

# HARMONIA

ORCHESTRA & CHORUS



2023–2024 SEASON

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PROPHECY

[HARMONIASEATTLE.ORG](https://www.harmoniaseattle.org)

# WELCOME TO THE 2023-2024 SEASON OF HARMONIA!

This season, Harmonia presents musical works based on prophetic themes, bringing to life the stories of oracles, sorcerers and seers. Some of these works feature mythological and historical figures, such as Moses, Cassandra and the Sibylline prophet. Others represent music by those who seemed to possess the gift of prophecy themselves, such as Robert Schumann, Antonín Dvořák and George Gershwin.

From the Renaissance to the Romantics, from the Jazz Age to the present day, this is a season of exploration and discovery.

PHOTO: John Concellio



**WILLIAM WHITE**  
Music Director

The 2023-2024 season marks William White's sixth as Harmonia's music director. Maestro White is a conductor, composer, teacher, writer and performer whose musical career has spanned genres and crossed disciplines. For four seasons (2011-2015) he served as assistant conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, working closely with music director Louis Langrée and an array of guest artists, including John Adams, Philip Glass, Jennifer Higdon, Itzhak Perlman and James Conlon. A noted pedagogue, he has led some of the nation's finest youth orchestra programs, including Portland's Metropolitan Youth Symphony and the Cincinnati Symphony Youth Orchestra.

Mr. White has long-standing associations with a number of musical organizations, including the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Pierre Monteux School for Conductors and the Interlochen Academy. In addition, Mr. White maintains a significant career as a composer of music for the concert stage, theater, cinema, church, radio and film. His music—which includes a symphony, an oratorio, chamber music of all varieties, and several works intended for young audiences—has been performed throughout North America as well as in Asia and Europe. Several of his works have been recorded on the MSR Classics, Cedille and Parma record labels. Recordings of his music can be heard at [www.willcwhite.com](http://www.willcwhite.com), where he also maintains a blog and publishing business.

Mr. White earned a master's degree in conducting from Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music, studying symphonic and operatic repertoire with David Efron and Arthur Fagan. He received a Bachelor of Arts in Music from the University of Chicago, where his principal teachers were composer Easley Blackwood and conductor Barbara Schubert. In 2004, he began attending the Pierre Monteux School for Conductors under the tutelage of Michael Jinbo, later serving as the school's conducting associate, and then as its composer-in-residence.

Hailing from Bethesda, Maryland, Mr. White began his musical training as a violist. (You can keep any jokes to yourself.) He is active as a clinician, arranger and guest conductor, particularly of his own works. Mr. White is editor of *Tone Prose*, a weekly Substack newsletter about the ever-changing world of classical music. From 2020 to 2022, he produced and co-hosted a podcast, *The Classical Gabfest*, and he has dabbled in the world of educational YouTube videos with *Ask a Maestro*.

On May 3, 2018, William White was named the third music director of Orchestra Seattle and the Seattle Chamber Singers, now known as Harmonia.

# Oracles

Saturday, March 9, 2024 • 7:30 p.m.

First Free Methodist Church

**Harmonia Chorus**

**William White**, conductor



JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750)

*Der Geist hilft unsrer Schwachheit auf*, BWV 226

*Der Geist hilft unser Schwachheit auf — Der aber die Herzen forschet — Du heilige Brunst, süßer Trost*

HILDEGARD VON BINGEN (1098–1179)

*Caritas habundat*

ORLANDE DE LASSUS (c. 1532–1594)

*Prophetiae sibyllarum*

Prologue • *Sibylla Persica* • *Sibylla Libyca* • *Sibylla Delphica* • *Sibylla Cimmeria*

SALAMONE ROSSI (1570–1630)

*Al Naharot Bavel*

CYRILLUS KREEK (1889–1962)

Psalm 137

ORLANDE DE LASSUS

*Prophetiae sibyllarum*

*Sibylla Samia* • *Sibylla Cumana* • *Sibylla Hellaspontica* • *Sibylla Phrygia*

SHEILA BRISTOW (\*1969)

*Winter Solstice* — WORLD PREMIERE

ORLANDE DE LASSUS

*Prophetiae sibyllarum*

*Sibylla Europaea* • *Sibylla Tiburtina* • *Sibylla Erythraea* • *Sibylla Agrippa*

JESSICA FRENCH (\*1984)

*Hear My Voice*

**Cassie Willock**, soprano

*Please silence cell phones and other electronics, and refrain from the use of cameras and recording devices during the performance.*

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## Harmonia Orchestra and Chorus

William White, music director • George Shangrow, founder

1916 Pike Pl. Ste 12 #112, Seattle WA 98101 • 206-682-5208 • [www.harmoniaseattle.org](http://www.harmoniaseattle.org)

**Soprano**

Barb Anderson  
Ann Bridges  
Karen Dunstan  
Susanna Erber  
Kiki Hood  
Genevieve Hurlocker  
Alivia Jones  
Peggy Kurtz  
Veena Ramakrishnan  
Courtney Ross  
Cassie Van Pay  
Cassie Willock

**Alto**

Sharon Agnew  
Sheila Bristow  
Emily Crawford  
Deanna Fryhle  
Nori Heikkinen  
Pamela Ivezić  
Natalia Johnson  
Ellen Kaisse  
Jan Kinney  
Theodora Letz  
Laurie Medill  
Pamela Silimperi

**Tenor**

Juan Pablo Bustos  
Dan Charlson  
William Ekstrom  
Steve Kauffman  
Aaron Keyt  
Carson Lott  
Lyon Stewart  
Rick Thompson  
Jon White

**Bass**

Gus Blazek  
Rory Flannery  
Jack Meyer  
Jeremy Pfister Schneider  
Glenn Ramsdell  
Gabe Salmon  
Steve Tachell  
William Willaford  
Rick Wyckoff

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Stephen Provine  
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Colleen Chlastawa

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**Maestro's Prelude**

Dear Listeners,

Tonight we're really digging into the 2023–2024 season theme, "Prophecy," with our chorus taking center stage.

The choir is the ideal medium to represent the sound of "voices from the beyond," and the composers tonight have not disappointed in their sonic depictions. Our program centers around a most extraordinary work, the *Prophetiae Sibyllarum* of Orlando di Lassus. This is a collection of 12 motets (plus a prologue) in which Lassus sets to music the poetry of Jewish oracles from the Hellenic world, poems that were written during the early centuries of the first millennium (CE) but only rediscovered during the Italian Renaissance.

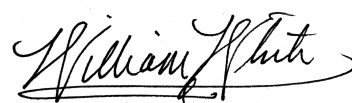
Lassus did everything he could to make these texts stand out, and his most distinctive musical tool was harmony. I can think of precious few works of Renaissance polyphony that sound anything like these motets. (The closest thing that comes to mind are the madrigals of Gesualdo, the notorious, murderous prince of Verona, from the generation following Lassus.) These pieces hardly ever get performed, so I hope you'll cherish what you hear tonight!

When I program choral concerts, one thing I always like to include is two settings of the same text, and this time around that text is Psalm 137. We'll hear it performed first in its original Hebrew, in music by the remarkable 17th-century musician Salamone Rossi, one of the few Jews in Europe who adopted and adapted the music of the surrounding Gentile society for use in the synagogue. Then we'll hear the text in a wholly different guise as set by the 20th-century Estonian composer Cyrillus Kreek.

The text of Bach's motet *Der Geist Hilft Unser Schwachheit Auf* ("The Spirit aids our weakness") speaks of a prayer given to those who don't know what to pray: "But the spirit itself pleads for us in the best way with inexpressible groans." Bach divides his performing forces into two choruses often using antiphonal (call and response) textures. This suggests the image of Choir I representing the voice of God, filling the spirits of Choir II with a divine presence. (I promise you they do better than inexpressible groans!)

Some of the earliest music that we can still decipher and perform is by the one divine oracle who actually notated her own music, Hildegard von Bingen. I never feel more like I'm communing with "the beyond" than when I hear her thousand-year-old music come to life.

We round out the program with two works of a much more recent vintage, both by Seattle-area composers. Jessica French's *Hear My Voice* uses the words of St. Teresa of Avila, an ecstatic mystic from 16th-century Spain. And we have a world premiere tonight — certainly a harbinger of the future — by Harmonia's own Renaissance woman, Sheila Bristow, written for the unusual combination of voices plus clarinet, harp and vibraphone.



## Program Notes

It was the custom in 18th-century Leipzig for the family of a prominent citizen who died to hold a memorial service on the following Sunday afternoon. Both the order of service and the music were prescribed: hymn, sermon, motet, collective prayers, blessing. **Johann Sebastian Bach** composed numerous motets for such memorial services during his time (1723–1750) as music director of Leipzig’s Thomaskirche, but only six survive. BWV 226 was written in 1729 for the funeral of 77-year-old Johann Heinrich Ernesti, a professor of poetry at the University of Leipzig and rector of the Thomasschule, where Bach was also employed. Because of Ernesti’s association with the university, his memorial was held in St. Paul’s (the university church) rather than the Thomaskirche, with the sermon (selected by Ernesti himself) taken from Paul’s Epistle to the Romans (8:26–27). Bach used this text for his motet and followed its lead for the uplifting demeanor of his music. The first section, in  $\frac{3}{8}$  time, is for double chorus, with a small group of string instruments accompanying one and a quartet of double reeds the other. This leads to a double fugue in duple time. The motet traditionally concludes with Bach’s setting of a Martin Luther text (the third stanza to the 1524 hymn “Komm, Heiliger Geist, Herre Gott”), which was likely performed at a separate juncture in the funeral service.

In *Symphonia armonie celestium revelationum* (“Symphony of the Harmony of Celestial Revelations”), **Hildegard of Bingen** — a mystic, natural scientist, artist, prophet and composer — collected 77 musical settings of lyric poems, including *Caritas habundat*, a psalm antiphon (designed to be sung before and after the singing of a psalm) that makes reference to Psalm 85:10.

**Orlande de Lassus** (or Orlando di Lasso, or any of a half dozen variations on this name he used during his life, depending on where he happened to be working at the time) was born in modern-day Belgium but at the age of 12 traveled to Mantua, then Sicily, Milan (where he began composing) and Rome, before eventually settling in Munich. He may have composed the dozen motets collectively known as *Prophetiae Sibyllarum* (“Sibylline Prophecies” or “Sibylline Oracles”) during or shortly after his time in modern-day Italy, reportedly offering them as a personal gift to his patron in Munich (Albrecht V, Duke of Bavaria). The text consists of a three-line prologue and 12 six-line motets, all in dactylic hexameter, with each motet relating a prophecy about the coming of Christ from a different sibyl (a prophetess or oracle from Ancient Greece).

**Salamone Rossi** worked for most of his adult life (from 1587 to 1628, during the late Renaissance) as the concertmaster for the court of Mantua. His surviving compositions

include five books of madrigals, innovative instrumental music, and a substantial collection of Jewish liturgical music written in the Baroque tradition. Rossi’s Hebrew setting of Psalm 137 (“By the Rivers of Babylon”) was published around 1623.

Estonian **Cyrillus Kreek** composed in a variety of genres, but is perhaps best known for his choral music. Between 1914 and 1944 he composed seven settings of various Psalms of David, later arranging four of them along with two other religious pieces for orchestra (as *Musica Sacra*). His choral treatment of Psalm 137 dates from 1938.

**Sheila Bristow** is a church musician, composer and collaborative keyboardist who serves as music director and organist for St. Barnabas Episcopal Church and as keyboardist for Harmonia. The poem on which she based her newest choral work, *Winter Solstice*, “conjures visions of our primeval ancestors sitting around the fire in the dead of winter,” she writes. “As they sit in this community, they mark the turning of the season, from the longest night of the year to the rebirth of the light. To represent this scene, I have used modern equivalents of basic musical instruments — percussion (vibraphone), plucked strings (harp), winds (clarinet) — combined with communal singing. Between each choral phrase, the clarinet repeats a folk-like melody over a harmonic pattern derived from one of the Lassus motets heard on tonight’s program.” Says conductor William White: “The choral writing is both smooth and dramatic. It’s a knock-out of a little choral piece!”

Award-winning composer **Jessica French** received a Bachelor of Music in organ performance from Indiana University Jacobs School of Music and a Master of Music in the same subject from Yale University. After moving to the Seattle area in 2011, she refocused her musical efforts toward composition, composing and arranging nearly 30 choral works during that period. *Hear My Voice* was commissioned for Epiphany Parish of Seattle (where it received its premiere on March 20, 2022) by Edie and Thomas W. Johnston to celebrate generations of musical family members. It sets “Let Nothing Disturb Thee” by St. Teresa of Avila in an English translation by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, which, the composer writes, “embod[ies] the message of peace and hope that is central to this commission. I wanted to give St. Teresa’s message even more significance, so I decided to contrast it with a text that represents our human search for hope during times of despair, and the words of Psalm 130 (“Out of the Depths”) immediately came to mind. As a result, I decided to juxtapose the two texts, with a soprano soloist singing the words of Psalm 130 representing each individual reaching out for help during times of trouble, while the choir responds with the words of St. Teresa, channeling her message of peace and calm.”

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Annie Roberts ♪ ♪  
Robin Stangland  
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Rick Thompson  
Nicole Tsong  
Thurbon Tukey ♪ ♪  
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Matthew Wyant & Bonnie Light

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JoAn Andenes  
Anonymous  
Eva Banbury  
Tom Bird  
Cheryl Blackburn  
Nancy Cella  
Dan Charlson  
Grace Chien  
Jennifer Chung & Aaron Keyt  
Rodney Combellick  
Jane Cottrell  
Genevieve Dreosch  
Bridget Dubois  
Eugene Duvernoy  
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Kenneth Johnson  
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Yuh-Pey Lin  
Kathleen Lofstedt  
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Lila Woodruff May  
Michael McGoodwin  
Judy Minninch  
Christine Moss  
Alex Nachman  
Julianne Paschkis  
Erica Pardee ♪ ♪  
Christopher Peterson  
& Carrie Stoltzman

Lynn Phillips  
Jean Provine  
Pacita Roberts  
Jeremy Rosenberg  
David & Barbara Sachi ♪ ♪  
Matthew Tracy  
Peter & Tjitske van der Meulen  
Amy Vandergon  
Karoline Vass  
Nancy White  
James Whitson & Patricia Adams  
Mark Wysoski  
Meng Xu  
Evelyn Yenson

### Andante [\$50–\$99]

Lynn Baab • Rich Baldwin  
Virginia Bear ♪  
Caitlin Bird • Pamela Cahn  
Julia Chiang • Marcia Coté  
Julan Chu • William Eckstrom  
Tyler Freeman ♪ ♪  
Byron Gega • E. Kay Heikkinen  
Penelope Koven  
Deborah Lamphere  
Anna & Jeffrey Lieblich  
Patricia Lott  
Rebecca Minich ♪ ♪  
Cynthia Murphy  
Lisa Nowakowski  
Christine Oliver • Valerie Ross  
Gabe Salmon • Pamela Shaw  
Michael Winkelhorst  
Byron & Cathy Wright  
Penelope Yonge

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### In Memoriam

Philippe-Olivier Faaland  
Jim Hattori (10)  
Barbara Kidder (2)  
Rebecca Cardiff McGoodwin  
Eugene Smith (3)  
Liesel van Cleeff

### In Honor of

David Brewer  
Kyla DeRemer ♪  
Stephen Hegg & David Reyes (2)  
Jon Lange  
Katherine McWilliams  
Megsie Siple & John Walter (2)  
William White (13)

### Matching Gifts

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## About Harmonia

Harmonia Orchestra and Chorus is a vocal-instrumental ensemble unique among Pacific Northwest musical organizations, combining a 70-member orchestra with a 55-voice chorus to perform oratorio masterworks alongside symphonic and a *cappella* repertoire, world premieres and chamber music.

Founded by George Shangrow in 1969 as the Seattle Chamber Singers, from its inception the group performed a diverse array of music—works of the Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque periods to contemporary pieces and world premieres—accompanied by an ad hoc group of instrumentalists for Bach cantatas and Handel oratorios (many of which received their first Seattle performances at SCS concerts). Over the past five decades, the ensemble has performed all of the greatest choral-orchestral masterpieces, from Beethoven's Ninth and *Missa Solemnis* to Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah* to Brahms' *German Requiem*, and Haydn's *The Creation* and *The Seasons* to Britten's *War Requiem*. Meanwhile, the orchestra, partnering with world-class soloists, has explored the symphonic repertoire, programming beloved warhorses alongside seldom-performed gems.

After George Shangrow lost his life in a car crash in 2010, the volunteer performers of Harmonia partnered with a number of distinguished guest conductors to carry on the astounding musical legacy he had created. Clinton Smith served as the ensemble's second music director, a period that saw musical growth, new partnerships and increased engagement in the community.

## Support Harmonia

As with any performing-arts organization, ticket proceeds provide only a fraction of our operating costs. In order to continue our mission of bringing great music to Seattle-area audiences, we depend on financial support from individuals, foundations and corporations. Every gift, no matter what size, enables us to perform more music and reach more people. Donors are acknowledged in our concert programs (unless they prefer to remain anonymous) and receive special benefits, including invitations to exclusive events.

Harmonia accepts gifts in many forms beyond one-time cash donations, including **financial instruments** such as stocks, properties and annuities. We also encourage donors to consider a recurring monthly contribution as part of our **Ostinato Giving Program**. Our planned-giving program, the **George Shangrow Society**, is named in honor of our founder, and accepts gifts in wills, trusts or beneficiary designations. And our **Commissioning Club** sponsors the creation of new works, including some you will hear this season.

To contribute, visit [harmoniasettle.org/support](https://harmoniasettle.org/support) or visit the lobby during intermission or after the concert.

## Land Acknowledgement

Harmonia acknowledges that our performances take place on Indigenous land: the traditional territory of Coast Salish peoples, specifically the *dx̣ẉḍəẉʔaḅš* (Duwamish), "The People of the Inside." Harmonia is proud to participate in the Duwamish Real Rent program. (Visit [realrentduwamish.org](https://realrentduwamish.org) for more information.)

### Harmonia Board of Directors

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## GLORY!

**Saturday \* October 7, 2023 \* 7:30 P.M.**

First Free Methodist Church • Seattle

**Serena Eduljee** *soprano*

Join Harmonia for a festive season opener featuring some of the most lively, colorful works in the repertoire!

**Shostakovich** *Festive Overture*

**Poulenc** *Gloria*

**Mussorgsky/orch. Ravel** *Pictures at an Exhibition*

## THE SEASONS

**Saturday \* November 11, 2023 \* 7:30 P.M.**

First Free Methodist Church • Seattle

**Natalie Ingrisano** *soprano*

**Zach Finkelstein** *tenor*

**Charles Robert Stephens** *baritone*

Haydn's last major work, *The Seasons*, is an operatic oratorio brimming over with hummable tunes and lively orchestration.

**Haydn** *The Seasons*

## HARMONIA CHAMBER PLAYERS

**Saturday \* November 25, 2023 \* 2:00 P.M.**

University Unitarian Church • Seattle

## MESSIAH

**Saturday \* December 16, 2023 \* 2:30 P.M.**

First Free Methodist Church • Seattle

**Sunday \* December 17, 2023 \* 2:30 P.M.**

Bastyr University Chapel • Kenmore

**Jocelyn Thomas** *soprano*

**Soon Cho** *mezzo-soprano*

**Namarea Randolph-Yosea** *tenor*

**Zachary Lenox** *baritone*

From the grandest of choruses to the most intimate of arias, Harmonia's *Messiah* is a must-see event for the holiday season.

**Handel** *Messiah*

## NEW PATHS

**Saturday \* February 3, 2024 \* 7:30 P.M.**

Shorewood Performing Arts Center • 17300 Fremont Ave N • Shoreline

**Stephen Provine** *violin*

When Robert and Clara Schumann first met Johannes Brahms—then just 20 years old—they immediately recognized his immense gifts and took the young man under their wing, helping him to realize his full potential. In this concert, we'll hear the results.

**Brahms** *Hungarian Dance No. 5*

**R. Schumann** *Manfred Overture*

**C. Schumann/orch. White** *Three Romances, Op. 22*

**Brahms** *Symphony No. 2*

## HARMONIA CHAMBER PLAYERS

**Saturday \* February 17, 2024 \* 2:00 P.M.**

University Unitarian Church • Seattle

## ORACLES

**Saturday \* March 9, 2024 \* 7:30 P.M.**

First Free Methodist Church • Seattle

Harmonia's chorus presents a program of music that gives voice to the voices from beyond.

**J.S. Bach** *Der Geist hilft unsrer Schwachheit auf, BWV 226*

**Lassus** *Prophetiae sibyllarum*

**Bristow** *Winter Solstice* **WORLD PREMIERE**

**French** *Hear My Voice*

**Kreek** *Psalms 137*

**Rossi** *Al Naharot Bavel*

## RHAPSODY

**Saturday \* April 6, 2024 \* 7:30 P.M.**

Shorecrest Performing Arts Center • 15343 25th Ave NE • Shoreline

**Joseph Vaz** *piano*

**Ellaina Lewis** *soprano*

**Melissa Plagemann** *mezzo-soprano*

**Brendan Tuohy** *tenor*

**Zachary Lenox** *baritone*

An all-American program with a dramatic flair, this concert promises to be one of the most lively, toe-tapping events of the season!

**L. Bernstein** *Candide Overture*

**Gershwin** *Rhapsody in Blue*

**White** *Cassandra* **WORLD PREMIERE**

## HARMONIA CHAMBER PLAYERS

**Saturday \* April 20, 2024 \* 2:00 P.M.**

University Unitarian Church • Seattle

## THE ORDERING OF MOSES

**Saturday \* May 4, 2024 \* 7:30 P.M.**

First Free Methodist Church • Seattle

**Marques L.A. Garrett** *conductor*

**The Sound of the Northwest**

**Kimberly Jones** *soprano*

**Cheryse McLeod Lewis** *mezzo-soprano*

**Namarea Randolph-Yosea** *tenor*

**Nicholas Davis** *baritone*

*The Ordering of Moses* is one of the truly great American oratorios, a richly scored work for soloists, choir and orchestra, built around African-American spirituals.

**Coleridge-Taylor** *La caprice de Nannette*

**Dvořák** *Largo* from *Symphony No. 9*

**Dett** *The Ordering of Moses* **NORTHWEST PREMIERE**

## GALA

**Friday \* May 31, 2024 \* 6:30 P.M.**

Brockey Center at South Seattle College

In this diabolical work, music director William White will display another side of his artistic personality. Join us for a scintillating performance unlike any other this season as we raise funds to propel Harmonia into its exciting future!

**Weill** *The Seven Deadly Sins*