wall Street Journal*), and “simply superb” (*The New York Times*).

The Choir of Trinity Wall Street leads liturgical music at Trinity Church on Sundays and Major Feasts, and at additional services throughout the year, all of which are livestreamed, providing access to a wide audience. In 2020–2022, musical excerpts were featured weekly on Trinity’s Comfort at One series. These concerts included a partnership with Amplify Female Composers to bring more music by women composers into the sacred music canon. A typical season for the choir includes performing in Bach at One, *Compline by Candlelight*, and many other concerts and festivals throughout the year, often with NOVUS NY, the Trinity Baroque Orchestra, and the Trinity Youth Chorus. The choir anchors Trinity’s critically acclaimed performances of Handel’s *Messiah*, which *The New York Times* referred to as “the best *Messiah* in New York.”

Recent season highlights include a full production of Craig Hella Johnson’s *Considering Matthew Shepard*, Handel’s *Theodora* at Caramoor, Julia Wolfe’s *Anthracite Fields* at Carnegie Hall, Tyshawn Sorey’s *Monochromatic Light* at the Park Avenue Armory, *Notes from Ukraine* at Carnegie Hall, Bach cantatas at Salle Bourgie in Montreal, and collaborations with the Orchestra of St. Luke’s and the American Modern Opera Company.

The choir has toured extensively throughout the United States, making appearances at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Shed at Hudson Yards, the Kennedy Center, Walt Disney Concert Hall, and the PROTOTYPE Festival, with partners such as Bang on a Can All-Stars, the New York Philharmonic, and the Rolling Stones. Increasingly in demand

internationally, the choir has also performed at Paris’s Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Norway’s Stavanger Cathedral, and London’s Barbican Theatre.

In addition to the GRAMMY Award–nominated recordings *Luna Pearl Woolf: Fire and Flood* and Handel’s *Israel in Egypt*, The Choir of Trinity Wall Street has released recordings on Naxos, Musica Omnia, Pentatone, VIA Recordings, ARSIS, Avie Records, Acis, Cantaloupe Music, Decca Gold, and Philip Glass’s Orange Mountain Music. Trinity’s long-term commitment to new music has led to many collaborations with living composers including Ellen Reid, Du Yun, Trevor Weston, Paola Prestini, Luna Pearl Woolf, Ralf Yusuf Gawlick, Elena Ruehr, and Julia Wolfe, whose Pulitzer Prize–winning and GRAMMY Award–nominated work *Anthracite Fields* was recorded with the choir. Along with NOVUS NY, the choir also collaborated on and recorded two Pulitzer Prize–winning operas: Du Yun’s *Angel’s Bone* and Ellen Reid’s *prism*.

SOPRANO

Shabnam Abedi
Elizabeth Bates
Margaret Carpenter Haigh
Aine Hakamatsuka
Molly Quinn
Elena Williamson

ALTO

Timothy Parsons
Pamela Terry

TENOR

Timothy Hodges
Nickolas Karageorgiou
Stephen Sands
David Vanderwal

BASS

Steven Hrycelak
Brian Mextorf
Edmund Milly
Neil Netherly

ARTEFACT ENSEMBLE



Hailed as “seamless” and “technically flawless” (*Musical America*), Artefact Ensemble brings together leading vocal artists from New York and around the country to craft immersive experiences of human connection through the transforming power of song. Partnering with schools, community organizations, and religious institutions, Artefact Ensemble— in collaboration with its sister organization, Artefact Institute— also offers workshops, master classes, culture creation events, and cooperative music-making experiences to students, teachers of music, music ministers, and underprivileged audiences who might not otherwise have access to high-level ensemble music. The ensemble “shone” (*The New Criterion*) and “stopped time” (*Bachtrack*) in its sold-out world premiere performances of Arvo Pärt’s *O Holy Father Nicholas* at the Met Museum’s LiveArts series in 2021.

Artefact’s 2023–24 season includes a free-of-charge summer choral program for high school students in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania; the world premiere performances of Benedict Sheehan’s oratorio *Akathist* at Trinity Church Wall Street with The Choir of Trinity Wall Street, NOVUS NY, Downtown Voices, Trinity Youth Chorus, and conductor Elaine Kelly; performances of Arvo Pärt’s *Passio* with James Blachly and the Experiential Orchestra at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine; concerts and workshops in Louisville and Washington, D.C. with music by Aaron Copland, Caroline Shaw, Trevor Weston, Benedict Sheehan, and others; and a “Worship Experience” program at the Southern Regional conference of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA).

ARTEFACT ENSEMBLE STAFF
Benedict Sheehan, *Artistic Director*
Lydia Given, *Executive Director*
Enrico Lagasca, *General Manager*

SOPRANO

Chelsea Helm
Fotina Naumenko
Savannah Porter
Miriam Sheehan

ALTO

Tynan Davis
Catherine Hedberg
Helen Karloski
Talia Sheehan

TENOR

Austin Cody
Paul D’Arcy
Nate Hodgson

BASS

Stephen Jacobs
Enrico Lagasca
John Verkuilen

NOVUS NY



Trinity Church Wall Street's new music orchestra, NOVUS NY, is a key player on the contemporary music scene. These "expert and versatile musicians" (*The New Yorker*) perform new music from all corners of the repertoire, meeting "every challenge with an impressive combination of discipline and imagination" (*New York Classical Review*). The orchestra's Carnegie Hall debut, made with a formidable pairing of Ives and Ginastera, prompted *The New York Times* to declare that "adventure and ambition go hand in hand at Trinity Wall Street."

With its annual appearances at the PROTOTYPE Festival, New York's premier celebration of contemporary opera, NOVUS NY and Trinity Church Wall Street have partnered in the development of several major new works. These include Emma O'Halloran's newest opera pairing *Trade* and *Mary Motorhead*; Du Yun's *Angel's Bone*, winner of the 2017 Pulitzer Prize for Music; and Missy Mazzoli and Royce Vavrek's *Breaking the Waves*, named "Best New Opera for 2016" by the Music Critics Association of North America.

VIOLIN 1

Katie Hyun, concertmaster
Miho Segusa
Amy Schroeder
Yezu Woo
Monica Davis
Jennifer Liu

VIOLIN 2

Henry Wang, pr
Pauline Kim
Sami Merdinian
Ben Russell
Kobi Malkin

VIOLA

Michael Davis, pr
Celia Hatton
Jessica Meyer
Tanner Menees

CELLO

Ashley Bathgate, pr
Titi Ayangade
Michael Katz

BASS

Doug Balliett, pr
Nathaniel Chase

FLUTE

Melissa Baker

OBOE

Keve Wilson

CLARINET

Benjamin Fingland

BASSOON

Nik Hooks

HORN

Laura Weiner

TRUMPET

Micah Killion

PERCUSSION

Victor Caccese

PIANO

Forrest Eimold

NOVUS NY recorded and performed in the East Coast premiere of Ellen Reid and librettist Roxie Perkins's *prism*, which won the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 2019. Additional PROTOTYPE highlights include the ensemble's East Coast premiere of Reid's *Dreams of the New World*, and the world premiere of David T. Little's revised version of *Am I Born*, which was recorded with NOVUS NY and The Choir of Trinity Wall Street.

NOVUS NY has forged strong links with many of today's leading composers, collaborating with Paola Prestini, Sarah Kirkland Snider, Daniel Felsenfeld, and Jonathan Newman on Trinity's "Mass Reimaginings" commissioning project, and giving world premiere performances of Laura Schwendinger's opera *Artemisia* and Prestini's interdisciplinary *The Hubble Cantata*, which drew an open-air audience of thousands to Brooklyn's Prospect Park.

The ensemble's recent recordings include the GRAMMY® nominated *LUNA PEARL WOOLF: FIRE AND FLOOD*; Prestini's *The Hubble Cantata*; Du Yun's *Angel's Bone*; Trevor Weston's *Choral Works*; *Elena Ruehr: Averno*, the new opera *Anna Christie* by Edward Thomas; Reid's *prism*; and Philip Glass's *Symphony No. 5*.

DOWNTOWN VOICES



Praised by *The New York Times* for its “incisive, agile strength,” Downtown Voices is a semiprofessional choir made up of volunteer singers and GRAMMY®-nominated members of The Choir of Trinity Wall Street. Directed by Stephen Sands since its 2015 inception, Downtown Voices has performed works by Beethoven, Brahms, Rachmaninoff, Pärt, Webern, Ginastera, Janáček, Hailstork, MacMillan, and Glass, in addition to premiering *Spire and Shadow* by Zachary Wadsworth, commissioned for the 250th anniversary of St. Paul’s Chapel.

Downtown Voices made its Carnegie Hall debut earlier this season with the Buffalo Philharmonic under the direction of JoAnn Falletta as a feature of the Lukas Foss Centennial Celebration. Alongside The Choir of Trinity Wall Street, its members performed Foss’s *Psalms* and *Alleluia* by Foss’s teacher Randall Thompson. *New York Classical Review* described the performance by the combined choirs as “a marvel of well-supported tone, lucid diction, and smart, détaché articulation.”

Recent season highlights include a performance titled “Anthems” that featured David Lang’s *national anthems*, Ola Gjeilo’s *Dark and Luminous Night*, Jenni Brandon’s *Tonight a Stolen Moment*, and Undine Smith Moore’s *We Shall Walk Through the Valley*. Additionally, a community concert titled Holiday Favorites showcased all of Trinity’s ensembles. Compline by Candlelight: Lessons and Carols featured St. Paul’s Chapel Choir and the Trinity Youth Chorus, and the choir sang as a part of Andrea Bocelli’s *A Family Christmas* tour at Madison Square Garden.

Past performances have included Compline by Candlelight, Lux Aeterna (Requiems by Fauré and Durufé), Community Carol Sing concerts, Arvo Pärt’s *Passio*, Beethoven’s Mass in C, Dvořák’s Mass in D, and Britten’s *Hymn to St. Cecilia*. The choir has also been featured in collaborations including Orff’s *Carmina Burana* at The Ross Farm in Basking Ridge, New Jersey, Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 at the Church of St. Paul & St. Andrew, and as a part of Mark Morris Dance Group’s *L’Allegro* production. Downtown Voices can be heard on Trinity’s epic recording of Phillip Glass’s Symphony No. 5 released by Orange Mountain Music.

SOPRANO

Ximena Borges
Ciera Cope
Hannah Landes
Luana Lewis
Shelley L. Mitchell
Denise Nalibotsky
Hillarie O’Toole
Fauneil Purcell
Salonie Rego
Erin Schwab
Carrie Sheeran
Mithuna Sivaraman
Kate Theis
Izzy Williams

ALTO

Charlotte Bergmann
Emily Bergmann
Mary Kathryn Bessinger
Tiffani Burgess
Astrid Cook
Elise Crull
Celia Gavett
Landy Guzman
Grace Honohan
Nataliia Kolkova
Sarah Longstreth
Monique Pelletier
Nicole Wakabayashi

TENOR

Ian Barnes
Paul Berryman
Conor Keelan
Jesse Liu
Jeff Lunden
Gavin Mackie
Hannes Manell
Theron Smith III
Erol Tameran

BASS

Joshua Allman
James Crowell
Joel Dankwa
Ryan John
Erik Jönsson
Theodore Mankiewicz
Frank Martinez
Tom O’Toole

ACCOMPANIST

Mitchell Vines

TRINITY YOUTH CHORUS



The Trinity Youth Chorus brings together talented youth ages 5 to 18 from the five boroughs of New York City. Choristers receive individual and group training in vocal technique, music theory, sight reading, and performance skills from a group of dedicated professionals led by Melissa Attebury, Trinity's director of music education.

The choristers provide musical leadership for Sunday 9am Family services and offer concerts throughout the season, often performing with Trinity's professional ensembles including The Choir of Trinity Wall Street. Recent highlights include Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*, a fully staged production of Britten's *Noye's Fludde*, Ellen Reid's *Winter's Child* at the Prototype Festival, Ginastera's *Turbæ ad Passionem Gregorianam* and Mahler's Symphony No. 8 at Carnegie Hall,

and Britten's *War Requiem* with the Queens College Choral Society. Recording projects include Philip Glass's Symphony No. 5 and Lisa Bielawa's *My Outstretched Hand* with The San Francisco Girls Chorus and The Knights.

The Trinity Youth Chorus is featured in the films *Love Is Strange* and *Doubt*, as well as Lisa Bielawa's made-for-TV opera *Vireo*; has sung backup for Josh Groban, the Rolling Stones, and Bobby McFerrin; and has been heard on Public Radio International and CBS's *The Early Show*.

ADVANCED TREBLE CHOIR

Sofia Aguirre
Maia Blake
Alana Conley
Cass Corso

Zina DeVoe
Julia Leopando
Heaven Martinez
Kit Roy

Kaeley Simon
Leah Singh
Kaileen So
Kaitly So

Ebony Spicer
Faline Torres-Hara
Nadia Verzhbalovich

IN MEMORIAM JONATHAN RUSSIN (1937–2022)

In the summer of 2020, as the COVID-19 lockdowns were entering their fourth month and my wife, Talia, and I were beginning to wonder how we would continue supporting ourselves as musicians in the coming season, Jonathan Russin called me and told me he wanted to commission a new major work. “Something significant,” he said. He explained that the pandemic had gotten him thinking about his mortality and that he wanted to leave something behind as a lasting legacy. This from a man who, after graduating from Yale Law School in 1962, embarked on a 60-year law career that literally spanned the globe. Living with his wife, Antoinette (Toni) Stackpole, in Turkey, Spain, the Dominican Republic, Moscow, and Washington, and opening law offices across Europe, Asia, Latin America, Russia, and the Middle East, Jonathan (to quote his obituary) “advised companies, governments, and NGOs—largely in developing countries—on how to build projects, organizations, and institutions that benefited their people. His work involved designing and maintaining legal structures for housing communities, industries, cooperatives, schools, hospitals, roads, pipelines, telecom systems, and the like. His purpose: to create sustainable institutions, which energize free-market economies, which in turn strengthen democratic traditions and freely elected governments.” And, after the fall of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, Jonathan spent nearly two decades in Russia trying to help create just, humane, and democratic legal structures in the young republic, actively opposing the resurgence of authoritarianism there until his final return to Washington in 2013. If only we all could leave behind such a legacy.

And yet Jonathan, also an avid music lover and longtime choral singer, felt that a piece of new music would be a fitting mark to leave on the world. And so *Akathist* was born. A monument of gratitude for life, love, beauty, and hope, all things that he dedicated himself to more than most.

In the fall of 2021, after about two-thirds of the music had been written, Talia and I had a chance to visit Jonathan and Toni at their home in Georgetown and share some of the piece with them. Playing MIDI files from a laptop and leafing through pages of sheet music while I feverishly guided them through the unfinished score and Talia offered commentary, I was suddenly struck by the look of joy and delight on Jonathan’s face, his eyes bright with tears. I knew in that moment that he understood, more than perhaps I ever would, what it means to be grateful for everything.

The following autumn I finished the first full draft of the work and sent it to him. He responded enthusiastically, but he also told me that he hadn’t been feeling well for several months and that he was going to have an operation to try to clear things up. He said he hoped he would be recovered in time for the premiere the following year but wanted me to know that “anything could happen—I’m 82!” After an apparently successful surgery Jonathan suffered a sudden stroke and passed away from complications shortly thereafter on New Year’s Eve, 2022. A week later I stood beside his grave in Dallas, Pennsylvania, joining Toni and their four sons, Alexander, Andrew, Benjamin, and Jacob, along with a host of other family friends, to say a last goodbye.

Tonight, though, I don’t say goodbye. Tonight, to the brilliant and gentle soul who helped carry my family through the pandemic and gave me the chance to pay tribute to a life truly and deeply lived, I say thank you. May this music be worthy of your memory.

—Benedict Sheehan



RENEWAL

TRANSCENDENCE

On **November 16, at 6:30pm** in Trinity Church, NOVUS NY presents *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* (*Quartet for the End of Time*), written by French composer Olivier Messiaen while he was interned as a German prisoner of war in 1940. Pulitzer Prize winner Richard Powers will narrate the concert with excerpts based on his book *Orfeo*.

Free. Registration required. Seating is first come, first served. trinitywallstreet.org/music



For Trinity's upcoming concerts, scan the QR code or visit trinitywallstreet.org/music

TRINITY CHURCH WALL STREET MUSIC STAFF

Melissa Attebury, *Director, Music Education*

Melissa Baker, *Director, Artistic Planning*

Alcée Chriss, *Assistant Organist*

Harrison E. Joyce, *Production Manager and Music Librarian*

Peyton Marion, *Assistant Conductor, Trinity Youth Chorus*

Thomas McCargar, *Choir Administrator and Director of Compliance*

Stephen Sands, *Downtown Voices Conductor*

Erin Schwab, *Downtown Voices Manager*

Avi Stein, *Organist and Chorusmaster*

Brittany Thomas, *Artistic Administrative Assistant*

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