



*The Circle Never Ends*

Cynthia Powell, Artistic Director and Conductor  
Jenny Clarke, Founder and Executive Director

Instrumentalists:

Allison Sniffin, piano, Francesca Ferrera, flute, and Jules Biber, cello

No flash photography. Please set cell phones to silent. This performance is being video recorded.

<b>Let Me Listen+</b>	Dan Forrest
<b>As Freedom is a Breakfastfood+</b>	Ron Perera
<b>The Sun Never Says</b> Forrest Soloist: Ashley Paskalis, soprano	Dan
<b>From the Stone Age*</b> - World Premiere Commission Stewart Robles Soloist: Rachel Porter, soprano	Zanaida
<b>Piano Trio No. 1 in D Minor, Op 48, mvt 1</b>	Felix Mendelssohn
<b>The Chambered Nautilus+</b> Beach Soloists: Hilary Baboukis, contralto; Linnea Mumma, soprano	Amy   Marcy   Cheney
<b>Our Revels Now Are Ended</b> Chilcott	Bob
<b>All Will Be Well</b>	Will Todd

\*\* Commissioned by Melodia  
+Instrumental arrangement by Allison Sniffin

## Melodia Singers

### Soprano

Ginny Bartelone  
Sasha Berger  
Shohini Bhattacharya  
Lindsay Cornelio  
Kyra DeTone  
Kate Fuglei  
Deb Howard  
Linnea Mumma  
Ashley Paskalis

Rachel Porter  
Chiara Pierangelo  
Charlotte Storch  
Sarah Wilson  
Sarah Woodruff

### Alto

Hilary Baboukis  
Cara Brownell

Veronica Cator  
Jenny Clarke  
Rebecca Hart  
Katherine Lascoutx  
Jordana Moldauer  
Alana Price  
Ruston Ropac  
Jeanne Ruskin  
Peggy Samuels

## Melodia Women's Choir History

Founded in 2003, Melodia explores and performs rarely heard music for women's voices in many different styles, and nurtures emerging women composers through commissions and performances. Under the leadership of Jenny Clarke, Executive Director, and Cynthia Powell, Artistic Director, Melodia has performed at Symphony Space, Merkin Concert Hall, DiMenna Center for Classical Music, the Church of Saint Ignatius Loyola in collaboration with Sacred Music in a Sacred Space, and others. Melodia has been heard on WQXR and WNYC radio, including as part of "Her Music: 24 Hours of Emerging Women Composers," in 2014 and again in 2015 and 2016, and seen on NBC television.

Melodia released their first commercial recording in 2014, *Lullaby*, a collection of soothing pieces selected from among the many rare and special works Melodia has performed over the first twelve years of music-making.

Melodia was selected to participate in the WNYC/WQXR Radio's Salute the ARTS Initiative (STAR) 2013 – our second STAR award. Melodia was honored to receive a special proclamation from the New York City Council in April 2018 for "delighting listeners with high quality musical performances and for fostering greater harmony throughout our community and beyond." Melodia was honored by New City Council Member Erik Bottcher in 2023 in celebration of Melodia's 20th Anniversary and for "raising women's voices and fostering greater harmony in New York City."

## Notes on the Program

"The Circle Never Ends" completes Melodia's 20th Anniversary season, a celebration of deep musical discoveries and adventures, and the creation of an extended community of musicians and audiences. In this concert, our journey encompasses music with themes of love, transformation, and the restorative power of nature.

Our journey begins with **Let Me Listen**, the first of two pieces by American composer Dan Forrest. The text by Charles Anthony Silvestri instills in us the need to listen to the stories of those we encounter "as our path's converge along this human journey."

The poet e.e. Cummings is unarguably one of the most playful, inventive, and idealistic wordsmiths of our time. In **as freedom is a breakfastfood**, his whimsical comparisons, and Ron Perera's delightful setting, bring everything into reverse – "every finger is a toe and any courage is a fear;" "hatracks into peach trees grow." Ultimately, "time is a tree, this life one leaf, but love is the sky and I am for you just so long and long enough." In spite of everything in this crazy world, love is what it's all about.

The next piece, **The Sun Never Says**, is our second by Dan Forrest. With poetry inspired by the 14th century lyrical poet Hafiz of Persia and reimagined by Dan Ladinsky, Forrest has created a soaring setting that speaks of the matchless beauty of unconditional love.

The world premiere of Dr. Zanaida Stewart Robles' piece **From the Stone Age**, lies at the heart of our concert. Robles is Melodia's tenth commissioned composer in the women composers' commissioning program and one of two composers commissioned in recognition of Melodia's 20th anniversary. Robles' setting of a poem by Alice Corbin Henderson describes what it is to be a stone once carved to represent a god, and, after time, reverts to its primal state as a stone, beautiful in and of itself without representing a deity. Robles is a composer, vocalist, and educator living in California. Melodia is honored to be among the first choruses to introduce her to New York audiences.

Our instrumental interlude follows, featuring Felix Mendelssohn's **Piano Trio No. 1 in D Minor, Op 48, mvt 1** presented by Allison Sniffin, piano; Francesca Ferrera, flute; and Jules Biber, cello.

**The Chambered Nautilus**, a major work by Amy Beach, is a setting of a poem by Oliver Wendell Holmes. He and Amy Beach were personal friends, and her setting of his poetic metaphor for human striving toward growth and freedom is one of her most brilliant works. Beach, America's first successful female composer of "high art" music, was established as an important force in music worldwide by the time she was in her mid-twenties. **The Chambered Nautilus**, composed in 1907, describes the fascinating life-cycle of a tropical sea creature that first appeared 500 million years ago. The nautilus grows by expanding its living space, creating internal shell chambers in a perfect logarithmic spiral with the body living in the last chamber. Beach's music evokes the imagery of the creature's journey amid a rolling and rumbling sea. An alto solo describes the calm, diligent work of the nautilus as it creates its shell home. "Can you find no lesson in this?" asks the poet, and in the closing stanza, the text offers an answer: "Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul... Till thou at length art free/Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!"

**Our Revels Now Are Ended**, by Bob Chilcott, with Shakespeare's words from *The Tempest*, draws us toward the end of our concert. Everything has come full circle. Soon, all our music will be heard, the gloriousness of it still rings in our ears, but the reverberations will fade, and we and they will disappear, one day. Nothing lasts. If "our little life is rounded with a sleep" as Prospero concludes in *The Tempest*, then let us dedicate our lives to that which works for the good - beauty, goodness and truth.

Our final piece, **All Will Be Well** with words and music created by British composer, Will Todd, represents our most fervent hope. Todd is known, among many other musical accomplishments,

for his arrangement of Amazing Grace performed at President Obama's Inauguration Day prayer service in 2013.

We hope that our concert offers an opportunity for respite and reflection. Beauty, wrote Dostoyevsky, "will save the world." And as Leonard Bernstein once said, "This will be our reply to violence: to make music more intensely, more beautifully, more devotedly than ever before."

Notes by Jenny Clarke and Cynthia Powell

## Texts

### Let me Listen

Charles Anthony Silvestri

We come from different places,  
You and I,  
on different paths we journey;  
let me walk beside you for a while –  
let me listen.

So briefly do our lonely paths converge,  
Yours and mine,  
along this human journey;  
what hollow loss to never hear your song –  
let me listen.

Let me listen,  
let me listen as you tell your story:  
Your triumphs and your tears,  
Your trials and your fears.  
Your story never has been mine to tell –  
so let me listen.

And if a silence is your choice to keep,  
then I will keep it with you;  
as long as we walk together,  
You and I,  
I will listen.

Too long you've waited, too long,  
to share your journey, your song –  
so let me listen.

### As Freedom is a Breakfast Food

e.e. Cummings

as freedom is a breakfastfood  
or truth can live with right and wrong  
or molehills are from mountains made  
—long enough and just so long  
will being pay the rent of seem  
and genius please the talentgang  
and water most encourage flame

as hatracks into peachtrees grow  
or hopes dance best on bald men's hair

or as the seeing are the blind  
and robins never welcome spring  
nor flatfolk prove their world is round  
nor dingsters die at break of dong  
and common's rare and millstones float  
—long enough and just so long  
tomorrow will not be too late

worms are the words but joy's the voice  
down shall go which and up come who

and every finger is a toe  
and any courage is a fear  
—long enough and just so long  
will the impure think all things pure  
and hornets wail by children stung

breasts will be breasts thighs will be thighs  
deeds cannot dream what dreams can do  
—time is a tree (this life one leaf)  
but love is the sky and i am for you  
just so long and long enough

### **The Sun Never Says**

Daniel Ladinsky

Even  
After  
All this time  
The sun never says to the earth,  
“You owe  
Me.”

Look  
What happens  
With a love like that,  
It lights the  
Whole  
Sky.

### **From the Stone Age**

Alice Corbin Henderson

Long ago some one carved me in the semblance of a god.  
I have forgot now what god I was meant to represent.  
I have no consciousness now but of stone, sunlight, and rain;  
The sun baking my skin of stone, the wind lifting my hair;  
The sun's light is hot upon me,  
The moon's light is cool,  
Casting a silver-laced pattern of light and dark  
Over the planes of my body:  
My thoughts now are the thoughts of a stone,  
My substance now is the substance of life itself;  
I have sunk deep into life as one sinks into sleep;  
Life is above me, below me, around me,  
Moving through my pores of stone—  
It does not matter how small the space you pack life in,  
That space is as big as the universe—  
Space, volume, and the overtone of volume  
Move through me like chords of music,  
Like the taste of happiness in the throat,  
Which you fear to lose, though it may choke you—  
(In the cities this is not known,  
For space there is emptiness,  
And time is torment) . . . . .  
Since I became a stone  
I have no need to remember anything—  
Everything is remembered for me;  
I live and I think and I dream as a stone,  
In the warm sunlight, in the grey rain;  
All my surfaces are touched to softness  
By the light fingers of the wind,  
The slow dripping of rain:  
My body retains only faintly the image  
It was meant to represent,  
I am more beautiful and less rigid,  
I am a part of space,  
Time has entered into me,  
Life has passed through me—  
What matter the name of the god I was meant to represent?

## **The Chambered Nautilus**

Oliver Wendell Holmes

This is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,  
Sails the unshadowed main, --  
The venturous bark that flings  
On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings  
In gulfs enchanted, where the Siren sings,  
And coral reefs lie bare,  
Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their  
streaming hair.

Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;  
Wrecked is the ship of pearl!  
And every chambered cell,  
Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,  
As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,  
Before thee lies revealed, --  
Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt unsealed!

Year after year beheld the silent toil  
That spread his lustrous coil;  
Still, as the spiral grew,  
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,  
Stole with soft step its shining archway through,  
Built up its idle door,  
Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the old  
no more.

## **Our Revels Now Are Ended**

William Shakespeare

Our revels now are ended. These our actors,  
As I foretold you, were all spirits and  
Are melted into air, into thin air:  
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,  
Child of the wandering sea,  
Cast from her lap, forlorn!  
From thy dead lips a clearer note is born  
Than ever Triton blew from wreathèd horn!  
While on mine ear it rings,  
Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice that  
sings: --

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,  
As the swift seasons roll!  
Leave thy low-vaulted past!  
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,  
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,  
Till thou at length art free,  
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!

## **All Will Be Well**

Will Todd

There's a bloom that never fades  
There's a dream that stays  
There's a hope which carries me

And all will be well  
All will be well  
All will be well, all will be well

Through all my days  
So I will bring a shining light  
A story new to tell  
In the end all things shall pass

I am here beside you  
I am holding you  
I will be the hand of love in all you do

## Meet the Directors



**Jenny Clarke**, Founder and Executive Director of Melodia, combined her lifelong love of choral music and her career as an arts administrator to form Melodia in 2003. She has a B.A. in music and English from Leeds University, England, and an M.A. in arts management from New York University. In addition to singing with Melodia – her true passion – Jenny has sung with the Royal Choral Society in England, and Riverside Choral Society in New York, performing at venues including Avery Fisher Hall (Mostly Mozart Festival), Alice Tully Hall, Carnegie Hall, Symphony Space, and Merkin Concert Hall.

Jenny has worked extensively in arts administration in music, theater, and dance in London including at the South Bank Concert Halls, the Royal Court Theatre and London Sinfonietta, and – for the past 32 years – in New York, including at Symphony Space, the NYC Arts in Education Roundtable, and Chamber Music America. Jenny is the Executive Director of the National Flute Association.



**Cynthia Powell**, Conductor and Artistic Director, celebrates her 20th season with Melodia. A graduate of Westminster Choir College, she has worked with many musical groups in the NY metropolitan area and has conducted major works for chorus and orchestra. She has served on the guest faculty at Sarah Lawrence College, led the St. George's Choral Society in NYC, and was a guest conductor at the International Choral Festival in Havana, Cuba. She is also the Artistic Director of the Stonewall Chorale, and Organist/Choirmaster of Temple Sinai in Tenafly, NJ. Her passion for music and commitment to the choral art is

coupled with a desire to generate awareness and funds for timely causes, and she has produced recitals, oratorios and concerts to benefit Bailey House, a homeless residence for people with AIDS, for Doctors Without Borders, the Pastors for Peace Cuba Caravan, and Water is Life, Kenya.

## Meet the Ensemble



**Allison Sniffin** is a frequent arranger for Melodia Women's Choir and was the inaugural composer for Melodia's Women's Composer Commission Series (*Oyeme con los ojos: Sor Juana*, 2006). In 2019 Melodia commissioned *Eko*, an atmospheric piece choreographed and danced by Stephanie Larriere. Allison tours and performs with Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble. She is the principal transcriber of Meredith Monk's music, preparing and arranging her scores for ensembles such as the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Master Chorale, Kronos Quartet, Western Wind Ensemble, Bang on a Can and Alarm Will Sound.



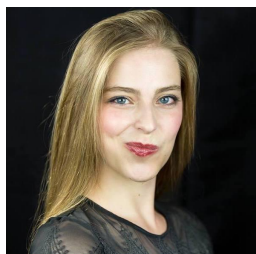
Flutist **Francesca Ferrara** received a Master of Music degree in Contemporary Performance from Manhattan School of Music, and a Bachelor of Music degree from Boston Conservatory. She was a finalist for the 2021 New York Flute Club Competition and has performed with a number of ensembles around NYC, including Cygnus Ensemble, Argento New Music Project, Sound Icon, Access Contemporary Music, ShoutHouse, Dance Theatre of Harlem, and Camerata Washington Heights Orchestra. From 2020 to 2022, Francesca was a performer in residence for the Louis Moreau Institute in New Orleans, and in August of 2018, she was a resident fellow in the Contemporary Performance Institute at Brandeis University. As a committed advocate for new music, she frequently collaborates with composers and has premiered over 75 new works. With a passion for collaboration and sharing new music with a wider community, Francesca co-produced Blank Canvas at Future Space, a concert series dedicated to presenting diverse programs by up and coming composers and ensembles from around NYC. Along with performing, Francesca teaches private flute lessons and is on the faculty of Willan Academy of Music.



**Jules Biber** is a cellist, educator and musical curator based in Brooklyn, NY. An accomplished chamber musician and soloist, Jules' versatility in early, standard and modern repertoire, as well as non-classical styles, makes her sought-after for a variety of high-profile concert and recording projects, and her deep commitment to inclusive community has made her one of the city's progressive curators of classical music spaces.



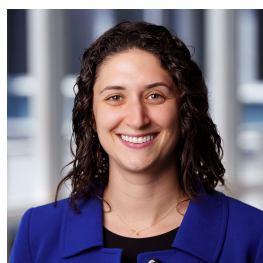
## Meet the Melodia Singers



**Hilary Baboukis** is thrilled to be singing again with Melodia! Ms. Baboukis is the Associate Director of Music at the Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in NYC, the Administrator of Great Music under a Byzantine Dome, and an Adjunct Professor of Voice at Wagner College, Staten Island. As a professional mezzo-soprano, she performs frequently with ensembles and organizations across New York and New Jersey. Ms. Baboukis studied at Columbia (NYC), the American University in Cairo, and Oklahoma State University (Stillwater). She lives in Jersey City, where she also teaches voice and piano privately.



**Ginny Bartolone** has been a member of Melodia since 2020 and is delighted to be back performing with the group for the third time. She currently works full time as a writer and has been singing with choirs across New York and New Jersey since childhood. She studied theatre at Drew University where she performed with a variety of choral and a cappella groups. She is also currently completing a book about her four long-distance hikes across Northern Spain.



**Sasha Berger** is thrilled to return to Melodia after a pandemic hiatus - she has sung with the group since 2018. Sasha has been a singer ever since she could speak, purportedly belting out Frank Sinatra's "New York, New York" from her Maryland bathtub. She has previously sang in school choirs, teen musicals, high school and college a cappella groups, and adult improvisation ensembles. In addition to singing, Sasha enjoys making pottery, cuddling with her dog, and cooking. Sasha currently works as a Policy Advisor for the New York State Department of Labor, where she helps guide New York State's transition to a just, green economy.



After a long hiatus, **Shohini Goldin Bhattacharya** is thrilled to rejoin Melodia this season. A Melodia member since 2014, she started her vocal training in the Hindustani tradition of India, and later participated in select choirs throughout middle and high school. After a stint in college a cappella at Johns Hopkins University, she worked for UBS in London and joined the bank's Choral Society. Now working in startup marketing in NYC, she is grateful for the support of her family and friends who always encouraged her to continue making music!

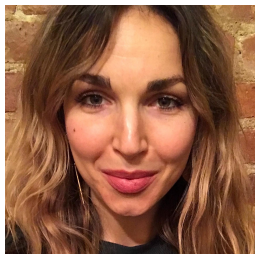


**Cara Brownell** joined Melodia in 2013. Choral singing and harmony have been her intercessors from an early age, in church & community choirs, high school (and a folk rock band, of course), SUNY Binghamton University Chorus and Women's Madrigal Ensemble. Cara's guitar-playing soprano sister nourished the pathway! Transplanted from Saratoga Springs in the 1970's, early years in NYC found her accompanying dance classes at NYU, Marymount Manhattan College, active in the downtown Soho/Lower East Side performance scene (Simone Forti, Douglas Dunn, Collaborative Projects, Inc.) and teaching vocal and movement improvisation in her loft. Cara is a founding member of the Lafayette Inspirational

Ensemble, a gospel choir based at historic Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, Ft. Greene, Brooklyn and also sings in the classical Lafayette Choir.



**Veronica Cator** is delighted to be participating in Melodia again this fall after joining the group in the spring. She currently works in music publishing while also composing her own works, and as choir music has always been a source of inspiration for her, she looks forward to every Melodia rehearsal. She studied music composition at Baldwin Wallace University where she also performed with a variety of choral ensembles. She also loves reading and trying new recipes.



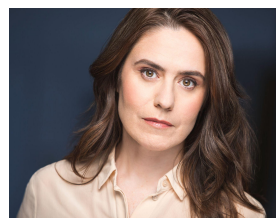
**Lindsay Cornelio** just recently joined Melodia in the fall of 2021 and is so happy to be singing again. Lindsay comes from a very musical family and was part of choirs and musical groups her whole life. Lindsay currently lives in Brooklyn and is the Operations & Human Resources Director at a non-profit law firm. Lindsay is passionate about social justice, and loves live music, going out to dance, meeting new people, traveling, culture, running, yoga, meditation, nature and being outside.



**Kyra M. DeTone** has been a member of Melodia since 2021 and is delighted to join the group for her third in-person season. Currently, she is attending law school where she attempts to recruit other law students with vocal talent to rekindle a non-legal hobby by joining Melodia. Before law school, Kyra spent five years developing and executing grant-seeking strategies for an education justice non-profit. She double majored in Art History and Gender, Sexuality, & Women's Studies at Union College and has been singing in musical groups since age seven. When she's not working on her amateur singing career or crying into a legal treatise, you can find Kyra obsessively photographing her dog, Harley, cooking (and eating), and drinking way too much coffee.



**Kate Fuglei** is an actress and singer whose most recent appearance was as Anna Akhmatova in the La Mama production of *Beautiful Lady*, with music and lyrics by Elizabeth Swados, directed by Anne Bogart. Kate was in the First National Broadway tour of *Spring Awakening*, directed by Michael Mayer. She has performed leading roles in many regional theaters, among them the Guthrie, Arena Stage, La Jolla Playhouse, McCarter Theater, Portland Stage and the Utah Shakespeare Festival. She has appeared in over forty roles on television, in feature films and short films, most recently on *Star Trek: Picard* and in the short film *I Live On Your Visits*, based on a Dorothy Parker short story. She is currently at work on a chamber musical with the composer Leslie Steinweiss, *In the Blink of An Eye*, based on her personal experience with gun violence. (imdb, [katefuglei.com](http://katefuglei.com), [intheblink.net](http://intheblink.net))



**Rebecca Hart** - delighted to be a new Melodian and to be singing choral music for the first time since high school! She is an actor, singer/songwriter (fronting the 'prog-folk' act *Rebecca Hart & the Wrong Band*), and emerging lyricist/librettist for theatre & opera. Recent onstage credits include the Public Theater's national tour of *SWEAT* by Lynn Nottage, *The Revolutionists* (CT

Critics Circle 'Best Ensemble' Award), the original solo show *How To Read Tarot Cards* (commission/residency, The Cell Theatre), and concerts at the Irish Arts Center, the Rockwood Music Hall, and the Brooklyn Americana Festival. Her original songs have appeared in productions with The Civilians, Target Margin, Woolly Mammoth, Village Theatre Seattle, Sprkbox Festival Oslo, and others. Her album *The Magician's Daughter* is available to stream. Highlights of the past year include a National Playwriting Award Honorable Mention and an Irish Arts Center grant/residency for her musical *IRON JOHN: an american ghost story* (w/composer Jacinth Greywoode); her first (ever) Law & Order audition, launching her side business Clear Tarot NYC, and joining Melodia.



**Deb Howard** retired from a career in affordable housing and community development and sought to join another choir, which would be both challenging and rewarding. She has been singing in choirs since she was five years old and has sung at Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church in both the Inspirational Ensemble and classic choirs for 40 years. After attending several concerts given by Melodia, she knew that this was the choir of which she wanted to be a part as the sound was so beautiful and the repertoire amazing! She is very glad to be in this wonderful choir!



**Katherine Lascoutx** has recently returned to choral singing, a lifelong love, after years of singing mostly solo or in small, informal gatherings. In one way or another, her life has always been filled with music. This is her first season singing with Melodia, and it has been an exciting challenge to work on these complex, intricate pieces as part of such a vibrant, dedicated, and supportive musical community.



**Jordana Moldauer** joined Melodia in 2014 and is thrilled to be singing once again with such a talented group of women. Jordana was born and raised in Switzerland in a family who couldn't wait to introduce her to music. Her love of singing began at age 3, when she first watched *The Little Mermaid* and declared that she too was meant to be a singer rather than a harpist or cellist as her parents had initially thought. She joined the Geneva conservatory children's choir shortly thereafter and has been singing ever since, whether it be as part of a choir, on her own, or more recently to her one year-old daughter who is especially fond of Elvis. A graduate of the University of Geneva and Fordham Law School, Jordana practices as an in-house media and entertainment attorney and also teaches as an adjunct professor at Fordham Law School.



**Linnea Mumma** joined Melodia this fall and is thrilled to be singing with the group. She has been singing as long as she can remember, beginning formal training as a middle schooler and continuing to this day. She graduated from Kenyon College in 2022 with degrees in music and English, where she participated in Chamber Singers as a soloist and choir member, performed every semester in Opera and Musical Theater workshop, and won the 2019 and 2021 Knox County Symphony Young Musicians Competition. She has participated in numerous singing programs, including Assisi Performing Arts, Baldwin Wallace Conservatory Vocal Intensive, Music Mountain, and New Jersey Performing Arts Center.

She now lives in Brooklyn and works as a PR executive for Anat Gerstein Inc., providing communications services to exclusively nonprofit clients.



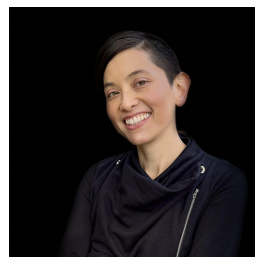
**Ashley Paskalis** had been singing with Melodia since fall 2010. Singing since grade school, Ashley studied vocal performance and sang in the Treble Choir at Wagner College, where she graduated in 2006 with a degree in Arts Administration. Currently working in healthcare PR/media relations, she spends her free time playing softball and of course, singing with Melodia. She'd like to thank her NYC family for continuing to support our concerts.



**Chiara Pierangelo** started singing at a very young age in various vocal groups in her hometown of Padova, Italy. Since 2009 she has been singing with “Cantus Anthimi”, conducted by Livio Picotti, with which she made three recordings of Medieval music and Josquin Desprez’s works. She is a founding member of “SolEnsemble”, a female vocal group performing mostly a cappella medieval and contemporary music. Chiara earned a Master’s in Ancient Greek Literature at the University of Padova and has been studying classical voice with Elisabetta Tiso, Francesco Signor, Rosetta Pizzo, and Sandro Naglia.



**Rachel Porter** joined Melodia in 2015. She first began singing on children’s albums and commercials as a child, joined a children’s choir at age 7, and has been singing in choirs ever since. While studying piano performance at University of Southern California, she sang with the USC Chamber Singers, was a founding member of an a cappella group, and performed in many composition and conducting recitals as both a pianist and vocalist. In NYC, she has performed with groups such as Jubilee Chorus and Downtown Voices at Trinity Church Wall Street. In addition to music, she has worked in education, publishing, and the nonprofit world.



**Alana Yu-lan Price** is delighted to be joining Melodia for the first time this season. Previously she has sung with Cornerstone Chorale in Washington Heights, the International Orange Chorale of San Francisco, Anna Crusis Feminist Choir in Philadelphia, the Vocal Arts Ensemble of Ann Arbor, Golosá in Chicago, the youth wing of Coro Nacional de Cuba in Havana, and an early music group called Cantatrix at Swarthmore College. As a child she had the formative experience of participating in Patricia O’Toole’s creative dissertation project on feminist and post-structuralist approaches to power relations in choral settings. Alana is managing editor at *Truthout*, a nonprofit news site that works to spark social change by revealing systemic injustice through in-depth investigative reporting and critical analysis.



**Ruston Ropac** is a dynamic explorer of eclectic vocal soundscapes. She is the vocalist for the BlackBox Ensemble, a NYC-based chamber music collective, and Four and Twenty Strings, Long Island’s premier early music ensemble. She holds a Master of Music degree in Contemporary Vocal Performance from the

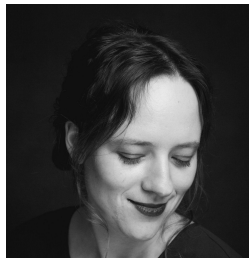
Manhattan School of Music and a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Redlands. She currently lives in Manhattan and enjoys writing poetry and playing tabletop games in her spare time.



**Jeanne Ruskin** has appeared on Broadway, and in many roles for the Roundabout Theatre, regional theaters, summer stock, and television. She has taught acting, voice and speech in colleges and universities and as a private coach. She is founder/artistic director of RFTC, Inc/Red Flute Theatre, and has presented four productions to date, including “Awakenings”, her dramatization of Kate Chopin’s 1899 novel *The Awakening*: <https://bit.ly/3Hj435T>. As a teenager she toured South America with the Michigan Youth Chorale. She toured with the USO during the Vietnam years. She performed as Ma Joad in “The Grapes of Wrath” in Moscow. Her travels changed her life. She is very happy to be singing again with Melodia (of which she has been a member since 2010). Music is truly the international language and we need the arts now more than ever.



**Peggy Samuels** feels privileged to sing with such a talented group of women and is excited to be part of bringing new compositions and arrangements to life. She spent several decades teaching poetry at Drew University and is enthralled to unleash the expressiveness of poems transformed into music. She and her husband, Lester, enjoy exploring the back roads of Vermont on their e-bikes.



**Charlotte Storch** is excited to be making her Melodia debut! An attorney in her third year of practice, Charlotte sings with the St. Bart’s Singers at St. Bartholomew’s Church and with the Oratorio Society of New York, has toured to England with the choir of St. John the Divine, and has studied Italian, English, and Spanish madrigals with Le Chant des Oyseaux in Chatillon-sur-Chalaronne, France. She has a special passion for Baroque and sacred music and also loves performing new music and works by underrepresented composers.



**Sarah Wilson** is excited to join Melodia this season. As a senior data analyst, she is thrilled to be singing again and delighted to explore new choral repertoire. Previously, Sarah has sung with the Handel Choir of Baltimore, the Capitol Hill Chorale, and St Lawrence University's Laurentian Singers.



**Sarah Woodruff** is happy to be singing with Melodia! She was a member of multiple choirs during her time at Penn State University, and has been singing most of her life. After ten years in book publishing, she joined a Brooklyn-based environmental nonprofit to work on outreach around NYC's Curbside Composting program (which will be citywide by October 2024!). She can frequently be found writing, hiking, and playing guitar.

## **More About Melodia**

### **Board of Directors**

Blessing Agunwamba  
Jenny Clarke  
Sally Collins  
Cynthia L. Cooper  
Kerry Fristoe  
Maggie Ress  
Susan Xenarios

Advisor to the Board of Directors: Cynthia Powell

### **Staff**

Jennifer Clarke, Executive Director  
Cynthia Powell, Artistic Director  
Allison Sniffin, Pianist  
Kayla Oderah, Administrator

### **Advisory Committee**

Kathleen Chalfant  
Lauren Flanigan  
Deborah Horne  
Laura Kaminsky  
Tania León  
Meredith Monk  
Kathleen Supové

### **Donors**

Melodia is extremely grateful for the generous support of our donors.

### **Dream Maker**

Blessing Agunwamba  
May Lee Vanden Broeck  
Suzanne Bennett in memory of Susana Meyer  
Kenneth Chase  
Jenny Clarke  
Amy Ellison & Trudy Sanders  
Frieda Holober  
James Lader  
Cynthia Powell  
Emily Segal & Andrew Ellis  
Susan Xenarios

## **Music Makers (including the Commissioning Fund)**

Suzanne Bennett  
Cathy & Joseph Christi  
Cindy Cooper  
William Lynch  
Chiara Pierangelo & Sandro Naglia  
Deborah A. Monk  
Taisiya Pushkar  
Scott Robertson  
Bernice Rohret  
Floyd Rumohr & Paco Arroyo  
Serra Schlanger  
Lyle Schoenfeldt & Wanda Hinshaw  
Kyung-A Yoo

## **General Support**

Angela Bonavoglia	Alexis Greene	Ellen Ress
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Martha Burns	Lanny Harrison	Peggy Samuels
Donna Campbell	Lynne Hayden-Finley	Liz Schalet &
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Rita Costanzi	Gaetano Jacobs	Nancy Simpson
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Lazebnik	Rosemary Palladino & Mariann	Janet Zaleon
	Brennick	

Thanks to all our donors, including the most recent online contributors who may not be listed here.

## **Institutional Supporters:**

This program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council. Special thanks to Erik Bottcher, New York City Council Member District 3.



**Donate to Melodia's 20th Anniversary appeal and help us find and sing music for women's voices now and in the future.** Your fully tax-deductible donation helps us to perform gorgeous, rarely-heard music for women's voices and commission composers to write new works. Please help by mailing a check to the address below. Make checks payable to Melodia Women's Choir.

You can also donate with a credit card at our website: [www.melodiawomenschoirnyc.org](http://www.melodiawomenschoirnyc.org) or via Venmo: Melodia Women's Choir NYC @MelodiaWomensChoir. Your support truly makes a difference!

### **Special Thanks**

Special thanks to all those who have helped make this concert possible, including Allison Sniffin for instrumental arrangements; Cindy Cooper; Taisiya Pushkar, the staff at Holy Apostles Church and St. John's Lutheran Church; and the Melodia Board of Directors.

Postcard design: Jill Falcone Vedric. Thanks to Melodia singers for all the extras, including: Section leaders: Ashley Paskalis, Chiara Pierangelo, Jeanne Ruskin, Jenny Clarke; stage coordinator, Lindsay Cornelio, program notes, Jenny Clarke & Cynthia Powell; marketing and social media, Kayla Oderah.

### **Audition for Melodia**

Do you love to sing? We are a women-powered organization exclusively dedicated to exploring, creating, and performing exemplary music for women's voices. Come and explore this wonderful repertoire with us! We're auditioning experienced choral singers in December/January. Contact [JenniferClarke446@gmail.com](mailto:JenniferClarke446@gmail.com) to schedule an audition.

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[www.melodiawomenschoirnyc.org](http://www.melodiawomenschoirnyc.org)  
[womenschoir@mindspring.com](mailto:womenschoir@mindspring.com)



## Melodia Women's Choir

### **2003-04**

Salut Printemps ~ Our first season, and a celebration of spring.

Monteverdi to Meredith Monk

Participation in Festival of Women and Girls' Choirs, NYC

### **2004-05**

November Song ~ Rachmaninov, Holst, Elgar and more

Sirens ~ Songs of the Sea, haunting tales of the deep, with piano, harp, flute and bassoon

### **2005-06**

Twilight in the Garden of Dreams ~ celebrating Fanny Mendelssohn-Hensel's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday, with piano and strings

Participation in Wall to Wall Igor Stravinsky at Symphony Space

A Thousand Sweet Refrains ~ with four French horns, Brahms to Stravinsky

Participation in Carmina Burana at Merkin Concert Hall

### **2006-07**

Óyeme con los ojos (Hear Me with Your Eyes) ~ world premiere commission by Allison Sniffin, Merkin Concert Hall, Queens Library

Shout, Sister, Shout! ~ Girl Groups from 12<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries,

Hildegard von Bingen to the Dixie Chicks

### **2007-08**

Sweet Interlude ~ featuring all-female performance of Vivaldi Gloria, and world premiere commission by Becca Schack

Force of Nature, celebrating the living world, 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> century works

Participation in Wall to Wall Bach at Symphony Space

Guest artists at Women's History Month Celebration of NYC

Participation in Holst The Planets at Symphony Space

### **2008-09**

Wrapped in Song ~ Britten's Ceremony of Carols and works by Thompson, Tormis, Holst and Kodály

Guest artists at Women's History Month Celebration of NYC

Visions of Eternity ~ with orchestra, featuring Messiaen Trois Petites Liturgies,

Church of St. Ignatius Loyola/Sacred Music in a Sacred Space

### **2009-10**

Notes Upon the Breeze ~ world premiere commission by

Chris Lastovicka, plus works by Pergolesi, Holst and Raminsh

Songs from the Heart ~ Merkin Concert Hall, works by Schumann, Brahms,

Fanny Hensel Mendelssohn, and US premiere of songs by Tofiq Guliyev

### **2010-2011**

Timeless ~ Britten Missa Brevis, works by Poulenc, Szymko, Casals, Fauré, plus world premiere commission by Becca Stevens

Mornings with You ~ world premiere commission by Christina Whitten Thomas,  
works by Meredith Monk, Ned Rorem, Charles M. Loeffler

### **2011-2012**

Journey ~ Amy Beach, The Chambered Nautilus, world premiere by Cathy Aks,  
Colors of the Sun ~ NY premiere by Cecilia McDowall, plus works by Whitacre, Fauré, Holst, Verdi

### **2012-2013 – 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season**

Questions About Angels ~ world premiere commission by Sally Lamb McCune, plus early American sacred songs and medieval selections

A Breath of Spring ~ world premiere commission by Nina Siniakova, plus works by Stravinsky, Duruflé, Debussy, Rutter, and Daley.

### **2013-2014**

Visions of Peace ~ celebrating Britten 100, plus works by Holst and Csonka, and jazz samba selections.

The Poet's Song ~ World premiere commission by Errollyn Wallen, plus American Songbook favorites

### **2014-2015**

Windsong ~ works by Franz Biebl, Gwyneth Walker, Peter Warlock, Ola Gjeilo and more.

Released our first commercial CD – Lullaby

### **2015-2016**

¡Alegría!

Works by Susa, Núñez, Chilcott, Carrillo, and more.

With Vox Nova Girls' Choir

Cassandra

World premiere commission by Hilary Purrington, plus works by Meredith Monk and Emma Lou Diemer.

### **2016-2017**

Autumn Rhapsody

Featuring Vivaldi's Magnificat, works by Ola Gjeilo, Rudi Tas, Tõnu Kõrvits, Eleanor Daley, & arrangement of "Largo" for NY Philharmonic 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Awakening The Spirit

Visions for upper voice choir, harp and strings ~ John Rutter, (US premiere)

The Dancers ~ Grace Williams

Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda ~ Gustav Holst

### **2017-2018**

#### **15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season**

Autumn Fire

Works by Fanny & Felix Mendelssohn, Aiblinger, and Rheinberger

The Harmony of Morning

Works by Melodia commissioned composers Christina Whitten Thomas and Sally Lamb McCune; early work by Elliott Carter; U.S. premiere by Paul Halley

### **2018-2019**

**Where Shadow Chases Light Red Bird** – world premiere commission by Cevanne Horrocks-Hopayian, NY premiere by Deanna Witkowski, works by György Orbán, Eric Whitacre, Gustav Holst, and Elena Kats-Chernin

## **Gloria - Lifting the Veil on Vivaldi's Masterpiece**

### **2019-2020**

**Incantations** – world premiere commission by Allison Sniffin. U.S. Works by C.V. Stanford, Robin Milford and Mediaeval Baebes.

From **fall 2019-2021**, Melodia's concert programs were on hiatus due to the pandemic. The choir produced a selection of virtual choir video recordings during this time.

### **2021-2022**

**Sun, Moon, and Stars**

**Light of a Brand New Day** - Reimagining American roots music for women's voices with the Melodia Bluegrass Band!

### **2022-2023**

**A Winter's Welcome** - Featuring spoken word performed by a cast of NYC actors including poems by Maggie Dietz, William Shakespeare, and Robert Frost. Musical selections include Mel Bonis, Katerina Gimon, John Rutter, and Barry Manilow.

**Always Something Sings** - 20th Anniversary concert - stories of courageous women and their achievements. Music by Hildegard von Bingen, Florence B. Price, Margaret Bonds, Abbie Betinis, Ola Gjeilo, and Emma Lou Diemer, excerpts from Melodia-commissioned works by Allison Sniffin and Cevanne Horrocks-Hopayian. Spoken word by members of Melodia.