Program Notes

This evening’s concert is a celebration of music for voice and organ. It features works by two legendary virtuoso organists (Louis Vierne and Marcel Dupré) and two composers known best for their vocal and choral music (Benjamin Britten and Zoltán Kodály). The fifth composer, Charles Ives, spanned both worlds, an organ virtuoso whose vocal and choral writing forms the largest part of his ouvre.

**Britten Festival Te Deum, Op. 32 and Jubilate Deo**

This year marks the centenary of the birth of Benjamin Britten (1913-1976), who was born, auspiciously enough, on the feast of St. Cecelia, patron saint of musicians. Britten was a precocious musician who studied piano and viola and began to compose at an early age. This early music was substantial – Britten compiled themes he wrote as early as age 10 into his 1934 Simple Symphony. At 15, he began private study with Frank Bridge, who broadened Britten’s musical horizons and instilled in him a meticulous attention to the craft of composition. At 17, Britten entered the Royal College of Music, where he studied composition with John Ireland. This was not a felicitous pairing, for Ireland represented that English pastoral neo-Romanticism that Britten rejected. Nevertheless, he won several composition prizes and, more importantly, was able to hear his music performed.

Following graduation from the RCM, Britten found work writing scores for documentary films produced by the British Post Office. This brought him into contact with the young poet W. H. Auden, who was writing the narration, and the two became collaborators. Britten’s music was not achieving much critical success and he was becoming despondent about his prospects as a composer in pre-war England. When Auden left England for Canada in 1939, Britten followed. He settled in New York, where the vibrant musical scene proved a tonic for him. He began a period of intense musical creativity, composing such significant works as the Violin Concerto, the Sinfonia da Requiem, and the operetta Paul Bunyan. He returned to England in 1942, re-energized as a composer.

The Festival Te Deum was written in 1944 for the centenary of St. Mark’s Church, Swindon, and was premiered by the church choir. The Te Deum is an ancient Latin hymn of praise and thanksgiving that has become part of the traditional Anglican morning service. The English translation that Britten set originally appeared in the 16th century in the first Book of Common Prayer. The hymn consists of three parts – a song praising God and ending with a doxology, a middle section in praise of Jesus, and a concluding prayer of supplication – and Britten’s setting reflects those divisions. The opening organ music features block chords with a two-note appoggiatura, like a harp or psaltery accompanying a psalm, in a steady ¾ meter. The text laid over that unfolds in a long, beautiful unison melody with an ever-changing meter. Britten was an absolute master at setting English text, and the complex rhythmic pattern exactly matches the cadence of the language, allowing the text to be presented naturally and with great clarity. The rhythm of the text and the organ accompaniment rarely align, providing a tension that propels the music forward. The middle section of the work features choral fanfares echoed by the organ, interspersed with highly rhythmic, almost madrigal-like music. The final section begins
with a soprano solo, reprising the opening theme. In an interesting role reversal, there is a modulatory section over a rising bass line, an effect which is stock in trade for an organ improvisation but which here is set for the choir, while the organ has the melody in the left hand and pedal. The music reaches a climax in a glorious E-major and suddenly becomes hushed for the last line, “let me never be confounded.” In a brilliant touch, the soprano solo repeats that last line, but in a dissonant key which only resolves on the final pitch.

Britten’s 1961 Jubilate Deo is a setting of Psalm 100, and like the Festival Te Deum, was written for liturgical use, this time for St. George’s Chapel in Windsor Castle. It is a spirited, joyous work. The organ music is filled with runs and detached, staccato notes, almost like birdsong. The choral parts are presented antiphonally, with sopranos and tenors answered by the altos and basses. The lines are almost unison, but the upper voice in each pairing has a slightly more ornamented line. A middle section is more hushed and introspective, but the joyful music quickly returns and the piece ends with a brilliant “amen.”

Vierne Messe Solennelle in C-sharp minor, Op. 16

Louis Vierne (1870-1937) was born with severe cataracts that rendered him essentially blind. When he was six, he underwent an experimental procedure that restored some vision, but he could only read oversized text and wrote music at an easel using a large pad and thick crayon. He was a precocious musical talent who studied theory, piano and violin at Paris’ Institute for Blind Youth, where he met the composer and organist César Franck, who steered him toward the organ. He soon began private harmony lessons with Franck and enrolled in his organ course at the Conservatoire de Paris. When Franck was tragically killed in a traffic accident, Vierne began studying with Franck’s successor, Charles-Marie Widor. He rapidly developed into a virtuoso performer with a mastery of improvisation. He became Widor’s assistant at the Conservatoire and his deputy organist at the fashionable Church of St. Sulpice. In 1900, he won the prestigious post of organist-titulaire of Notre Dame Cathedral. While it was prestigious, the position was neither lucrative nor very musically satisfying, for the organ was in very poor repair. Vierne spent the better part of the next two decades concertizing to raise money for its restoration, with tours in England and the U.S., including an appearance in Philadelphia where he performed on the great Wanamaker Organ. Vierne never achieved an academic position at the Conservatoire, despite having served as an unpaid assistant for 19 years, but he did teach some of the most prominent organists and musicians of the next generation, including Nadia Boulanger, Marcel Dupré and Maurice Duruflé. In June 1937, Vierne was giving a recital on the now restored Notre Dame organ, assisted by his student Duruflé, when he suffered a fatal heart attack. As he collapsed, his foot struck the E pedal, and the single tone echoed throughout the cathedral, a wonderfully poetic and fitting end for a man who had devoted his life to his art.

The Messe Solennelle in C-sharp minor was written between 1898 and 1900. Vierne originally planned to set it for chorus and orchestra, but Widor persuaded him to prepare a two organ version instead. It was premiered in 1901 at St. Sulpice, with Widor and
Vierne at the church’s two organ consoles. The term *Solemn Mass* usually signifies a High Mass, in which all the parts of the Ordinary are sung, but Vierne’s *Messe Solennelle* omits the *Credo*. It was evidently intended for liturgical use, since the opening for the *Gloria* is not set but rather is meant to be intoned by the celebrant. There is a strong chromatic flavor to the *Messe Solennelle* and Vierne displays considerable harmonic freedom. While *solennelle* does not mean serious in this context, there is something foreboding in the descending line of the organ that opens the *Kyrie*. The chorus enters sequentially with a chant-like melody that outlines the C-sharp minor triad. A middle section displays more harmonic freedom before returning at last to the opening melody. The *Gloria* has a similar tripartite structure. After the opening is intoned, the organ immediately takes up an arch-like phrase, creating the feeling that the music was already in motion during the intonation. A long central section, starting with the *Domine Deus*, is more introspective, with a somewhat *misterioso* organ accompaniment. The final *Agnus Dei* is the most lyrical movement, with a long, gentle chant-like melody. An organ line like bells softly ringing and a quiet *dona nobis pacem* brings the work to a close. This evening’s performance uses an arrangement for solo organ created by the distinguished Hungarian organist and composer Zsigmond Szathmáry.

**Dupré Four Motets, Op. 9**

It was only natural that Marcel Dupré (1886-1971) would become an organist. His father was organist at St. Ouen in Rouen, which featured one of the finest organs in France, and family friends included the Conservatoire organ professor Guilmant and the organ builder Cavaillé-Coll. Dupré began lessons at an early age, first with his father and then with Guilmant, and it soon became apparent that he was a prodigy. He was appointed organist at Saint-Vivien in Rouen at age 11. He was admitted to the Conservatoire de Paris at 16, where he studied with Vierne and Widor and systematically won first-place prizes in piano, organ and fugue. He won the Prix de Rome, France’s most important composition prize, in 1912 for his secular cantata *Psyche*. Dupré maintained an incredibly active concert career, appearing in well over 2000 recitals around the world, including extensive tours of the U.S. While his technique was extraordinary, his improvisational skills were the stuff of legend. He could extemporize entire organ symphonies and fully realized fugues. His American premiere, on Philadelphia’s acclaimed Wanamaker organ, featured an astounding improvised symphony that he later turned into his *Symphonie-Passion*.

Dupré composed the *Four Motets* in 1914. *O Salutaris* is a fragment of a communion hymn written by St. Thomas Aquinas and traditionally used in the benediction service. The expansive melody and the contrasting countermelody are based loosely on the traditional chant music. Dupré sets the text in a polyphonic fashion, which is contrasted with the homophonic organ accompaniment. He deviates from the standard text twice, at the end of the verse, repeating the words “*da robur, fer auxilium*” (give us your strength, bring us your aid), a very understandable sentiment for a piece written at the beginning of World War I. Like *O Salutaris*, the *Tantum Ergo* is also a fragment of an Aquinas hymn used in the benediction service. It begins with a long, descending chromatic line in the organ, very reminiscent of the opening of the *Kyrie* in the Vierne *Messe Solennelle*, and may have been an homage to his former teacher. There is a strong contrapuntal flavor to
the organ accompaniment, which contrasts the simpler homophonic setting of the text. The *Ave Maria* is set for treble voice and organ. There is a wonderful sense of innocence in the music, with its long, lyrical vocal line gently supported by soft organ chords. *Laudate* is a setting of Psalm 117 for two organs and chorus. It begins with a majestic organ prelude that ushers in a very declamatory setting of the opening text. A middle section is more introspective, but gradually swells to a fortissimo statement of the text “the Lord’s truth endures forever,” and the motet ends with a restatement of the opening music.

**Ives Psalm 90**

Charles Ives (1874-1954) was one of the most original and remarkable composers ever. He was a precocious talent, both as a performer and composer. He was a professional organist from the age of 14 and introduced his virtuoso organ piece *Variations on America* in recital at the age of 17. Under the influence of his equally remarkable father, he developed a unique musical idiom which was totally without antecedent and which included techniques like polytonality, polyrhythm, chord clusters, unresolved dissonances, microtonal music, spatial music (ensembles placed in spatially distinct locations and often requiring separate conductors) and aleatoric music (chance music, in which tempos, rhythms and sometime pitches unfold at the discretion of the performers), all of which are now staples of contemporary music. Ives’ style is so idiosyncratic and distinctive that his music has an amazing freshness of sound, belying the fact that it was written a century ago.

Ives’ setting of Psalm 90 is one of the choral masterpieces of the 20th century. He probably began work on it in the late 1880’s or early 1890’s, trying it out on his father’s long-suffering church choir. He used it again during his brief tenure as music director of New York City’s fashionable Central Presbyterian Church in 1902. Both scores were lost, so he reconstructed (or recomposed) the work in 1923. It is Ives’ most complex choral work, and the only composition with which he was entirely satisfied. *Psalm 90* displays Ives’ wonderful gift for melody and his mastery at setting English, using complex and irregular rhythms that match the cadence of the language. He often ends phrases with a thick chord composed of thirds stacked one on top of the other, and in one memorable section, has the choir start on a unison pitch and then constantly divide, moving by whole steps until a massive 22-part whole tone chord covering three octaves is formed, and then reversing the process until the choir again reaches a unison. The organ maintains a C pedal throughout the piece, creating a center of gravity that eventually draws the music back to a quiet C major for the final four verses of the psalm. Three sets of chimes or bells and a low gong enter sequentially, repeating different patterns and rhythms, like the pealing of church bells in the distance, leaving at the end a soft, dissonant chord hovering over the C pedal.

**Kodály Laudes Organi**

Zoltán Kodály (1882-1967) grew up in rural Hungary where he had ample opportunity to become acquainted with the rich traditions of native folk music that played such an
important part in his musical life. With little formal training, he learned piano, violin, viola and cello and began writing music. When he entered Budapest University to study modern languages, he also enrolled at the Franz List Academy of Music and studied composition. It was there that he met Bela Bartók, who became a lifelong friend and collaborator. Kodály had written his doctoral thesis on the structure of Hungarian folksong, and he and Bartók began a serious effort to collect and archive Hungarian folksong. Their first collection, published in 1906, was an unexpected scholarly success and helped validate the fledgling discipline of ethnomusicology.

Kodály’s success as a composer took somewhat longer to achieve. His first major break came with the 1923 premiere of Psalmus hungaricus, an oratorio based on a 16th century Hungarian translation of Psalm 55. This was followed in 1926 by his singspiel Háry János, dealing with the tall tales recounted by a colorful folkloric character, and the orchestral suite he drew from Háry János received international acclaim. The influences on Kodály’s musical palette were quite eclectic. In addition to folksong, he was profoundly influenced by the music of Debussy (he studied for a year with Widor in Paris), but he also assimilated Renaissance polyphony, Gregorian chant, and the Classical styles of Mozart and Haydn. His music is highly rhythmic and, while fundamentally tonal, is liberally seasoned with dissonance and unusual modulations.

Kodály was also an innovator in primary music education and strove to make music an integral part of the school curriculum. Music was taught primarily through singing, solfege (interval training using the syllables do, re, mi, etc. assigned to the pitches of the scale) and other vocal exercises, and Kodály believed the instructional materials should be of the highest artistic quality. He compiled an enormous collection of folksong arrangements and exercises that form the basis of what is now known as the Kodály method.

Laudes Organi (In Praise of the Organ) was commissioned by the American Guild of Organists and premiered at its 1966 national convention. It would be the last piece that Kodály composed. Rather than a solo organ work, Kodály wrote a work for chorus and organ with a text taken from a 12th century Latin poem. While the text reads somewhat like a manual of organ instruction, it is not clear if the poem was meant to be taken literally, figuratively, or even humorously. It could just as easily refer to singing, and this ambiguity probably appealed to Kodály. The poem was annotated with note names for each syllable of the text, making this the earliest notated score, and Kodály draws on that original melody for much of the thematic material in Laudes Organi. The work opens with a long, imposing, majestic organ prelude. The text is divided into sections, each separated by an organ interlude. Kodály gives the organ prominence, explaining, “The choir sings comments to the playing of the organ…The thought was given by the old Latin words: listen to the different possibilities of sound on the organ.” The music moves through polyphonic sections with intertwining melodies and countermelodies, beautifully harmonized homophonic sections, and canons offset by a single beat, creating a kind of Ivesian dissonance. Kodály takes advantage of what opportunities for tone painting that the text provides – the text about musicians training like soldiers acquires a rather martial air, and the text about the middle voices flying nimbly through notes, jumping about
melodiously ends with complex, overlapping melismas and an unexpected cadence. The work ends with a magnificent fugue based on the original melody. Toward the end of the fugue, there is an additional verse, almost like a postscript. It memorializes Guido d’Arezzo, the 11th century monk who developed solfege and the use of hand gestures to indicate the solfege syllables, both important components of the Kodály method. He sets that text as a familiar vocal exercise, a series descending intervals all starting from the same pitch, which ripples through the texture of the fugue. A glorious choral “amen” followed by a brief but equally imposing organ postlude bring Laudes Organi to a close.

– Michael Moore

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Program Texts

Britten Festival Te Deum

We praise Thee, O God,  
We acknowledge Thee to be the Lord.  
All the earth doth worship Thee,  
The Father everlasting.  
To Thee all Angels cry aloud,  
The Heav’n and all the Pow’rs therein.  
To Thee Cherubim and Seraphim continually do cry:  
Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord God of Sabaoth!  
Heav’n and earth are full of the majesty of Thy Glory.  
The glorious company of the Apostles, praise Thee.  
The goodly fellowship of the Prophets, praise Thee.  
The noble army of Martyrs, praise Thee.  
The Holy Church thro’out all the world doth acknowledge Thee.  
The Father of an infinite majesty;  
Thine honourable, true, and only Son;  
Also the Holy Ghost, the Comforter.

Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ.  
Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.  
When Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man,  
Thou didst not abhor the Virgin’s womb.  
When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death,  
Thou didst open the Kingdom of God to all believers.  
Thou sittest at the right hand of God in the glory of the Father.  
We believe that Thou shalt come to be our judge.  
We therefore pray Thee help Thy servants  
Whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood.  
Make them to be number’d with Thy Saints in glory everlasting.

O Lord save Thy people and bless Thine heritage.
Govern them and lift them up forever.
Day by day we magnify Thee
And worship Thy name ever, world without end.
Vouchsafe O Lord to keep us this day without sin.
O Lord, have mercy upon us.
O Lord, let Thy mercy lighten upon us,
As our trust is in Thee.
O Lord, in Thee have I trusted.
Let me never be confounded.

Britten *Jubilate Deo*

O be joyful in the Lord all ye lands:
Serve the Lord with gladness
And come before his presence with a song.
Be ye sure that the Lord, he is God:
It is he that hath made us and not we ourselves.
We are his people,
We are the sheep of his pasture.
O go your way into his gates with thanksgiving,
And into his courts with praise.
Be thankful unto him
And speak good of his name.
For the Lord is gracious,
His mercy is everlasting,
And his truth endureth from generation to generation.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
And to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning is now
And ever shall be:
World without end. Amen

Vierne *Messe Solennelle*

*Kyrie*

*Kyrie eleison.*
*Christe eleison.*
*Kyrie eleison.*

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

*Gloria*
Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis.
Laudamus te, benedicimus te, adoramus te, glorificamus te.
Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.
Domine Deus, Rex cælestis, Deus Pater omnipotens.
Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe.
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.
Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram.
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis.
Quoniam tu solus sanctus, tu solus Dominus,
tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe.
Cum Sancto Spiritu in gloria Dei Patris, amen.

Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to men of good will.
We praise you, we bless you, we worship you, we glorify you.
We give you thanks for your great glory.
Lord God, heavenly king, God the Father almighty.
Lord Jesus Christ, only begotten Son.
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.
You who take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
You who take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer.
You who sit at the right hand of the father, have mercy on us.
For you alone are holy, you alone are the Lord,
You alone are the most high, Jesus Christ.
With the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father, amen.

Sanctus

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth,
Pleni sunt cæli et terra gloria tua.
Hosanna in excelsis.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

Benedictus

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.
Hosanna in excelsis.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

Agnus Dei
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.

Lamb of God, you who take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you who take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you who take away the sin of the world, grant us peace.

Dupré Four Motets

O Salutaris

O Salutaris hostia,
Quæ cœli pandis ostium,
Bella premunt hostilia,
Da robur, fer auxilium.

O saving victim,
Who opens the gates of heaven;
Hostile foes press upon us;
Give us your strength; bring us your aid.

Tantum Ergo

Tantum ergo sacramentum
Veneremur cernui:
Et antiquum documentum
Novo cedat ritui.
Præstet fides supplementum
Sensuum defectui.

Let us therefore venerate
Such a great sacrament with a bowed head;
And let the old customs
Give way to the new rite.
Let faith supply
What the senses fail to see.

Ave Maria

Ave Maria, gratia plena,
Dominus tecum.
Benedicta tu in mulieribus,
Et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesu.
Sancta Maria, Mater Dei,
Ora pro nobis peccatoribus,
Nunc et in hora mortis nostræ.
Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace,
The Lord is with you.
Blessed are you among women,
And blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
Pray for us sinners,
Now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.

Laudate

Laudate Dominum omnes gentes,  
Laudate eum omnes populi,  
Quoniam confirmata est super nos misericordia ejus,  
Et veritas Domini manet in æternum.

Praise the Lord all you nations,  
Praise him all you peoples,  
For his mercy is confirmed upon us,  
And the truth of the Lord endures forever.

Ives Psalm 90

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place  
From one generation to another.  
Before the mountains were brought forth,  
Or ever thou hadst formed the earth or the world,  
Even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.  
Thou turnest man to destruction,  
And sayest, “Return, ye children of men.”  
For a thousand years in thy sight  
Are but as yesterday when it is past,  
And as a watch in the night.  
Thou carriest them away as with a flood;  
They are as asleep;  
In the morning, they are like the grass  
Which groweth up.  
In the morning it flourisheth and groweth up;  
In the evening it is cut down, and withereth.  
For we are consumed by thine anger,  
And by thy wrath are we troubled.  
Thou hast set our iniquities before thee,  
Our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.
For all our days are passed away in thy wrath;
We spend our years as a tale that is told.
The days of our years are three score and ten;
And if by reason of strength they be four score years,
Yet is their strength labor and sorrow;
For it is soon cut off, and we fly away.
Who knoweth the pow’r of thy anger?
Even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.
So teach us to number our days,
That we may apply our hearts to wisdom.
Return, O Lord, how long?
And let it repent thee concerning thy servants.
O satisfy us early with thy mercy;
That we may rejoice and be glad all our days.
Make us glad according to the days
Wherein thou hast afflicted us,
And the years wherein we have seen evil.
Let thy work appear unto thy servants,
And thy glory unto their children.
And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us;
And establish the work of our hands upon us;
Yea, the work of our hands, establish thou it.
Amen.

Kodály Laudes Organi

Audi chorum organicum
instrumentum musicum
modernorum artificum
documentum melicum
canentem ludere amabiliter
ludentem canere laudabiliter
docens breviter;
leniter utiliter;
dulciter, humiliter.

Ideo persuadeo
hic attendere
jubeo commoneo
haec apprendere,
mentigere humiliter.

Musice! milies
te habilites
Usum exercites
tartem usites
habilem corpore
te prebeas
facilem pectore
te exhibeas

Follibus providas
bene flautes habeas.
Istare praetereas
diligenter caveas.
His prehabetis
sonum elice
doctis digitis
modum perfice
neumis placitis.

Gravis chorus succinat
qui sonorus buccinat
vox acute concinat
choro chorus succinat
diafonicum modo
et organico.

Nunc acutas moveas
nunc ad graves redeas
modo lyrico
nunc per voces medias
transvolando salias,
saltu melico
manu mobile,
delectabili, cantabili.

Tali modulo,
mellis æmulo
placens populo;
qui miratur et laetatur
et cantatur et laudatur
Deo sedula
qui regnat in sæcula.

Huivus artis præceptor
secum Deus det Guidoni
Vitam æternalem.
Fiat Amen.

Listen to the chorus of the pipes
the musical instrument
of modern artists
a paragon of melody
which plays sweetly
and sings full of praise
which speaks short of words
friendly and beneficial
pleasantly modest.

So I advise you
to stand still here
and ask you urgently
to listen to it
with humble attention.

Musician! you must behave
like a warrior.
Let your craft hear
and practise your art
show the skill
of your body
and the dignity
of your mind.

Look after the bellows in advance
to have enough air
Standing still must be avoided
watch out for that.
When you have looked after this
then let the sound hear
with nimble fingers
bring about the series of tones
which have a pleasant sound.

The heavy choir below
which makes itself heard sonorously
the high voice sounds against
choir and counterchoir
in the series of tones
after the melody of the organ.

Now you must play the high ones
now go to the low ones
as with the lute
then through the middle voices
jump like lightning
melodious
with a smooth hand
pleasing and tuneful.

With such modulating
sweet as honey
pleasing to the people
who are surprised and pleased
and sing and praise
and serve God
who rules in eternity.

To the master of this art
may God, to Guido, grant
ever eternal life.
So be it, Amen.

– translation by Helene Whitson

**Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia**

Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, one of America’s oldest musical ensembles, is performing in its 140th consecutive season. It began in 1874 as an eight-voice male chorus founded by William Wallace Gilchrist, one of the most important musical figures in nineteenth century Philadelphia. The chorus rapidly expanded, and was able to provide more than three hundred singers for the 1916 American premiere of Mahler’s *Eighth Symphony* with the Philadelphia Orchestra under the direction of Leopold Stokowski. Since then, Mendelssohn Club has earned a prestigious reputation by giving the first performance outside the Soviet Union of Shostakovich’s *Thirteenth Symphony* and the Philadelphia premieres of Brahms’ *German Requiem*, Prokofiev’s *Ivan the Terrible*, Scriabin’s *First Symphony*, Bartók’s *Cantata Profana*, and the full orchestral version of Britten’s *War Requiem*, among many others.

Under the dynamic leadership of Artistic Director Alan Harler, the 150-voice Mendelssohn Club is known for its professional productions of choral/orchestral programs, as well as performances in guest engagements with prominent area orchestras. Harler’s programs combine new or rarely heard works with more traditional works in order to enhance the presentation of each and to provide the audience with a familiar context for the new experience. Dedicated to the ongoing vitality of the choral art, Mendelssohn Club and Alan Harler have made a significant commitment to the commissioning of new choral music, and have commissioned and premiered fifty-five new works since 1990. This commitment has earned Mendelssohn Club an ASCAP/Chorus America Award for Adventurous Programming. Mendelssohn Club has also been honored with an award from the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations for “bringing the community together in song” through Harler’s multicultural concert programming.
Mendelssohn Club also explores interdisciplinary concert presentations and, in May 2005, presented the Philadelphia premiere of Richard Einhorn’s 1994 cantata *Voices of Light* with the 1928 silent film masterpiece by Carl Dreyer, *The Passion of Joan of Arc*. The November 2006 co-production of *Carmina Burana* with the Leah Stein Dance Company was the first dance collaboration in Mendelssohn Club’s recent history. This collaboration continued with the 2008 *Urban ECHO: Circle Told*, featuring an improvisational vocal score by Pauline Oliveros and choreography for the entire chorus by Stein, and *battle hymns*, with a score by David Lang and a choreography for the full chorus and nine professional dancers.

**Alan Harler, Artistic Director**

Alan Harler became Mendelssohn Club’s twelfth Music Director in 1988 and was named Artistic Director in 2009. Maestro Harler served for three decades as Laura H. Carnell Professor and Chairman of Choral Music at Temple University’s Esther Boyer College of Music. He has appeared at the Festival Casals in San Juan, Puerto Rico and the Aspen Choral Institute, and has given master classes and conducted performances in Taiwan, China and South Africa. He currently serves as a Conducting Mentor with the Conductors Guild, making himself available for consultation with young conductors internationally.


In 2004, Alan Harler received the Emanuel Kardon Foundation Award for “contributing to the vitality and excellence of the Philadelphia arts community.” In 2007, Harler received the Elaine Brown Award for Lifelong Service to Choral Music, given by the American Choral Director’s Association. In 2009, he was honored with Chorus America’s prestigious Michael Korn Founders Award for Development of the Professional Choral Art, and the Musical Fund Society of Philadelphia’s Honorary Lifetime Membership for a Distinguished Contribution to the Musical Life of Philadelphia.

**Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia**
Soprano

Ashley Elisabeth Alden
Elizabeth Benjamin
Anneliese Butler
Caitlin Butler
Rachel Castro-Diephouse
Rosetta Chapman
Lillie Claitt
Judy Ann Curtis
Jean Dowdall
Sarah Finnan
Roberta Fischer
Sarah Glaser
Claire Gober
Lindsay Jackson
Anna Juliar
Emily Grace Kane
Julianna Kelley
Lynn Kirby
Carolyn Linarello
Rebecca Marx
Ilene Meyers Miller
Sybille V. Pierre
Rebekah Reddi
Sophie Reid
Roberta L. Rote
Julia Richie Sammin
Margaret C. Satell
Lizzy Schwartz
Johanna Schweitzer
Linda A. Shashoua
Christina King Smith
Linda W. Spitko
Erin E. Swanson
Rebecca Thornburgh
Becky Tkacs
Kathryn Wadsworth
Lori Wolf

Alto

Samantha Apgar
Brenda B. Bary
Jennifer Beattie
Shahara M. Benson
Sonja Bontrager
Linda D. Carpenter
Christine Chaapel
Erin M. Donovan
Robin Eaton
Ellie Elkinton
Carol Everett
Sara Ying Gao
Karen H. Gildea
Anne F. Gold
Emily Guendelsberger
Katherine Haas
Jennifer Hay
Jean M. Hunsberger
Amber Nicole Johnson
Bobbie Konover
Allison Levine
Erin Elizabeth Levine
Susan M. Lin
Priscilla Lo
Florence Moyer
Margaret Oravetz
Terri Radway
Kelly Seymour
Jennifer Sheffield
Maria Sisto
Jean L. Sugars
Rebecca C. Test
Gladys M. Thonus
Jane Uptegrove

**Tenor**

Alan Drew Baldridge
Andrew Beck
Stephen Bennett
Frank Cassel
Mark Davidson
Josh Dearing
Joshua Edwards
Nathan P. Gibney
Brad Gragilla
Josh Hartman
Gabor Kari
John Michael Lapetina
John P. Leonard
John H. Luttenberger, III
Tom Mercer
Daniel Ojserkis
Michael T. Paz
Mark Pinzur
Bob Rodgers
Roy Schmidt
Joseph Scholl
John E. Spitko, Jr.
Evan B. Towle
AJ Walker
Cory O’Niell Walker

Bass

David G. Alpern
Steve Barsky
Evan Birnholz
Michael A. Blaakman
Stephen Cubbellotti
John Curtis
Tom Elkinton
Donald Gilchrist
Steven Glasser
Philip H. Jones
Moshe Kam
Jon Kochavi
John Kohlihas
Changho Lee
Martin Levitas
Adam J. Lynn
Nicholas S. Marini
Nicholas May
Brian Middleton
Michael Moore
Matt Nabinger
Jeffrey Nemeth
Larry Passmore
Darian Anthony Patrick
Bob Ranando
Sameer Krishna Rao
Cleveland Rea
Joel Sheffield
Daniel Simpson
David Simpson