Eastern Voices
Paul Rardin, Conductor
with Michael Stairs, Organ

March 5, 2016 | 7:30pm

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Dear Friends,

Welcome to Temple Performing Arts Center! We are delighted to have you join us for Eastern Voices, a celebration of the unique sounds of choral music in Eastern and Northern Europe. This evening you’ll hear brilliant, shimmering harmonies; haunting, soaring melodies; and ethereal, mesmerizing textures. So that you can best appreciate these qualities, we’ll venture somewhat onto a limb and present the first half of the program – which draws a geographical longitude from Finland south to Lithuania, Latvia, and Poland – without accompaniment; our voices speaking directly, we hope, to your hearts and souls!

The second half of the program completes the southward journey, ending in Hungary with the powerful Missa brevis of Zoltán Kodály. Composed while in hiding during World War II, this piece for organ and chorus is a powerful plea for peace. Kodály’s music is unique; one hears echoes of Western European music in his nods to Gregorian Chant and Renaissance polyphony, but more prominently his unique, Hungarian sense of melodic mode and harmonic twist. Originally scored for organ solo, this later version for chorus and organ retains the latter’s majesty and power, as you’ll hear in the brilliant playing of Michael Stairs.

By using the term “Eastern” loosely enough (as in Pennsylvania), we welcome to this program two brilliant settings of “Alleluia” by Philadelphia luminaries Andrea Clearfield and Jennifer Higdon. Composed as part of the “Alleluias for Alan” series honoring my esteemed predecessor Alan Harler, these pieces somehow fit in beautifully with their European counterparts for their harmonic richness and shimmering textures. Both evoke bells at different points and in different ways, providing fitting, ringing tributes to Alan. We are honored to have commissioned these pieces and to present their first performances this evening.

We thank you again for being with us, and we hope you’ll join us again for an equally beautiful program of English choral music on May 1, featuring the music of Ralph Vaughan Williams and Benjamin Britten, and featuring the magnificent “The Passing of the Year” by contemporary phenomenon Jonathan Dove.

Enjoy!

Paul Rardin
Artistic Director
Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia
Paul Rardin, Artistic Director

PROGRAM

Credo .................................................. Einojuhani Rautavaara
Mendelssohn Club Chamber Singers
Ryan Tibbetts, conductor

Exsultate Deo, omnis terra ............................ Marek Jasínski
Diffusa est gratia........................................ Vytautas Miškinis
Ave verum corpus ...................................... Imant Raminsh

Alleluia .................................................... Jennifer Higdon

First Performance

O salutaris hostia ......................................... Ēriks Ešenvalds
Erika Holland, Jennifer Wait, sopranos
Emily Sung, conductor

Alleluia .................................................... Andrea Clearfield

First Performance
Jessica Beebe, soprano

Intermission

Missa brevis .............................................. Zoltán Kodály
Introitus
Kyrie
Gloria
Credo
Sanctus
Benedictus
Agnus Dei
Ite, missa est

Erika Holland, Jennifer Wait, Betty Hohweiler, sopranos
Jennifer Beattie, alto
Ben Harbold, tenor
Jean Bernard Cerin, bass
Michael Stairs, organ
Paul Rardin, conductor
Mendelssohn Club Chorus

The use of recording or photographic equipment during this concert is strictly prohibited. Please silence audible cell phones and alarms.
Eastern Voices takes us on a musical tour from Finland, through the Baltic countries and down into Poland and Hungary. It is an area which has experienced a remarkable flowering of sacred choral music in recent decades, yet many of its composers remain relatively unknown in America. The centerpiece of our European tour is Zoltán Kodály’s magnificent Missa brevis for organ and chorus. Written while Kodály was in hiding during World War II and premiered in 1945 within earshot of the advancing Russian artillery, it is one of the great choral masterpieces of the 20th century.

We are also pleased to be presenting two premieres at this concert. During Alan Harler’s 27-year tenure as Artistic Director, he commissioned and premiered some 58 works. It is a remarkable legacy which includes Julia Wolfe’s Anthracite Fields, winner of the 2015 Pulitzer Prize in Music, five major works which have been commercially released on CD, and many others which have received multiple performances across the country. To honor Harler and continue this tradition, Maestro Rardin has commissioned four composers, each of whom has previously written for Mendelssohn Club, to compose an Alleluia dedicated to Harler. We hear two of these “Alleluias for Alan” tonight, written by distinguished composers Jennifer Higdon and Andrea Clearfield.

Einojuhani Rautavaara (b. 1928)
Credo

Einojuhani Rautavaara is one of Finland’s most distinguished and prolific composers. He studied composition at Helsinki’s Sibelius Academy, with Vincent Persichetti at Juilliard, and with Roger Sessions and Aaron Copland at Tanglewood. He has composed eight symphonies (the last of which was premiered by The Philadelphia Orchestra under Wolfgang Sawallisch), ten operas, fourteen concertos and scores of vocal and choral works. Credo was written in 1972 at a time of great stylistic experimentation in his music. It was originally conceived as a study in setting such a lengthy text, but has become one of Rautavaara’s most popular choral works. In the outer sections of the piece, Rautavaara does not set the text so much as use its percussive quality in a rapid-fire rhythmic ostinato. The contrasting middle section, beginning with the text Et incarnatus est (And He was made man), unfolds in a soft, dreamy polyphony. Rautavaara is honoring a tradition dating from the Middle Ages of setting that text musically apart from the rest of the Credo, but he also asserts his individuality by continuing Et resurrexit (And He was raised) in that same style, a text which is usually set to more brilliant and exultant music. The Credo is unified by a theme heard at the opening in the soprano line, which appears in various rhythms throughout the work.

What to Listen For

The piece begins with the tenors and basses briskly chanting on a single pitch – a sensible way for a composer to handle a text with so many words
- over which the sopranos and altos glide with a mystical, angular chant. A slower middle section finds tenors, sopranos and altos taking turns on a newer, more serene version of the opening melody, while the other voices chant individual words on static chords. The full ensemble restarts the fast tempo on the piece’s opening pitch, leading to a gallop that ends suddenly but beautifully.

Marek Jasínski (1949-2010)
*Exsultate Deo omnis terra*

Vytautas Miškinis (b. 1954)
*Diffusa est gratia*

Imant Raminsh (b. 1943)
*Ave verum corpus*

Composer, conductor and educator Marek Jasínski studied piano, composition and conducting at the Academy of Music “Ignacy Jan Paderewski” in Poznan, Poland and served on the faculty there and at the Academy of Music in Bydgoszcz for nearly 30 years. While he composed in many genres, he is best known for his choral and vocal music, which won several international awards. *Exsultate Deo omnis terra* is a paraphrase of a verse from Psalm 98 which he composed in 2002.

Lithuanian composer and choral conductor Vytautas Miškinis began his career at the age of seven as a member of the prestigious Ažuoliukas boys’ choir. After completing his studies at the Lithuanian Academy of Music in 1976, he returned to the Ažuoliukas choir as Artistic Director, a position he still holds, and has turned the ensemble into a prize-winning touring choir. He has written some 500 choral works, both secular and sacred. The text of *Diffusa est gratia*, composed in 1998, is taken from Psalm 45 and has been traditionally used as the gradual, or responsorial psalm, for masses in honor of the Virgin Mary.

The violinist and composer Imant Raminsh is the ringer in this set, born in Latvia but raised in Canada from the age of five onward. He studied violin at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, and music theory and composition at the University of Toronto and the Universität Mozarteum in Salzburg. He established the Music Department at the University of New Caledonia in British Columbia, founded and conducted a symphony orchestra, a youth symphony, chamber choir and children’s choir, all in British Columbia, and is principal second violin with the...
Okanagan Symphony. A man of many interests, he also studied biology and geology and has served as a volunteer naturalist/interpreter in provincial parks in British Columbia. *Ave verum corpus* is a Eucharistic hymn dating from the 14th century. Raminsh composed his setting in 1972.

**What to Listen For**

We might subtitle this three-piece set, which we will present without pause, “Fanfare-Reflection-Prayer.” *Exsultate Deo omnis terra* begins with a brassy fanfare, with all voices beginning in unison and fanning out to jubilant chords. The altos and sopranos then take turns on a melodic fragment over sustained men’s chords before a return of the opening section and an expansion of the playful women-men call-and-answer introduced in the opening. *Diffusa est gratia* has two principal characters: a sustained, static chord that adds dissonant notes to create haunting sounds, and an imitative middle section that evokes classical fugue. The primary character, which opens and closes the work, is the more compelling of the two; if stained glass were music, it might sound like this. *Ave verum corpus* is a charming and often poignant choral prayer. Notice how Raminsh slides his way cleverly between the distant keys of E major and G major (first at *pro homine*) and back, giving the work a chance to come “home” to the warmer, richer sounds of the opening key. The climax at *O clemens* belongs in the pantheon of great choral outpourings.

**Jennifer Hidgon (b. 1962)**

*Alleluia*

Jennifer Higdon is one of the most highly regarded American composers. Her orchestral tone poem *blue cathedral* is probably the most frequently programmed work by any living composer, having had more than 600 performances since its premiere in 2000. Her *Percussion Concerto*, co-commissioned by The Philadelphia Orchestra, won the Grammy for Best Contemporary Classical Composition in 2010, and her *Violin Concerto*, written for Hilary Hahn, won the Pulitzer Prize for Music that same year. Her opera *Cold Mountain* just received its Philadelphia premiere in February. Higdon composed *On the Death of the Righteous* for Mendelssohn Club’s 135th Anniversary Concert in 2009, a work subsequently released on the CD *Metamorphosis* on the Innova label.

Higdon has added an additional text to the “alleluias,” but unusually for her, wrote it as she composed rather than working from a written text. The text is fragmented, with words or syllables distributed among the voice parts, rippling through the music in flashes like sunlight glinting off a fast-moving stream. The highly rhythmic, syncopated music periodically gives way to more homophonic sections, where the text briefly coalesces into longer phrases before exuberantly dashing off again.
What to Listen For

This piece gives us a sense of what a chorus might sound like if it were a set of handbells. The choir intones individual syllables that make up words, and words that make up sentences, as a joyous background to charming melodic fragments. This bell-like backdrop is punctuated by homophonic (all voices singing in the same rhythm) refrains of “Let us give thanks” that seem to delight in new and interesting harmonies. “Sing this Alleluia” begins a low-to-high pealing of the bells from the basses to the sopranos, while the fragmented “Hear us sing these words for you... Alleluia” moves from high to low before a joyous final cheer.

Ēriks Ešenvalds (b. 1977)

*O salutaris hostia*

Latvian Ēriks Ešenvalds is one of the fast-rising stars in the world of choral music. He graduated from the Latvian Academy of Music in 2004 and won the first of two Great Music Awards, the most prestigious Latvian music honor, in 2005. Since then he has won several international composition prizes, been awarded a two-year fellowship to Trinity College, Cambridge, and has won two Latvian Music Record Awards, the Latvian equivalent of the Grammy, for recordings of his choral music. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* named him “The Year’s New-Composer Discovery” in 2010, and Maestro Rardin and the Temple University Concert Choir recorded a CD of his works, *Northern Lights*, on the BMC&D label. Ešenvalds composed his setting of *O salutaris hostia* in 2009. The text is taken from the last two verses of a Eucharistic poem written by St. Thomas Aquinas in 1264 for the newly created Feast of Corpus Christi.

What to Listen For

In this serene, uplifting miniature, the chorus serves as a muted canvas to the elegant, ornamented brush strokes of a floating soprano duet. It is perhaps the only piece in choral history with the indication “Con sentimento,” an indication of Ešenvalds’s fondness for accessible, sweeping music that has the capacity to tug at the listener’s heartstrings.
Andrea Clearfield (b. 1960)

Alleluia

Andrea Clearfield is an award-winning composer of music for orchestra, chorus, chamber ensemble, dance, and multimedia collaborations and whose music is widely performed and recorded. She is also the pianist in the Relâche Ensemble and the founder and host of the renowned Philadelphia Salon concert series, now celebrating its 29th year featuring contemporary, classical, jazz, electronic, dance, and world music. Clearfield has written two major works for Mendelssohn Club. The Golem Psalms, for baritone, chorus, and orchestra, was premiered in 2006 and has been released on the CD Metamorphosis on the Innova label. The cantata Tse Go La (On the threshold of this life), for double chorus, electronics and chamber orchestra, is based on field work she did in the remote Himalayan region of Lo Monthang, Nepal, collecting traditional court and folk songs. Since its premiere in 2012, it has received three additional full performances, with another three scheduled for this year alone. Clearfield has provided the following program notes for Alleluia.

Alleluia was commissioned by Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, Paul Rardin, Artistic Director, in honor of Alan Harler and his 27 years of inspired musical leadership. The 6 minute piece for a cappella chorus uses only the word “Alleluia”. It begins with two main thematic ideas that are developed throughout the work: a gentle lilting motive like a lullaby and a 4-note theme that travels throughout the voices. It was an honor to have been asked to write this work in celebration of Alan Harler. Our collaborations have been high points in my musical life. These include two large-scale cantatas commissioned by Mendelssohn Club. I am deeply grateful to Maestro Harler for his encouragement and openness in exploring different ways of creating, for his strong advocacy of new work, and for successfully building and energizing a large and enthusiastic audience for contemporary choral music. This work is a tribute to his major contribution to choral arts and to a valued friendship. With deep appreciation to the Mendelssohn Club and their excellent new leader, Paul Rardin for carrying on the torch.

What to Listen For

A lilting, two-note alto melody, lullaby-like, opens this piece with great calm, out of which a gentle descending theme emerges in the tenor voice. This four-note melody is our guide through this beautiful and multi-faceted piece, whether the “alleluia” acts as a calming prayer or bell-like cheer. It is as if Ms. Clearfield has found many different definitions of the word – perhaps the many beautiful emotions she feels toward her longtime collaborator Alan Harler – and has found the music to soothe, challenge, and rouse us all at once.
Zoltán Kodály (1882-1967)

*Missa brevis*

Zoltán Kodály grew up in rural Hungary, where he became acquainted with the rich traditions of Hungarian folk music which was to play an important part in his musical life. His parents were both amateur musicians who encouraged the young Kodály’s interest in music. He studied piano and violin, taught himself cello to make up a fourth in his father’s quartet nights, sang in the school choir, and taught himself composition by studying scores in the cathedral library. Several youthful works were performed by the school orchestra. Despite his talent, he considered music an avocation and entered Budapest University to study language, but he was soon also taking composition classes at the Hungarian Academy of Music. He combined both interests in his doctoral dissertation, *The Strophic Structure of Hungarian Folk-Songs*. In 1905 he met a kindred spirit, Béla Bartók, and the two became lifelong collaborators in the study of Hungarian folk song. They trekked into the countryside, armed with an Edison wax recorder, to collect and document authentic folk music. Their first collection, published in 1906, was an unexpected scholarly success and helped validate the fledgling discipline of ethnomusicology.

Kodály joined the faculty at the Academy as a professor of theory and composition in 1907, but his own acceptance as a composer took longer to achieve. His first major success came in 1923 with the 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*, recounting the tall tales of a colorful Hungarian folkloric character. The orchestral suite he extracted from the work drew international attention and established him as a major composer. Kodály developed an eclectic musical palette, influenced by Mozart and Haydn’s classicism, Debussy’s impressionism, Renaissance polyphony, and the modal flavors of folk song and Gregorian chant (modes are “natural” scales, the forerunners of today’s diatonic scales). Kodály’s music is highly rhythmic and, while fundamentally tonal, is liberally seasoned with dissonance and unexpected harmonic shifts.

Kodály was one of the few major musical figures to remain in Hungary during World War II. He was at the height of his popularity. 1942 was proclaimed a “Kodály Year” in honor of his 60th birthday and retirement from the Academy. In 1943 he was awarded the Hungarian Order of Merit and inducted into the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. This official recognition belied his deep antipathy for the actions of the Hungarian government, which had allied the country with Nazi Germany. When the first of three anti-Jewish laws was enacted in 1938, Kodály was one of 39 prominent non-Jewish signatories to a public letter denouncing the law. He refused to sanction the dismissal of Jewish musicians from the Academy of Music, and began quietly using his connections to help Jewish musicians and their families reach places of refuge. And he was in blatant violation of the third anti-Jewish law by refusing to divorce his wife of 30 years, Emma, who was Jewish. Eventually, he
and his wife were forced into hiding, taking refuge in the cellar of a Benedictine convent on the outskirts of Budapest, and it was there that he began reworking a 1942 organ mass into the Missa brevis. When Germany occupied Hungary in 1944 and Russia subsequently invaded, they took shelter in the basement of the opera house in Budapest, and it was there that the Missa brevis was premiered in February, 1945, in a makeshift auditorium fashioned from the first floor cloakroom.

Kodály’s Missa brevis is a virtuoso choral work, requiring great agility and vocal range. He took care that the mass would be suitable for liturgical use; he does not repeat the text, and the openings of the Gloria and Credo are written to be intoned in plainsong chant by the celebrant. Unlike Haydn’s Missa in tempore belli (Mass in a time of war), where the artillery cannonades of the timpani are present from the opening measures, the war intrudes to a surprisingly small extent in the Missa brevis. It is only at the Agnus Dei that he breaks his rule about repeating text, adding a coda in which the words dona nobis pacem (grant us peace) are repeated over and over. Kodály originally intended to end the Missa brevis as it began, with the Ite, missa est set for organ only, but finally decided to set the text instead. He makes one more deviation from strict liturgical form, appending the more insistent words da nobis pacem (give us peace) which are again repeated over and over, at first uneasily, despite a brilliant modulation by the organ to a glorious but fleeting A major chord, and finally ending quietly but hopefully.

What to Listen For

The language of this piece tells us that Kodály was interested both in asserting himself as part of the Western European classical tradition while also injecting highly distinctive melodies of his native Hungary. The opening In- troit reminds us of the work’s origin as a piece for solo organ, and displays a number of melodies as well as compositional techniques (listen for low notes onto which higher notes are added, thereby building both volume and harmonic power) to be found later in the piece. What feels like a curious harmonic ending is simply a setup for the first choral entrance in the Kyrie, a mysterious chant-like canon between the altos and basses, after which an angelic solo trio enters with its high and haunting plea to Christ for mercy before returning to the opening theme.

A brisk tenor fanfare opens the predictably joyous Gloria movement before giving way to the work’s most poignant melody (qui tollis peccata mundi – who takes away the sins of the world) as sung by the alto soloist, answered soon thereafter by tenor and bass soloists. A jubilant choral fanfare brings the movement to a brisk finish. The Credo begins with pleasant, somewhat meandering melodies in each voice part; on cue, Kodály has the choir descend over an octave on the text “he came down from heaven” before yielding to
a haunting and sublime *et incarnatus est* (and was made man). Throughout music history, this section has brought out composers’ best and most profound music as Jesus dies and is buried; likewise, when he rises again, the music turns fast and uplifting until the end of the movement, one of several powerful “amens” in the piece.

In the *Sanctus*, listen for a clear, calm, bell-like melody passed between the women’s voices before giving way to a joyous *Hosanna*; this static shout of rejoicing is accompanied by a thunderous version of the opening theme in the organ pedals. *Benedictus* also begins in calm fashion but with a more harmonically searching melody; here we may hear more tinges of Kodály’s “Hungarianisms,” which can at times sound like jazz harmonies. The movement ends, in traditional fashion, with a reprise of the *Hosanna* from the *Sanctus*.

In the *Agnus Dei*, the text *qui tollis peccata mundi* (he who takes away the sins of the world) re-appears after first being heard in the *Gloria* movement. Kodály brings back the melody from the earlier movement, with its earlier soloists but accompanied and commented upon by choir, after which the choir builds to a climactic *dona nobis pacem* – the first of several musical and textual pleas for peace. The movement concludes with a reprise of the angelic *Christe* trio and choral *Kyrie* melody over the now-familiar *dona nobis pacem*.

Perhaps to round out this powerful work with yet another wish for peace, Kodály adds a seldom-used text from the Mass, the *Ite, missa est* (go, the mass is over). Borrowing motives from the *Credo* and *Sanctus* movements, Kodály spins his most powerful music on the texts *Ite, missa est* and *Deo gratias* (thanks be to God) respectively. A sequence of organ-like chord progressions for choir on *Da nobis pacem* (give us peace) begins a climactic hammering-home of this message. The work ends with an echo of the triumphant “Amen” of the *Credo*, perhaps a sense of hope for life beyond war.

– Paul Rardin & Michael Moore
THE TEXTS

Rautavaara: Credo

I believe in one God.
The Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth,
of all things seen and unseen.
And in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
True God from true God.
Begotten, not made,
of one substance with the Father
by whom all things were made.
Who for us men
and for our salvation
came down from heaven.
And was incarnate by the Holy Spirit
of the Virgin Mary.
And was made man.
He was also crucified for us
under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered, and was buried.
And he arose on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And he shall come again with glory
to judge the living and the dead;
his reign will never end.
And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
Lord and Giver of life:
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
Who with the Father and the Son
is worshipped and glorified:
who spoke to us through the Prophets.
And I believe in one, holy, catholic
and Apostolic Church.
I confess one baptism
for the forgiveness of sins.
And I await the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Jasinski: Exultate Deo omnis terra

Exsultate Deo, omnis terra. 
Praise God, all the earth.

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who are visually impaired. Requests must be made at least one week in advance by calling
Mendelssohn Club at 215.735.9922 or visiting our website at www.mcchorus.org.
Miškinis: Diffusa est gratia

Grace is poured forth from your lips:
Therefore God has blessed you forever.
Because of your truth, humility and justice,
Your right hand shall lead us forth wondrously.
With your comeliness and beauty, set forth,
Go forth in prosperity, and reign. Alleluia.

Raminsh: Ave verum corpus

Hail, true body,
who truly suffered, sacrificed on the cross for mankind.
From whose pierced side truly flowed blood.
May it be for us a foretaste (of Heaven) in the trials of death.

O merciful, O blessed,
O sweet Son of Mary.

Ešenvalds: O salutaris hostia

O saving victim,
Who opened the gates of heaven,
Hostile foes press upon us,
Give us your strength, lend us your aid.

To the triune Lord
Be eternal glory;
Who gives everlasting life
To us in our land.
Amen.

Kodály: Missa brevis

Kyrie

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

Gloria

Glory to God in the highest.
And on earth peace to men of good will.
We praise you. We bless you.
We worship you. We glorify you.
We give thanks to you for your great glory.
Lord God, Heavenly King.
God the Father almighty.
Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son.
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.
You who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.
Credo

I believe in one God.
The Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth,
of all things seen and unseen.
And in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
True God from true God.
Begotten, not made,
of one substance with the Father
by whom all things were made.
Who for us
and for our salvation
came down from heaven.
And was incarnate by the Holy Spirit
of the Virgin Mary.
And was made man.
He was also crucified for us
under Pontius Pilate,
his reign will never end.
And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
Lord and Giver of life:
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
Who with the Father and the Son
is worshipped and glorified:
who spoke to us through the Prophets.
And I believe in one, holy, catholic
and Apostolic Church.
I confess one baptism
for the forgiveness of sins.
And I await the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.
Sanctus

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth,
Pleni sunt caeli 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, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

Ite, missa est

Ite missa est.
Deo gratias.
Da nobis pacem.
Amen.

Go, you are sent forth.
Thanks be to God.
Grant us peace.
Amen.
The Performers

Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, one of America’s longest-standing musical ensembles, is performing its 142nd season, and its inaugural season with its 13th Artistic Director, Dr. Paul Rardin. Since its founding in 1874, the chorus has carried on a rich tradition of performing the great works of the choral canon while also premiering, performing, and commissioning new choral works at the highest artistic level. The chorus has performed under the batons of world famous conductors such as Sergei Rachmaninoff, Eugene Ormandy, Claudio Abbado, Zubin Mehta, Mstislav Rostropovich, and Riccardo Muti, and has maintained a performing relationship with the Philadelphia Orchestra since its inception.

In its early history, Mendelssohn Club gave the Philadelphia premiere of Brahms’ *Ein deutsches Requiem*, American premieres of Mahler’s *Symphony No. 8* and Walton’s *Belshazzar’s Feast*, and the first performance outside of the USSR of Shostakovich’s *Symphony No. 13*. These works, many of which are now considered some of the greatest choral works ever written, were new and sometimes experimental at the time of their premieres. Mendelssohn Club continues this tradition today through commissions from luminaries such as Alberto Ginastera, Alice Parker, and Jennifer Higdon.

Mendelssohn Club has commissioned 58 works since 1990 under Artistic Director Alan Harler, and Maestro Rardin has commissioned five more for this season. Mendelssohn Club is known throughout the nation as a leader in advancing the field of choral music. Recognition for this dedication, as well as our commitment to artistic excellence, is seen through a Grammy nomination for the 1985 recording of Vincent Persichetti’s *Winter Cantata*, Mendelssohn Club receiving the 1992 and 2013 ASCAP/Chorus America Award for Adventurous Programming, and our 2014 commission, Julia Wolfe’s *Anthracite Fields*, receiving the 2015 Pulitzer Prize in Music.

Maestro Paul Rardin leads Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia and Symphony in C in his inaugural concert as Mendelssohn Club Artistic Director, “Beginnings…” at the Church of the Holy Trinity in October 2015.
In its more recent history, Mendelssohn Club has deepened its mission to take artistic risks that challenge both singers and audiences through commissioning new works that include cross-genre performance. Recent commissions such as David Lang’s *battle hymns*, Julia Wolfe’s *Anthracite Fields*, and Byron Au Yong’s *TURBINE* integrate artistic elements such as dance, ensemble choreography, projections, and even audience movement into our performances to create a fully immersive experience for our audience members.

Paul Rardin, Artistic Director

Paul Rardin is the thirteenth Artistic Director of Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia. He is also Elaine Brown Chair of Choral Music at Temple University, where he conducts the Concert Choir, teaches graduate conducting, and oversees the seven-choir program at Temple’s Boyer College of Music and Dance. Rardin previously taught at the University of Michigan and Towson University, where his choirs appeared with the Kirov Orchestra of the Mariinsky Theatre, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, and Baltimore Choral Arts Society. Under his direction the University of Michigan Men’s Glee Club performed at the 2010 American Choral Directors Central Division Convention. In 2015 the Temple University Concert Choir performed with the Philadelphia Orchestra in Bernstein’s *MASS* under the direction of Yannick Nézet-Séguin.

Rardin has served as a guest conductor for all-state choirs in fifteen states, for divisional honor choirs for the ACDA and Music Educators National Conference, and for Manhattan Concert Productions at Lincoln Center. He has presented clinics for state, regional, and national conferences of the American Choral Directors Association. His engagements for 2015-2016 include conducting the Temple University Concert Choir in conference presentations for the National Collegiate Choral Organization and ACDA Eastern Division; guest conducting the Ohio All-State chorus and PMEA District 12 chorus; and guest conducting at Carnegie Hall with Manhattan Concert Productions.

Rardin is a graduate of Williams College and the University of Michigan, where he received the M.M. in composition and the D.M.A. in conducting. He has studied conducting with Theodore Morrison, Jerry Blackstone, and Gustav Meier, and composition with Leslie Bassett, George Wilson, and Robert Suderburg. He has also participated in conducting master classes with Helmuth Rilling, Charles Bruffy, and Dale Warland. His arrangements of spirituals and folk songs are published by Santa Barbara Music Publishing, and his articles, many on the topic of contemporary music, have appeared in the ACDA publications *Choral Journal*, *Troubadour*, *Resound*, and *Bel Canto*.

Rardin lives in suburban Philadelphia with his wife, Sandy.
Michael Stairs, organ

Michael Stairs was born in Milo, Maine and vividly remembers loving the sound of a pipe organ at the two services per Sunday at his father’s church in Gardiner. Against his father’s wishes, he began studying piano in Presque Isle at age ten but paid for the first year of lessons by picking potatoes vigorously. After high school in Erie, PA, he went on to Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey, where he accompanied the 300-voice Symphonic Choir under the batons of great conductors such as Leopold Stokowski and Leonard Bernstein. He studied organ with George Markey and Alexander McCurdy and improvisation with Alec Wyton. He then went on to earn the coveted Artist’s Diploma from the Curtis Institute of Music, studying organ with Alexander McCurdy and piano with Vladimir Sokoloff.

Michael retired in June 2012 from twenty-five years of teaching Upper School Music at The Haverford School, where he was awarded the first Grace and Mahlon Buck Chair in the Performing Arts. Under his direction, The Glee Club and small vocal ensemble, The Notables, have toured twelve overseas countries. Stairs retired in January of 2008 as organist/choirmaster at Bryn Mawr’s Church of the Redeemer after serving twenty-five years in that post. He has now returned as Organist Emeritus under the leadership of Dr. Michael Diorio. Michael serves on the boards of the Friends of the Wanamaker Organ, The Garrigues Foundation and The Presser Foundation, where he chairs the Advancement Committee.

Riccardo Muti appointed Stairs as organist for the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1985. He has since been a featured soloist with this ensemble in various locations ranging from New York’s Carnegie Hall to Tokyo’s Suntory Hall. Maestros Christoph Eschenbach and Charles Dutoit featured Michael in several concerts on Verizon Hall’s Dobson organ, the largest mechanical-action concert hall pipe organ in North America. He has been a member of the Allen Artists program for several years.

His most recent album from Girard College’s magnificent Æolian organ is titled Sacred and Profane. It is a double CD produced through his new company with partners Rudy Lucente and Douglas Backman: Stentor Music Services.
Mendelssohn Club Chorus

**Soprano**
- Joan Dwyer Aspan
- Jessica Beebe
- Elizabeth Benjamin
- Caitlin Butler
- Rachel Castro-Diephouse
- Lillie Ann Claitt
- Lauren Eliza Darkes
- Roberta Fischer
- Maria V. Fox
- Teri Gemberling-Johnson*
- Olesia Gordynsky
- Kelsey Hendler
- Elizabeth Hohwieler*
- Erika Holland*
- Nancy Jantsch†
- Anna Juliar
- Juliana Kelley
- Lynn Kirby
- Carolyn Linarello
- Marlee Madora
- Natalie McQuiston
- Ilene Meyers Miller
- Tatyana Mykhaylova
- Gabrielle Rinkus
- Roberta L. Rote
- Julia Richie Sammin
- Margaret C. Satell
- Linda A. Shashoua
- Rebecca McKillip
- Thornburgh
- Kathryn Wadsworth
- Jennifer Wait*
- Emily Westlake†
- Samantha Winter**
- Laura M. Yavru-Sakuk

**Tenor**
- Andrew Beck
- Stephen Bennett
- Akash Bhatia†
- Frank Cassel
- Kyle Conner
- Mark Davidson
- Nathan P. Gibney
- Ben Harbold*
- Josh Hartman**
- Warren Hoffman
- Gabor Kari
- John Lewis**
- John H. Luttenberger, III
- Kenneth L. Medina
- Simon Mosbah
- Daniel S. Ojserkis
- Mark Pinzur†
- Roy Schmidt
- Joseph Scholl
- Regis William Wagner, IV

**Alto**
- Christy Bacon
- Amanda Bauman**
- Jennifer Beattie*
- Shahara M. Benson**
- Christine Chaapel
- Robin Eaton
- Emily Ballentine Erb
- Carol Everett
- Sara Gao
- Karen H. Gildea
- Anne F. Gold
- Katherine Haas
- Becky Hallam
- Jennifer Hay
- Bobbie Konover
- Deborah L. Laird
- Susan M. Lin
- Priscilla Lo
- Karen Mercer
- Florence Moyer
- Maggie Nice**
- Margaret Oravetz
- Kristen Phillips
- Gina Polite
- Alison Taylor Rosenblum
- Jennifer Sheffield
- Brenda Rose Simkin
- Maria Sisto
- Jean L. Sugars
- Emily Sung**
- Mary Morgan Taylor
- Becky Test
- Jane Uptegrove

**Bass**
- Andrew Beck
- Stephen Bennett
- Akash Bhatia†
- Frank Cassel
- Kyle Conner
- Mark Davidson
- Nathan P. Gibney
- Ben Harbold*
- Josh Hartman**
- Warren Hoffman
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* Mendelssohn Club Chamber Singers
† MendelSounds (singers for pre-concert talk)
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*Conductor Laureate*

Ryan Tibbetts  
*Assistant Conductor*

Donald St. Pierre  
*Rehearsal Accompanist*

Amanda Schkeeper  
*Executive Director*

Elena Grace Smith  
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*Marketing Manager and Photography*

Michael Stiles  
*Development Associate and Executive Assistant*

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Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia  
PO Box 59522, Philadelphia, PA 19102  
215.735.9922  
[www.mcchorus.org](http://www.mcchorus.org)
Mendelssohn Club thanks the following organizations, foundations and individuals whose generous support made the 2014-2015 season a success. (Gifts received between July 1, 2014 and June 30, 2015).

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Jeff and Fran Barton
Harris and Louise Clearfield
Bill and Karen Gildea
Mary Ellen Hagner
Stephanie Judson and Sandy Rea
Brian G. Kight
Rosa and Bernie Meyers
Mark and Maxine Pinzur
Sharon Torello

Virtuoso ($250-$499)
Kendra Ajuba
Thomas Moore and Richard Bost
Anthony P. Chechcia
Alvin & Lillie Claitt
Frank Cassel & Chris Clyde
Jeffrey Gelles & Sharon Gornstein
Elizabeth H. Gemmill
Kathy Haas
Lynn Kirby
Eugene Leff
Alan and Edina Lessack
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Louis Willig
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Marilyn W Ashbrook
Lisa Barrow
Peter Barsky
Bruce Bekker
Julie Thompson Bender
Elizabeth Benjamin
Linda and Raymond
Bisson
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Scott N Grayson
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Ed Grusheski
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Susan and Douglas
Heckrotte
Gayl and Herb Henze
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**ALAN HARLER NEW VENTURES FUND**  
*(donations received during the 2015-2016 season)*

The Alan Harler New Ventures Fund was established in 2007 in honor of Alan Harler’s first 20 years as Mendelssohn Club’s Artistic Director, to assure the continuation of his landmark initiatives and adventurous programming. It has supported the commissioning of Jennifer Higdon’s *On the Death of the Righteous*, David Lang’s *battle hymns*, and Rollo Dillworth’s *Rain Sequence*, as well as the commercial recording *Metamorphosis*, featuring *On the Death of the Righteous*, Andrea Clearfield’s *The Golem Psalms*, and James Primosch’s *Fire-Memory/River-Memory*.

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Joseph Carrello  
Frank Cassel & Chris Clyde  
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Michael Schaedle and Maria Sisto  
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Christina King Smith  
John and Linda Spitko  
Jeffrey Sultar

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**Duane Kight Memorial Fund**  
*Contributions given in memory of Duane Kight, devoted singer and dear friend.*  
*(donations received during the 2015-2016 season)*

John H. Luttenberger, III  
Jerry & Stephen Reid
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### Maestro’s Society

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Daniel Kochavi
Jan Krzywicki & Susan Nowicki
Jan & Bill Lutz
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