

**Advent of a New Age**  
**Harmonium, A Classical Choral Society**  
**December 11 and 12, 1999**

*Program*   *Orchestra*   *Notes*

*We wait for Thy loving kindness, O God*      William McKie (1901-1984)  
Andrew McDonough, tenor

*Hashkiveinu No. 2*      David Nowakowsky (1848-1921)  
Murray Spiegel, bass

*Lift up your heads, O ye gates*      William Mathias (1934-1992)

*Machet die Tore weit*      Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767)  
Leslie Leeman, Kathryn Deguire, Jim Branigan, soloists

*The Peaceable Kingdom*      Randall Thompson (1899-1984)

*Say ye to the righteous*

*Woe unto them*

*The noise of a multitude*

*Howl ye*

*The paper reeds by the brooks*

*But these are they that forsake the Lord/For ye shall go out with joy*

*Have ye not known?*

*Ye shall have a song*

**INTERMISSION**

*Veni Domine*      Cristobal Morales (c.1500-53)

*Ich bin eine rufende Stimme*      Heinrich Schutz (1585-1672)

*You are the New Day*      John David, arr. Peter Knight

*Se Zhenih griadet* [Behold the Bridegroom Comes]      Alexandre Gretchaninoff (1864-1956)

*Missa Sancti Nicolai* [St. Nicolas Mass]      Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Kyrie

Leslie Adler, Kate Kurz, Marc Persing, Mark Hewitt, soloists

Gloria in excelsis

Maria Hladczuk, soloist

Quoniam tu solus sanctus

Credo in unum Deum

Et incarnatus est

Darlene Wyzga, Joanna Hoty Russell (Sat.), Laura Wolverton (Sun.), Marc Persing,

Mark Hewitt, soloists

Et resurrexit

Sanctus

Benedictus

Maria Hladczuk, Laura Wolverton, Marc Persing, Mark Hewitt, soloists

Agnus Dei

Dona nobis pacem

Leslie Adler, Kate Kurz, Marc Persing, Mark Hewitt, soloists

[Before Too Long](#) Mark Miller (b. 1967)

Michelle Yurecko, soloist

#### Chamber Orchestra:

Kathleen Derbyshire, Rebecca Harris, Lynn Siebert, Hanfang Zhang, Ruth Zumstein, violins.

Maggie Speier, viola.

Marnie Kaller, Jodie Beder, cellos.

Dennis Masuzzo, bass.

Andrejs Jansons, Katy Durham, oboes.

Ann Mendoker, Frank Donaruma, horns.

Mark Miller, organ.

Darren O'Neill, guitar.

Joan Tracy, rehearsal accompanist. ([to top](#))

### **Program Notes for Harmonium Choral Society's**

#### **"Advent of a New Age" Concerts**

#### **December 11 and December 12, 1999**

At the advent of each new age mankind wonders, will the earth be a better place in the future, or are we doomed to destroy ourselves? When not distracted by computer bugs which have little to do with the real deep questions, we ponder the spiritual aspects. Can we learn from our past mistakes, can we look hopefully forward? Composers and artists are among those who dare to articulate such questions.

*We wait for thy loving kindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple. Alleluya.*

*Thy right hand is full of righteousness: Alleluya.*

*O Lord, send us now prosperity. Amen.*

These words were selected by the Precentor of Westminster Abbey to be set by Australian-born organist and master of choristers Sir William McKie for the wedding of H.R.H. The Princess Elizabeth and Lieutenant Philip Mountbatten in 1947--surely hopes were high for a new beginning for the war-torn nation. ([to top](#))

*Help us, O Lord, our God, to lie down in peace; and awaken us to life again, our King. Spread over us Your shelter of peace, guide us with Your good counsel. Save us for the sake of your mercy. Shield us from enemies and pestilence, from starvation, sword, and sorrow. Remove the evil forces that surround us, shelter us in the shadow of Your wings. You, O God, guard us and deliver us. You are a gracious and merciful King. Guard our coming and our going, grant us life and peace, now and always.*

David Nowakowsky was Choirmaster and Composer at the famed Brody Synagogue in Odessa, Ukraine, for over 50 years. Following the Communist Revolution and World War II, his voluminous music compositions were lost for almost two generations. This setting of the text, from the Sabbath Evening Service, demonstrates the influence of the Russian choral style by giving the melody almost

exclusively to the bass voice which was highly prized for its warmth and strength. The publication and promotion of Nowakowsky's by the Nowakowsky Foundation in itself represents a new age of accessibility and rediscovery of Russian choral music--although these editions are now in Hebrew rather than the original Ashkenazic text employed during his lifetime.

In the Christian tradition, Psalm 24, vv. 7-10, is an Advent text, an admonition to readiness that applies to the Coming of Christ, and the last days of the world. The next two very different works (Mathias and Telemann) set this same text. [\(to top\)](#)

*Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting door, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle (strife).*

William Mathias, Welsh composer, pianist and teacher, shows the influence of Walton, Stravinsky and Tippett in his orchestral, choral and chamber music. "Lift Up Your heads" is an exuberant setting of the text which shows off Mathias' penchant for jazzy syncopations and repeating text with the metrical accents realigned. [\(to top\)](#)

Georg Phillip Telemann's energetic chorus, from the Cantata of the same name (one of over a thousand) seems cautionary rather than purely joyful in its dramatic sensibility. The driving rhythms, the long melisma in the word "Streit" (strife), and the slower expressive solos ("Who is this King of Glory") demonstrate Telemann's straightforward approach to dramatizing the scripture in a way that would engage the emotions. The final fugato section especially shows how many of Telemann's cantatas over the years could have been attributed to Bach. This cantata for the first Sunday in Advent was written in 1719, during the period in which the composer worked in Eisenach, and probably met J.S.Bach. Like most of Telemann's four complete cycles it was not published in his lifetime--in fact it was not published until 1963 (present edition, 1975) at which point it became one of the most frequently performed sacred works by Telemann. [\(to top\)](#)

Randall Thompson wrote symphonies and chamber music, but is best known for his choral works which are idiomatic for the voice and rewarding to sing. Thompson was a New Englander, his parents both born in Maine, but his early vocal experiences come at the Lawrenceville School here in New Jersey, where his father was headmaster, and he a star boy soprano in the school glee club. Thompson later attended Harvard, where Archibald Davidson was his choral influence. The Prix de Rome followed, and study with Ernst Bloch. He taught at Wellesley (1927-1929) where he directed the (women's)choir, followed by stints as lecturer at Harvard and a Guggenheim fellowship. Choral music again became the focus when Thompson became guest conductor of the A Cappella Singers and the Dessoff choirs, and madrigals group at Juilliard (1931-32).

*The Peaceable Kingdom* is considered his first choral masterpiece. It was commissioned by the League of Composers for its 25th anniversary and introduced on March 3, 1936, in Cambridge, Mass. It was inspired by a famous painting of the same title by 19th century artist Edward Hicks, which shows William Penn making peace with the Indians on one side and Isaiah's depiction of the lion lying down with the lamb on the other side. The Biblical texts from Isaiah which Thompson used, although they end hopefully and peacefully, are predominantly predictions of a world on the brink of great evil and destruction--one can only wonder what the work came to mean as the decade of the 30's progressed into the 40s. One biographer writes "Simplicity of means and clarity of structure contributed to the overall eloquence, as Thompson revealed a consummate skill in contrapuntal writing. The music was dramatically dissonant when the text spoke of the fury of the Lord and the destruction he wrought..."

This work was followed closely by his most famous, "Alleluia"(1940). Thompson went on to teach at Berkeley, Curtis, Princeton and Harvard. "A composer's first responsibility," he once said, "is and always will be to write music that will reach and move the hearts of his listeners in his own day." [\(to top\)](#)

*Say ye to the righteous, it shall be well with him:*

*for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.*

*Woe unto the wicked! It shall be ill with him:*

*for the reward of his hands shall be given him.*

*Behold, my servant shall sing for joy of heart,*

*but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart and shall howl for vexation of spirit. [\(to top\)](#)*

## II

*Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope!*

*Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!*

*Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!*

*Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink!*

*Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue till night, till wine enflame them! And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operations of his hands.*

*Woe unto the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas!*

*Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth. [\(to top\)](#)*

## III

*The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together; the Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle. They come from a great country, from the end of heaven, even the Lord, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land. Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children. Every one that is found shall be thrust through; and every one that is joined unto them shall fall by the sword. Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled and their wives ravished. Therefore all hand shall be faint, and every man's heart shall melt. They shall be afraid: pangs and sorrow shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed at one another; their faces shall be as flames. [\(to top\)](#)*

## IV

*Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand.*

*Howl, O gate; cry, O city; thou art dissolved. [\(to top\)](#)*

## V

*The paper reeds by the brooks, by the mouth of the brooks, and everything sown by the brooks, shall wither, be driven away, and be no more. [\(to top\)](#)*

## VI

*But these are they that forsake the Lord, that forget my holy mountain.*

*For ye shall go out with joy; and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the fields shall clap their hands. [\(to top\)](#)*

## VII

*Have ye not known? Have ye not heard? Hath it not been told you from the beginning?*

*Have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? [\(to top\)](#)*

## VIII

*Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord.*

-text from the book of Isaiah [\(to top\)](#)

Cristobal Morales was the greatest Spanish composer of sacred music in the first half of the sixteenth century. *Veni Domine*, the Advent motet, has a poignant, mystical quality, stemming from its use of the Aeolian mode, shapely descending phrases which represent the descent of God to earth, and an ostinato part in the first alto, which is repeated down a step each time. [\(to top\)](#)

New ages are predicted by great prophets, who often feel, as did John the Baptist, "like a voice crying in the wilderness." Heinrich Schutz was master of the dramatic baroque motet which made the most of the small forces available to him during most of his life, due to the Thirty Year's War.

*I am a voice crying in the wilderness: make straight the way of the Lord. I baptize you with water, but there walks one among you whom you know not. He it is who will come after me, yet was before me, whose shoe-laces I am not worthy to unloose.* [\(to top\)](#)

This arrangement of "New Day" from the Kings Singer's 25th Anniversary publication is a Harmonium favorite, and seems especially appropriate here.

*You are the new day.*

*I will love you more than me and more than yesterday*

*If you can but prove to me you are the new day.*

*Send the sun in time for dawn, let the birds all hail the morning.*

*Love of life will urge me say,*

*You are the new day.*

*When I lay me down at night knowing we must pay,*

*Thoughts occur that this night might stay yesterday.*

*Thoughts that we as humans small could slow worlds and end it all*

*Lie around me where they fall*

*Before the new day.*

*One more day when time is running out for everyone,*

*Like a breath I knew would come I reach for the new day.*

*Hope is my philosophy, just needs days in which to be,*

*Love of life means hope for me,*

*Born on a new day.*

*You are the new day.* [\(to top\)](#)

Vladimir Morosan provides the following notes: Alexandre Tikhonovich Gretchaninoff studied at the Moscow Conservatory 1881-90 and St. Petersburg Conservatory 1890-1893, from which he graduated in Rimsky-Korsakov's composition class. After composing secular choral music for a St. Petersburg chorus, he moved back to Moscow, where he began writing sacred music under the influence of the Moscow Synodal School of Church Singing; continued to compose secular choral music, theater music, and music for children's choirs. In 1925 he left Russia to live in Paris; from 1939 until his death he lived in the United States, where he also composed a number of large- and small-scale choral works. Gretchaninoff's style is characterized by an intense Russian "flavor" on the one hand, and exceptionally rich choral textures and opulent harmonic sonorities on the other, utilizing chant-like themes, and extremes of vocal range. *Behold the Bridegroom Comes* takes its text from the parable of the wise and foolish virgins (Matt.25:1-13) which urges preparedness.

*Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*

*Behold, the Bridegroom comes at midnight,*

*And blessed is the servant whom he shall find watching;  
And again, unworthy is the servant whom he shall find heedless.  
Beware, therefore, O my soul, do not be weighed down with sleep,  
Lest you be given up to death and lest you be shut out of the Kingdom.  
But rouse yourself, crying: "Holy, holy, holy, art Thou, O our God.  
Through the Theotokos, have mercy on us! [\(to top\)](#)*

The great Haydn enjoyed a long and prosperous career under the enlightened despotic thumb of Prince Nicolas of Esterhazy. He was expected to dress everyday (basically in livery, like servant) and provide for every whim and occasion dictated. "The Saint Nicolas Mass is an optimistic Mass," writes the great Haydn scholar H.C.Robbins Landon, "full of joie de vivre and vigorous youthful spirits. It is incredible that it was composed almost immediately after the bleak, tragic "Farewell" symphony, Haydn's most intense piece of Sturm und Drang writing in the orchestral field." The "Farewell" was composed to convince Prince Nicolaus to let the musicians go home from Esterhazy Castle (where they had remained late into the season) to their families. It called for the parts to drop out one at a time, and each to blow out their music stand candle and leave, leaving only Haydn and the concertmaster playing a mournful violin duet in the darkened salon. The Prince got the message and the musicians as well as the rest of the court departed for Eisenstadt soon after, and so were there in time for the Prince's nameday (St. Nicolas, Dec. 6). The *Missa Sancti Nicolai* may have been a kind of surprise thank you to the prince, since it was not customary for Haydn to write him a name-day Mass.

The *Missa Sancti Nicolai* is sometimes known as the "Mass in 6/4 time" because of the unusual meter of the opening Kyrie (and closing Dona nobis) which gives the work a particularly pastoral feel, appropriate for the Advent/Christmas season. It shows Haydn's fascination with highly developed vocal quartet writing in the Crucifixus and Benedictus. The string writing is masterly and virtuosic. The Credo is practically set with a telescoped text (each vocal part singing a different part at the same time) which comes together at more important points, ("who for us men and our salvation came down from heaven"), leaving time for the rhapsodic solos of the Crucifixus. "Et unam sanctam catholicam ecclesiam" (and one holy catholic church) is even written in unison for extra emphasis on unity. The adagio Sanctus with its sextuplets in the strings and lyrical fugato entries in the voices is atypical for a classical mass Sanctus. The brief Agnus is the only movement where the Sturm und Drang style is even hinted at, with its minor key, extremes of dynamics, and diminished chords. The mass as a whole is charming and concise, with the satisfying (and typical) repetition of the pastoral Kyrie theme for the final Dona nobis. [\(to top\)](#)

We conclude our concert with the hopeful message of *Before Too Long*, a millennium commission from Harmonium Choral Society to local composer, Mark Miller. It is based on a simple poem text by Alena Synkova contained in the book *I Never Saw Another Butterfly: Children's Drawings and poems from Terezin Concentration Camp 1942-1944*. The editors noted: "This poem was preserved in manuscript in pencil on a scrap of yellowed paper. On the other side is the inscription 'Alena Synkova' in ink. Alena Synkova was born in Prague on September 24, 1926, and deported to Terezin on December 22, 1942. She returned home after the liberation."

*I'd like to go away alone  
Where there are other, nicer people,  
Somewhere into the far unknown,  
There, where no one kills another.  
Maybe more of us,  
A thousand strong,  
Will reach this goal,  
Before too long. [\(to top\)](#)*