



TEREZÍN REQUIEM

Michael Schachter — World Premiere, 2026
Celebrating BCCO's 60th anniversary

Theresienmesse

Joseph Haydn — Mass in B-flat major, 1779

BERKELEY COMMUNITY CHORUS & ORCHESTRA
MING LUKE, MUSIC DIRECTOR

MICHAEL SCHACHTER

Terezín Requiem (premiere)

Ronit Widmann-Levy, *soprano*
Simon Barrad, *baritone*

JOSEPH HAYDN

Theresienmesse (Theresa Mass)

Morgan Balfour, *soprano*
Brenda Iglesias, *alto*
Edward Graves, *tenor*
Matthew Dexter, *bass*

Ming Luke, *Music Director*
Natalia Ter Agapova, *Assistant Conductor*

Friday, June 12, 2026, at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, June 13, 2026, at 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, June 14, 2026, at 4:00 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church, 2407 Dana Street, Berkeley

BERKELEY COMMUNITY CHORUS & ORCHESTRA

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Natalia Ter Agapova, *Assistant Conductor*

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WELCOME!

Welcome to our June 2026 concert series! As we continue to celebrate BCCO's 60th anniversary, we are thrilled to be premiering a work we commissioned especially for this special year, Michael Schachter's *Terezín Requiem*.

This requiem was composed by Schachter to honor the courage of those victims of Nazi persecution who, despite the inhumane conditions of the camp, managed to make music. Among the inmates was the Czech conductor (and relative of composer Michael!) Rafael Schächter, who formed a chorus, led rehearsals, and presented concerts at the concentration camp. Most famously, during the 1944 International Red Cross visit to the camp, Rafael Schächter conducted the Verdi *Requiem*, which BCCO performed in January.

Michael's connection to BCCO began in 2012 when he won BCCO's Emerging Composer Competition with his vocal

work *Oseh Shalom Bimromav*, performed by the chorus in 2013. Music Director Ming Luke has followed Michael's career closely in the years since, making BCCO the ideal artistic home for this deeply personal commission.

Also on our program is Haydn's *Theresienmesse* (Theresa Mass). Composed in 1799, it is the fourth of the six great masses that Haydn composed toward the end of his career. With its fast-moving fugues and beautiful melodies, this piece is Haydn at his best.

Thank you again for attending this concert. BCCO singers have worked hard to master these two challenging yet inspiring pieces. We hope you enjoy them.

— Hester Bradbury & Ellen Rosenfield, *Co-Presidents*

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BCCO is supported in part by grants from the Alameda County ARTSFUND and the City of Berkeley CivicArts Grant Program.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In celebration of our 60th Season, BCCO wishes to recognize the many individuals who have made it possible for our chorus to continue to flourish.

We start with a thank you to our many donors listed at the end of the program. Our day-to-day operations wouldn't be conceivable without your support.

Special mention goes to Elaine Jackson and her late husband, Herrick Jackson, whose sustaining gifts over the past decade have been instrumental in keeping BCCO on a firm footing.

BCCO would also like to extend special thanks to the donors who provided underwriting in 2024 for the commission of Michael Schachter's *Terezin Requiem*, being premiered at these concerts:

Joel Biatch & Shosh Blachman
Janelle Noble & George Martin
Anne Mester
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Patricia Sakai & Richard Shapiro
Ruth White & Alan Block, in memory of Frieda Röderer
Lisa Wuennenberg & Nancy Wecker
Nancy Wolfe

We are also especially grateful for the use of generous rehearsal and concert spaces that can accommodate our large chorus, enabled by helpful staff:

Arlington Community Church, Jacob Day
Berkeley Friends Church, Steve Sims
First Presbyterian Church Berkeley, Michele LeBrun
Hertz Hall, Nadia Endara
Lafayette United Methodist Church, Linda Berti
Northbrae Community Church, Tristan Bachus
Piedmont Center for the Arts, Harry Howe
St. John's Presbyterian Church, Nelly Coplan
Strings, Joey Lent

BCCO also wishes to recognize the local businesses and contractors whose teamwork is vital every semester:

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Penny Werner



MICHAEL SCHACHTER

Terezín Requiem (premiere)

Commissioned by the Berkeley Community Chorus & Orchestra, in remembrance of the victims of the Terezín (Theresienstadt) Ghetto and dedicated to Rafael Schächter (1905–44) and Ruth Samuels Schachter (1933–2025).

- I. ADONAI, MAH ADAM? (chorus)
- II. KADDISH (baritone & chorus)
- III. DER TOD (chorus)
- IV. FARGANGLIKHKAYT (soprano & baritone)
- V. REQUIEM AETERNAM — ANA ADONAI HOSHIA NA (chorus)
- VI. VE SLUNNÉM VEČERU (soprano)
- VII. EL MALEI RACHAMIM (soli & chorus)

Ronit Widmann-Levy, *soprano*
Simon Barrad, *baritone*

— INTERMISSION —

JOSEPH HAYDN

Theresienmesse (Theresa Mass)

- I. KYRIE
Kyrie eleison (soli & chorus)
- II. GLORIA
Gloria in excelsis Deo (chorus)
Gratias agimus tibi (soli & chorus)
Quoniam tu solus Sanctus (soli & chorus)
- III. CREDO
Credo in unum Deum (chorus)
Et incarnatus est (soli)
Et resurrexit (soli & chorus)
- IV. SANCTUS (soli & chorus)
- V. BENEDICTUS QUI VENIT (soli & chorus)
- VI. AGNUS DEI
Agnus Dei (chorus)
Dona nobis pacem (soli & chorus)

Morgan Balfour, *soprano*
Brenda Iglesias, *alto*
Edward Graves, *tenor*
Matthew Dexter, *bass*

Ming Luke, *Music Director*
Natalia Ter Agapova, *Assistant Conductor*

The concert will last approximately two hours and 15 minutes, including one intermission.

THE ORCHESTRA

VIOLIN I

Julie Kim
Concertmaster
Sarah Elert
Assistant Principal
Sarah Biagini
Katherine Allen
Emanuela Nikiforova
Carlotta Jacobs

VIOLIN II

Rebecca Wishnia
Principal
Annamarie Arai
Assistant Principal
Josepha Fath
Micha Okun

VIOLA

Taylor Cooksey
Principal
Cynthia Ryan
Assistant Principal
Paula Karolak
Janice Woo

CELLO

David Wishnia
Principal
Alana Shannon
Assistant Principal
Lucas Chen
Jennifer Mathers

BASS

Michael Minor
Principal
Herrick Jackson Chair
Andrew McCorkle
Assistant Principal

FLUTE

Lance Suzuki
Principal
Angelina Yuan-Fen Ho
Tori Hauk

OBOE

Robin May
Principal
Alli Gessner

CLARINET

Bruce Foster
Principal
Karen Wells

BASSOON

Emily Prather
Principal
Lawrence Rhodes
Cynthia Hanson

HORN

Wayne Van Lieu
Principal
Susan Vollmer
John Chapman
Adrienne Chambers

TRUMPET

Ari Micich
Principal
Charles Ryan

TROMBONE

Steve Perdicaris
Principal
Chris Vincenti
Jason Borris
bass trombone

TUBA

Michael Kuntz

TIMPANI

Fred Morgan
Principal

HARP

Kristin Lloyd
Principal

ORGAN

Leon Chou
Principal



Our orchestra's first chair bass position has been named in memory of former BCCO bass singer and string bass player Herrick Jackson. If you would like to learn about sponsoring a named orchestra chair, please email development@bcco.org.

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SOPRANO

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Monica Clark
Lin Clymer
Rachel Dent
Janelle Detten
Barbara Dilts
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Sara Frucht
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Karen Natoci
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Nancy Wolfe
Yvonne Yildirim
Wendy Yun

THE CHORUS

ALTO

Catherine Atcheson*	Karen Davison	Manon Johnson	Jan Murota
Penny Barron	Rita Dichtel	Paula Kaufman	Lauren Narcross
Kathleen Barrows	Virginia Dobbins	Sonja Kaufman	Gretchen Neel
Linda Berti	Joan Fife	Paula Kingsley	Lucinda Olney
Annette Bistrup	Amy Chu Finkel	Nina Kloian	Rebecca Osborn-Coolidge
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Jeanne Butterfield	Carol Handelman	Rosemary Loughman	Barbara Szudy
Brittany Chen	Denise Hart*	Andrée McGiffin	Heidi Thompson
Jan Chess	Deborah Hurst	Monir Memarpuri	Carol Thornton
Johanna Clark*	Elizabeth Hutchins	Anne Mester	Ruth White
Ruth Collier	Barbara Ivins	Laura Miller	Lisa Wuennenberg

TENOR

Virginia Babasa	Joanna Davenport	Ella Hirst	Pam Miller*
Joan Bajsarowicz	Ignacio Dayrit*	Mui Ho	Andrea Morgan
Cynthia Barbaccia	Kay Ellyard	Elizabeth Horowitz	Jim Morris
Brandi Bellamy	Robert Fearman	Jennifer Israel	Linda Morris
Flavia Bellu	Theresa Fleury	Sally Kaye	Joyce Muns
Nancy Benson*	Lisba Fowler	Joan King-Angell	Ricardo Pastor
Janet Berrien	Eloise Fox	Lewis Kraus	Jane Perry
Janice Bradley	Ellen Freed	Irene Kuhn	Nancy Perry
Gretchen Carlson	Julie Fryckman	Susan Kurjiaka	Bill Sinn
Paul Colley	Janet Hack	Brian Landes	Christine Steers
Jody Cornelius	Roz Hardy	Laura Leibowitz	Ted Vorster
Marjorie Cox	Claudia Hartley	Leo Lew	Kevin Westbrooke
Gabriela Crane	Giles Hinchliff	Laura Malik	
Ian Crane	Linda Hirshfeld	John McDougall	

BASS

Collin Baker	David Flack	Ronald Krauss	David Sanan
Curtis Berrien	Louis Freedberg	Greg Lutz	Lynn Shafer
Joel Biatch	Jerry Freiwirth*	Robert Lyons	Richard Shapiro
Steve Cohen	Christian Fritze*	Thomas MacKinnon	Mark Taksa
Richard Colton	Paul Gerken	Kevin Mann	Mark Talamantes
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Richard Diamond*	Ernest Izaret	Jarred Miyamoto-Mills	Lester Uy
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John Dowdakin	Arnold Kloian	Fred Renfroe	Peter Washburn
Laurence Elias	Richard Kong	Thomas Rothschild	

* Section Leader

ARTISTIC STAFF



Ming Luke

Music Director

With “energy, creativity and charisma not seen since Leonard Bernstein,” and “vibrant,” “mind-blowing,” and “spectacular” conducting, BCCO Music Director Ming Luke is a versatile conductor who has excited audiences around the world. Highlights include conducting the Bolshoi Orchestra in Moscow and

Romeo and Juliet and *Cinderella* at the Kennedy Center, making his English debut at Sadler’s Wells with Birmingham Royal, conducting Dvořák’s *Requiem* in Dvořák Hall in Prague, recording the score for a Coppola film, and conducting over a hundred performances at the San Francisco War Memorial with the San Francisco Ballet. He has been recognized nationally for his work with music education and has designed and conducted education concerts and programs with Berkeley Symphony, Houston Symphony, Sacramento Philharmonic, and San Francisco Ballet, and he currently serves as music director of the Merced Symphony, principal conductor of the Nashville Ballet, associate conductor of the Berkeley Symphony, and principal guest conductor of the San Francisco Ballet. Allan Ulrich of the *San Francisco Chronicle* said, “Ming Luke delivered the best live

theater performance I’ve ever heard of [Prokofiev’s *Romeo and Juliet*],” and BCCO’s *War Requiem* was named the best choral performance of 2016 in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Passionate about collaboration with dance companies and deepening the impact of movement to live music, Ming has guested with Boston Ballet, New York City Ballet Orchestra, Nashville Symphony/Ballet, San Diego Ballet, and others, and conducted Orchestre Prométhée in Paris as part of San Francisco’s residency with Les Étés de la Danse. Famed dancer Natalia Makarova stated, “Ming has a mixture of pure musicality and a sensitivity to needs of the dancers, which are such rare qualities.”

Ming has written, arranged, and performed over 150 education concerts with the Berkeley Symphony and has served on grant panels for the National Endowment of the Arts and the Grants and Cultural Committee of the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission. An exciting pops conductor, he has created and conducted pops concerts in many venues, from baseball stadiums to picnics with over 4,000 people in attendance, traditional concert halls, and recordings for Major League Baseball.

Ming holds a master of fine arts degree in conducting from Carnegie Mellon University and a bachelor of music degree in music education and piano pedagogy from Westminster Choir College of Rider University.



Natalia Ter Agapova

Assistant Conductor

Natalia Ter Agapova holds degrees in voice and choral conducting from the Alfred Schnittke Moscow State Institute of Music and is a laureate of numerous international vocal competitions. Based in San Francisco, she serves as soprano

soloist and section leader at Calvary Presbyterian Church. Natalia appears frequently as a soloist, a Russian diction coach, and an ensemble singer with Vox Humana SF, Golden Gate Symphony Orchestra & Chorus, and Zephyr Symphony & Chorus. She and her husband, Sergei, welcomed their first child, Alexander, this summer.



Leon Chou

Accompanist

Leon Chou is a staff accompanist for Berkeley Community Chorus and Orchestra, Cantare Con Vivo, and the Albany Unified School District choral program. He also serves as the music director of Good Shepherd Episcopal

Church and the manager of Berkeley Youth Orchestra. He received his bachelor’s degree in mathematics from UC Berkeley and will be pursuing his master’s in piano accompanying and chamber music at Eastman School of Music this fall. His non-musical interests include word games, soups, and exceedingly long walks.



Ronit Widmann-Levy

soprano

Ronit Widmann-Levy has received worldwide accolades for her operatic and concert performances. A versatile artist equally at home on both concert and opera stages, Ronit has sung in opera houses and festivals in San Francisco, Chicago, Washington, Tanglewood, Cincinnati, Kentucky, Berlin, Munich,

London, Bangkok, and Jerusalem. She has performed at the Ravinia Festival in Chicago, the Bath and Dartington Festivals in England, the Jüdische Kulturtag in Berlin, and the America Haus Concert Series in Munich.

Ronit made her debut with the San Francisco Symphony in February 2005 in Schumann's *Das Paradies und die Peri*, conducted by Ingo Metzmacher. She performed regularly with Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony in Carnegie Hall and with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, the New World Symphony, and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Ronit

recorded for PBS's Great Performances with Michael Tilson Thomas for *The Thomashefskys: Music and Memories of a Life in the Yiddish Theater*.

Ronit is renowned for her interpretation of Ladino Romansa and Cantiga. She has made numerous recordings of Ladino music, both symphonic and with guitar accompaniment. Her opera repertoire includes the roles of Violetta, Constanza, Madama Butterfly, Micaela, Mimì, Liù, and Freia, and various contemporary-opera roles. Symphonic works include, among others: *Carmina Burana*, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Mahler's Fourth and Second Symphonies, and Arnold Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*.

In 2024, Ronit toured the United States with legendary guitarist Angel Romero, performing a recital of Spanish music by Manuel de Falla, Rodrigo, Lorca, and traditional Ladino Romansa. In 2025, she embarked on a world concert tour with Cantilena Trio.

Source: ronitwidmannlevy.com/biography



Simon Barrad

baritone

Grammy-nominated baritone Simon Barrad is known for his versatile performances across the United States and Europe. His innovative programming style blends classical, jazz, folk, and new music. He has performed at prestigious venues including the Metropolitan Opera, Wigmore Hall,

the Columbus Symphony, Cincinnati Opera, the Ravinia Festival, Stanford Live, the Marlboro Music Festival, the Berlin Philharmonie, and Finland's National Opera House, where he studied as a 2015–16 Fulbright scholar. As a performer and former mentor with ArtSmart, which provides free music and singing lessons to teenagers in underserved communities, he strives to build empathy and understanding through music.

A four-time *Downbeat* magazine national award winner for vocal jazz, Simon has performed at the Monterey Jazz Festival and the Grammys with the Grammy vocal jazz ensemble. He regularly

performs with Austin-based Conspirare and was the baritone soloist for its national tour of *Considering Matthew Shepard*.

Simon champions new works, premiering compositions by John Harbison, David Lang, Craig Hella, Mason Bates, and others. As a Jewish musician, he served as High Holiday soloist at Cincinnati's Plum Street Temple and currently performs at San Francisco's Congregation Sherith Israel. He recently founded JIVE: Jewish Innovative Voices & Experiences with Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen and Ronny Michael Greenberg.

Simon holds a master's degree from the University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music and a bachelor's degree in voice with a French language minor from California State University, Long Beach, where he graduated *summa cum laude*. Simon has collaborated with renowned artists, including Mitsuko Uchida, Jonathan Biss, Awadagin Pratt, and Ignat Solzhenitsyn.

Source: simonbarrad.com

GUEST ARTISTS



Morgan Balfour

soprano

Australian soprano Morgan Balfour made her San Francisco Symphony debut in 2023 as the soprano soloist in Bach's *Magnificat*. She returned in 2025 as the soprano soloist in Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*.

During the 2025–26 season, Morgan returns to American Bach Soloists as a soloist in the concert series “A Grand Tour,” performs Handel's *Messiah* with I Cantori di Carmel, makes her debut with BCCO in Haydn's *Theresienmesse*, and joins Cantata Collective for BWV 18 and 104. She will also perform in San Francisco Symphony's pre-concert talks for Holst's *The Planets*, with Symphony violinist Chen Zhao, and return to San Francisco Bach Choir for its performance of Bach's Mass in B Minor.

Morgan has had recent numerous roles in Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* with Pinchgut Opera, as well as Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Pocket Opera. With a strong affinity for early music and the concert stage, Morgan has performed as a soloist

BCCO is proud to present the finalists of our national, merit-based Vocal Soloists Competition as the solo quartet for these performances of Haydn's *Theresienmesse*

with numerous companies, including Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, American Bach Soloists, Sydney Philharmonia, Canberra Symphony Orchestra, Cantata Collective, Madison Bach Musicians, and Sacramento Baroque Soloists. Morgan made her European debut in 2023 with the Internationale Bachakademie Stuttgart's JSB Ensemble under the baton of Hans-Christoph Rademann. In 2022, she was a Virginia Best Adams Fellow at the Carmel Bach Festival.

Morgan is an AGMA member of the San Francisco Symphony Chorus and has participated in numerous projects, including the Grammy Award–winning recording of Kaija Saariaho's *Adriana Mater*. Morgan has also performed as a member of the San Francisco Opera Chorus and regularly appears with American Bach Soloists Cantorei.

In addition to her work as a classical vocalist, Morgan can be heard on the game soundtrack of *The Lord of the Rings: Return to Moria*.

Source: morganbalfour.com/bio



Brenda Iglesias

alto

Praised for her distinctive contralto voice, Brenda Iglesias has appeared as soloist and guest artist with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Cincinnati Opera, Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de México, Orquesta Filarmónica de la UNAM, Orquesta Filarmónica de la Ciudad de México, Orquesta Sin-

fónica de la UAEH, and Capella Barroca de México. She has performed in her native Mexico, the Czech Republic, and the United States, at such venues as the Palacio de Bellas Artes, Teatro Degollado, Cincinnati Music Hall, and Prague's Estates Theater and Liechtenstein Palace, collaborating with distinguished conductors like Louis Langrée, James Burton, José Luis Castillo, and Eduardo García Barrios.

With a repertoire from Baroque to contemporary, Brenda has portrayed key contralto and mezzo-soprano roles such as Sesto in *La Clemenza di Tito*, Third Lady in *Die Zauberflöte*, Zia Principessa in *Suor Angelica*, and Maman and La bergère in *L'enfant et les sortilèges*. Concert highlights include Brahms's *Alto Rhapsody*, Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* and *Lieder eines fahrenden*

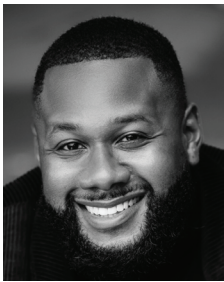
Gesellen, Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky*, de Falla's *El Amor Brujo*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Vivaldi's *Dixit Dominus*, and Bach's *St. John Passion*.

Passionate about art song, Brenda has performed at festivals including the Source Song Festival in Minneapolis and the Summer of Song hosted by the Art Song Preservation Society of New York. She often highlights underrepresented works, with an emphasis on Mexican and Argentine composers. An expert on Latin American art song, Brenda has presented her research on early Mexican art song at international forums.

Widely sought after as a teacher, Spanish coach, and clinician, Brenda is an Assistant Professor of Voice at the State University of New York at Binghamton.

When she isn't pouring her heart into singing and teaching, Brenda enjoys experimenting with plant-based recipes, learning new languages, staying active at the gym, and sharing laughter with her Argentine husband as they playfully navigate the nuances of each other's Spanish accents and colorful expressions.

Source: brendaiglesias.com/about



Edward Graves

tenor

Praised by *Opera News* as a tenor of “stunningly sweet tone,” Edward Graves is a graduate of the prestigious Merola Opera Program and Adler Fellowship at San Francisco Opera. During his tenure, he performed as Stone/Eunuch in Bright Sheng’s *Dream*

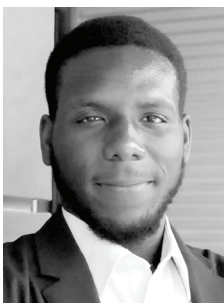
of the Red Chamber and as Gastone in *La traviata*, covered the roles of Alfredo in *La traviata* and Lensky in *Eugene Onegin*, sang Rodolfo in SFO’s *Bohème* *Out of the Box*, covered the title role in Giddens and Abels’s *Omar*, and performed as Ruiz in *Il trovatore*. His appearance in the Merola Opera Program’s *What the Heart Desires* earned a *San Francisco Chronicle* rave for his “superbly bright, clarion sound.”

In 2024, he made his Metropolitan Opera debut as First Armored Man in *The Magic Flute* and returned in 2025 to cover the roles of First Armored Man and Second Priest. Additional

2025 engagements included performances with Anchorage Opera as Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, Opera Omaha as the tenor soloist for its Opera Outdoors concert, Houston Grand Opera as Robbins in *Porgy and Bess*, and Harmonia Orchestra & Chorus as the tenor soloist in Handel’s *Messiah*. In 2026, he debuts at Virginia Opera as Wilson in Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer’s newest opera, *Intelligence*, and with BCCO as the tenor soloist in Haydn’s *Theresienmesse*. He also will return to Sacramento Philharmonic & Opera as Alfredo in *La traviata* and tenor soloist in Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony.

Edward was a 2022 San Francisco District winner of the Metropolitan Opera’s Laffont Competition. He holds a bachelor of music degree in voice performance from Towson University and a performer diploma and master of music degree in voice performance from Indiana University’s Jacobs School of Music.

Source: edwardgraves.com/about.html



Matthew Dexter

bass

Matthew Dexter is a bass-baritone from McKinney, Texas, and a first-year master’s student at Yale University. A lover of choral music, Matthew has enjoyed a variety of ensemble-singing experiences. He performs with the Yale Schola Cantorum and the Yale Voxter, in which he sings as an ensemble member and as a soloist. He has also sung with professional choral ensembles, including Lafayette Musicians, Lumedia Musicworks, the Orpheus Chamber Singers, Verdigris Ensemble, and the Montana Early Music Festival.

For the past three years, Matthew was a vocal fellow at Spoleto Festival USA, where he premiered Rhiannon Giddens and Michael Abels’s Pulitzer Prize-winning opera *Omar* in 2022,

covered the role of the Old Doctor in Samuel Barber’s *Vanessa* in 2023, and sang in choral concerts in 2024. This summer, he will perform in the Grant Park Music Festival in Chicago as a vocal fellow and will return to Chicago in the winter as a soloist in Apollo’s Fire’s tour of the Michael Praetorius *Vespers*.

In 2024, Matthew received the audience favorite award and placed third in the James Toland Vocal Arts Competition. He participated in Houston Grand Opera’s Young Artist Vocal Academy. He has sung in solo recitals with the Puccini Society of Dallas and at the University of North Texas, and has sung in masterclasses around the country with artists such as Donnie Ray Albert, Ana María Martínez, and Gordon Hawkins. Matthew studies with James Taylor. He was recently selected as a member of Lyric Opera of Chicago’s Ryan Opera Center 2026–27 ensemble.

GUEST ARTISTS



Michael Schachter

composer

Michael Schachter is a composer, writer, and pianist based in Burlington, VT. His compositions have been performed at venues ranging from Lincoln Center to the Smithsonian to the Minnesota Centennial Showboat.

Current projects include commissions and premieres with the Vermont Symphony, the Burlington Choral Society, BCCO, and Grammy-winning choir Conspirare. The 2025–26 season will see additional performances with Ljova and the Kontraband, Salina Symphony, New World Symphony, BBC Symphony, City of Birmingham Symphony, and The Concertgebouw.

Recent projects include a concerto for pianist Aaron Diehl and the Knights in honor of the centennial of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, which premiered at Carnegie Hall in October 2024, as well as commissions with the Knoxville Symphony and Violins

of Hope, the MakeMusic Festival and Przekroj Foundation, and the New World Symphony with bass-baritone Davóne Tines. His concerto for Grammy-nominated violinist Tessa Lark and the Knoxville Symphony, *Cycle of Life*, premiered to rave reviews in April 2022 and was profiled in a recent PBS feature (*Craft in America*: “Harmony”). Also in 2022, the Los Angeles Philharmonic premiered “Concerto No. 2: Anthem” at the Hollywood Bowl, created in collaboration with Davóne Tines, Caroline Shaw, and Tyshawn Sorey. His music-theater piece, *The Black Clown* (libretto co-written with and starring Davóne Tines, directed by Zack Winokur), premiered with sold-out runs at the American Repertory Theater and Lincoln Center, where it was a *New York Times* Critic’s Pick. A new production in May 2026 at Opera Philadelphia kicked off a national tour for 2026–27.

As a scholar, Michael recently completed a three-year term as a Junior Fellow in the Harvard University Society of Fellows.



MICHAEL SCHACHTER, 1987–

Terezín Requiem

We often refer to the departed. But what do we do about the “disappeared”—the people who have left daily life and whose exact fates are actually unknown?

Here are two examples of the disappeared from the data collected by Yad Vashem for the victims of the Holocaust, that is, the attempt to annihilate the Jews of Europe as well as the members of other groups.

First, on July 10, 1942, in Berlin, Mrs. Dora Ullman disappeared when she boarded Train Transport I/20. It appears that the train was bound for Terezín, and we think she arrived there because the materials in Yad Vashem say

so and note that she was “murdered” on July 27. But what does that mean? Was she shot? Did typhus take her? Was she just worn out? She was, after all, 81 years old.

Second, on July 14 or 15, also in 1942 and also in Berlin, Miss Jeanne Ilch, age 66, disappeared when she boarded Train Transport I/45. The data in Yad Vashem report that she was taken to a camp near Riga, Latvia. But the data also report quite differently that she was taken to Terezín and recorded as “missing.” So, did she die on the train? In Terezín? Was Terezín her stopping point before the camp near Riga? Is August 18, reported in the data, really her death date? We don’t actually know.

Mrs. Ullman and Miss Ilch were just two bourgeois ladies among millions of the disappeared. Their absence is a void that is filled with sadness. The *Terezín Requiem* tries to pour into this void as much memory and attention and honor as we can carry. It does this in a beautiful seven movements that express human-kind’s common experience and emotions, and perhaps wisdom.

In the first movement, the chorus sings Psalm 144:3–4. This is the first of the *Terezín Requiem*’s ceremonial or liturgical texts that concern the fact of death. The Psalm’s two verses delicately hold a beautiful contradiction—that we feel that God is immensely distant and also that God does in fact care for us. Otherwise, why

PROGRAM NOTES

ask the Psalm's question? "O Lord, what are we that you should care about us?"

The second movement, for soloist(s), is the Mourner's Kaddish, a great Aramaic/Hebrew prayer. Although it is prayed intensely and daily for eleven months after a person's death, it is a prayer on behalf of the mourners, the people left behind. That is, it's about us. It exalts God the Creator, who is beyond all expressions of glory and praise. It calls down peace on all of us. A great solemnity of this prayer is that those who are praying call on themselves four times to proclaim a great Amen. "And let us say Amen."

The third movement is for the chorus. The text is a poem by the romantic poet Heinrich Heine (1797–1856). In line with the title we give it—"Death is the cool night"—the poem is an account of giving way to death. But in Heine's brief way, it is also a nostalgic, maybe even positive, reminiscence of life and love. Indeed, a beautiful tree is growing above the poet's bed. After a formidable start by the bass section, the sopranos and altos take the music briefly into the world of art songs. (Brahms also set this poem to

music.) It then returns to the formidable.

The fourth movement, for soloists, is a Yiddish poem by "Yehoash" ("God gives"), the pen name of the Yiddish writer Solomon Blumgarten (1872–1927). The poem is called "Transience" and is a perfect counterbalance to the preceding poem by Heine. Yehoash's poem is an energetic, visceral, and angry love poem. It is full of life and lust and tenderness and the knitting together of two people. But Yehoash is angry at the universe in an existential way because, no matter how we love, we are just a shimmer that's been "spit out" for one moment against the background of eternity.

The fifth movement, for the chorus, opens with the "Requiem aeternam" that begins practically every requiem a concertgoer has heard. The music starts with a unison singing of the ancient Gregorian chant. It adds voices until the chorus is singing something different—a multipart chant. The chant's Latin text calls down rest and perpetual light for the dead. The surprise of the very end, however, is a full-throated Hebrew cry for deliverance (Psalm 118:25). In the context of this

Terezín Requiem, the drama seems to move from present prayers for rest even to past cries for help.

The soloists sing the sixth movement. It is a poem—and a well-constructed one—written by anonymous children in 1944 at the barracks in Terezín. This is a voice that brings us to the very brink of disappearance. It is filled with a child's appreciation of beauty and a child's straining at optimism. We can only wish for the deliverance or eternal rest of these child poets.

The prayer *El Malei Rachamim* is the fitting conclusion to the *Terezín Requiem*. It is a prayer specifically for funerals, memorials, the visiting of graves, the public reading of the Torah on the anniversary of a death, and so on. Importantly, it is also prayed for persons who disappeared or died during the Holocaust. This is a serious prayer filled with lovely images of peace like "the wings of the Divine" and the "Garden of Eden." It is a great offering for all people... And let us say: Amen.

— *Lawrence DiCostanzo, BCCO bass*



JOSEPH HAYDN, 1732–1809 *Theresienmesse* (Theresa Mass)

Music and war often go together. Our chorus has sung several works that feature war as their theme or context. A few notable examples: Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem*, Michael Tippett's *A Child of Our*

Time, along with Sam Wu's *the wind blows full of sand*, and Sergei Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky*.

Joseph Haydn was perturbed by war, writing two masses that directly addressed the

impact of the Napoleonic Wars, as well as several other pieces. The *Missa in tempore belli* (Mass in Time of War, also known as the *Paukenmesse*) was written as Austria was gearing up for combat, fearing invasion by European forces in 1796. (We

PROGRAM NOTES

sang it in 2025.) The *Missa in Angustiis* (Mass in Troubled Times), known later as the *Lord Nelson Mass*, was written in 1798. (We sang it in 2020.) The title reflects the increasing angst that afflicted the Austro-Hungarians as Napoleon drove his forces closer to their borders. It is a much darker piece than the earlier *Mass in Time of War*. One can only imagine the general distress and unease as Napoleon marched across Europe, expanding France's territorial reach.

Angustiis is a suggestive term, its Latin root meaning "narrowing" or "constricting." In Haydn's title, it takes on a double meaning, conveying the emotional strain as well as the actual physical encroachment of Napoleon's forces as they narrowed in on the Austro-Hungarian territory. Later, the piece was appropriated by the British as a tribute to the hard-won success of Lord Nelson, who defeated the French and Spanish navies at the Battle of Trafalgar.

These two masses are part of a series of six that Haydn wrote for his patrons, the Esterhazy family. The *Theresienmesse* was the last in this series, written in close sequence with the *Mass in Time of War* and the *Mass in Troubled Times* (1796–99). All six masses celebrate the name day of Princess Maria Josepha Hermenegilde, the wife of Prince Nikolaus II Esterhazy. She was a patron of the arts, with a special fondness for Haydn. Her name day was a big event, and the tradition of celebrating it continued after Haydn died. For her 1807 name day, Beethoven composed his Mass in C Major.

It may seem odd to us that the first two masses feature war as part of a celebra-

tory occasion. Haydn clearly wanted to acknowledge the zeitgeist and the unavoidable anxiety that surrounded the princess's name day. But he also peppered these masses with lightness and hope.

Perhaps we should ask instead why the *Theresienmesse* mass is so buoyant. As the last of the name day series, it was written as Napoleon continued to escalate his assaults throughout Europe. (He was not forced to abdicate the French throne until 1814.) Perhaps Haydn wanted a break from the terrors of war, to encourage a happier or more hopeful mood. He lived the rest of his life under war, remarkably retaining his ability to write uplifting music. Perhaps it is a reflection of a tendency to look on the bright side as a coping strategy. Some music scholars have argued that he was a born optimist who was driven to share his positive view of life with his fellow beings and who managed to maintain some gaiety to an advanced age.

Haydn is sometimes compared with his contemporary Mozart, who was able to convey music that was more dramatic and somber. From the first few notes of Haydn's "Kyrie," we know we are in a different territory. Here a plea for mercy does not convey a pitiable urgency. It begins on a stately note that conveys formality, as if for a processional, and moves toward a faster-moving lyrical tone, with overlapping choral voices. While its crowded *kyries* do convey an urgency to be heard and granted mercy, this is overridden by Haydn's exuberance.

Words like "gentle and expressive," "peaceful," and "graceful" usually describe this mass. But if you listen closely, you can hear the darker shades of war. In

the middle of the "Gloria," with its light dance-like energy, we sing *dona nobis pacem*, the tone slightly wistful, a nod to the surrounding world still warring outside the joyful boundaries of the celebratory name day. (Note how the underlying orchestral notes that enliven this piece subside here.) The "Qui tollis peccata mundi" is full of yearning; the phrase "sins of the world" (*peccata mundi*) may encompass the sad state of the world at war. The soloist's *miserere* is especially plaintive, and these interludes are striking insertions in the "Gloria." There is no way of knowing Haydn's intentions, although we know that war was on his mind. *Dona nobis pacem* is also the concluding phrase of the mass, and Haydn's treatment of it is striking. Underneath the chorus's repeated plea for peace, you can hear a dramatic drumbeat. There is a sense of tension here, perhaps suggesting the rift between wish and reality.

Haydn did not manage to escape the impact of war, even with his fame and international reputation. At the end of his life, he moved to Vienna. Napoleon attacked the city in full force and bombarded Haydn's neighborhood in 1809. After continued bombardment, the city fell to the French. Haydn did his best to maintain his composure, but was clearly terrified. Whether he regained any of his cheerful spirit we will never know, but the *Theresienmesse*, written in those troubled times, continues to remind us that hopefulness can keep us all going.

— Kitty Hughes, BCCO soprano



Terezín Requiem

I. ADONAI, MAH ADAM?

*Adonai—mah Adam, vateida'eihu
Ben enosh, vat'chashveihu*

*Adam, la'hevel damah
Yamav k'tzel over*

O Lord, what are we, that you should care about us?
Mortal beings, that you should think of us?

We are like a mere breath;
Our days are but a passing shadow.

Psalm 144:3–4

II. KADDISH

*Yitgadal v'yitkadesh sh'mei raba
b'alma di v'ra chir'utei;
v'yamlich malchutei
b'hayeichon u-v'yomeichon,
uv'hayei d'chol beit Yisrael,
ba-agala u-vi-z'man kariv,
v'imru amen.*

*Y'hei sh'mei raba m'varach
l'alam u-l'almei almaya.*

*Yitbarach v'yishtabach,
v'yitpa'ar v'yitromam, v'yitnasei
v'yit-hadar, v'yit'aleh v'yit'halal
sh'mei d'kudsha, b'rich hu,
l'ela min kol birchata v'shirata,
tushb'hata v'nehemata,
da-amiran b'alma, v'imru amen.*

*Y'hei sh'lama raba min sh'maya,
v'hayim, aleinu v'al kol Yisrael,
v'imru amen.*

*Oseh shalom bi-m'roav,
hu ya'aseh shalom aleinu
v'al kol Yisrael,
v'imru amen.*

Magnified and sanctified is the great name of
God throughout the world, which was created
according to Divine will.

May the rule of peace be established unto us
and unto the entire household of Israel,
speedily and in our time.
And let us say: Amen.

May God's great name be praised
throughout all eternity.

Glorified and celebrated, lauded and praised,
acclaimed and honored,
extolled and exalted ever
be the name of thy Holy One,
far beyond all song and psalm, beyond all
hymns of glory which mortals can offer.
And let us say: Amen.

May there be abundant peace from heaven, with
life's goodness for us and for all your people Israel.
And let us say: Amen.

May the one who brings peace to high places
bring peace to us
and to all the people Israel.
And let us say: Amen.

Hebrew Liturgy

III. DER TOD

*Der Tod, das ist die kühle Nacht,
Das Leben ist der schwüle Tag.
Es dunkelt schon, mich schläfert,
Der Tag hat mich müd gemacht.*

Death is the cool night,
Life is the sultry day.
Dusk falls now, I feel drowsy,
The day has made me weary.

LIBRETTO

*Über mein Bett erhebt sich ein Baum,
Drin singt die junge Nachtigall;
Sie singt von lauter Liebe,
Ich hör es sogar im Traum.*

Over my bed rises a tree,
In which the young nightingale sings;
She sings of nothing but love,
I hear it even in my dreams.

Heinrich Heine, 1826–27

IV. FARGANGLIKHKAYT

*Ven kh'drik dikh tzu meyn Brust, un lip tzu lip
Tzikh klammeren tzonoyf mit vilder lust
Ven eyn n'shma mit der tzveyter vert
Ayn eyn entzikten shtrahl tzonoyfgekost*

When I press you to my breast,
With wild lust, lip to lip,
And our two souls cling together
And blend into one enchanted beam

*Fon eyvigkeit, fon toyt un finsternis—
Der grenzlatzer thum fon ALLES un NISHT
Fon velchen untz a blinde shiktzal-hand
Aroysgeshpritz hat un tzunoyfgemisht*

Of eternity, of death and darkness—
The boundless abyss of ALL and NOTHING
From which a blind hand of destiny
Spit us out and spun us together

*Dann palt a shvartzer shatten oyf meyn freyd
Un kh'denk, vi schnell, nit bloytz di yugendflam
Nahr s'gantze leben meyns uhn deyns, tzurik
Ayn tzikh vet eyntzafen der groyser yam*

Then, a dark shadow falls upon my joy,
And I think, how quickly, not just the flame of youth,
But our whole lives, mine and yours,
Will be drawn back into itself by the great sea

Fon eyvigkeit...

Of eternity...

*Un valsto itlikh fodem fon deyn tzinen
Mit meyn n'shma tag far tag neknipt,
Un valt ikh bitz meyn letzten lebens-hoykh
Dikh t'mid mit dertzelber glot geliebt*

And if, day after day, you knitted
Every thread of your being to my soul,
And if I ever, with the same attachment,
Loved you to my life's highest point

*Di teife nakht, di eyvige, tzi makht
Tzum fonken-tz'vig ontzern an end,
Un shlingt tzurik dam lebend-shimmer eyn,
Aroysgeshpigen bloitz oyf eyn moment...*

The deep, eternal night
Would engulf our dual spark,
And would swallow back up the life-shimmer,
Spit out for one mere moment...

Fon eyvigkeit...

Of eternity...

Yeboash, 1905

V. REQUIEM AETERNAM—ANA ADONAI HOSHIA NA

*Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.*

Grant them eternal rest, Lord,
and let everlasting light shine upon them.

*Te decet hymnus, Deus, in Sion,
et tibi reddetur votum in Jerusalem.
Exaudi orationem meam,
ad te omnis caro veniet.*

A hymn, O God, becomes you in Zion,
and a vow shall be paid to you in Jerusalem.
Hear my prayer;
before you, all flesh shall come.

*Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.*

Ana Adonai hoshia na!

VI. VE SLUNNÉM VEČERU

*Ve slunném večeru pod přemodralým nebem
pod kvetoucími stromy hmotných kaštanů tu
sedím: v prachu stavby, zaprášený celý jak
včera, dnes, to jeden jen je z dnů.*

*Tak krásně, krásně všechny stromy kvetou
i s svým stářím, celým dřevnatým
že bojím se, zda do koruny jejich
za zelenou tu krásu zhlédět smím.*

*Tak krásně sluncem zlatotkaný závoj
mým celým tělem prudce zachvívá
a nebe na mne hodně modře křičí
a jistě myslí, že se usmívá.*

*A vše tak kvete, vše se tolik směje
chci letět, ale nevím jak a kam
dnes slibuji si—v drátech všecko kvete—
proč bych já ne? A proto vytrvám!*

VII. EL MALEI RACHAMIM

*El Malei Rachamim, shochein bam'romim,
ham'zei m'nucha n'chona al kan'fei
hash'china b'ma'alot k'doshim u'thorim
k'zohar harakiya mazhirim.
L'nish'not yakireinu shehal'chu l'olamam,
b'gan eden t'hei m'nuchatam.*

*Ana ba'al harachamim yastireim b'seiter
k'nafav l'olamim v'yitzror bitzror hachayim
et nishmatam.*

*Adonai hu nachalatam, v'yanuchu b'shalom
al mishkavam. V'nomar amen.*

Grant them eternal rest, Lord,
and let everlasting light shine upon them.

4 Esdras 2:34–35; Psalm 65:1–2

Lord, I beg of you: deliver us!

Psalm 118:25

On a purple, sun-shot evening
Under wide-flowering chestnut trees
Upon the threshold full of dust
Yesterday, today, the days are all like these.

Trees flower forth in beauty,
Lovely, too, their wood all gnarled and old
That I am half afraid to peer
Into their crowns of green and gold.

The sun has made a veil of gold
So lovely that my body aches.
Above, the heavens shriek with blue
Convinced I've smiled by some mistake.

The world's abloom and seems to smile.
I want to fly but where, how high?
If in barbed wire, things can bloom
Why couldn't I? I will not die!

Anonymous, 1944

Children in Terezín Barracks L318 and L417

English translation ©1964 by Jeanne Nemcová

God full of mercy, who dwells on high, grant
perfect rest on the wings of the Divine,
amongst the holy and pure, who shine like the
splendor of the firmament.

To the souls of our beloved ones, who have
gone on to join eternity, the Garden of Eden
will be their resting place.

O Merciful One, shade them forever under
divine wings, and bind their souls up in the
bonds of life.

The Lord is their heritage, and may they be at
peace where they rest. And let us say: Amen.

Hebrew Liturgy

LIBRETTO

Theresienmesse

I. KYRIE

*Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison.*

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

II. GLORIA

*Gloria in excelsis Deo,
et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.
Laudamus te, benedicimus te,
adoramus te, glorificamus te.*

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace on earth to those of good will.
We praise You, we bless you,
we adore You, we glorify You.

*Gratias agimus tibi propter
magnam gloriam tuam.
Domine Deus, Rex coelestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens.
Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe.
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.*

We thank You
for Your great glory.
O Lord God, king of heaven,
God the Father almighty.
O Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son.
O Lord God, lamb of God, Son of the Father.

*Qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
suscipe deprecationem nostram.
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,
miserere nobis.*

You who take away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.
You who take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer.
You who sit at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

*Quoniam tu solus sanctus,
tu solus Dominus,
tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe.
Cum Sancto Spiritu
in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.*

For You alone are holy,
You alone are the Lord,
You alone are high above all, Jesus Christ.
With the Holy Spirit
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

III. CREDO

*Credo in unum Deum,
Patrem omnipotentem,
factorem coeli et terrae,
visibilem omnium et invisibilem.
Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum,
Filius Dei unigenitum,
et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula.
Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine,
Deum verum de Deo vero,
genitum, non factum,
consubstantialem Patri:
per quem omnia facta sunt.
Qui propter nos homines et propter nostram
salutem descendit de coelis.*

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
and of all things visible and invisible.
And in Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God of God, light of light,
true God of true God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father:
by whom all things are made.
For us and for our
salvation, He came down from heaven.

*Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto
ex Maria Virgine:
et homo factus est.
Crucifixus etiam pro nobis:
sub Pontio Pilato,
passus et sepultus est.*

*Et resurrexit tertia die
secundum scripturas.
Et ascendit in coelum:
sedet ad dexteram Patris.
Et iterum venturus est cum gloria
iudicare vivos et mortuos:
cujus regni non erit finis.
Et in Spiritum Sanctum,
Dominum et vivificantem:
qui ex Patre, Filioque procedit.
Qui cum Patre et Filio
simul adoratur et conglorificatur:
qui locutus est per prophetas.
Et unam sanctam catholicam
et apostolicam ecclesiam.
Confiteor unum baptisma
in remissionem peccatorum.
Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum,
et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.*

IV. SANCTUS

*Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus,
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.
Hosanna in excelsis.*

V. BENEDICTUS

*Benedictus qui venit
in nomine Domini.
Hosanna in excelsis.*

VI. AGNUS DEI

*Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona nobis pacem.*

And was incarnate by the Holy Spirit
of the Virgin Mary:
and was made man.
He was also crucified for us:
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
and was buried.

And the third day He rose again
according to the scriptures.
And He ascended into heaven:
He sits at the right hand of the Father.
He shall come again in glory to
judge the living and the dead:
of whose kingdom there shall be no end.
And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and giver of life:
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
Who together with the Father and the Son
is adored and glorified:
who spoke through the Prophets.
And in one holy catholic
and apostolic church.
I confess one baptism
for the remission of sins.
And I look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Holy, holy, holy,
Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of Your glory.
Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is He who comes
in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest!

Lamb of God,
who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God,
who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God,
who takes away the sins of the world,
grant us peace.

THANK YOU!

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\$250 to \$999 continued

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\$100 to \$249

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Natasha Carlitz	Rosalind Kim <i>in honor of Ruth White</i>	Nancy Rader
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Donations to \$99

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bcco's Legacy Society comprises individuals who have included bcco in their estate plans. The Society is named in memory of the late Betty Pigford, who was dedicated to bcco's longevity. We would be pleased to include you in the list of individuals who are sustaining bcco for future generations. For more information, please email development@bcco.org.

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BERKELEY COMMUNITY CHORUS & ORCHESTRA

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JANUARY 2027

Poulenc *Gloria* & Walton *Belshazzar's Feast*

JUNE 2027

Gabriela Lena Frank* *Conquest Requiem* & Mozart *Requiem*

*2026 Pulitzer Prize winner!

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At intermission, visit the lobby to purchase BCCO chocolates, water, and recent concert CD recordings. Also available for these concerts: a few remaining copies of a special book describing BCCO's first 50 years.

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