

**BACKBAYCHORALE**

**THE POWER OF VOICE**

**50**



**The BACKBAYCHORALE**  
**at FIFTY**

*Honoring Five Decades of Song,  
Community, and Purpose*

**Saturday, October 18, 2025 • 4:00 p.m.**  
Old South Church  
645 Boylston St., Boston



---

## STAFF

**Susanne Powers**  
Executive Director

**Dr. Stephen Spinelli**  
Music Director

**Nicholas Holloway**  
Operations Manager

**Riikka Pietläinen Caffrey**  
Community Engagement  
Coordinator

**Henry Weinberger**  
Rehearsal Accompanist

**Viacheslav Kozlenko**  
Conducting Apprentice

---

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### *Officers*

**Craig Hughes**  
President

**Ludovica Mottura**  
Interim Treasurer

**Brenda Ulrich**  
Secretary

### *Members-at-large*

Thomas Barber  
Rachel Burckardt

Judy Foreman  
Alison Geyer

Vincent James

Claye Metelmann

Michael Wagner

Kaylee Wallace

Nicole Werther

Wayne Wilkins

---

**Mail:** PO Box 170051 • Boston, MA 02117

**Phone:** 617-648-3885 | **Email:** [info@bbcboston.org](mailto:info@bbcboston.org)

**Website:** [bbcboston.org](http://bbcboston.org)

The Back Bay Chorale gratefully acknowledges the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency, The Boston Foundation, and the Boston Cultural Council, for their support.



# From the President of the Board

---



Welcome to you, our audience, our friends. We've turned fifty. How did that happen?

Many of us experience the surprise of time slipping by unnoticed. Birthdays or anniversaries are wonderful occasions to notice the time that has passed, to honor what has been done and to think about what might be next.

The Back Bay Chorale was founded in 1973 by minister and social activist Larry Hill, with a first concert around the corner at Church of the Covenant in the Spring of 1974. Larry put up posters around town urging people to audition for a new group. 100 people auditioned, 80 joined and the BBC performed Mozart's *Requiem* on April 21, 1974. No matter where people came from, Larry recognized an urge, a need, for people to come together in song. Fifty years later, we still need this. Maybe now we need it even more.

We have evolved over the last fifty years and have sustained a musical community and an enduring network of friends. We have grown: we have become better singers, we have explored a large world of complex and meaningful music. We have commissioned new works that have celebrated our shared humanity. Our concert today is a testimony to these years, and our Music Director, Steve Spinelli, has much to say about this - you should read his program notes.

Which brings us to the present. We're delighted to spend time with you this season as we explore favorite music from across the last half century of performances and invite you to join us 'on stage' in February and March at our choral sing-ins of Fauré and Mozart. In March, in particular, we return to where it all started to sing Mozart's *Requiem* in Church of the Covenant. Once again, posters will appear around Back Bay inviting singers to join us. It worked well when Larry did it!

We're also excited to perform at Symphony Hall to close out our fiftieth anniversary season as we combine forces with our friends at Boston Conservatory at Berklee to perform Orff's *Carmina Burana*. Our singing and performance community expands for this memorable concert in a unique way and hopefully will inspire the future musicians at the conservatory as they begin their careers in music.

Our community, founded fifty years ago, essentially includes **you**, our audience. We need your presence at our concerts and we'd love your support as a donor or a concert sponsor. You can reach out to our Executive Director, Susanne Powers, for more information on how to help us, or simply contribute online on our website.

Please enjoy this concert and this milestone season. We're enormously grateful for your presence, your energy and your love for choral music.

Craig Hughes, Board Chair & President



Creative Law for Creative People

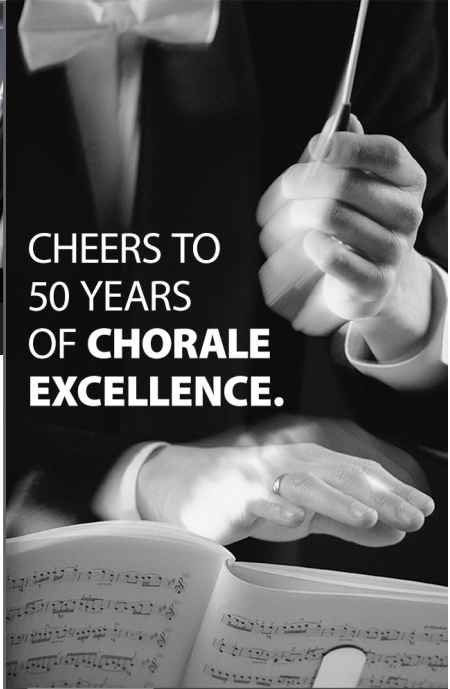


Archstone Law Group P.C.

**Providing legal services in**

Intellectual Property • Publishing  
Higher Education • Health Care  
Employment • Estate Planning  
Business Law • Commercial Real Estate

Newton, MA | [archstonelaw.com](http://archstonelaw.com)



CHEERS TO  
50 YEARS  
OF **CHORALE**  
**EXCELLENCE.**

BANKING,  
WELL-CRAFTED.

**BrooklineBank**

MEMBER FDIC



215 ADAMS STREET—MILTON

**Cheers to 50 Years!**

Looking forward to a golden season.  
From your friends at the Forbes House Museum:  
"An entrepreneurial family; an historic place."

[www.forbeshousemuseum.org](http://www.forbeshousemuseum.org)

## From the Music Director

---



Dear friends,

It is with great joy that I welcome you tonight to *The Back Bay Chorale at 50*, the opening concert of our fiftieth anniversary season. Tonight we honor not only the legacy of this remarkable ensemble, but also the enduring spirit of community and artistry that has sustained it for half a century.

Our program tonight reflects the breadth of the Chorale's identity. We begin by celebrating the power of our own unaccompanied sound, before joining forces with soprano Karen Slack, the reigning GRAMMY® Award-winning soloist whose artistry has inspired audiences around the world. Ms. Slack will share orchestrated versions of two songs from her GRAMMY-winning album, a project on which I was privileged to serve as researcher, editor, and producer. No retrospective of community singing would be complete without the music of Boston's own Alice Parker, whose monumental career was marked by a signature restraint in the arrangement of folk music. Her *Hark! I Hear the Harps Eternal* has become iconic in American choral life, and as we mark our fiftieth anniversary, we are proud to honor Ms. Parker's centennial, following her passing on December 23, 2023, at the age of ninety-eight.

The masterworks at the heart of this concert remind us of our history and of the music that continues to shape us: Mozart's *Requiem*, the very first major work sung by the Chorale under founding director Reverend Larry Hill fifty years ago at the Church of the Covenant, and Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem*, a work that has become especially beloved by our singers. In revisiting Mozart tonight, we also extend an invitation: please join us on March 7, 2026, when we return to Church of the Covenant for a full performance of Mozart's *Requiem* as part of our Masterworks Sing-In Series. From there, we celebrate Ms. Slack's illustrious operatic career with a set of arias and choruses, recalling her first appearance with the Chorale in 2013, and we close with music by Margaret Bonds, the pioneering composer, pianist, and activist. This pair of arrangements—originally written for the great Leontyne Price and now fittingly in the hands of Ms. Slack—affirms the Chorale's enduring commitment to social justice, a vision first embraced by Reverend Hill.

As we launch this milestone season, we are grateful for your presence and support. The Back Bay Chorale is, at its heart, a community of singers and listeners bound together by the shared experience of music. Thank you for celebrating fifty years with us—and for helping us look forward to the next fifty with hope and song.

With gratitude, Dr. Stephen Spinelli

# Our Singers - Back Bay Chorale

---

## SOPRANO

Patricia Almond  
Catherine Backer  
Maya Bloom  
Evann Carter  
Hannah Cole  
Amy Crouch  
Catherine Cushenberry  
Theresa Ekinici  
Maryanne Fenerjian  
Alison Geyer  
Katie Grinnell  
Melissa Haber  
Brooke Halaby  
Rebecca Hayden  
Lauren Haydon  
Jen Herrmann  
Alison Hickey  
Alexandra Houck  
Becca Kornet  
Monica Krishna  
Kristin Kulash  
Franny Lucey-McCabe  
Judith M. Marie  
Kelly McMullin  
Sarah Milt  
Tatiana Niebuhr  
Claire O'Connor Singh  
Jessica Patin  
Dottie Pitt  
Kim Reynolds Reid  
Julianna Schwindt  
Lessie Tyson  
Brenda Ulrich  
Christina Wallace  
Nicole Werther  
Cynthia Young

## ALTO

Anna-Sophia Boguraev  
Regina Cho  
Elly Cope

Catherine Doyle  
Elizabeth Driver  
Deborah Dumaine  
Judy Foreman  
Betsy Groves  
Wendy Horgan  
Debbie James  
Haley Liddy  
Carolyn Lowell  
Jessica Mason  
Molly McCleary  
Ludovica Mottura  
Shelby Nugent  
Joan Regan  
Jackie Salzinger  
Sabrina Sarmiento  
Polly Scannell  
Ellen Scerbo  
Leah Segal  
Mary-Margaret Segraves  
Barb Siftar  
Jennah Slayton  
Beverly St. Clair  
Sarah Stone  
Holly Teti  
Rikki Tracy  
Kathy Heppner Trogolo  
Kaylee Wallace  
Mary Wendell  
Elizabeth Williams

## TENOR

Christopher Addis  
William Aldenberg  
Don Di Salvo  
Aidan Ferguson  
Logan Grubb  
John Herrington  
Paul Kearney  
John Kornet  
Benjamin Kulas  
Abe Laxague

Paul Lewis  
Patrick McMahon  
Claye Metelmann  
Conrad Moss  
Paul Rabin  
Joseph Reid  
Alan Rothschild  
Tyler Seegars  
Larry St. Clair  
Mike Trogolo  
William Tuttle  
Matthew Vera  
Michael Wagner

## BASS

Ronald Aldridge  
David Auerbach  
Thomas Barber  
Michael Baum  
Justin Buie  
Simon Butterworth  
Neil Cudmore  
Josh Daniels  
Tyler Etzel  
Pablo Fiori  
David Golan  
Michael Hanley  
Irvin Heifetz  
Craig Hughes  
Matthew Kulas  
Manny Lim  
Jayson Madara  
Paul McLean  
Henry Rea  
Abby Reichlin  
Steven Roberts  
Norman Roye  
Rory Schadler  
Peter Smith  
Wayne Wilkins  
Tyler Williams

## HENRY WEINBERGER

PIANO / REHEARSAL ACCOMPANIST



As a professional musician, Henry Weinberger has accompanied, coached, collaborated and performed throughout New England. He served as vocal coach and accompanist in the opera departments of both New England Conservatory and Boston Conservatory, and has privately coached many aspiring opera singers. Mr. Weinberger received a Master of Music in Piano Performance at NEC, where he studied with Leonard Shure and accompanied the chorus under the direction of Lorna Cooke DeVaron. Other principal teachers included Victor Rosenbaum and John Moriarty. Mr. Weinberger has played rehearsals under the batons of Seiji Ozawa, Arthur Fiedler, Kurt Masur and John Williams. He has served on the faculty of the Longy School in Cambridge, where he was the music director of the opera department and taught classes in vocal repertoire and diction. He accompanied the MIT Chorus under the direction of Bill Cutter and the Master Singers of Lexington under the direction of Betsy Burleigh. Mr. Weinberger also enjoyed a career in nursing, working at Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates for twenty-four years, specializing in the care of people with HIV, hepatitis C, and other infectious diseases. He frequently plays chamber music and occasionally performs in venues in and around Boston.



### *The Mindful Tutor*

Executive function support for real life.

Student • Adults with ADHD • Parent Coaching

Boston, MA • Est. 2010  
themindfultutor.org ✉ [lisa@themindfultutor.org](mailto:lisa@themindfultutor.org)  
[substack.com/@lisafranz](http://substack.com/@lisafranz)

*Proud supporter of the Back Bay Chorale*

## RUSTICA

HANDMADE RUSTIC FURNITURE

by Susan Grose Rloff  
781-910-8920 | [rusticafurniture.org](http://rusticafurniture.org)

*All proceeds help support Music with a Heart, singing in Boston area homeless shelters and prisons*



## About the Music Director

---

### Dr. Stephen Spinelli



**D**r. Stephen Spinelli is a conductor, scholar, and advocate for historically underrepresented voices in music. He serves as Music Director of the Back Bay Chorale in Boston, and as Director of Choral Studies at the Boston Conservatory at Berklee, where he conducts the Conservatory Chorale and Chamber Choir, builds curriculum in choral literature, and mentors graduating conducting candidates. He previously served as the Assistant Director of Choral Programs at Cornell University, and

held visiting appointments at Thomas Jefferson University, Moravian College, Villanova University, and Syracuse University.

Dr. Spinelli has sung with some of the country's leading vocal ensembles. As a tenor with The Crossing, his credits include the 2018 GRAMMY® Award-winning recording of Gavin Bryars' *The Fifth Century*. Spinelli also performed with the genre-bending vocal octet Roomful of Teeth. He assisted in the production of their GRAMMY Award-winning debut album, which yielded the Pulitzer Prize-winning recording of Caroline Shaw's *Partita for Eight Voices*. As a frequently engaged guest conductor, he particularly cherishes his experiences leading the Maui Chamber Orchestra and Chorus.

Spinelli is the the co-founder and director of ONEcomposer, an arts initiative dedicated to restoring the legacies of historically excluded musicians. Through research, performance, publication and recording, ONEcomposer seeks to broaden our understanding of history. The organization, founded in 2019, has collaborated with major arts organizations all over the country, including the Philadelphia Orchestra, Opera Philadelphia, the New Jersey Symphony, the Eastman School of Music, and the Lyric Opera of Chicago. ONEcomposer's inaugural recording, *Beyond the Years: The Unpublished Art Songs of Florence Price*, featuring soprano Karen Slack and pianist Michelle Cann, won the 2024 GRAMMY Award for Best Classical Solo Vocal Album, with Spinelli serving as researcher and co-producer. His work as editor and researcher of music by Florence Price and Margaret Bonds has been supported by fellowships from the Beinecke Library at Yale University, the Boston Psychoanalytic Society and Institute, and the Central New York Humanities Corridor, and has been featured in national media. He holds degrees from Williams College (BA, music), Temple University (MM, choral conducting), and Northwestern University (DMA, choral conducting).



The Whaley Ring Team.  
LUXURY REAL ESTATE

#1 TEAM



Paul Whaley | 617.460.4238

Charlie Ring | 617.699.2597

Lilly Frohlinger | 508.523.6347

Robert Von Stein | 203.526.6672

Kimberly Bavis | 617.429.0639

Christopher Spagnuolo | 617.755.2922

Kristin Hill Casey | 917.208.8825

Representing the Top 1% of Coldwell  
Banker Realty Agents Internationally



**COLDWELL  
BANKER**

399 Boylston Street, Suite 200, Boston, MA 02116 | @thewhaleyringteam



**CAPITOL  
SECURITIES**  
MANAGEMENT, INC.

- Financial Planning
- Wealth Management

Call us for a free initial review of  
your current situation.

Mr. John Cahill  
Mr. Greg Clarke, AAMS, CRPS  
Mr. William R. Stade Jr., CFP,  
CRPS

1 Hollis Street #218  
Wellesley, MA 02482  
617-897-8500

*Capitol Securities Management is a registered  
broker-dealer, investment advisor, Member FINRA,  
Member SIPC*

Silken  
Audio

- Professional  
Location Recording
- Audio Production

Ken Silber  
617-686-1585  
ken@silkenaudio.com  
www.silkenaudio.com

# The Back Bay Chorale Conducting Apprenticeship

---

We're thrilled to welcome Viacheslav Kozlenko as the Back Bay Chorale's Conducting Apprentice for the 2025–2026 season!

This season-long apprenticeship is a fantastic opportunity for emerging conductors to dive into the life of a vibrant, high-level volunteer chorus. Under the guidance of our Music Director, Stephen Spinelli, and in collaboration with our artistic team, Mr. Kozlenko will gain hands-on experience throughout the year.

As Conducting Apprentice, he'll be involved in all aspects of our musical preparation—studying scores to a professional standard, leading sectional rehearsals, conducting portions of full rehearsals, and occasionally offering keyboard support. He'll also assist behind the scenes when needed and benefit from regular one-on-one mentorship with Maestro Spinelli.

We can't wait to see the energy and perspective he brings to the Chorale this season—welcome, Viacheslav!

## VIACHESLAV (SLAVA) KOZLENKO

### CONDUCTING APPRENTICE



Viacheslav Kozlenko is an accomplished choir director and pianist with extensive experience in classical and contemporary music. He is currently a Boston Conservatory at Berklee Choral Conducting student. Holding a Master's degree in Artistic Direction of Opera and Symphony Orchestra and Academic Choir from the V.S. Popov Academy of Choral Art, he has a strong foundation in music theory, vocal coaching, and ensemble leadership. His career highlights include serving as Choirmaster for the Perm Opera and Ballet Theater, where he led weekly rehearsals, coordinated repertoire, and directed live performances. Viacheslav has also

collaborated with esteemed orchestras like the Moscow Regional Philharmonic and Mariinsky Theater Orchestra, performing under the direction of renowned conductors, including Valery Gergiev and Vladimir Fedoseev.

As a singer, Viacheslav has performed with the INTRADA vocal ensemble, which specializes in early music, touring internationally and appearing on television and in theater productions. His commitment to excellence in performance is matched by his dedication to music education, evident from his role as a collaborative pianist with such prominent singers as Lubov Petrova (Metropolitan opera/Bolshoy theater), Vasily Laduk (Bolshoy/Mariinsky theater) and many more. Fluent in Russian, English and German he brings a global perspective and a rich artistic background to his work, inspiring musicians and audiences alike.

# A Word to Our Supporters

---

## Thank You!

**W**e are grateful to our many friends and members for their generous support. Ticket income covers less than half of concert costs. If you enjoy today's concert, please consider making a donation at [bbcboston.org](http://bbcboston.org), or by mail to:

**Back Bay Chorale  
PO Box 170051  
Boston, MA 02117**

Back Bay Chorale is a federal 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and donations are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law. Annual donors of \$1,800 or more become members of the Larry Hill Society in recognition of their generous support. Named in honor of our founder and first conductor, the Larry Hill Society ensures the Chorale's future through leadership giving.

### Other ways to help the Back Bay Chorale

#### **Make a bequest**

Supporting the Back Bay Chorale through a bequest is easy—simply include the following language in your estate plan: “I give \$ \_\_\_\_\_ dollars or \_\_\_\_\_ percent or all of the residue of my estate to the Back Bay Chorale, Ltd., a Massachusetts charitable corporation.”

#### **Name us your Retirement Beneficiary**

Your IRA will be taxed twice after you pass on: (1) In your estate (2) As income when distributed. Beat the tax by naming the Back Bay Chorale, Ltd., as the beneficiary on your IRA!

#### **Donate Appreciated Securities**

Dreading paying capital gains tax on your favorite stock? Contact us on how you can gift the security to the Back Bay Chorale. A win-win move!

#### **Charitable Income Trust**

Thinking about making a gift, but concerned about income? Consider a charitable income trust. The trust is a contract between you and Back Bay Chorale that will provide income for your life and benefit the Chorale in years to come.

#### **Cars for the Chorale**

Ready to buy a new car? Help Back Bay Chorale by donating your old vehicle.

Please contact **Susanne Powers, Executive Director** at (617) 648-3885 to discuss any of the above opportunities.

*The above suggestions do not constitute legal or tax advice.*

# Our Supporters

---

## **CORPORATE, FOUNDATION, AND GOVERNMENT**

Atlassian  
Bank of America  
Foundation  
Berkshire Choral  
International  
Boston Cultural Council  
Boston Foundation  
First Parish Milton  
Gradient Corp.  
Hologic Charitable Fund  
Massachusetts Cultural  
Council  
McCall MacBain  
Foundation  
Red Tree Real Estate  
Sanofi  
SEI Boston  
Takeda Pharmaceuticals

## **CONDUCTOR'S CIRCLE (\$5,000 or more)**

Michael Baum &  
Catherine Snow  
Stephen & Patricia  
Chubbs  
Judy Foreman  
Alison & Fred Geyer  
Winifred Hentschel  
Craig Hughes  
Paul Lewis  
Dorothy Pitt  
Mira Rabin  
Paul Rabin &  
Arlene Snyder  
Susan Grose Rioff  
Carol & Stephen Spinelli  
Mary & Ted Wendell  
Cynthia Young &  
James Farmer

## **BENEFACTORS (\$2,500 - \$4,999)**

Rachel Burckardt  
Donald Di Salvo  
Paul McLean &  
Mary Margaret  
Segraves  
Todd & Amy Millay  
Ellen & Richard Scerbo  
Alexandra Young &  
Allan Hershfield

## **SUSTAINERS (\$1,500 - \$2,499)**

Anonymous  
Robert Dimmick  
Vincent James  
Judith Marie  
Ludovica Mottura &  
Michele Zanini  
Joan Regan  
Abbott Reichlin &  
Maddy Segal  
Kim Reynolds Reid  
Polly Scannell  
Beverly & Larry St. Clair  
William Tuttle  
Nicole Werther &  
Dan Lev

## **PATRONS (\$500 - \$1,499)**

Tom Barber  
Gina Bohannon  
Joshua Daniels  
Deborah Dumaine  
Melissa Haber  
Alice Hageman  
Rebecca Hayden  
Alison Hickey  
Tricia & Dudley Ladd  
Nan M Laird & Joel  
Alstein  
Carolyn Lowell  
Kelly McMullin &  
Maribeth Burke

Peter Smith  
Dr. John H &  
Mrs. Martha N Stone  
Brenda & Thomas Ulrich  
Kaylee Wallace  
Constance &  
Robert Walkingshaw  
Wayne Wilkins

## **SPONSORS (\$250 - \$499)**

David Auerbach  
Karen & Robert Baart  
John Balder Jr. &  
Victoria Stein  
Rebecca Earle  
Tyler Etzel  
Maryanne Fenerjian  
Byron & Mary-Jo Good  
Neil & Leigh Hesler  
Wendy Horgan  
Alexandra Houck  
Holiday & Philip Houck  
Kristin & Frank Kulash  
James Liu &  
Alexandra Bowers  
Traute & Robert Marshall  
Claye Metelmann  
Sarah & Stephen Milt  
Pamela Snyder  
Lee Warren

## **SUPPORTERS (\$100 - \$249)**

Maggie Bruck  
Louisa Connaughton  
Irene Cramer  
Liz DeBenedictis  
Daniel Dineen &  
Manny Lim  
Ellen Feingold  
Jim Johnson  
Becca Kornet  
Matthew Kulas  
Bronwen MacArthur

Divya Mani  
Deleta McMullin  
Elizabeth  
Noel-Cushenberry  
Diana Palmer  
Philip Pitt  
Claire Regan  
Emily Romney &  
George Hein  
Nicholas Russell  
Phil Sbaratta  
Molly Schen  
Janet Selcer  
Sarah Stone  
Rikki Tracy

Edwin Truman  
Henry Weinberger  
Elizabeth Wharff  
Michael & Susan Wolfe  
Beverly Woodward &  
Peter Monsky

**FRIENDS**  
**(Up to \$99)**

Maya Bloom  
Peter Burke  
Susan Earle  
Jim Gerow  
Alison Goulder  
Judith Inker

Eugene Lanin  
Jonathan Litt &  
Thomas Mitchell  
Kate Lucey  
Nicole Piper  
Barbara Sparhuber  
Maria Sun  
Trader Joes

**Print • Promo • Apparel**

**LITHO-  
CRAFT**

*Established 1976*

**(781) 729-2012**

**Fax: (781) 729-5717**

74 Maple Street, Unit E  
Stoneham, MA 02180

**backartists  
art studio**

PROCESS ART +  
SENSORY PLAY



- **Corporate events** – Ideal for Take Your Child to Work Day
- **Art Classes** – for kids 6mos – 8 years, led by experienced instructors
- **Birthday Parties** – Hands-on, custom celebrations for kids 2-8

**Where Good Messes Are Made**

[www.backartists.com](http://www.backartists.com) | [info@backartists.com](mailto:info@backartists.com)

**8 Medford Street, Arlington Center**



The Back Bay Chorale presents  
**The Back Bay Chorale at 50**

Saturday, October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025 - 4:00pm  
Old South Church, Boston

---

**Dr. Stephen Spinelli, conducting**  
Viacheslav (Slava) Kozlenko, conducting apprentice  
David Cleavinger, organ  
**KAREN SLACK, soprano**

---

Bogoroditse Djevo (from <i>All-Night Vigil</i> , Op. 37) . . . . .	<b>Sergei Rachmaninoff</b> (1873–1943)
Tota Pulchra Es . . . . .	<b>Maurice Durufé</b> (1902–1986)
Ave Maria (Angelus Domini) . . . . .	<b>Franz Biebl</b> (1906–2001)
Hark, I Hear the Harps Eternal . . . . .	<b>Alice Parker</b> (1925–2023)
Geistliches Lied, Op. 30 . . . . .	<b>Johannes Brahms</b> (1833–1897)
Desire . . . . .	<b>Florence Price</b> (1887–1953)
Winter Idyl . . . . .	<b>Florence Price</b>
Requiem in D minor, K. 626 . . . . .	<b>Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart</b> (1756–1791)
<i>Introitus &amp; Kyrie</i> Maya Bloom, soloist	
Ein Deutsches Requiem, Op. 45 . . . . .	<b>Johannes Brahms</b> <i>Movements IV &amp; V</i>
<i>Patria oppressa</i> (from <i>Macbeth</i> , Act IV) . . . . .	<b>Giuseppe Verdi</b> (1813–1901)
<i>Dove sono I bei momenti</i> (from <i>Le nozze di Figaro</i> ) . . . . .	<b>W. A. Mozart</b>
<i>Labiami ne' lieti calici</i> (from <i>La Traviata</i> , Act I) . . . . .	<b>Giuseppe Verdi</b>
<i>Tu, tu, piccolo iddio</i> (from <i>Madama Butterfly</i> , Act III) . . . . .	<b>Giacomo Puccini</b> (1858–1924)
<i>Va, pensiero</i> (from <i>Nabucco</i> , Act III) . . . . .	<b>Giuseppe Verdi</b>
<i>I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free</i> . . . . .	<b>Margaret Bonds</b> (1913–1972)
<i>Sit Down, Servant</i> . . . . .	<b>Margaret Bonds</b>

---

*Audio or video recording of any portion of this concert is not permitted.*



This concert is made possible by the generosity of our  
supporters and with additional support from  
Red Tree Real Estate.

## KAREN SLACK

FEATURED SOPRANO SOLOIST



Praised as "one of opera's strongest voices at present – both as a singer and a shaper of its culture" (*The Washington Post*), soprano **Karen Slack** is a recipient of the 2022 Sphinx Medal of Excellence and a 2025 MPower Artist Grant. She is a sought-after curator and artistic advisor known for her fiery charisma and groundbreaking approach to engagement. Her debut album, *Beyond the Years: Unpublished Songs of Florence Price* on Azica Records, won the 2025 GRAMMY® Award for Best Classical Solo Vocal Album.

Slack's 2025-2026 season sees the continuation of nationwide touring for her critically-acclaimed *African Queens*, including Portland Opera's season-opening performance and a season-concluding performance with Piedmont Opera. Slack will perform world premieres of Tamar-kali's new work with the Miró Quartet for the Arizona Friends of Chamber Music and Philadelphia Chamber Music Society; Kathryn Bostic's *Drag*, which celebrates the life of Gladys Bentley at the Dallas Symphony Orchestra; and Brittany J. Green's *Letters to America* for Soprano and Orchestra, part of the American Composers Orchestra's program *Hello, America: Letters to Us, from Us* at Carnegie Hall. Slack has her debut with the Iris Collective, and also appears with the Orlando Philharmonic, Chamber Music Cincinnati, and Spivey Hall, and in works from her GRAMMY®-winning album *Beyond the Years* at Yale School of Music's Oneppo Chamber Music Series and Amherst College.

In July 2024, Slack released an ambitious new recording project, *Beyond the Years: Unpublished Songs of Florence Price*, with pianist Michelle Cann in collaboration with ONEcomposer. The album comprises the unpublished songs of Florence Price, and won the 2025 GRAMMY® Award for Best Classical Solo Vocal Album, which was the first time an album of the work of a Black composer received the award. In 2025, Slack was featured on Shawn Okpebholo's album *Songs in Flight*, released with Cedille Records.

When the pandemic limited live performances during the 2020-2021 season, Slack made premiere digital performances with Houston Grand Opera, Madison Opera, and Minnesota Opera. She starred in a new production of the opera *Driving While Black*, presented by UrbanArias, and launched a digital talk show, #kikikonversations, drawing acclaim from *Opera News* and *The New York Times*.

Karen Slack has performed on the stages of the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Washington National Opera, Scottish Opera, San Francisco

Opera, Dallas Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Austin Opera, New Orleans Opera, Minnesota Opera, Vancouver Opera, Edmonton Opera, Sacramento Opera, Opera Philadelphia, Madison Opera and Arizona Opera, among others. Abroad, she has appeared with the Melbourne Symphony, Sydney Symphony, Bergen Philharmonic Orchestras, and St. Petersburg Philharmonic. Slack made her Carnegie Hall debut with the Orchestra of St. Luke's and performed as a soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra in the world premiere of Hannibal Lokumbe's Healing Tones with conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin. She made her New York Philharmonic debut in May 2024.

A recipient of the 2022 Sphinx Medal of Excellence and 2025 MPower Artist Grant, Slack is an Artistic Advisor for Portland Opera, serves on the board of the American Composers Orchestra, and holds a faculty position at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity in Alberta, Canada. She has been named Lyric Unlimited Artist-in-Residence at Lyric Opera of Chicago for the 2024-2025 season as well as Artist-in-Residence at leading entrepreneurial institution Babson College.

A native Philadelphian, Slack is a graduate of the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music, as well as the Adler Fellowship and the Merola Opera Program at the San Francisco Opera.

For more information, please visit [www.sopranokarenslack.com](http://www.sopranokarenslack.com)

# It's your story. It's your plan.

Looking for a personalized wealth planning experience? We can help you create a comprehensive plan designed just for you.

**Burlington Investor Center**

44 Mall Road

Burlington, MA 01803

781.272.3600



WEALTH MANAGEMENT

Investment minimums apply.  
*Investing involves risk, including risk of loss.*

The Fidelity Investments logo is a registered service mark of FMR LLC.

Fidelity Brokerage Services LLC, Member NYSE, SIPC, 900 Salem Street, Smithfield, RI 02917 © 2024 FMR LLC. All rights reserved. 1066898.2.24



# Program Notes, Texts and Translations

---

## Part I: A Capella

For fifty years, the Back Bay Chorale has gathered weekly to form a steadfast community through song. We work together to create collaborations and present meaningful artistic experiences. We are inspired by the prospect of a grand, final product, but it is our weekly practice, with no audience and no orchestra, that sustains us. First, we celebrate our community and its sound, unadorned.

### **Bogoroditse Djevo** (from *All-Night Vigil*, Op. 37)

Composed in 1915, Rachmaninoff's *All-Night Vigil* was written in just two weeks and premiered in Moscow during the turbulence of World War I. The cycle of fifteen movements sets texts from the Orthodox Vespers and Matins. The sixth movement, *Bogoroditse Djevo*, is a setting of the Orthodox "Hail Mary." Unlike the monumental expanses elsewhere in the Vigil, this brief prayer glows with directness and clarity.

Situated firmly and pandiatonically (with no accidentals) in F major, the *Bogoroditse* has become a beloved emblem of the larger Rachmaninoff work for choirs around the world. Richard Buell's 1998 Boston Globe review of the chorale's performance can be best summarized as follows: "Conceived for the Orthodox Church and the Russian Language, (the piece) begs to be experienced in the kind of church acoustic where massed sonorities can rise, float, drift, and overlap, losing thereby many of the accustomed usages and textures, but gaining others that can be astonishing, moving, and beautiful. That, in essence, is the story of the Back Bay Chorale's Performance."

#### **Text (Church Slavonic)**

Bogoroditse Djevo, raduysya, blagodatnaya Mariye, Gospod s Toboyu.  
Blagoslovenna Ty v zhenakh, i blagosloven plod chreva Tvoyego,  
yako Spasa rodila yesi dush nashikh.

#### **Translation**

*Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, Mary full of grace, the Lord is with Thee.  
Blessed art Thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of Thy womb,  
for Thou hast borne the Savior of our souls.*

## Tota Pulchra Es

Composer Jean Langlais once said, “Duruflé writes so slowly that one could die waiting for a new piece.” Duruflé, clearly self-aware, said of his own approach, “I am haunted by the idea of perfection. I want everything to be perfect, and it takes me a long time to write anything.” A glimpse at the now-beloved composer’s psyche perhaps explains his small but exceptional output of choral music: a requiem, a set of four motets, a mass, and a choral setting of the Our Father prayer.

Duruflé composed *Tota Pulchra Es* in 1960 as part of a set of motets on Gregorian themes. The text is an early Marian antiphon associated with the Feast of the Immaculate Conception; Duruflé’s setting merges plainchant contours with a restrained 20th-century harmonic language. This is the second of a trio of works on tonight’s program that are inspired by the Virgin Mary; an homage to a beloved Back Bay Chorale concert in March of 2006 titled “One Woman: 1000 Years of Music.”

### Text (Latin)

Tota pulchra es, Maria, et macula originalis non est in te.

Vestimentum tuum candidum quasi nix, et facies tua sicut sol.

Tota pulchra es, Maria, et macula originalis non est in te.

Tu gloria Ierusalem, tu laetitia Israel, tu honorificentia populi nostri.

### Translation

*Thou art all beautiful, O Mary, and the original stain is not in thee.*

*Thy raiment is white as snow, and thy face is like the sun.*

*Thou art all beautiful, O Mary, and the original stain is not in thee.*

*Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, thou the joy of Israel, thou the honor of our people.*



**MODERN DENTAL**  
ASSOCIATES

Dr. Heather Coubrough  
Dr. Maria L. Longo

*General, Implant and  
Cosmetic Dentistry*

1037 Beacon Street, Suite 2  
Brookline, Massachusetts 02446  
617.738.7210 phone  
office@moderndentalmass.com

## Ave Maria (Angelus Domini)

The final work in our homage to *One Woman: 1000 Years of Music* is the beloved *Ave Maria* of Franz Biebl. Written in 1959 for tenor-bass choir in Munich, Biebl's setting combines the interpolated texts about the Annunciation with the traditional text of the oft-set *Ave Maria*. On a tour to Germany in the 1970's, the Cornell Glee Club (directed by Thomas Sokol) met Biebl, who handed Sokol a stack of scores for perusal. The piece has become beloved by Cornell University singers, several of whom are singing with the Back Bay Chorale today. Championed and recorded by *Chanticleer*, this work has become an international staple of choral music.

### Text (Latin)

Angelus Domini nuntiavit Mariae,  
et concepit de Spiritu Sancto.  
Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum.  
Benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus.

Maria dixit: Ecce ancilla Domini.  
Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum.  
Et verbum caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis.

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum.  
Benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus.  
Sancta Maria, mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus.  
Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis, nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.

### Translation

*The Angel of the Lord announced to Mary,  
and she conceived of the Holy Spirit.  
Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.  
Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb,  
Jesus.*

*Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord.  
Be it done to me according to thy word.  
And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.  
Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.*

*Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb,  
Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners.  
Holy Mary, pray for us, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.*

## Hark, I Hear the Harps Eternal

A graduate of Smith College and Juilliard, Parker rejected mid-century modernist approaches, favoring a more straightforward relationship to the setting of song. Parker arranged this 19th-century American folk hymn (first printed in *Southern Harmony*, 1837) for modern concert performance in the 1960s. It has become emblematic of American choral singing around the world.

Hark, I hear the harps eternal, ringing on the farther shore,  
As I near those swollen waters, with their deep and solemn roar.

Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, praise the Lamb,  
Glory to the great I AM!

And my soul, though stained with sorrow, fading as the light of day,  
Passes swiftly o'er those waters, to the city far away.

Souls have crossed before me, saintly, to that land of perfect rest,  
And I hear them singing faintly in the mansions of the blest.

## Geistliches Lied, Op. 30

*Geistliches Lied* is one of Brahms's earliest published sacred works and was written when he was only 23 years old. The piece is set for four-part mixed chorus, with an optional organ accompaniment, and here heard as we introduce our string players.

The motet is a study in counterpoint: Brahms constructed it as a strict double canon at the ninth, with sopranos and tenors forming one canon and altos and basses the other. Despite its technical rigor, the music unfolds with clarity and restraint, showing Brahms's interest in older models of polyphony, particularly those of the Renaissance and Baroque, which he was studying closely at the time. The work's concision, symmetry, and contrapuntal mastery reveal Brahms's command of learned technique early in his career. At the same time, *Geistliches Lied* points ahead to the composer's later sacred works, where themes of mortality, consolation, and faith recur—most notably in *Ein deutsches Requiem* a decade later.

### Text (German)

Laß dich nur nichts nicht dauren mit Trauren,  
sei stille,  
wie Gott es fügt, so sei vergnügt mein Wille.

Was willst du heute sorgen auf morgen?  
Der Eine steht allem für;  
der gibt auch dir, das Deine.

Sei nur in allem Handel ohn' Wandel,  
steh feste,  
was Gott beschleußt, das ist und heißt das Beste.

Amen.

**Translation**

*Let nothing ever grieve thee,  
be still,  
as God ordains it; so be content, my will.*

*Why worry today about tomorrow?  
The One stands for all;  
He will also give thee what is thine.*

*Be steadfast in all thy doings without wavering,  
stand firm;  
what God decrees is and means the best.*

Amen.



# STEEPLECHASE

CAPITAL PARTNERS

proudly support the artists of Back Bay Chorale



[www.steeplechasecp.com](http://www.steeplechasecp.com)

## Part II: In Partnership - A History of Esteemed Guest Artists

From its earliest years the Back Bay Chorale established a proud tradition of welcoming distinguished collaborators to share the stage. These include commissions from composers like Gunther Schuller, Stephen Paulus, and Caroline Shaw. Just last year, we were enriched by the singular artistry of countertenor Reginald Mobley. Our collaborators affirm the Chorale's place as a cultural hub in Boston — an ensemble of excellence that draws the city into dialogue with the world's great voices.

For our 50th Anniversary celebration, we honor that legacy in partnership with Karen Slack, the reigning GRAMMY® Award-winning soprano. Ms. Slack first appeared with the Chorale in 2013, and is known for performing with the Metropolitan Opera, Chicago Lyric Opera, San Francisco Opera, and leading orchestras across the globe. She is a fierce advocate for diversity in Classical music and a sought-after curator and creative advisor. Her return represents not only the brilliance of her artistry, but also the continuity of our tradition: forging meaningful collaborations with esteemed artists whose voices inspire, challenge, and elevate our own. The following are orchestrations of songs from the GRAMMY Award-winning album *Beyond the Years: Unpublished Songs of Florence Price*. The album represents the ongoing commitment of our music director, Ms. Slack, and the ONEcomposer team to the celebration of historically excluded musical legacies.

### **Desire**

The poet Orma Jean Surbey was born in Canada, and spent her early life in Flint, MI, and Akron, OH. She lost her eyesight at age three during a seizure brought on by whooping cough. Her family moved to Miami, FL, in 1914. Though she never received a formal education, she won the South Florida Poetry Festival, and her works were featured in *McCall's*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, and *Saturday Review*. She considered it the poet's duty to "sense things beyond commonplace, and help others stretch their consciousness." "Desire" was printed in the February 1947 issue of *McCall's*, embedded within a short story called *Walk, Don't Run*, by Isabella Holt. Surbey's obituary, published on November 8, 1967, cites that she died at age 71 with no listed survivors.

#### **Text**

I want life, the whole of it,  
Here in my hand,  
The brimming bowl of it  
To drink as I stand;

Draining the flower of it  
Acid or sweet,  
To know one hour of it  
Life, or defeat.

## Winter Idyl

David Morton was born on February 21, 1886, in Elkton, KY. He graduated from Vanderbilt University and began his career as a newspaper reporter for the *Louisville Evening Post*. He later worked with the Associated Press in Louisville and New York City. Morton became an educator in 1915, teaching at the Louisville Boys's School from 1915 to 1918, and at a high school in Morristown, NJ, from 1918 to 1924. He then joined Amherst College as an assistant professor of English, where he was a colleague of Robert Frost; he became a full professor in 1926 and remained until 1945, when he became poet-in-residence at Deerfield Academy. In the early 1950s, he taught at the overseas branch of American International College in the Azores. In declining health, he returned to New Jersey in 1957 and died on June 13 of that year.

### Text

The dry-lipped grass curls back  
And bares the pitted stones,  
And the tree, in its new lack,  
Bares, now, its angular bones.

Man looks – and looks away  
From earth to a bleak sky,  
Where, high above the day,  
Where high above the sky  
The last geese, going by,

Pass the horizon's rim;  
And man, remembering where  
A door will welcome him,  
Turns in the darkening air,  
And takes him there.



Enrolling  
pre-K to  
Grade 6

## The Advent School

Progressive, Reggio-inspired education in  
the heart of Boston. Teaching children to  
be confident and curious readers, writers,  
and thinkers and thoughtful community  
advocates since 1961.



Learn more at  
[adventschool.org](http://adventschool.org)

Learn with passion. Act with courage. Change the world.

## Part III: Reflection - Major Works and Major Events

For fifty years, the Back Bay Chorale has engaged with established works of choral excellence—music that challenges, uplifts, and unites singers and audiences alike. Among these, the Requiems of Mozart and Brahms hold a special place in our history. The Mozart Requiem was the first major work sung by the Chorale, and Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* has perhaps become the most beloved by our membership—a work we return to for its consolation, humanity, and enduring beauty.

The choruses and arias we sing tonight not only highlight Karen Slack's first collaboration with the Chorale a decade ago, they also recall last season's joyful partnership with the Boston Lyric Opera, reminding us of the many ways in which our ensemble has engaged Boston's wider cultural life. In revisiting these masterworks and operatic treasures, we honor the legacy of our past seasons while celebrating the broad and evolving scope of the choral art. These pieces remain vital companions as we continue to shape our voice as an ensemble for the present and future.

### **Requiem in D Minor, K. 626**

*I. Introitus: Requiem aeternam*

*II. Kyrie*

Commissioned anonymously by Count Franz von Walsegg in 1791 and left unfinished at Mozart's death, the *Requiem* was completed by Franz Xaver Süssmayr from Mozart's materials. The *Introitus* invokes eternal rest with solemn choral writing; the *Kyrie* is a vigorous double fugue demonstrating Mozart's contrapuntal craft.

#### **Text (Latin)**

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,

et lux perpetua luceat eis.

Te decet hymnus, Deus, in Sion,

et tibi reddetur votum in Jerusalem.

Exaudi orationem meam,

ad te omnis caro veniet.

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,

et lux perpetua luceat eis.

Kyrie eleison.

Christe eleison.

Kyrie eleison.



## Translation

*Grant them eternal rest, O Lord,  
and let perpetual light shine upon them.  
A hymn befits you, O God, in Zion,  
and to you shall a vow be repaid in Jerusalem.  
Hear my prayer,  
to you all flesh shall come.  
Grant them eternal rest, O Lord,  
and let perpetual light shine upon them.*

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

## Ein Deutsches Requiem, Op.45

*IV. Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen*

*V. Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit*

Unlike the traditional Latin Requiem Mass, Brahms's *German Requiem* is neither strictly liturgical nor oriented toward prayers for the dead. Instead, it is a work of consolation for the living. Brahms compiled his own German-language texts from Martin Luther's Bible, shaping a meditation on grief, hope, and divine comfort. First performed in 1868, the work established him as one of the great composers of his age and remains a cornerstone of the choral repertory.

While the fourth movement has become a beloved excerpt of the requiem for choirs all over the world, the fifth movement was added later and is often understood as Brahms's tribute to his mother, who died in 1865. Its intimate, almost lullaby-like character contrasts with the grandeur of the surrounding movements, embodying the work's essence: not a fiery judgment scene, but music of solace and reassurance.

For the Back Bay Chorale, *Ein deutsches Requiem* has become perhaps the most beloved staple of its repertoire. It was the ensemble's choice for its major works return following the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2022.

### **Text (German)**

Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen, Herr Zebaoth!  
Meine Seele verlangt und sehnt sich  
nach den Vorhöfen des Herrn;  
mein Leib und Seele freuen sich  
in dem lebendigen Gott.  
Wohl denen, die in deinem Hause wohnen;  
die loben dich immerdar.

Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit;  
aber ich will euch wieder sehen  
und euer Herz soll sich freuen  
und eure Freude soll niemand von euch nehmen.  
Ich will euch trösten, wie einen seine Mutter tröstet.

### **Translation**

*How lovely are thy dwellings, O Lord of Hosts!  
My soul longs, yea, even faints  
for the courts of the Lord;  
my heart and my flesh cry out  
for the living God.  
Blessed are they that dwell in thy house;  
they will praise thee forever.*

*You now are sorrowful;  
but I will see you again,  
and your heart shall rejoice,  
and your joy no one shall take from you.  
I will comfort you as one whom his mother comforts.*

## **NEXT REALITY COACHING**

**Celebrates Back Bay Chorale's 50 years of Success and Harmony**

[nextrealitycoaching.com](http://nextrealitycoaching.com)

Listen to your voice to power you forward

## **Patria oppressa** (from *Macbeth*, Act IV)

Verdi's *Macbeth*, first staged in Florence in 1847, was his tenth opera and his first based on Shakespeare, a writer who would remain a lifelong source of inspiration. At this point in his career, Verdi was emerging from what he called his "anni di galera" ("years in the galleys"), producing operas at a relentless pace while establishing himself as a composer whose music carried political urgency and patriotic symbolism.

The chorus is sung by Scottish refugees mourning their homeland under Macbeth's tyranny. Verdi abandons bravura display in favor of stark, hymn-like writing, creating an atmosphere of collective grief and dignity. For Italian audiences, the plight of Scotland resonated as a metaphor for their own divided and oppressed homeland, and the chorus was heard as a call to solidarity. Dramatically, the piece marks a turning point: the collective voice of the people emerges as a counterbalance to Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, preparing the way for their overthrow.

### **Text (Italian)**

Patria oppressa! il dolce nome  
No, di madre aver non puoi,  
Or che tutta a figli tuoi  
Sei conversa in un avel.

D'orfanelli e di piangenti  
Chi lo sposo e chi la prole  
Al venir del nuovo Sole  
S'alza un grido e fere il Ciel.

A quel grido il Ciel risponde  
Quasi voglia impietosito  
Propagar per l'infinito,  
Patria oppressa, il tuo dolor.

Suona a morto ognor la squilla,  
Ma nessuno audace è tanto  
Che pur doni un vano pianto  
A chi soffre ed a chi muor.

## Translation

*Oppressed homeland! the sweet name  
of mother you can bear no more,  
now that, for all your sons,  
you have become a tomb.*

*From orphans and from the grieving—  
some for husbands, some for children—  
at each new dawn  
a cry rises and strikes the heavens.*

*To that cry Heaven replies,  
as if moved to pity,  
to spread, for all eternity,  
oppressed homeland, your sorrow.*

*The passing-bell tolls unceasingly,  
yet no one is so bold  
as to shed even a futile tear  
for those who suffer and those who die.*

## **Dove sono i bei momenti** (from *Le nozze di Figaro*)

Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*, premiered at Vienna's Burgtheater in 1786, was his first collaboration with librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte. Based on Beaumarchais's controversial play, the opera transformed a story of class tensions and domestic intrigue into a work that combined the traditions of opera buffa with new depth of characterization.

In Act III, the Countess Almaviva sings "Dove sono," reflecting on the happiness of her early marriage and the neglect she now suffers from her husband. The aria follows a two-part design common to the period: a slow, lyrical opening in which she recalls past joys, followed by a livelier cabaletta that turns toward the hope of reconciliation.

Placed amid the opera's comic schemes and ensembles, "Dove sono" offers a moment of stillness and gravity. It underscores the Countess's role as the emotional anchor of the drama, balancing the farcical action with music of elegance and sincerity.

**Text (Italian)**

Dove sono i bei momenti  
di dolcezza e di piacer?  
Dove andaro i giuramenti  
di quel labbro menzogner?

Perché mai, se in pianti e in pene  
tutto il pianto mio si sfoga,  
la memoria di quel bene  
dal mio sen non si dilegua?

Ah, se almen la mia costanza  
nel languire amando ognor,  
mi portasse una speranza  
di cangiar l'ingrato cor!

**Translation**

*Where are the beautiful moments  
of sweetness and of pleasure?  
Where are the promises gone  
from those lying lips?*

*Why, if in weeping and in sorrow  
all my lament pours out,  
does the memory of that happiness  
not vanish from my breast?*

*Ah, if at least my constancy,  
in languishing, loving always,  
might bring me one hope  
of changing his ungrateful heart!*

## Libiamo ne' leiti calici (from *Le Traviata*, Act I)

Verdi's *La traviata*, premiered at Venice's Teatro La Fenice in 1853, was based on Alexandre Dumas fils's contemporary novel and play *La Dame aux Camélias*. It was one of the first operas to place modern social life—rather than distant history or legend—at its center, and over time it became one of Verdi's most enduring works.

The famous drinking song, or *brindisi*, “Libiamo ne' lieti calici,” opens Act I during a party at the heroine Violetta's home. Alfredo, who has fallen in love with her, proposes a toast, and she joins him in a duet that quickly expands to include the chorus of guests. The music is light and lilting, written in waltz-like rhythms that capture the convivial spirit of the scene.

Within the opera, the *brindisi* sets the stage for the relationship between Violetta and Alfredo, contrasting the glittering surface of festivity with the more serious emotions that soon unfold. As one of Verdi's most recognizable melodies, it has long stood apart from the drama as a concert favorite, yet in context it remains a vital introduction to the opera's central characters and themes.

### Text (Italian)

Libiamo, libiamo ne' lieti calici  
che la bellezza infiora;  
e la fuggevol ora  
s'inebrii a voluttà.

Libiam ne' dolci fremiti  
che suscita l'amore,  
poiché quell'occhio al core  
onnipotente va.

Libiamo, amore, amore fra i calici  
più caldi baci avrà.

### Translation

*Let us drink, let us drink from the joyful cups  
that beauty so adorns;  
and let the fleeting hour  
be intoxicated with pleasure.*

*Let us drink to the sweet tremors  
that love arouses,  
for that eye goes to the heart  
omnipotently.*

*Let us drink, for love, for love among the cups,  
will have warmer kisses.*

# Singing soothes the savage baby. Really.

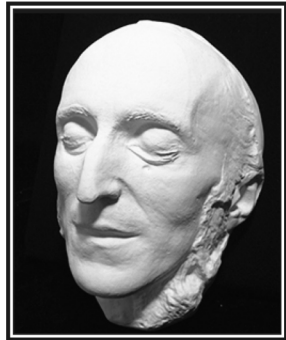
**Children's Garden Pediatrics  
Deborah James, M.D.**

799 Concord Ave  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
617-441-9276



## **Congratulations to The Back Bay Chorale on a wonderful season**

from the International Life Cast Museum.  
The image to the right is a cast impression  
of Felix Mendelssohn's real face. Please  
view many more historical faces at  
[www.ilcmuseum.org](http://www.ilcmuseum.org)



**CRAWFORD**  
LAND MANAGEMENT

88 Route 6A | Sandwich, MA 02563  
508.477.1346  
✉ [info@crawfordlm.com](mailto:info@crawfordlm.com)  
@ [crawfordlandmgmt](https://www.crawfordlandmgmt.com)  
🌐 [www.crawfordlm.com](http://www.crawfordlm.com)



SAVE THE LAND, KEEP THE VIEW.

ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION, SHORELINE STABILIZATION, VIEW MANAGEMENT, REGULATORY PERMITTING & MORE

## **Tu, tu, piccolo iddio** (from *Madama Butterfly*, Act III)

Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* premiered at La Scala in 1904, though only after extensive revisions did it achieve lasting success. The opera, based on David Belasco's play, tells the story of Cio-Cio-San, a young Japanese woman betrayed by her American husband, Lieutenant Pinkerton. It became one of Puccini's most celebrated works, noted for its fusion of Italian lyricism with musical gestures that evoke Japanese culture.

"Tu, tu, piccolo Iddio!" is Butterfly's final aria, sung in Act III as she prepares to end her life. Having sent her son away to be raised by Pinkerton's new wife, she bids him a tender farewell. Puccini underscores the moment with simple, luminous lines and restrained orchestration, focusing attention on her voice and the intimacy of the scene. Within the opera, the aria concludes Butterfly's tragic arc: from youthful hope, to betrayal, to her final act of sacrifice.

### **Text (Italian)**

Tu? tu? piccolo iddio!  
Tu, non saprai mai  
quanto t'amo.  
Addio, addio, piccolo amor!  
Va, gioconda la tua via.

### **Translation**

*You? You? little god!  
You will never know  
how much I love you.  
Farewell, farewell, little love!  
Go — may your path be joyful.*

## **Va, pensiero** (from *Nabucco*, Act III)

Verdi's *Nabucco*, premiered at Milan's Teatro alla Scala in 1842, was his first great operatic success and secured his reputation across Italy. With its story of the Babylonian exile of the Israelites, the opera wove together biblical narrative with themes of loss, faith, and identity that struck a deep chord with contemporary audiences.

"Va, pensiero" appears in Act III, as the exiled people recall their homeland. Verdi sets their words to a melody of noble simplicity and flowing rhythm, emphasizing communal song rather than individual display. The chorus quickly became one of his most celebrated creations, admired for its directness and clarity.



Though grounded in its biblical setting, audiences of the time soon heard in it a reflection of their own longings during the Risorgimento, when Italy was striving for independence and unity. It has remained one of Verdi's most enduring works, both in the theater and in cultural memory.

**Text (Italian)**

Va, pensiero, sull'ali dorate;  
va, ti posa sui clivi, sui colli,  
ove olezzano tepide e molli  
l'aure dolci del suolo natal!

Del Giordano le rive saluta,  
di Sionne le torri atterrate,  
Oh mia patria sì bella e perduta!  
Oh membranza sì cara e fatal!

Arpa d'or dei fatidici vati,  
perché muta dal salice pendi?  
Le memorie nel petto raccendi,  
ci favella del tempo che fu!

O simile di Solima ai fati  
traggi un suono di crudo lamento,  
o t'ispiri il Signore un concerto  
che ne infonda al patire virtù.

**Translation**

*Go, thought, on golden wings;  
go, alight on the slopes and hills,  
where soft and mild  
blow the sweet breezes of our native land!*

*Greet the banks of the Jordan,  
the toppled towers of Zion.  
O my country, so beautiful and lost!*

*O memory, so dear and so deadly!  
Golden harp of prophetic bards,  
why do you hang silent upon the willow?  
Rekindle the memories in our breast;  
speak to us of the time that was!*

*O, like the fate of Jerusalem,  
bring forth a sound of bitter lament,  
or may the Lord inspire a harmony  
that gives us strength to endure our suffering.*

## **Part IV: Dedication - Honoring the Legacy of Larry Hill**

The Back Bay Chorale was founded in 1973 by Rev. Larry Hill, then minister of the Church of the Covenant. Rev. Hill believed passionately that music could be more than performance — it could be a force for justice, hospitality, and belonging. His vision created not only an ensemble, but also a community: singers gathered across differences, joined by the conviction that great music should be open to all.

As we celebrate our fiftieth season, we dedicate the conclusion of our program to Rev. Hill’s enduring legacy. The spirit of justice and community that inspired him continues to guide us. For this reason, we close our anniversary celebration with the music of Margaret Bonds, a great American composer whose work gave voice to the struggle for dignity, freedom, and equality. Bonds’s music was rooted in collaboration with writers like Langston Hughes, and committed to the cause of racial and social justice; a fitting tribute to Rev. Hill’s vision. By ending with her works, we affirm that the values that brought the Back Bay Chorale into being fifty years ago remain central to who we are today — and to the ensemble we hope to be in the years ahead.

### **I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free**

On November 12, 1969, Leontyne Price wrote to Bonds: “Dear Margaret - I have decided to do a new spiritual album with the Rust College A Cappella Choir in January. This record is being made to assist the school as well as to gain recognition for the choir.” She goes on to cite the arrangements she would like to commission, including “I Wish I Knew.” “The last three would be for choir and me,” she says. And to make certain Bonds understood she is no one’s choral soprano, she adds a handwritten addendum that reads, “solo line.” “Rush College is a Methodist school where my Mother went many years ago. It does not enjoy the assistance of the different college funds...Let us hear from you very soon, as the chorus will need all the time it can get.”

The resulting album is an iconic part of Leontyne Price’s recording history. Ultimately the arrangement was heavily adapted for the Rust College Choir through the adoption of a duple meter (as opposed to the original triple meter heard tonight), as well as the inclusion of body percussion. This performance adheres to the manuscript material held in Bonds’ papers at the Beinecke Library and Special Collections at Yale University.

It should be noted that this tune is not in fact a spiritual. It is the work of Jazz great Billy Taylor, who wrote an instrumental composition called *I Wish I Knew How it Would Feel to be Free* in 1952, and Dick Dallas added lyrics in 1967. Nina Simone recorded the song that same year, and it became an anthem of the Civil Rights movement.

## **Text**

I wish I knew how it would feel to be free,  
I wish I could break all these chains holding me,  
I wish I could say all the things I should say,  
Say 'em loud, say 'em clear, for the whole world to hear.

I wish I could share all the love in my heart,  
Remove all the bars that still keep us apart  
I wish you could know what it means to be me  
Then you'd see and agree, every man should be free.

I wish I could give all I'm longing to give,  
I wish I could live like I'm longing to live,  
I wish I could do all the things I can do,  
Though I'm way overdue I'd be starting anew.

I wish I could be like a bird in the sky,  
How sweet it would be if I found I could fly,  
I'd soar to the sun, and look down at the sea,  
Then I'd sing 'cause I'd know how it feels to be free.

## **Sit Down, Servant**

Bonds originally arranged the *Five Creek Freedmen Songs* in the 1940's for soprano Hortense Love. Love writes, "In the Southwest of the United States lies a wildly beautiful and fabulous strip of land...Dwelling there near Muskogee is a group of people called 'Creek-Freedman,' who are both Creek Indian and Black. From early childhood, I have heard my grandmother, a Native herself, sing these songs in Creek and English, so for my New York Town Hall debut, I asked Miss Margaret Bonds to make arrangements of them." Bonds later adapted these songs, originally for piano and voice, for orchestra, choir, and the great Leontyne Price, who recorded them.

## **Text**

Sit down servant, I can't sit down,  
I can't sit down, my soul's so happy Lord, I can't sit down.

That ain't all you know you promised me,  
Promised me a long white rose and a pair of wings  
Go over yonder angel, get my servant's wings,  
Place them on my servant's frame, now servant do sit down.

Sit down servant, I can't sit down,  
I can't sit down, my soul's so happy Lord, I can't sit down.

That ain't all you know you promised me,  
Promised me a starry crown and a golden harp,  
Go over yonder angel, get my servant's crown,  
Place them on my servant's head, now servant do sit down.

Sit down servant, I can't sit down,  
I can't sit down, my soul's so happy Lord, I can't sit down.

**Boston's #1 Best Place to Work**

**Boston Business Journal**

**Driven by excellence,  
*inspired by community***

**Our consultants proudly support  
the Back Bay Chorale!**



**sei.com**



## Advancing the spirit of community.

Our Bridges ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages) Chorus gives students an opportunity to make vocal music, improve their English language skills, and develop friendships with singers. A partnership with the Boston Public Library, the program helps immigrants, refugees, and others to become integrated with the Boston community. These in-person classes are FREE for all participants, and no previous music skills are required. The Bridges ESOL Chorus performs at the Boston Public Library Fund, our Christmas concerts, and at U.S. Naturalization Ceremonies.

**To learn more, visit [bbcoston.org/bridges](http://bbcoston.org/bridges)**

### DR. RIIKKA PIETILÄINEN CAFFREY

BRIDGES ESOL DIRECTOR & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR



**D**r. Pietiläinen Caffrey was born in Kemi, Finland, and sang and toured with the acclaimed Finnish choir Philomela. She immigrated to the U.S. to pursue music studies. While in New York, she founded and conducted Las Sirenas, a women's chamber choir, at the City College of New York, premiering works by American and Finnish composers. She has held academic positions at American University in Beirut, Lebanon, Whitman College in Walla Walla, WA, and Bunker Hill

Community College in Boston. She is Associate Professor of the Practice and Director of Choral and Vocal Performance at Boston College.

## Our Orchestra Musicians

---

### Violin I

David Rubin  
Roksana Sudol  
Paola Caballero

### Violin II

Lilit Hartunian  
Paula Oakes  
Nicola Payne

### Viola

Emily Rome  
Joy Grimes

### Cello

Nicole Cariglia  
Agnes Kim

### Bass

Robb Aistrup

### Flute/Piccolo

Jessica Lizak

### Oboe/English Horn

Jennifer Slowick

### Clarinet

Amy Advocat

### Bassoon

Sam Childers

### Horn

Clark Mathews

### Trumpet

Dana Oakes

### Timpani

Bob Schulz

### Harp

Lishan Tan

### Contractor

Robb Aistrup

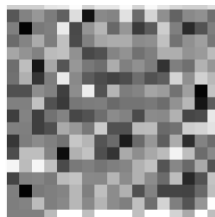
## Double the impact of your gift.

Did you know you can double your support for the Back Bay Chorale, without giving a dollar more? You can if your employer participates in our **Matching Gifts Program**.

Many corporations match employee donations to our organization. They may also match the gifts of retirees, spouses, surviving spouses, and outside directors.

If you volunteer with us, your employer may also provide us with a grant as a way to recognize your ongoing support.

[bbcboston.org/match](http://bbcboston.org/match)



# UNITING *neighborhoods* JUST AS NOTES UNITE IN A *song*

We believe in the power of voice and community,  
which is why we're proud to support the *Back Bay Chorale*.

**Jerome Bibuld**  
OWNER OF RED TREE



*Let's get in touch. Reach out today.*



617-642-5456



Jerome@redtreeboston.com



# 25

**BACKBAYCHORALE**  
THE POWER OF VOICE

# 50

# 26

## Upcoming Concerts



### **A Boston Christmas**

Friday, December 19 • 7:30pm

Saturday, December 20 • 4pm

Old South Church, Boston



### **Resounding Together: A Masterworks Sing-in Series:**

Sunday, February 8 • 2pm

Trinity Church, Boston

Saturday, March 7 • 3pm

Church of the Covenant, Boston

*Free Admission*



### **O Fortuna: A Carmina Burana Spectacular**

Friday, May 1 • 8pm

Symphony Hall, Boston

*A Collaboration with Boston Conservatory at Berklee*

[bbcoston.org/tickets](http://bbcoston.org/tickets)