



## *A Tapestry of Song*

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

Instrumentalists:

Janet Sora Chung, piano and organ, Rita Costanzi, harp, and Jules Biber, cello

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

**Mass in A Major, Op. 126+**

Josef Rheinberger

**Kyrie**

**Gloria**

*(Incipit, Ruston Ropac)*

**Credo**

*(Incipit, Ruston Ropac)*

**Sanctus & Benedictus**

*Soloists: Linnea Mumma, Chiara Pierangelo and Hilary Baboukis*

**Agnus Dei**

**Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda**

Gustav Holst

1) Hymn to the Dawn, 2) Hymn to the Waters

3) Hymn to Vena (the Sun), 4) Hymn of the Travellers

**Vers la Source (Harp solo)**

Marcel Tournier

**Nocturne (Instrumental Ensemble)**

Marcel Tournier

**Your Children\*\***

Emily Mason

**The Skye Boat Song+**

Bob Chilcott

**Wayfarin' Stranger+**

Traditional, arr. Reginald Unterseher

**Jubilee+**

Sally Lamb McCune

\*\* Commissioned by Melodia

+Instrumental arrangement by Allison Sniffin

### **Melodia Singers**

#### **Soprano**

Hilary Baboukis  
Shohini Goldin Bhattacharya  
Lindsay Cornelio  
Naomi Davidson  
Kyra DeTone  
Deb Howard  
Linnea Mumma  
Ashley Paskalis  
Chiara Pierangelo

Rachel Porter  
Marlowe Rodda  
Sarah Wilson  
Sarah Woodruff

#### **Alto**

Cara Brownell  
Jenny Clarke  
Emilie Gilligan  
Rebecca Hart

Katherine Lascoux  
Jordana Moldauer  
Tara Mulvaney  
Alana Price  
Ruston Ropac  
Tina Rosenberg  
Jeanne Ruskin  
Peggy Samuels  
Emily Segal  
Zarina Vildanova

### **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**

With **A Tapestry of Song**, Melodia closes its 21st season by exploring themes of connection with something greater than ourselves, of the hopes and dreams we have for the next generation, and of travel — within this world and beyond. The rich, contrasting textures of the instruments — piano, organ, harp, and cello — intertwine with our voices to weave this tapestry.

One thread running through this program is an expansive, joyful, transcendent view of humanity, our connection with each other, and our relation with the divine. Beneath this repertoire thrums the spirit of Walt Whitman, whose approach to spirituality was a major influence on both Kahlil Gibran and Gustav Holst. Like the narrator in Whitman's "Song of Myself," who invites readers on a journey, "My left hand hooking you round the waist, / My right hand pointing," Melodia invites you to join us as we travel by boat with a fleeing Scottish prince; through the sky in a cosmic chariot; down to the sea, swept along by the rushing waters; and through lands of woe, yearning for a haven free of sickness, toil, and danger.

We open our concert with Josef Gabriel Rheinberger's **Mass in A Major, Op 126**, which premiered at the 1881 Christmas Eve Mass at the Allerheiligen-Hofkirche in Munich. The Mass is emblematic of Rheinberger's affinity for liturgical music, his aptitude for vocal and choral writing, and his excellent ear for counterpoint. Graceful homophonic phrases and a strategic use of unison and "conversational" text-setting clearly communicate the wordier sung prayers of the Latin Mass, especially the Credo. This is in contrast to the more complex polyphonic moments, particularly in the Kyrie and Agnus Dei, where the music communicates the emotional subtext of the prayers being sung. The organ supports and surrounds the choir throughout the Mass, without overpowering or clouding its sound, while the cello anchors and augments it. The end result is far greater than the sum of its parts: an elegant expression of the intention of each prayer, unfolding in an almost story-like arc across the larger structure of the work.

Gustav Holst, the composer of **Hymns from the Rig Veda**, was not the only British composer looking to ancient Indian texts for inspiration in 1908. But where Holst's contemporaries filled their "India-inspired" compositions with Orientalist stereotypes while simultaneously sneering at 20<sup>th</sup>-century Indian culture, Holst approached contemporary Indian music with a deep and respectful interest. He sought out Indian musicians, pored over Indian scales, and studied Sanskrit in an effort to heed the rhythms and melodic nuances of the canonical Hindu texts. He set the hymns with harp to approximate the sound of the *tambura*, an Indian lute. And he largely eschewed hackneyed Orientalist cadences, instead exploring whole-tone scales, Dorian mode, homophony, asymmetrical ostinatos, and other features inspired by actual Indian music. This earnest engagement with Indian music and literature yielded compositions that were disparaged by some of his English peers but have been embraced by some contemporary South Asian choirs, most recently in a 2017 concert series by the Bangalore School of Music.

**Hymn to the Dawn** pays reverent homage to Ushas, the Vedic goddess of the dawn in Hinduism who, traveling in her golden chariot in the sky, gently ushers all living things over the threshold from night to day. The cascading Dorian melody of **Hymn to the Waters** evokes the constant motion of the water cycle, as rain falls and cuts channels across the earth to the ocean. This hymn references Indra, the thunderbolt-wielding god of rain, and Varuna, the god of oceans and sky who upholds the laws of the cosmos. **Hymn to Vena** paints an ecstatic, iridescent scene of the sun traveling through the misty sky and "hurling light to the farthest region." Analysts disagree over whether the Rig Veda's Vena is best understood as a sun god, a moon god, or the personification of the rainbow, but Holst makes clear in his translation and setting that he is imagining a radiant sun god. Holst's final movement, **Hymn of the Travellers**, juxtaposes a sense of yearning faith that safety and homecoming are possible with stark images of a perilous journey threatened by robbers and foes. The hymn appeals to a mighty power to "feed us and inspire us" and "lead us past pursuers unto meadows fair."

An instrumental interlude comes next: Marcel Lucien Tournier's **Vers la Source** for solo harp is followed by his **Nocturne in E-flat, (Opus 21)**, a virtuosic harpist who was equally gifted (and known) as a composer. His compositional output unsurprisingly centered around the harp, though he also wrote for various flavors of chamber ensemble and organ, with the occasional orchestral piece. This nocturne, published in 1930, is a seminal example of Tournier's compositional voice, which blends the idioms of the Romantic and Impressionist styles. The contrapuntal exchanges between cello and harp explore the striking contrasts and surprising similarities between the textures of the two (the one perhaps spikier, the other more rounded) while fully exploiting the wide tonal ranges of both instruments. The end result is a mellifluous, elegant piece — a varied soundscape which draws in the listener and creates a sense of ease and peace.

Our next piece, **Your Children**, is the world premiere of a piece by composer Emily Mason, the winner of Melodia's 2022 Women Composers' Commissioning Competition. **Your Children** is a new setting of Lebanese American writer Kahlil Gibran's poem "On Children" from his 1923 book *The Prophet*. "On Children" asserts the inherent dignity of children and their right to self-determination. The role of parents, the poem tells us, is to care for children as they grow and then to let go, to send them forth into the ever-changing world. In picturing the divine as an archer, children as the arrows, and parents as the bow, the poem confronts us with the truth that none of us can travel with our children to the future they will inhabit: it is a journey we must trust them to make

without us. Mason's setting treats this theme with a sweet and solemn grandeur, passing the melodic line back and forth among the voices to create a continual motion of separation and reconvergence, as moments of stirring harmony alternate with a simply stated melody that gives Gibran's words space to resonate.

**Skye Boat Song** began its life as a Scottish air in the 1700s called **The Cuckoo in the Grove** about a man who complains to a bird about his love life. In the 1880s, Englishman Sir Harold Boulton wrote new lyrics to the tune, recounting the story of "Bonnie Prince Charlie's" escape from Scotland to the Isle of Skye following the failure of his Jacobite uprising in 1745. This version is arranged by Bob Chilcott.

Next is a setting by Reginald Unterseher of the classic American folk song **Wayfarin' Stranger**. The origins of this haunting and plaintive tune are, like so many others, contested and ultimately unknown. The melody has been linked to various Scottish and Irish tunes, to the German hymn **A Guest on Earth I Wander**, and to songs from Black American spiritual tradition. For a brief time after the Civil War, it was known as **The Libby Prison Hymn** after a dying Union soldier scratched the lyrics into the wall of his cell. The song is an arresting combination of lament and exultation, with the singer asserting that their troubles on earth are temporary and that such joy awaits them in the next world that they have no fear of death. **Wayfarin' Stranger** remains immensely popular today—it's hard to think of a modern folk artist who has not covered it—with its enduring ability to resonate with those going through challenging times.

The final piece in our program, **Jubilee**, brings a playful modern sensibility and a sense of pageantry to folk themes and melodies. A lively tempo, mixed meter, and a few theatrical flourishes animate a simple, whimsical text adapted from traditional Appalachian songs, resulting in an upbeat, exciting piece with irresistible momentum. "Jubilee" is composed by Sally Lamb McCune, a composer and educator based in upstate New York. McCune's 2012 piece **Questions About Angels** was commissioned and performed by Melodia.

The future is uncertain, as it has always been. But as long as people gather to make art together for the sheer joy of it, we can still hope that, as Whitman wrote, "the strongest and sweetest songs yet remain to be sung."

Notes by Hilary Baboukis, Rebecca Hart, Katherine Lascoutx, and Alana Price.

## **Texts**

### **Mass in A Major, Op. 126**

#### **Kyrie**

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

#### **Gloria**

All praise and glory to God in all manifestations

#### **Credo**

An extended statement of faith

#### **Sanctus**

God is holy. God's glory is everywhere. Joy!  
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

#### **Agnus Dei**

Lamb of God, have mercy, give us peace.

### **Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda**

Gustav Holst

#### **Hymn to the Dawn**

Hear our hymn, O Goddess,  
Rich in wealth and wisdom,  
Ever young yet ancient,  
True to Law Eternal.  
Wak'ner of the songbirds,  
Ensign of the Eternal,

Draw thou near, O Fair One  
In thy radiant Chariot.  
Bring to her your off'ring;  
Humbly bow before her:  
Raise your songs of welcome  
As she comes in splendor.

#### **Hymn to the Waters**

Flowing from the firmament forth to the ocean,  
Healing all in earth and air, never halting.  
Indra, Lord of Heav'n formed their courses,  
Indra's mighty laws can never be broken.  
Cleansing waters flow ye on, hasten and help us.  
Lo, in the waters, dwelleth One,  
Knower of all on earth and sea,

Whose dread command no man may shun,  
Varuna, sovran Lord is He.  
Onward, ye waters, onward hie,  
Dance in the bright beams of the sun,  
Obey the ruler of the sky  
Who dug the path for you to run.  
Flowing from the firmament...

### **Hymn to Vena (Sun rising through the mist)**

Vena comes, born of light;  
He drives the many-colour'd clouds onward.  
Here, where the sunlight and the waters mingle,  
Our songs float up and caress the new-born  
infant.  
The child of cloud and mist appeareth on the  
ridge of the sky.

With yearning heart  
On thee we gaze, O gold-wing'd messenger of  
mighty gods. Wise men see him in their libations  
As the sacrifice mounts to the eternal heights,  
mingling with our solemn chant; He stands erect  
in highest heav'n.

### **Hymn of the Travellers**

Go thou on before us,  
Guide us on our way,  
Mighty One.  
Make our journey pleasant,  
Never let us stray.  
Wonder-worker, hearken.  
Come in thy splendor; come in thy mighty pow'r.  
Trample on the wicked,  
All who would oppose,  
Mighty One.  
Drive away the robber;  
Drive away our foes.  
Wonder-worker, hearken.  
Come in thy splendour; come in thy mighty pow'r.

He shines on the summit of creation.  
The hosts proclaim the glory of our common Father.  
He hath come to the bosom of his beloved.  
Smiling on him  
She beareth him to highest heav'n.

Clad in noble raiment, arm'd with shining weapons,  
Hurling light to the farthest region,  
Rejoicing in his radiant splendour.

As we journey onward,  
Songs to thee we raise,  
Mighty One.  
Thou didst aid our fathers.  
Guard us all our days.  
Wonder-worker, hearken.  
Come in thy splendour; come in thy mighty pow'r.  
Feed us and inspire us;  
Keep us in thy care,  
Mighty One.  
Lead us past pursuers  
Unto meadows fair.  
Wonder-worker, hearken.  
Come in thy splendour; come in thy mighty  
pow'r.

## **Our Children**

Kahlil Gebran

(And a woman who held a babe against her bosom said, Speak to us of Children. And he said) Your children are not your children. They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself. They come through you but not from you, And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts, for they have their own thoughts. You may house their bodies but not their souls, for their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.

## **They Skye Boat Song**

Sir Harold Boulton

Speed, bonnie boat, like a bird on the wing,  
Onward! the sailors cry; Carry the lad that is born  
to be king Over the sea to Skye.

Loud the winds howl, loud the waves roar,  
Thunderclaps rend the air; Baffled, our foes stand  
by the shore, Follow they will not dare.

Speed, bonnie boat, like a bird on the wing,  
Onward! the sailors cry; Carry the lad that is born  
to be king Over the sea to Skye.

Many's the lad, fought on that day Well the  
claymore did wield; When the night came,  
silently lay Dead on Culloden's field.

## **Wayfarin' Stranger**

Appalachian Folk Hymn

I'm just a poor wayfaring stranger  
while journeying through this Land of woe  
But there's no sickness toil or danger  
In that bright world to which I go.

I'm going there to see my Mother/Father,  
I'm goin' there, no more to roam,

You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make  
them like you. For life goes not backward nor tarries  
with yesterday. You are the bows from which your  
children as living arrows are sent forth.

The archer sees the mark upon the path of the  
infinite, and He bends you with His might that His  
arrows may go swift and far.

Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness;  
For even as He loves the arrow that flies, so He loves  
also the bow that is stable.

Speed, bonnie boat, like a bird on the wing, Onward!  
the sailors cry; Carry the lad that is born to be king  
Over the sea to Skye.

Though the waves leap, soft shall ye sleep, Ocean's a  
royal bed. Rocked in the deep, Flora will keep Watch  
by your weary head.

Speed, bonnie boat, like a bird on the wing, Onward!  
the sailors cry; Carry the lad that is born to be king  
Over the sea to Skye.

I know dark clouds will gather o'er me,  
I know my way lies rough and steep  
But Beauteous Fields lie out before me  
Where God's redeemed their vigils keep.

I'm only going over Jordan  
I'm only going over home.

### **Jubilee**

Anonymous

All out on that ol rail-road, All out on that sea,  
All out on that ol rail-road, Far as I can see,  
Swing and turn Jubilee, Live and learn Jubilee

Hardest work I ever done, Workin' on a farm  
Easiest work I ever done, Swing my true love's  
arm  
Swing and turn Jubilee, Live and learn Jubilee

Coffee grows on a white oak tree,  
Sugar runs in brandy  
Girls as sweet as a lump of gold,  
boys as sweet as candy.

If I had a needle and thread, fine as I could sew  
I'd sew my true love to my side  
And down this creek I'd go

Some will come on Saturday night,  
some will come on Sunday  
If you give'em half a chance,  
they'll be back on Monday

Saddle up my ol' gray horse, who will be my rider?  
Ride him down to the ol'still house  
and get a jug of cider



## 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 21st 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. At home as both a conductor and an organist, she freelances in a number of area churches, including Holy Apostles, Riverside, St. Luke in the Fields, and Church of the Ascension, and will give a recital at All Saints' in Glen Rock, NJ on June 1.

## Meet the Ensemble



Dr. **Janet Sora Chung** is an organist, pianist and violinist in New York City where she is the co-artistic director of the [Christopher Street Collegium](#), an ensemble that vivifies the sacred works of Bach, Buxtehude and Couperin among others. Chung's interpretations of Messiaen and Bach have met with acclaim. She has performed at St. Mary the Virgin, St. Ignatius of Loyola Church, SUNY Purchase Performing Arts Center, the University of Scranton, Winspear Centre and Riverside Church. She earned her Doctorate of Musical Arts from the Manhattan School of Music, studying with McNeil Robinson and garnering the Bronson Ragan Award for outstanding ability in organ performance. She loves to arrange pieces for solo organ and for organ and saxophone duo. To expand this repertoire, she and Jay Rattman (saxophone) have commissioned or premiered works by Walter Hulse, Rachel Laurin, James Chirillo and transcribed pieces by Debussy and others. She recently premiered her arrangement of Bach's Goldberg Variations for the 200th anniversary of St. John's Lutheran Church's where she serves as Music Director & Organist. In addition, she is Cantor-Organist of the New York Finnish Lutheran Congregation and Director of the Contemporary Ensemble at Holy Trinity Church:

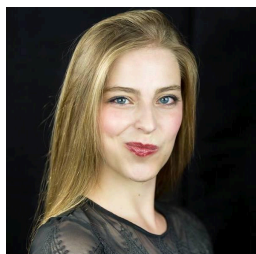


Through her depth of expression as an internationally acclaimed harp soloist, recitalist, chamber musician, actor, teacher and writer, harpist **Rita Costanzi** is recognized as “an artist of immense gifts,” Vancouver Sun. Costanzi's training began at an early age under the guidance of her father, the noted violist Francis Tursi, and harpist Eileen Malone. After graduating from the Eastman School of Music, she furthered her studies with Bernard Zighera, Marcel Grandjany, and in France on an ITT International Fellowship with Jacqueline Borot. She was twice winner of the American Harp Society's National Competition and recipient of the Lily Laskine Award for the most outstanding solo harp recital. Former Principal Harp of the Vancouver Symphony and CBC Radio Orchestra, Costanzi was also an adjunct professor at the University of British Columbia and New York University and has given master classes at Juilliard, Eastman, Peabody, University of Toronto, Glen Gould School, McGill University and Montreal Conservatory. Costanzi's Masterclasses at Brazil's FEMUSC Festival attracted students from around the world. She has performed and taught internationally in North and South America, Europe and Australia. Her latest CD, *Amoroso*, (2023) on the Navona Label with renowned oboist, Alex Klein, has received over two million streams. *Woman on a Ledge*, a one-woman play with harp based on Costanzi's memoir, produced by Hershey Felder and directed by Lissa Moira, will be performed in November 2024 at Theater for a New City in Manhattan. Costanzi currently lives in New York. [www.ritacostanzi.com](http://www.ritacostanzi.com).



**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.

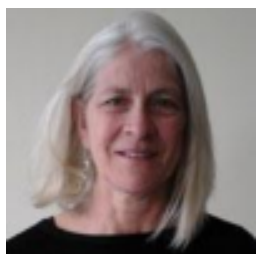
## Meet the Melodia Singers



**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.

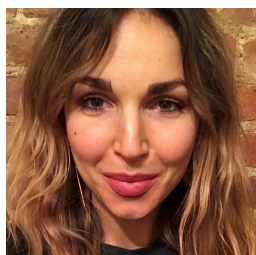


After a long hiatus, **Shohini Goldin Bhattacharya** is thrilled to rejoin Melodia this season. A Melodia member since 2014, she started her vocal training in the Hindustani tradition of India, and later participated in select choirs throughout middle and high school. After a stint in college a cappella 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!

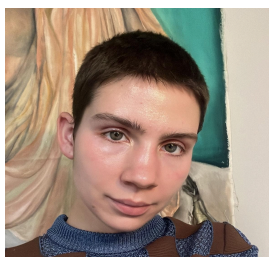


**Cara Brownell** joined Melodia in 2013. Choral singing and harmony have been her intercessors from an early age, in church & community choirs, high school (and a folk rock band, of course), SUNY Binghamton University Chorus and Women's Madrigal Ensemble. Cara's guitar-playing soprano sister nourished 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.



**Lindsay Cornelio** 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.



**Naomi Davidson** is thrilled to be joining melodia for her first season. Born and raised in Iowa, Naomi moved to New York in 2016 to attend Vassar College where she studied voice with Drew Minter while pursuing a degree in film. A lifelong fan of choral music, she has sung in ensembles ranging from church choirs to the Vassar College Chamber Singers. She lives in brooklyn and works as a production manager for an eyewear company.

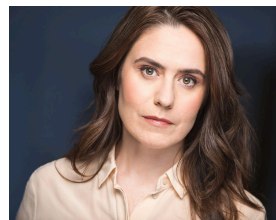


**Kyra M. DeTone** has been a member of Melodia since 2021 and is delighted to join the group for her third in-person season. Currently, she is attending law school where she attempts to recruit other law students with vocal talent to rekindle a non-legal hobby by joining Melodia. Before law school, 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.



**Emilie Gilligan** has been a member of Melodia since January and is delighted to sing with the group for the first time this spring. Born and raised in the midwest, she moved to the city this past summer and is glad to find a way to continue her passion for singing. Currently, she lives in Manhattan and works for a brand strategy consultancy. Before joining Melodia, she was a member of Gimble A Cappella at the University of Michigan and participated in the Wisconsin State Honor Choir, National Youth Choir, Conference Honor Choir, and the Lawrence Academy Girl Choir.



**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 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 second season singing with Melodia, and it is always 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. Born and raised in Switzerland in a family of musicians who couldn't wait to introduce her to music, she joined the Geneva conservatory children's choir at age 7 and has been singing ever since, whether as part of a choir, on her own, or more recently to her 18-months-old daughter who is especially fond of Elvis. A graduate of the University of Geneva and Fordham Law School, Jordana works as an in-house media and entertainment attorney and also teaches at Fordham Law School.



**Tara Mulvaney** is grateful to have found a place as a first-year Melodian. Rigorously trained in her youth as a classical vocalist, she quit after losing her connection to her voice. In 2022, her love for vocal music was rekindled with the emergence of a burgeoning and mildly notorious Brooklyn-based music arts organization, the Gaia Music Collective. This renewal has prompted her to leverage her position as a special educator to offer students musical outlets via the Columbia University Singers Workshops and the Bayard Rustin Music Club. She spends her spare time among butterflies.



**Linnea Mumma** joined Melodia in the 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.



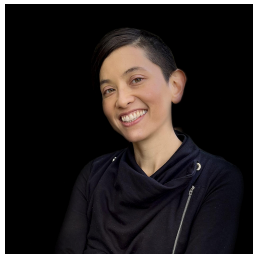
**Ashley Paskalis** had been singing with Melodia since fall 2010. Singing since grade school, Ashley studied vocal performance and sang in the Treble Choir at Wagner College, where she graduated in 2006 with a degree in Arts Administration. Currently working in healthcare PR/media relations, she spends 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.



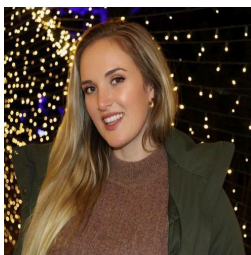
**Chiara Pierangelo** started singing at a very young age in various vocal groups in her hometown of Padova, Italy. Since 2009 she has been singing with “Cantus Anthimi”, conducted by Livio Picotti, with which she made three recordings of Medieval music and Josquin Desprez’s works. She is a founding 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.



**Marlowe Rodda** is one of Melodia’s newest members. She was eager to join such a wonderful, talented group of singers after taking a hiatus from professional voice since 2012. Marlowe is currently a full-time Licensed Master Social Worker at NY-Presbyterian Weill Cornell hospital and yoga instructor in Manhattan. She is passionate about incorporating holistic, somatic work with her clients who struggle with substance use, complex trauma, and a broad range of mental/behavioral health diagnoses. To boost her own “self-care” regimen, Marlowe loves cooking, hiking/backpacking, practicing yoga and meditation, hosting game-nights, attending stand-up comedy shows, and most importantly, singing and writing music!



**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.



**Tina Rosenberg** is enjoying her second season as a member of Melodia. She has sung with Voce In Tempore in Mexico City and the Yiddish Philharmonic Chorus in New York City. Singing is a family activity; she and her oldest daughter sing together in the Glass Menagerie Chorus. Her day job is in journalism. She is co-founder of the Solutions Journalism Network.



**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.



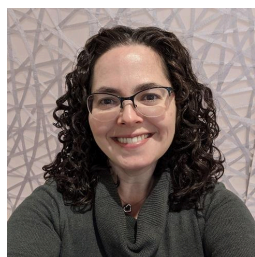
**Peggy Samuels** feels privileged to sing with such a talented group of women and is excited to be part of bringing new compositions and arrangements to life. She spent several decades teaching poetry at Drew University and is enthralled to unleash the expressiveness of poems transformed into music.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



**Emily Segal** has been a part of Melodia for a few years. She loves singing with this choir and to be a part of this very talented group of women! When not rehearsing, she pursues her longstanding interests in the arts and in live theatre. Spending time with her family is also something she loves to do.



**Zarina Vildanova.** Singer and songwriter in her native language (Tatar language). She is popularizing her native Eastern culture. Zarina is a graduate of the Russian Institute of Theater Arts GITIS in Moscow and the College of Music in Kazan. This is her first experience of singing in a large choir and her first season with Melodia.



**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.

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**Melodia Treble Sing**  
**Monday August 19 at 7pm**  
**St. John's Lutheran Church, 81 Christopher Street, West Village, NYC.**

**Calling all treble singers – join us and sing some of the music featured in this concert. Cynthia Powell will conduct read-throughs of Holst's *Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda Group III* and Josef Rheinberger's *Mass in A Major, Op. 126*. More information:  
[www.melodiawomenschoirNYC.org](http://www.melodiawomenschoirNYC.org).**





## **More About Melodia**

### **Board of Directors**

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Sally Collins  
Cynthia L. Cooper  
Kerry Fristoe  
Maggie Ress  
Susan Xenarios

Advisor to the Board of Directors: Cynthia Powell

### **Staff**

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Janet Sora Chung, Pianist  
Kayla Oderah, Administrator

### **Donors**

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

### **Dream Maker**

Blessing Agunwamba  
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Suzanne Bennett in memory of Susana Meyer  
Kenneth Chase  
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Amy Ellison & Trudy Sanders  
Frieda Holober  
James Lader  
Cynthia Powell  
Bernice Rohret  
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Ashley Wright  
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Cindy Cooper  
Michael Angel Johnson  
Kate Fuglei & Ken Lazebnik  
William Lynch  
Chiara Pierangelo & Sandro Naglia

Deborah A. Monk  
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Karen Eterovich-Maguire	Paul Naprstek	Lisa Vives
Vincent H. Fedor	Alison Neet & John Fox	Janis Weatherly
Jack Fiala	Rachel Osborne	Karen Wellington
Kerry Fristoe	Rosemary Palladino & Marianne Brennick	Elizabeth Winthrop
		Janet Zaleon

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 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 women 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; the staff at Holy Apostles Church and St. John's Lutheran Church; and the Melodia Board of Directors.

Postcard design: Jill 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, Hilary Baboukis, Rebecca Hart, Katherine Lascoutx, and Alana Price. 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 July/August. Contact [JenniferClarke446@gmail.com](mailto:JenniferClarke446@gmail.com) to schedule an audition.

Melodia Women's Choir of NYC  
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212-252-4134  
[www.melodiawomenschoirnyc.org](http://www.melodiawomenschoirnyc.org)  
[womenschoir@mindspring.com](mailto:womenschoir@mindspring.com)

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### Melodia Women's Choir History

#### **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**

¡**Alegria!**

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** – 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.

## **2023-2024**

**The Circle Never Ends** – world premiere commission by Zanaida Stewart Robles, music by Amy Beach, Ron Perera, Dan Forrest and more.

**A Tapestry of Song** – world premier commission by Emily Mason, works by Josef Rheinberger, Gustav Holst celebrating 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth, Sally Lamb McCune and more.