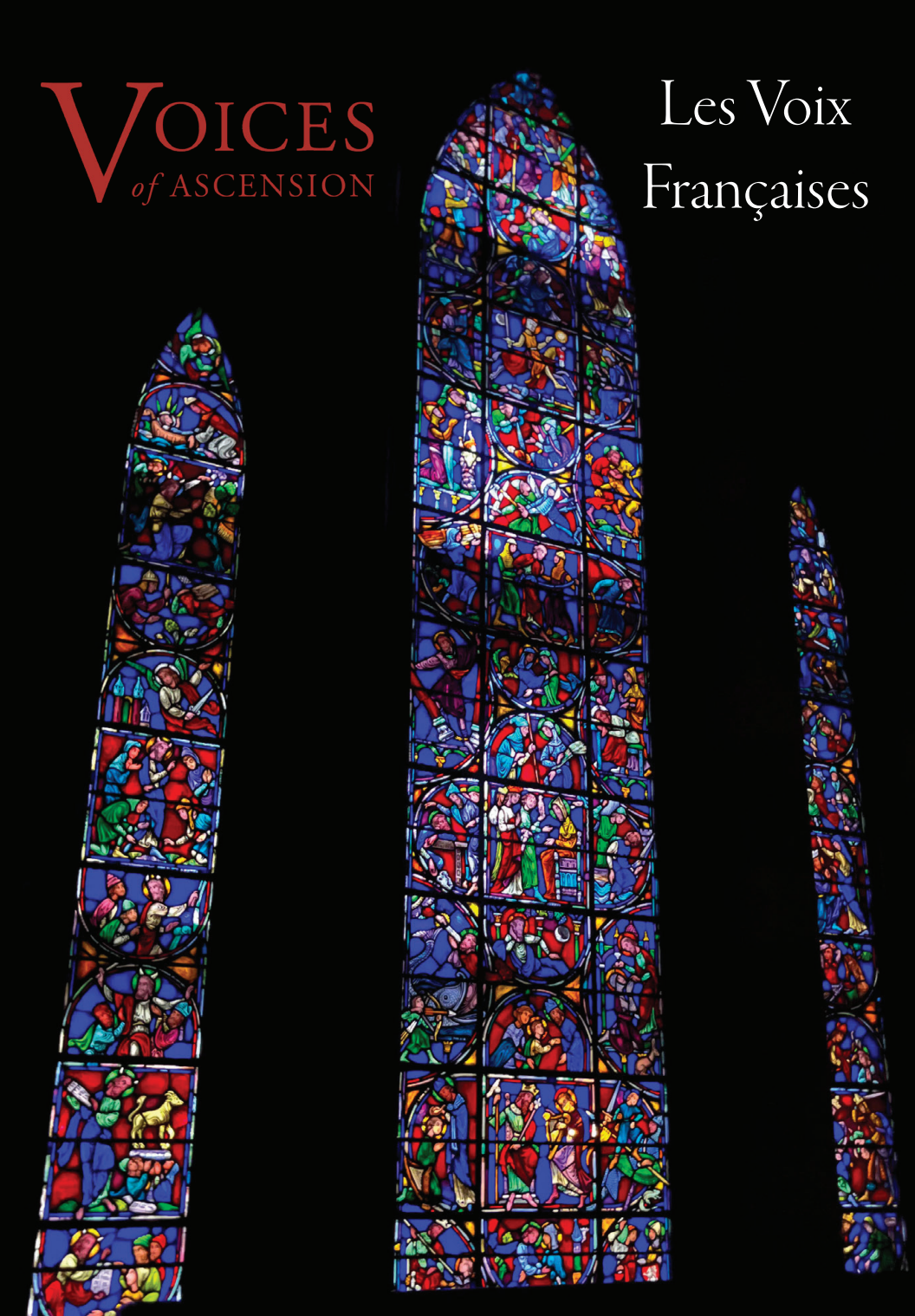


# VOICES *of ASCENSION*

Les Voix  
Françaises



March 14, 2024, 7:30pm New York City



# VOICES *of* ASCENSION

DENNIS KEENE  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR & CONDUCTOR

Thursday, March 14, 2024 at 7:30PM  
The Church of the Ascension  
Fifth Avenue and Tenth Street  
New York City

## LES VOIX FRANÇAISES

Hymne au Soleil - Lili Boulanger  
Vieille prière bouddhique - Lili Boulanger  
Pie Jesu - Lili Boulanger  
Sous Bois - Lili Boulanger  
Psaume XXIV - Lili Boulanger  
INTERMISSION  
Stabat Mater - Francis Poulenc

SARAH CHALFY, SOPRANO | HEATHER PETRIE, CONTRALTO  
SAMUEL ROSNER, TENOR | ANDREW HENDERSON, ORGAN  
DANIEL BECKWITH, PIANO

*Piano by Steinway & Sons*

*The Manton Memorial Organ built by Pascal Quoirin, St. Didier, France (2011)*

Please make sure that all cell phones and other electronic devices are turned off.

The use of cameras and recording devices is strictly prohibited.

At intermission, you may use the three Ascension restrooms, or follow the directions to the seven restrooms accessible through the 11th Street side entrance at First Presbyterian. For further assistance, please ask a Voices of Ascension volunteer, usher, or staff member for instructions. Voices of Ascension wishes to thank the clergy, the staff and members of The First Presbyterian Church for making their restrooms available to us.

Please note that video footage will be taken throughout Les Voix Françaises. This footage will be streamed live and used by Voices for marketing and publicity and in our website and social media. Your attendance at this event constitutes your consent to be recorded.

# MUSIC BY LILI BOULANGER

(1893-1918)

## HYMNE AU SOLEIL HYMN TO THE SUN

Heather Petrie, Contralto

For most of my career I only knew one of Lili Boulanger's works (*Psautme 24*). It is a wonderful piece and full of personality, even original. But, a few years back we gave a concert of music by women composers and I researched Lili Boulanger carefully for the first time in my life. What a discovery that was! We ended up doing four pieces of hers and my estimation of her as a composer rose from "full of personality" to my current belief that she was a major early 20th century composer. Tonight we perform five of her works, the entire first half of our program. What is amazing is that no two of the pieces are at all alike. Each inhabits its own special world. What a talent she was!

Lili Boulanger was brought up in an extremely musical family which included her famous sister, Nadia Boulanger, composer, conductor, and perhaps the most esteemed music teacher of the 20th century. Lili Boulanger died at a very early age but left us with an extremely rich body of works. *The Hymn to the Sun* was written in 1912 to a poem by Casimir Delavigne. In ecstatic layers of chords the sun is acclaimed; through its power it brings the colors of the earth to light anew.

Du soleil qui renaît bénissons la puissance.  
Avec tout l'univers célébrons son retour.  
Couronné de splendeur, il se lève, il s'élançe.  
Le réveil de la terre est un hymne d'amour.  
Sept coursiers qu'en partant le Dieu contient  
à peine,  
Enflamment l'horizon de leur brûlante haleine.

O soleil fécond, tu parais!  
Avec ses champs en fleurs, ses monts, ses bois épais,  
La vaste mer de tes feux embrasée,  
L'univers plus jeune et plus frais,  
Des vapeurs de matin sont brillants de rosée.

Let us bless the power of the reborn sun.  
With all the universe let us celebrate its return.  
Crowned with splendor, it rises, it soars.  
The waking of the earth is a hymn of love.  
Seven rushing steeds that the god scarcely holds  
back  
Ignite the horizon with their scorching breath.

Oh, vivid sun, you appear!  
With its fields in bloom, its mountains, its thick  
forests,  
The vast sea set ablaze by your fires,  
The universe, younger and fresher,  
With morning vapors glistening with dew.

VIEILLE PRIÈRE BOUDDHIQUE (PRIÈRE QUOTIDIENNE POUR TOUT L'UNIVERS)  
OLD BUDDHIST PRAYER (DAILY PRAYER FOR THE WHOLE UNIVERSE)

Samuel Rosner, Tenor

The Vieille prière bouddhique is a substantial work set to a Buddhist prayer, deeply felt. The secondary title (Daily prayer for the entire universe) indicates the inclusive, universal theology of the prayer – it is for everyone, in every country, of all faiths. The haunting melody, which repeats constantly, carries the text in a manner of a litany. There is an Eastern exotic flavor to the work, including a ravishingly beautiful interlude before the interior tenor solo. This was one of Boulanger's last pieces completed before her untimely death at the age of 24.

Que toute chose qui respire,  
sans ennemis, sans obstacles, surmontant la douleur  
et atteignant le bonheur, puisse se mouvoir libre-  
ment,  
chacun dans la voie qui lui est destinée.

que toutes les créatures et partout,  
tous les esprits et tous ceux qui sont nés,  
sans ennemis, sans obstacles, surmontant la douleur  
et atteignant le bonheur, puisse se mouvoir libre-  
ment,  
chacun dans la voie qui lui est destinée.

que toutes les femmes, que tous les hommes,  
les Aryens, et les non-Aryens,  
tous les dieux et tous les humains  
et ceux qui sont déchus,  
sans ennemis, sans obstacles, surmontant la douleur  
et atteignant le bonheur, puisse se mouvoir libre-  
ment,  
chacun dans la voie qui lui est destinée.

en orient et en Occident, au Nord et au Sud,  
que tous les êtres qui existent --  
sans ennemis, sans obstacles, surmontant la douleur  
et atteignant le bonheur, puisse se mouvoir libre-  
ment,  
chacun dans la voie qui lui est destinée.

May each thing that breathes,  
Without enemies, without obstacles,  
Overcoming pain and attaining happiness,  
Be able to move freely,  
Each in the way destined for him

May all creatures everywhere,  
All the spirits and all who have been born,  
Without enemies, without obstacles,  
Overcoming pain and attaining happiness,  
Be able to move freely,  
Each in the way destined for him.

May all women, May all men,  
Aryans and non-Aryans,  
All gods and all humans and all who have died,  
Without enemies, without obstacles,  
Overcoming pain and attaining happiness,  
Be able to move freely,  
Each in the way destined for him.

In the East and in the West,  
In the North and in the South,  
May all the beings that exist,  
Without enemies, without obstacles,  
Overcoming pain and attaining happiness,  
Be able to move freely,  
Each in the way destined for him.



PIE JESU

Sarah Chalfy, Soprano

Boulanger's *Pie Jesu* is in the same league as those of Fauré and Duruflé. But here the soprano's pleading for eternal rest and peace for a loved one seems to be floating in a shimmering, timeless world far away. For this performance we are using the solo organ version which has very specific organ colors called for by the composer. How wonderful it sounds on Ascension's French organ built by Pascal Quoirin (the builder currently restoring the organ at Notre Dame Cathedral)!

Pie Jesu Domine, dona eis requiem.  
Dona eis requiem sempiternam.

Blessed Lord Jesus, grant them rest.  
Give them eternal rest.

## SOUS-BOIS

### DEEP IN THE FOREST

This is one of the most exquisite, sensitive, poetic pieces I have come across in a long time. Originally scored for piano and chorus, as you will hear it tonight, every piano note, every vocal line is carefully laid out to portray an interior romantic world of great nuance and subtlety. This beautiful music perfectly expresses the tender, moving text, a poem by Philippe Gille (1831-1901).

Sous bois  
Marchons devant nous, bien douce est la pente,  
Le rossignol chante dans l'ombre des bois.  
Nos cœurs sont d'accord et la nuit est belle,  
Elle nous appelle, écoutons sa voix.

Pourquoi faut-il que tout s'efface,  
Que ces rameaux sur nous penchés  
A d'autres demain aient fait place  
Par le temps flétris et séchés?

Ces bois verront une autre aurore  
Et d'autres nuits et d'autres jours.  
Des oiseaux y viendront encore  
Pour y chanter d'autres amours.

Et ce doux sentier qui nous charme  
En l'absence d'un cœur glacé  
Recevra peut-être une larme,  
Où tant de bonheur a passé.

Deep in the Forest  
Let's walk – before us is a gentle slope,  
The nightingale sings in the shadow of the woods.  
Our hearts are one and the night is beautiful.  
It calls us, listen to its voice.

Why must everything wither away,  
That these boughs, leaning upon us,  
Replaced tomorrow by others,  
Be withered and dried by time?

These woods will see another dawn,  
And other nights and days,  
Birds will still come here,  
To sing of new loves.

And this pleasant path which charms us,  
In the absence of a hardened heart,  
Will perhaps receive a tear  
Where so much happiness has transpired.



## PSAUME XXIV

### PSALM 24

#### SAMUEL ROSNER, TENOR

A complete contrast to the other Boulanger works on this program, *Psalm 24* begins rough and strong, almost in an Old Testament Biblical way. The middle section moves to a more lyrical land. Finally, the full choir proclaims, “Lift up your heads, you gates, and let the King of Glory in!!” The music is regal and vigorous. A swirling accelerando then intensifies, more and more, to a thrilling conclusion: “Ah!”

La terre appartient à l'Éternel et tout ce qui s'y  
trouve,  
la terre habitable et ceux qui l'habitent.  
Car Il l'a fondée sur les mers,  
et l'a établie sur les fleuves.  
Qui est-ce qui montera à la montagne de l'Éter-nel,  
et qui est-ce qui demeurera au lieu de sa sainteté,  
ce sera l'homme qui a les mains pures, et le cœur net,  
dont l'âme n'est point portée à la fausseté  
et qui ne jure point pour tromper.  
Il recevra la bénédiction de l'Éternel  
et la justice de Dieu son sauveur.  
Telle est la génération de ceux qui Le cherchent,  
qui cherchent Ta face en Jacob.

The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it,  
the world, and all who live in it;  
for he founded it on the seas  
and established it on the waters.  
Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord?  
Who may stand in his holy place?  
The one who has clean hands and a pure heart,  
who does not trust in an idol  
or swear by a false god.  
They will receive blessing from the Lord  
and vindication from God their Savior.  
Such is the generation of those who seek him,  
who seek your face, God of Jacob.

Portes, élevez vos têtes,  
portes éternelles,  
haussez-vous, et le Roi de gloire entrera.

Qui est ce Roi de gloire ?

C'est l'Éternel fort  
et puissant dans les combats.

Portes, élevez vos têtes,  
élevez-vous aussi, portes éternelles;  
Et le Roi de gloire entrera.

Qui est ce Roi de gloire ? C'est l'Éternel des  
armées,

c'est Lui qui est le Roi de gloire. Éternel. Ah!

Lift up your heads, you gates;  
be lifted up, you ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may come in.

Who is this King of glory?

The Lord strong and mighty,  
the Lord mighty in battle.

Lift up your heads, you gates;  
lift them up, you ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may come in.

Who is he, this King of glory?  
The Lord Almighty—

He is the King of glory. Ah!

## INTERMISSION

### STABAT MATER

FRANCIS POULENC (1899-1963)

I. Stabat Mater dolorosa  
Juxta Crucem lacrymosa,  
Dum pendebat Filius.

II. Cujus animam gementem,  
Contristatam ac dolentem  
Pertransivit gladius.

III. O quam tristis et afflicta  
Fuit illa benedicta,  
Mater Unigeniti!

IV. Quae moerebat et dolebat,  
Pia Mater, dum videbat  
Nati poenas incliti.

V. Quis est homo qui non fletet,  
Christi Matrem si videret  
In tanto supplicio?  
Quis non posset contristari  
Matrem Christi contemplari  
Dolentem cum Filio?  
Pro peccatis suae gentis,  
Vidit Jesum in tormentis,  
Et flagellis subditum.

There stood the Mother grieving,  
Beside the cross weeping,  
While on it hung her Son.

Whose saddened soul,  
Sighing and suffering,  
A sword pierced through.

O how sad and how afflicted  
Was that blessed Mother  
Of the Only-Begotten!

Loving Mother, who as grieving  
And suffering, while she beheld  
The torments of her glorious Son.

Who is the man who would not weep  
If he should see the Mother of Christ  
In such great distress?  
Who could not be saddened  
If he should behold the Mother of Christ  
Suffering with her only Son?  
For the sins of his people,  
She saw Jesus in torments  
And subjected to stripes.

- VI. Vidit suum dulcem Natum  
Moriendo desolatum,  
Dum emisit spiritum.
- VII. Eja, Mater, fons amoris  
Me sentire vim doloris  
Fac, ut tecum lugeam.
- VIII. Fac, ut ardeat cor meum  
In amando Christum Deum  
Ut sibi complaceam.
- IX. Sancta Mater, istud agas,  
Crucifixi fige plagas  
Cordi meo valide.  
Tui Nati vulnerati,  
Tam dignati pro me pati,  
Poenas mecum divide.  
Fac me tecum pie flere,  
Crucifixo condolere,  
Donec ego vixero.  
*Juxta Crucem tecum stare,*  
Te libentur sociare  
In planctu desidero.  
Virgo virginum praeclara,  
Mihi jam non sis amara,  
Fac me tecum plangere.
- X. Fac, ut portem Christi mortem,  
Passionis fac consortem,  
Et plagas recolere.  
Fac me plagis vulnerari,  
Cruce fac inebriari,  
Ob amorem Filii.
- XI. Inflammatus et accensus,  
Per te, Virgo, sim defensus  
In die judicii.  
Christe, cum sit hu nc exire,  
Da per Matrem me venire  
Ad palmam victoriae.
- XII. Quando corpus morietur,  
Fac, ut animae donetur  
Paradisi gloria. Amen.
- She saw her own sweet Son,  
Whose dying caused His desolation,  
While he yielded up His Spirit.
- O Mother, fount of love,  
Make me feel the force of your grief,  
So that I may mourn with you,
- Grant that my heart may burn  
In loving Christ my God,  
So that I may be pleasing to him.
- Holy Mother, may you do this:  
Fix the stripes of the Crucified  
Deeply into my heart.  
Share with me the pains  
Of your wounded Son  
Who deigned to suffer so much for me.  
Make me lovingly weep with you,  
To suffer with the Crucified  
So long as I shall live.  
To stand with you beside the cross,  
And to join gladly with you;  
This I long for and desire.  
O Virgin all virgins excelling,  
Be not inclement with me now;  
Cause me to mourn with you.
- Grant that I may bear the death of Christ;  
Make me a sharer in His Passion  
And ever mindful of his wounds.  
Let me be wounded by His wounds,  
Cause me to be inebriated by the Cross  
For the love of your Son.
- Lest I burn in flames enkindled,  
May I, through thee, O Virgin,  
Be defended on Judgment Day.  
O Christ, when from here I must depart,  
Grant that, through your Mother,  
I may obtain the palm of victory.
- When my body perishes,  
Grant that my soul be given  
The glory of Paradise. Amen.



## STABAT MATER BY FRANCIS POULENC

This has been one of my favorite pieces of music for my entire adult life. For a long time, Voices of Ascension had never performed it because I could not imagine doing it without the huge orchestra called for in the score. But in 2011 at Ascension's Good Friday service, I did three movements of it with the Church of the Ascension Choir (about 20 professional singers) accompanied by our new (at the time) French-built organ. It was incredible, and, immediately, I decided to do the whole piece with the Voices of Ascension – 40 voices strong – and the Manton Memorial Organ at Ascension. Andrew Henderson and I have had a wonderful time choosing the organ stops for this piece, and the sounds are truly special – often evoking the original orchestration, and often in a sound world of its own!

Francis Poulenc was born right before the turn of the century - in 1899 - in Paris. He grew up during the days when Debussy and Ravel (his teacher) were composing many of their greatest works. During the 1920's he came to be influenced also by Satie and Stravinsky, and by the many literary figures who were close personal friends of his. Along with other young composers, he formed a group called *Les Six*, often seen as a reaction against the music of the Impressionists and Wagner. During this period Poulenc composed songs, piano music, chamber music, and orchestral works. There was great sensitivity to the marvelous texts he chose in his vocal music, and often a true Parisian élan throughout, many works even evoking memories of a Parisian music hall.

The death of a dear friend in 1936 deeply affected Poulenc. He went to visit the chapel high in the hills of Rocamadour, France, which contained a famous sculpture, The Black Virgin. This experience took him to a spiritual plane that he had never before experienced, and resulted in the composition of the first of his sacred choral works, *The Litanies of the Black Virgin*. The Mass in G followed a year later. And, in 1949, another dear friend died unexpectedly. At first he thought he would compose a Requiem. But that text, with its formality and *Dies Irae* threats of damnation, was not his style. He chose instead the more human text of the *Stabat Mater*, a 13th-century poem depicting the sorrow of Mary as she stands at the foot of the cross.

The work was completed in 1950 and premiered in 1951. Poulenc considered it his greatest composition. The 12 contrasting movements form an utterly amazing procession of musical gestures, some deep, dark, and utterly serious; some luxuriously beautiful; others ferocious, brutal; others austere and deeply spiritual. The totality is a piece of sustained inspiration and depth matched in only a few of his other compositions.

The opening movement is immediately affecting, drawing us into this special world in just a few measures. It is profoundly serious, but human at the same time. The *Cujus animam* is marked “very violent,” expressing the terrible suffering of the soul, as if pierced by a sword. The next movement begins a cappella in a far-away key, a whole new spiritual world. When the basses come in with the organ, speaking to the Mother of Christ, it is a human response. Measures of worldly beauty contrast with more austere sections. *Quae moerebat* is inspired by the text “loving Mother,” and provides a contrasting gesture of happiness. Next follows perhaps the boldest movement of all which portrays Mary in horrible distress as she watches her Son being whipped. The immensely-moving *Vidit suum*, with soprano solo, depicts Mary as she watches her Son die. Only Poulenc could have composed this music, this particular combination of deeply serious, then spiritual, worldly, macabre. Only Poulenc could have combined all these elements into a profound unity. *Eja Mater* is another movement providing a contrasting gesture of happiness, this time inspired by the words “fount of love.” It is followed by the most austere, antique movement of the piece, asking “that my heart may burn in loving Christ.” As *Sancta Mater* begins, the basses speak in human tone to Mary. Much of the rest of the movement speaks personally, spiritually, but in a worldly cloak. This was Poulenc’s amazing gift: his personal spirituality never negated his urban humanity. His soul had room for both the chapel in Rocamadour and the Parisian night club. (I think this is one reason New Yorkers find his music speaks to them. It is a spirituality that does not ignore the human urban existence). *Fac ut portem*, with its sharply rhythmic sarabande style, asks to share carrying the burden of Christ’s suffering. *Inflammatum* is the one depiction of the flames of damnation. The second half of the movement shows the ultimate victory of sharing the Cross with Jesus. The magnificent concluding movement starts with a pious prayer. And then Poulenc shows us the glories of Paradise. Motivic material from the very first movement is brought back. The work winds down, little by little, until the choir finally sings a resounding “Amen!” The spirit is taken up to Heaven with the final dramatic chords of the organ.

– Dennis Keene

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**Daniel Beckwith** has conducted in most of the major opera houses throughout North America and Europe. With repertoire spanning the 17th to 21st centuries, he has been hailed as one of the most exciting conductors of his generation. Mr. Beckwith's Metropolitan Opera debut was in 1995, followed by important debuts conducting the works of Handel, both nationally (Seattle Opera) and internationally (Grand Théâtre du Genève, The Glyndebourne Festival). Concert appearances include Boston's Handel and Haydn Society, the Juilliard Orchestra, Chicago's Music of the Baroque and Grant Park Summer Festival, Spain's Santander Festival with soprano Renée Fleming, the Hartford Symphony, and the Orchestra of St. Luke's at Carnegie Hall, both with Ms. Fleming.



His church work in New York City includes Assistant Organist positions at The Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church and St. Bartholomew's Church; staff singer and Assisting Organist at The Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine. Mr. Beckwith is currently Principal Organist at the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola and Assistant Organist at Temple Emanu-EL. Mr. Beckwith is also the opera conductor and coach for at SUNY Stony Brook.



**Sarah Chalfy's** work as a singer and actor encompasses the music and art of many centuries, languages, and cultures. She has been praised by the *NY Times* for her "dramatic bent and command of tone color", and her "clear tone, agility, and abundant spirit". Solo oratorio engagements include Mozart's *Requiem*, *Exsultate Jubilate*, Handel's *Messiah*, Monteverdi Madrigals books IV and VI, and Berio's *Sinfonia*, among others. Her one-woman show *Artemisia: Light and Shadow* (Toth/Sandrow), featuring music of Strozzi and Cavalli, has toured the Northeast and West of the US, and will receive its French premiere next year, performed in French. She frequently performs her solo cabaret show in NYC, and has released an album of cabaret songs from the US, France and Germany, entitled *Love.Sex.Death: A Cabaret* (available on CD and via all major streaming services). Sarah has also recorded on the Canteloupe, New Amsterdam, and Innova labels, singing the works of Michael Gordon and John Halle with Alarm Will Sound and the NOW Ensemble. Sarah is an avid recitalist and collaborator with living composers and songwriters. Upcoming engagements include premieres of the works of Kim D. Sherman and Scott Wheeler, an solo cabaret show in NYC, and a performance with the famous organ at the ancient Basilica de Valère in Sion, Suisse.

Sarah has worked as an actor on stage and screen, with Off-Broadway, TV and film credits to her name. She studied at the Peabody Conservatory, Manhattan School of Music, the Mozarteum and l'Académie Internationale d'Été de Nice. More about Sarah at [www.sarahchalfy.com](http://www.sarahchalfy.com).

**Andrew Henderson** is Director of Music & Organist at Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City, where he oversees an extensive liturgical and choral program, including the 40-voice Saint Andrew Chorale, the 180-voice New York City Children's Chorus, in addition to the Saint Andrew Music Society's *Music on Madison* concert series. He also serves as the chair of the organ department at the Manhattan School of Music, as the organ instructor at Teacher's College, Columbia University, and as Associate Organist at New York City's Temple Emanu-El. Dr. Henderson, a native of Thorold, Ontario, holds degrees in music from Cambridge and Yale Universities, and in 2007 he was awarded the Doctor of Musical Arts degree at The Juilliard School. He was a finalist in the international competition *Grand Prix de Chartres* in France in 2002, and won first prize in the Royal Canadian College of Organists' biennial National Organ Playing Competition the following year. Recent performances include organ and continuo playing with the New York Philharmonic, American Symphony Orchestra, Musica Sacra, Voices of Ascension, The Oratorio Society of New York and The Collegiate Chorale, and solo recitals in Poland, Canada, and throughout the USA. His performances have been featured on the nationally-syndicated public radio programs *Pipedreams* and *With Heart and Voice*. He has been featured as a recitalist and workshop leader at national and regional gatherings of the Presbyterian Association of Musicians, the Fellowship of United Methodists in Worship and Music Arts, the Royal Canadian College of Organists, and the American Guild of Organists. His first solo CD, *Andrew Henderson at St. John's, Elora*, was recorded and released in 2010. A Fellow of the Royal Canadian College of Organists, his teachers have included John Tuttle, Barrie Cabena, David Sanger, Thomas Murray and John Weaver.



**Heather Petrie** is “a true contralto, with a big, deep, resonant projection that can fill a hall.” (*New London Day*) She made her Carnegie Hall solo debut with the Oratorio Society of New York in 2019, after winning second place in the Lyndon Woodside Oratorio Competition. Highlights of the 2023-2024 season include Verdi's *Requiem*, Beethoven *Symphony No. 9*, Mahler *Symphony No. 2*, and Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*. Recent seasons have included multiple performances at Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall and the Metropolitan Opera in New York, as well as several concerts throughout South Korea with the American Soloists Ensemble and National Chorus of Korea. As a soloist Heather has appeared with Musica Sacra, the American Symphony Orchestra, Voices of

Ascension, Sacred Music in a Sacred Space, the Cathedral of the Madeleine, and the New Orchestra of Washington. She performs frequently with the NY Philharmonic, the Choir of St. Ignatius Loyola, Musica Viva NYC, Essential Voices USA, and the Cathedral Choir of Saint John the Divine, and received a Grammy nomination for Clarion Music Society's recording of Steinberg's *Passion Week*. Operatic roles include Mary (*die Fliegende Holländer*), Baba (*The Medium*), Third Lady (*die Zauberflöte*), Marcellina (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Larina (*Eugene Onegin*), and Annina (*der Rosenkavalier*). She holds degrees from Bard College and SUNY Purchase Conservatory, and is represented by Wade Artist Management. More information can be found at [www.heatherpetriecontralto.com](http://www.heatherpetriecontralto.com).



Tenor **Samuel Rosner** is in his final year in the Graduate Diploma program at THE JUILLIARD SCHOOL. He previously attended the Harvard/New England Conservatory Dual Degree Program, studying Linguistics and Voice. Samuel recently was a Wolf Trap Opera Studio Artist, covering Jupiter in *Se-mele*. He previously covered Elvino in *La Sonnambula* with Teatro Nuovo and Tonio in *La Fille du Régiment* with St. Petersburg Opera and was a Winter Apprentice Artist with Sarasota Opera. At Juilliard, Samuel sang as Sheldon Segal (*Later that Same Evening*), Le Remendado (*Carmen*) several roles in Juilliard's production of *King Arthur*, and was the tenor soloist in John Musto's *The Book of Uncommon Prayer*. His additional opera roles include Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*), Chevalier de la Force (*Dialogues des Carmélites*), and Évandre (*Alceste*).

Samuel's previous oratorio and concert work includes the tenor solos in Mozart's *Solemn Vespers* and *Coronation Mass* with Kollektive366, Bach's BWV 78 cantata and Britten's *Canticle II: Abraham and Isaac* at First Presbyterian Church of NYC, Bach's *Cantata 61* at SongFest, and Handel's *Messiah* with Central Presbyterian Church of NYC, the Danbury Concert Chorus, King's Chapel Boston, and Manhattanville College. Samuel is also a composer of vocal, chamber, and electro-acoustic works, as well as film scores. His compositions have been premiered at venues such as Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, and Juilliard, and performed throughout the U.S., as well as in France, Austria, and Canada. Samuel also performed his own settings of Hebrew Holocaust poems by Hannah Szenes on NPR's *From the Top*, and was awarded a prize from the ASCAP Foundation's Irving Caesar Fund.

**DENNIS KEENE** is an internationally renowned conductor. Through his concerts and Grammy-nominated recordings with Voices of Ascension, regular guest appearances as conductor and teacher, and his work as Artistic Director of the Dennis Keene Choral Festival and Voices of Ascension Conductor Academy, he has become one of the preeminent figures in choral music today. Recipient of awards for exceptional artistry from The Juilliard School and Chorus America, Dr. Keene has also served on grants panels for the NEA and NYSCA as well as the board of Chorus America.



In addition to his work with Voices of Ascension and The Dennis Keene Choral Festival, Dr. Keene continues as Organist and Choirmaster of Church of the Ascension in New York City. He served for many years on the Board of Directors of Chorus America, the national service organization for the choral field, which honored him with the first Louis Botto Award for "innovative action and entrepreneurial zeal in developing a professional ensemble of exceptional artistic quality." He has also served on the Choral Panel of the National Endowment for the Arts and on the Music Panel of the New York State Council on the Arts.

**VOICES OF ASCENSION**, founded in 1990 and directed by conductor Dennis Keene, presents exceptional performances of great works of music for chorus and orchestra. Over the course of its 34-year history, Voices of Ascension has produced an annual concert series, released Grammy-nominated recordings, and engaged in artistic collaborations with the San Francisco Symphony, Mostly Mozart Festival, José Limón Dance, the Mark Morris Dance Group, The Metropolitan Museum of Art and others. Recent performances have been described as 'richly colored, impressive, and beautifully balanced' (*Wall Street Journal*) and 'inspired' (*NY Times*).

Through the shared experience of singing and listening to choral music, Voices of Ascension is creating a vibrant, diverse musical community. We engage an ever-widening public, now and for generations to come, by encompassing both the extraordinary traditions and inspiring new iterations of choral music.

# VOICES OF ASCENSION

DENNIS KEENE, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR

## CHORUS

### SOPRANO

Elisse Alban  
Sophie Amelkin  
Deborah Feldman  
Amy Goldin  
Sarah Griffiths  
Chloe Holgate  
Linda Jones  
Rachel Mikol  
Erinn Sensenig  
Katherine Wessinger  
Elena Williamson

### ALTO

Donna Breitzer  
Alison Cheeseman  
Hai-Ting Chinn  
Tracy Cowart  
Allison Gish  
Heather Jones  
Jessica Kimple  
Kate Maroney  
Heather Petrie  
Molly Yuko-McGuire

### TENOR

James Bassi  
James Donegan  
Marquis Fuse  
Brandon Hynum  
John Kawa  
Chad Kranak  
Samuel Rosner  
Michael Steinberger  
Nathan Wiley

### BASS

Matthew Curran  
Dominic Inferrera  
Bert K. Johnson  
Jeffrey Johnson  
Timothy Krol  
Steven Moore  
Mark Rehnstrom  
Jose Pietri-Coimbre  
Peter Stewart  
Charles Perry Sprawls

### CHORUS PERSONNEL MANAGER

Carolyn S. Braden

*The choral artists in this concert are represented by AGMA, the American Guild of Musical Artists, AFL-CIO, the union that represents artists performing in opera, modern dance and choral presentations, as well as choreographers, stage directors, and stage managers.*

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## VOICES OF THE NEW: MANY WORLDS, WITH THE UNSUNG COLLECTIVE - APRIL 9

Begun four years ago as a series exploring new horizons in vocal chamber music under the curation of long-time Voices of Ascension ensemble member Hai-Ting Chinn, Voices of The New has grown into a program that asks diverse artists to fully participate in the artistic process of programming and performing works for vocal ensemble. Featuring world premieres by Danielle Jagelski and Evan Blaché. **April 9, at Roulette Intermedium, Brooklyn. Livestream available!**



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