

HARMONIA

ORCHESTRA & CHORUS



2024–2025 SEASON

PINNACLES

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WELCOME TO THE 2024–2025 SEASON OF HARMONIA!

Join Harmonia as we scale the peaks of the choral and orchestral repertoire, tackling some of the most inspiring, challenging and beloved music written over the last 300 years. From stone-cold classics (Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra and Beethoven's seventh symphony) to lesser-known delights (Handel's *Dixit Dominus* and Mendelssohn's *Die erste Walpurgisnacht*) to the uncontested Everest that is Bach's Mass in B minor, this is a season that ascends to high altitude and dances at the top of the world.

PHOTO: John Cornicello



WILLIAM WHITE
Music Director

The 2024–2025 season marks William White's seventh 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, 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.

Invention

Saturday, March 1, 2025 • 7:30 p.m.

First Free Methodist Church

Harmonia Chorus

William White, conductor



JAAKKO MÄNTYJÄRVI (*1963)

Pseudo-Yoik

MORTEN LAURIDSEN (*1943)

“Quando son più lontan” from Madrigali

ERIC WHITACRE (*1970)

Leonardo Dreams of His Flying Machine

MARQUES L.A. GARRETT (*1984)

The Lesson

R. NATHANIEL DETT (1882–1943) / ED. MARQUES L.A. GARRETT

O Holy Lord

KEN BURTON (*1970)

A Prayer

CAROL SAMS (*1945)

“Stone” from The Earthmakers

AARON KEYT (*1964)

Nizina — WORLD PREMIERE

SHEILA BRISTOW (*1969)

At harbor, waiting for wind — WORLD PREMIERE

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750)

“Confiteor” from Mass in B minor, BWV 232

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

Refreshments will be available in the Fine Center following the concert.

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

Soprano

Barb Anderson
Ann Bridges
Sheila Bristow
Karen Dunstan
Susanna Erber
Beth Fineberg
Peggy Hudson
Alivia Jones
Peggy Kurtz §
Kyla Roberts
Courtney Ross
Ananya Saxena
Nancy Shasteen
Cassie Van Pay
Jennylynn Vidas^ω

Alto

Sharon Agnew
Elyse Christensen
Anjali Chudasama^ω
Jennifer Chung
Emily Crawford
Deanna Fryhle
Pamela Ivezić
Natalia Johnson
Ellen Kaisse
Jan Kinney
Theodora Letz §
Esther Ranjbar

§ section leader

^ω Whitacre soloist

Tenor

Dan Charlson §
Sixing Chen
William Ekstrom
Steve Kauffman
Aaron Keyt
Lincoln Klopfenstein
Geoffrey Lambeth
Lyon Stewart
Rick Thompson
Jon White

Bass

Stephen Carl
Scott Fikse^ω
Rory Flannery
Rabi Lahiri
Jeremy Pfister Schneider
Kevin Read
Steve Tachell
William Willaford §
Rick Wyckoff

Keyboard

Sheila Bristow

Cello

Katie Sauter Messick
Matthew Wyant

Percussion

Sheila Bristow
Steve Kauffman
William White

Maestro's Prelude

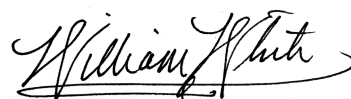
Welcome to this evening's program of great, new (mostly), American (mostly) choral music.

We're opening with a high-energy Finnish romp, but then we'll attack our purpose head-on with a set that presents works by the two composers who wrought a sort of "Marshmallow Revolution" on American choral music between 1980 and 2000: Morten Lauridsen and Eric Whitacre. Lauridsen has created music of radiant beauty that has proven so popular that all contemporary American choral composers have had to contend with it in one way or another. His music may tend a tad towards the over-gooey for some folks, but not the piece we'll perform this evening: an Italian madrigal that shows Lauridsen's refined craftsmanship and careful handling of dissonance. The exact same can be said for Eric Whitacre's *Leonardo Dreams of His Flying Machine*. You'll hear the clear influence of Lauridsen's madrigal in Whitacre's work, but you'll also hear his use of expanded vocal techniques for which he is so rightly renowned.

Our next set features music from another, more traditional strain of American choral writing. I selected these works because I wished to live a while longer in the reverberations from the performance we mounted last season of R. Nathaniel Dett's masterpiece, *The Ordering of Moses*, conducted by my friend and colleague Marques L.A. Garrett. Dr. Garrett is a Dett scholar, so for this concert I wished to pair his music with Dett's and see what audible connections we could draw. As a cherry on top, I had to include Ken Burton's *A Prayer*, a piece that I first learned about when Marques recommended it to me. Ken Burton is, admittedly, a British composer, but this piece's luscious, soulful harmonies are clearly in conversation with American styles.

For our final set, we're performing the music of three local composers — and some of it is literally hot off the presses! Not Kia Sam's "Stone," though, which comes from *The Earthmakers*, a major oratorio that she wrote in the 1980s. Harmonia has performed this work five times, most recently in 2019 under my own baton, and I am convinced that it is one of the great works of the 20th century. "Stone" is an *a cappella* memento from that piece and I'm glad to keep it as a part of our active repertoire. As for the two new pieces — Sheila Bristow's *At harbor, waiting for wind* and Aaron Keyt's and Jennifer Chung's *Nizina* — it makes me so happy and honored that we have such great talent residing in our own ensembles, and I very much look forward to bringing these pieces to life tonight.

Our concert ends on a tantalizing note (engineered to make you rush to our web site and purchase a ticket for our next concert): the great and glorious Mass in B minor by Johann Sebastian Bach. Admittedly, this is an unusual way to end a program, but I'm willing to chance it so that you're maximally primed for this grandiose work come the month's end.



We'd like to hear from you!

Let Harmonia know what you think about your experience at this concert (or share anything else you might have on your mind about our performances). Simply scan this QR code:



or navigate to:

www.harmoniaseattle.org/survey

Program Notes

The Finnish translator and composer **Jaakko Mäntyjärvi**, who has published more than 150 choral works, describes himself as “an eclectic traditionalist.” His 1994 *Pseudo-Yoik* for 11-part chorus “has nothing to do with the genuine traditional Lappish or Sámi *yoik*, and should thus be considered to have the same degree of authenticity as local color in *bel canto* opera. . . . I would prefer to describe this piece as an impression of a stereotype — the stereotype that most Finns associate with Lapland and its people. The text exists merely to give form to the music and is meaningless.”

A native of Colfax, Washington, and a resident of Waldron Island in the San Juans, **Morten Lauridsen** served as a professor of composition at the University of Southern California for 52 years until his retirement in 2019. His 1987 choral cycle *Madrigali: Six “Fire Songs” on Italian Renaissance Poems* (deemed to be “stunningly crafted” by the *Los Angeles Times*) was inspired by the “choral masterpieces of the High Renaissance, especially the sacred works of Josquin and Palestrina, and the secular madrigals of Monteverdi and Gesualdo. . . . These settings are passionate, earthy, dramatic — red wine music.” The second of these, “Quando son più lontano,” sets a text from a madrigal by a 16th-century papal singer, Yvo Barry.

Leonardo da Vinci’s sketches of various “flying machines,” based on his studies of birds in flight, inspired American composer **Eric Whitacre** to collaborate with lyricist Charles Anthony Silvestri on a piece for chorus (and, briefly, percussion) to fulfill a prestigious Raymond C. Brock Commission from the American Choral Directors Association that premiered in San Antonio on March 14, 2001, with the composer conducting the Kansas City Chorale. Whitacre writes: “We started with a simple concept: what would it sound like if Leonardo da Vinci were dreaming? And more specifically, what kind of music would fill the mind of such a genius? The drama would tell the story of Leonardo being tormented by the calling of the air, tortured to such degree that his only recourse was to solve the riddle and figure out how to fly. We approached the piece as if we were writing an *opera breve*. Charles (Tony to his friends) would supply me with draft after draft of revised ‘libretti,’ and I in turn would show him the musical fragments I had written. Tony would then begin to mold the texts into beautiful phrases and gestures as if he were a Renaissance poet, and I constantly refined my music to match the ancient, elegant style of his words. I think in the end we achieved a fascinating balance, an exotic hybrid of old and new.”

A Virginia native, **Marques L.A. Garrett** is currently Associate Professor of Choral Studies at the University of North Texas. An avid composer of choral and solo-vocal music, his compositions have been performed to acclaim by all-state, collegiate and professional choirs. The text of *The Lesson* comes from a poem by Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872–1906), the son of emancipated American slaves. “As an educator,” says Garrett, “I feel that a lesson is about ensuring that repetition is present to aid in remembering. This

is why there are many similarities between the voices. Musically, the goal is that the audience will find some familiarity and potentially learn the song even after one listen. The joy of writing this song was that it practically sang itself, which made the composing process easier.”

The Canadian-born, American-educated **R. Nathaniel Dett** “was a Black nationalistic composer, educator, conductor, pianist, essayist and poet who helped to change the impressions people had about Black music during the early 20th century,” writes Marques Garrett. “Dett intentionally used Black folk music as the source material for anthems and motets. His intention was not to improve the music. He simply wanted to find other ways to preserve the music and create songs for use in worship services.”

British composer, conductor, keyboardist, singer and television judge **Ken Burton** composed *A Prayer* to a text by Paul Laurence Dunbar for the Jason Max Ferdinand Singers, who premiered it in London on March 28, 2021. Burton characterizes his work as “like a reflective evening hymn in its use of a consistent, rhythmically simple melody,” requiring sounds ranging from “the Middle-Ages *organum* style” to “a contemporary vocal approach.”

Carol Sams’ 1987 oratorio, *The Earthmakers*, does not draw upon “the version of Creation as told in the Bible, or any one creation story,” she says, “but all kinds of creation myths from all over the world. The third myth is the story of Na Areau the Elder, who makes a toy for his son, which turns out to be the world. But in order for the son to play with his toy, he must open the world, which is like a rock. Here an *a cappella* chorus interrupts the myth narrative, the intimacy of the unaccompanied voices comparing the discovery of a new world with self-discovery.”

“The Nizina (nih-ZEE-nuh) River is a tributary of the Chitina,” explains **Aaron Keyt**, “which in turn is a tributary of the Copper River. These flow through Wrangell–St. Elias National Park in Alaska. In 2017, my wife, Jennifer Chung, rafted these rivers as part of the Riversong Program, through the Wrangell Mountain Center. I made the same trip through the same program the following year. Jennifer wrote the text as a birthday present for me in 2019, intended for choral setting.” An invitation from William White “to write something for Harmonia was one impetus for my finally setting Jennifer’s text. Another was the passing of my mother, at age 93, in February 2024.” Scored for two cellos and chorus, *Nizina* “is very much an elegy for her.”

“Tacoma’s Fireman’s Park includes a dramatic art installation, created by the firm Rotator Creative as part of the Port of Tacoma’s centennial,” writes **Sheila Bristow** of her newest work. “*Swell* is constructed of steel panels shaped like a ship’s bow and embedded with art and poetry about the region’s history. In *At harbor, waiting for wind*, I’ve gathered several lines of the text and woven them together with varied musical styles that may evoke memories of calm sunsets, turbulent sea crossings — or cinematic romance.”

The “Confiteor” from **Johann Sebastian Bach’s** Mass in B minor takes the form of a five-part chorale fantasia featuring imitative counterpoint.

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Eugene Smith (3)
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In Honor of

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Kyla DeRemer ♪
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Gregor Nitsche (5)
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Megsie Siple & John Walter (3)
William White (14)

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About Harmonia

Harmonia Orchestra and Chorus is a vocal-instrumental ensemble unique among Pacific Northwest musical organizations, combining a 75-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 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 harmoniasattle.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 dx̣w̓dəw̓ʔabš (Duwamish), "The People of the Inside." Harmonia is proud to participate in the Duwamish Real Rent program. (Visit realrentduwamish.org for more information.)

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SALVATION

Saturday * October 5, 2024 * 7:30 P.M.

Shorecrest Performing Arts Center • Shoreline

Harmonia Orchestra & Chorus

Cassandra Willock *soprano*

Béla Bartók composed his final masterpiece in poor health, yet he produced a work of striking power that calls upon every musician to display virtuoso talents. The Harmonia Chorus takes the lead in Samuel Barber's *Prayers of Kierkegaard*, which draws on choral traditions from several styles and centuries. Grażyna Bacewicz's exultant overture, composed in 1943 amid the terrors of WWII, opens the program.

Grażyna Bacewicz Overture

Samuel Barber *Prayers of Kierkegaard*

Béla Bartók Concerto for Orchestra

MAJESTY

Saturday * November 9, 2024 * 7:30 P.M.

First Free Methodist Church • Seattle

Harmonia Orchestra & Chorus

This program of beloved favorites presents two aspects of Handel's art—the majestic and the groovy—side by side, followed by Beethoven's Seventh, a work in which he captured the majesty and the grooviness of his favorite composer (Handel) in a symphony so compelling that it draws its listeners along as if they were reading a page-turning novel.

George Frideric Handel *Zadok the Priest*

George Frideric Handel *Dixit Dominus*

Ludwig van Beethoven Symphony No. 7

HARMONIA CHAMBER PLAYERS

Saturday * November 23, 2024 * 2:00 P.M.

University Unitarian Church • Seattle

MESSIAH

Saturday * December 14, 2024 * 2:30 P.M.

First Free Methodist Church • Seattle

Sunday * December 15, 2024 * 2:30 P.M.

Bastyr University Chapel • Kenmore

Harmonia Orchestra & Chorus

Ellaina Lewis *soprano* **Soon Cho** *mezzo-soprano*

Andrew Etherington *tenor* **José Rubio** *baritone*

Handel's *Messiah* is a revered institution—in Harmonia's hands, it's a party. Dueling harpsichords, vocal theatrics and a maximalist approach to every bar have set Harmonia's interpretation of this score apart for so many years. You won't hear a *Messiah* with such dash and flair anywhere else.

Handel *Messiah*

INNOCENCE

Saturday * February 8, 2025 * 7:30 P.M.

Northshore Concert Hall • Kenmore

Harmonia Orchestra

Katherine Goforth *tenor*

Gustav Mahler was so enchanted by *The Boy's Magic Horn*, a collection of Romantic German folk poems, that he set 14 of them for voice and orchestra. The innocence of childhood in these songs stands in contrast to the innocence of a guileless artist, Dmitri Shostakovich, whose symphonies were deeply influenced by those of Mahler. Shostakovich's multi-layered fifth symphony served as a form of atonement to the Soviet government, which had found him guilty of artistic sins.

Carl Maria von Weber Overture to *Oberon*

Gustav Mahler selections from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*

Dmitri Shostakovich Symphony No. 5

INVENTION

Saturday * March 1, 2025 * 7:30 P.M.

First Free Methodist Church • Seattle

Harmonia Chorus

This program displays our vocal artists at the pinnacle of their versatility. Our concert explores several strains of contemporary choral composition, most notably with world premieres from two of our own musicians.

Johann Sebastian Bach/arr. Swingle Invention in C Major

Morten Lauridsen "Quando son più lontan" from *Madrigali*

Eric Whitacre *Leonardo Dreams of His Flying Machine*

Marques Garrett *The Lesson*

R. Nathaniel Dett *O Holy Lord*

Ken Burton *A Prayer*

Carol Sams "Stone" from *The Earthmakers*

Sheila Bristow *At harbor, waiting for wind* **WORLD PREMIERE**

Aaron Key *Nizina* **WORLD PREMIERE**

Johann Sebastian Bach "Confiteor" from Mass in B minor

HARMONIA CHAMBER PLAYERS

Saturday * March 8, 2025 * 2:00 P.M.

University Unitarian Church • Seattle

MASS IN B MINOR

Saturday * March 29, 2025 * 7:30 P.M.

First Free Methodist Church • Seattle

Harmonia Orchestra & Chorus

Arwen Myers *soprano*

Brendan Tuohy *tenor*

Clarice Alfonso *soprano*

Sarah Larkworthy *mezzo-soprano*

Zachary Lenox *baritone*

In his final completed work, Bach left not only a masterpiece but also a mystery: to this day, nobody knows for certain why this most devout Lutheran composer composed a gargantuan setting of the Roman Catholic mass as his dying statement. Whatever the reason, Bach's B-minor mass now stands as one of the uncontested peaks of the oratorio repertoire, a masterpiece that must be experienced live to be fully appreciated.

Johann Sebastian Bach Mass in B minor, BWV 232

HARMONIA CHAMBER PLAYERS

Saturday * April 19, 2025 * 2:00 P.M.

University Unitarian Church • Seattle

SPRING RITES

Saturday * May 3, 2025 * 7:30 P.M.

First Free Methodist Church • Seattle

Harmonia Orchestra & Chorus

Carson Ling-Efird *cello*

Die Erste Walpurgisnacht tells the story of a band of pagan druids who are beset upon by Christian invaders and—unlike in any other Romantic oratorio—the pagans win! Druids were in the air in 1831: they were also the subject of Bellini's great dramatic opera *Norma*. The centerpiece of our concert is Robert Schumann's cello concerto, performed by a phenomenal young soloist: Seattle native Carson Ling-Efird, who joins Harmonia on a break from her studies at the Curtis Institute of Music.

Vincenzo Bellini Overture to *Norma*

Robert Schumann Cello Concerto

Felix Mendelssohn *Die erste Walpurgisnacht*

GALA: AMADE-ISH

Friday * May 30, 2025

Brockey Center at South Seattle College