

# Mendelssohn Chorus of Philadelphia

Artistic Director: Dominick DiOrio

Associate Artistic Director: Heather Mitchell

Collaborative Pianist & Senior Artist-in-Residence: Ting Ting Wong

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

## Canada

June 2025

Church Service Performance | Eastminster United Church

10:00 AM, June 22, 2025

Concert | Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours Chapel

3:00 PM, June 25, 2025

Concert | Saint-Dominique Church

7:00 PM, June 27, 2025



# REPERTOIRE

## VIGIL FOR LOVE

A Choral Libretto in 10 Movements by Kyle Conner

Set to Original Music by Dominick DiOrio

*This piece is dedicated to our friend and former leader Charlotte Sibley, a model for living and loving life fully*

1. Prayer
2. Intercession: A Madrigal
3. Responsory
4. Song to the Friend
5. Offertory
6. Invocation
7. Song of Sanctuary
8. Lesson
9. Canto
10. CREDO

About the work:

Love is that emotion that we believe distinguishes humans from all other forms of life. It ennobles, it transforms, it illuminates. It also confounds, mystifies, and frustrates. The piece explores various facets and utterances of love, hopefully bringing us to a more profound understanding of its unique mysteries and many layers.

# MENDELSSOHN CHORUS OF PHILADELPHIA

## **SOPRANO**

Maryl Apadula  
Jayne Lester  
Ilene Miller  
Laura Miller  
Mary Muth  
Roberta Rote  
Allison Terzyk  
Kay Wadsworth

## **TENOR**

Will Budreau  
Chris Carriero  
Frank Cassel  
Kyle Conner  
Joshua Matthias-Long  
Dan Ojserkis  
Kyle Sheehan  
Steve Ullman

## **ALTO**

Dani Cantor  
Hannah Davis  
Robin Eaton  
Eloise Flood  
Daphne Hanford  
Katie Kershaw  
Susan Lin  
Deborah McIntosh  
Sarah McCague  
MaryBeth Nelson  
Rebecca Roberts

## **BASS**

Steven Glasser  
Martin Levitas  
Jacob Lynn-Palevsky  
Sean Martin  
Michael Moore  
Eric Muth  
Cleveland Rea  
Steve Rock



# ABOUT MENDELSSOHN CHORUS OF PHILADELPHIA

Mendelssohn Chorus of Philadelphia, now in its 151st season under Artistic Director & Conductor Dominick DiOrio, stands as one of America's most enduring musical institutions. Originally founded in 1874 as an eight-part male chorus by William Wallace Gilchrist, Mendelssohn Chorus now includes over 150 voices of diverse age, background, gender, and profession. Since its inception the chorus has balanced tradition with innovation, presenting beloved classics while championing new works.

Throughout its history, the chorus has collaborated with world-renowned conductors, including Leopold Stokowski, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Riccardo Muti, and most recently Fabio Luisi. Its longstanding partnership with The Philadelphia Orchestra, dating back to the orchestra's founding, underscores its significance in the city's rich musical landscape. Mendelssohn Chorus' discography contains numerous commercial recordings with The Philadelphia Orchestra including the GRAMMY-nominated 1985 recording of Persichetti's *Winter Cantata*.

Mendelssohn Chorus has been at the forefront of introducing groundbreaking works to American audiences. From the Philadelphia premiere of Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem* to the first U.S. performance of *Mahler's Symphony No. 8*, the chorus has consistently pushed boundaries. Under the leadership of Conductor Laureate Alan Harler, the chorus gained recognition for its innovative, cross-genre performances. This pioneering spirit continues today with over 100 commissions from contemporary composers including Rollo Dilworth, Jennifer Higdon, David Lang, and Caroline Shaw.

The chorus's commitment to excellence has garnered prestigious accolades, including ASCAP/Chorus America Awards for Adventurous Programming and a Pulitzer Prize in Music for Julia Wolfe's *Anthracite Fields*, commissioned by the chorus in 2014. Beyond performances, the Mendelssohn Chorus serves as an incubator for emerging talent through its section leader and apprenticeship programs, and recently launched *Joyful Abundance*, a commissioning program for emerging composers and poets. Centering its mission to foster artistry, beauty and belonging, the chorus is dedicated to enriching Philadelphia's cultural tapestry by illuminating our shared human experiences.



# DOMINICK DIORIO

**Dominick DiOrio** is the 14th Artistic Director and Conductor of the Mendelssohn Chorus of Philadelphia, one of the most historic choral organizations in the United States. In this role, he regularly prepares the chorus to sing with The Philadelphia Orchestra, including a "near ideal" (*The Philadelphia Inquirer*) performance of *Carmina burana* in March 2024 with conductor Fabio Luisi. His artistic vision for the Mendelssohn Chorus of Philadelphia has been regularly supported with multiple grants from the William Penn Foundation, the Presser Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts.



Recognized with The American Prizes in both Choral Composition (2014) and Choral Performance (2019, with NOTUS), DiOrio is an energetic conductor and composer who has won widespread acclaim for his contributions to American music. He is also professor of music and chair of the department in choral conducting at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, where he joined the faculty in 2012, and where he serves as director of NOTUS, Indiana University's storied contemporary vocal ensemble.

DiOrio's combined role as a composer-conductor has led to many unique opportunities and collaborations. In April 2024, he had the honor of writing original music for William Shatner, part of a spoken-word performance at IU's Memorial Stadium moments before the total solar eclipse. DiOrio conducted the collaboration, which featured Mr. Shatner, NOTUS and twenty instrumentalists from the IU Jacobs School of Music. DiOrio's guest conducting appearances regularly feature his original compositions, including with civic and professional ensembles such as the Choral Arts Society of Washington (*SOLARIS*), Houston Chamber Choir (*I Am*), Choral Arts Initiative (*All Is*), and the Young Naperville Singers (*Young Today*).

DiOrio's original music has been hailed for its keenly intelligent, evocative style, which shows "a *tour de force* of inventive thinking and unique colour" (*Gramophone*). His over 60 published works have appeared at major venues around the world including the Sydney Opera House, Lincoln Center, and Carnegie Hall—as well as internationally in Austria, Canada, China, Denmark, Finland, Hong Kong, Italy, Norway, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, and the U.K.

He composes for musicians of all ages and experiences and maintains an active writing schedule—completing over 70 commissions in the last decade. Some of his recent commissioning partners include the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus and the San Francisco Symphony, the Children's Chorus of Washington, the Cincinnati Vocal Arts Ensemble & Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra, The Choral Arts Society of Washington, "The President's Own" United States Marine Band, and many academic institutions, including Macalester, Oberlin, Princeton, Smith, and the Universities of Michigan, Oregon, and Illinois.

(continued)

DiOrio's love for contemporary music is reflected in his conducted repertoire, including such path-breaking works from the 20th and 21st centuries as James MacMillan *Seven Last Words*, Steve Reich *The Desert Music*, Alfred Schnittke *Requiem*, Sarah Kirkland Snider *Mass for the Endangered*, Joel Thompson *Seven Last Words of the Unarmed*, and Krzysztof Penderecki *St. Luke Passion*, which he prepared for the composer in November 2017. Equally at home with music of earlier eras, he has also conducted choral-orchestral performances of Bach *Magnificat*, Haydn *Mass in Time of War*, Mozart *Great C Minor Mass*, Vaughan Williams *Five Mystical Songs*, and Leonard Bernstein *Chichester Psalms*, among others.

DiOrio is deeply committed to strengthening the profession by empowering others, and he recently completed a four-year term as president and president-elect of the National Collegiate Choral Organization (2018-22). For his leadership during the pandemic, he was honored with NCCO's inaugural Distinguished Service Award. DiOrio also previously served as chair of ACDA's Composition Initiatives Standing Committee and as a member of the Board of Directors for Chorus America.

He earned the Doctor of Musical Arts in Choral Conducting from the Yale School of Music, as well as an M.M.A. and an M.M. in Conducting from Yale and a B.M. in Composition *summa cum laude* from Ithaca College. He proudly credits his mentors Janet Galván, Simon Carrington, and Marguerite Brooks for serving as model leaders and for making him the person he is today.

## TING TING WONG

Collaborative pianist and Senior Artist-in-Residence Ting Ting Wong is in great demand as a vocal coach and accompanist. Ting Ting has recently appointed as the accompanist at The Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia. She has served as chorus pianist with Opera Philadelphia and assistant conductor with ConcertOPERA Philadelphia, and Temple University Women Chorus. She is currently the accompanist for Jefferson University Singers, the Arcadia University Choir, Philadelphia Voices of Pride and T-voce with Opera Philadelphia. She is the music director at Newtown Square Presbyterian Church and music director for Union League Voices. Ting Ting remains a busy schedule giving recitals to the community. Born and raised in Hong Kong, Ting Ting holds two master's degrees: one in piano performance from Carnegie Mellon University where she also earned a piano pedagogy certificate, and one in piano accompanying and coaching from Temple University, where she studied with Mr. Lambert Orkis and Dr. Charles Abramovic.





## MENDELSSOHN CHORUS OF PHILADELPHIA

Canada Tour | June, 2025

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by Kyle Conner

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*© Kyle Conner, 2025*



i. Prayer

*Ominous*

*Monks whispering fervently in their temples:*

Holy love  
Come upon us  
Lift us  
Guide us  
Set us free

(Repeat)

*Sages contemplating in their mountaintop refuges:*

Subtle passion  
Supple mission  
Pierce the veil  
Deliver vision

(Repeat)

*Ritual celebrants circle-dance and chant by moonlight:*

What is hidden  
shall be known

What has raged  
shall be tamed

What was lost

Shall be gained

What is nameless  
Shall be named

(Repeat)

*Seekers floating in vision quest:*

Move us!  
Sate us!  
Fill our cups!  
Ecstatic vision  
Lift us up!

(Repeat)

*All together:*

Love enchanted  
Love enshrined  
Love embodied  
Love divined

Love transcendent  
Love unshamed  
Love ascendant  
Love new named

*Chanted by those consumed by the dance, eyes ablaze, feet spasming in cadence beguiled:*

Wild love!  
We demand release!  
We will have nothing else!

Stomp our feet!  
Clap our hands!  
Aaaaaahhh!!

*Gathered voices across eons:*

**Rumi**, raise your cup!  
Speak for us  
this fervid stuff,  
Jolt us to unfettered vision

In storming ocean, gathering forest,  
roaring gale or placid seas  
We consummate our vow with life  
The wilds of love draw us on

Seduce and surge,  
    buoy and burden,  
Buffet and buttress,  
    confuse and captivate  
Soothe and sanctify,  
    fortify and fascinate

Love's blade carves and shapes us--  
    Old clay made new,

We are never the same.

ii. Intercession: A Madrigal

Love, be my wound!  
I offer this flesh to thy pleasures.  
Thy cuts are holy,  
Thy balms mystical.

I submit—  
*Teach me.*  
I burn—  
*Heal me.*

Love, be my gauze!  
Thou art the physician of my soul.  
Thy touch is medicine.  
Thy potions wondrous.

I resist—  
*Restrain me.*  
I relent—  
*Salve me.*

Love, be my nurse!  
I cannot control my heart.  
Offer me words of comfort.  
My temples burn, my hands sweat.

I waver—  
*Bolster me.*  
I falter—  
*Convince me.*



iii. Responsory

*Measured, ceremonial.*

Whose is the face nestled to mine?

*So we are one visage anneal'd*

Whose tender kisses warm my cheek, my neck, my eyelids?

*So that I am bathed in your mouth's warmth*

Who embraces me in all fullness?

*So that I am a flower bursting into bloom*

Whose rain washes my forest?

*A child of Nature reborn*

Whose love raised me from the deserts of men,

    Their bloodless words,

    Their frozen stares,

    Their conceal'd knowledge,

    Their vacant mansions?

*So that I am welcomed into every oasis*

Whose pasture encircled me?

*So that I took refuge from the world's degrees*

Whose love anointed and washed me clean of sadness?

*So that I recover and embrace that which I am*

Whose love illuminated my surroundings?

*So that I could see the immanence of beauty*

Whose love was an unfiltered draught from crystal-pure spring?

*So that I could drink my fill and purify my attention*

iv. Song to the Friend

*Folksy. Heartfelt.*

Friend, embrace me now  
I'm in need of  
sweet affection.

The warming of body to body  
The spark of skin on skin,  
Belly on belly

Quiver of anticipation  
On my tongue,  
I am open, vulnerable.  
Breath caught.

What was once unknown,  
Now understood  
What was once upset,  
Now becalmed.  
What was once desired,  
Now possessed.

Friend, let's love a little  
And build a city of hands,  
a passage of skin.

Let's hang a door of mouths  
Press a keyhole of lips  
Cut a key of kisses  
That unlock & open  
into a world  
of fire.

This world rushes  
In the highways of the blood,

Captivating rhythm—

But the touch transfixes  
And the moment quickens  
There are no other  
sounds in sight—

We are struck to each other,  
Seized in the moment.

*Of hush and moan*  
*Of lush and bless*  
*Of blush and sigh*  
*Of rush and yes*

This is the world  
Of which we sing.



v. Offertory

*Courtly, strident. In Medieval style.*

I am a packhorse with many bags!  
Load me up!  
Adorn me with baggage!

I am thy jewelry box—  
Stow thy glittering stones  
In my storehouse—  
I will not divulge them!

I am thy fruit-bearing tree--  
Pluck the apple--  
Bite, and savor its juice  
That runs down your throat.  
Join me in the orchard!

I am thy book!  
Write thy words of desire  
On the white pages  
Of my skin.  
(Thy punctuation is my command!)

Now recite me.

vi. Invocation

*Incense. Resonance. Ceremony. Percussion.*

O Gods and Goddesses hear us now—

Rain down \ blessings \ upon us  
We make \ offering of \ voices  
Use them \ as conduit

Sing to us \ of Love \ that  
burns \ and also \ freezes \ blood  
Come to us \ in chariots

Festooned \ with glittering garlands  
On \ wing of \ mighty bird  
Enfolded in \ bosom of \ Nature's breast

We call you \ now \ to educate us  
Preserve us \ in these \ bold pursuits

Cupid! Venus! Aphrodite!

Inanna! Ishtar! Oshun! Bes!

Bastet! Hathor! Siebog! Min!

Živa! Áine! Freyja! Eros!

Astghik! Bangan! Hermaphroditos!

Apollo! Ixcuiname!

Kamadeva and Rati!

Xōchiphilli! Kurupi!

Rāgarāja! Kurukulla!

Rudá! Yue-Lao! Tu Er Shen!

Bless us!

Soothe us!

Hear our pleas!

Satisfy! Sanctify!

Deliver us!

Give release!

Bind us!

Melt us!

Cool us!

Thrill us!

Join us in our dance and song!

vii. Song of Sanctuary

*for Ting Ting*

“Get out the bottle of red”



viii. Lesson

*Methodical, minimalist.*

Throw the clay  
To tone its mass  
And warm the slab for kneading work

Knead the clay  
To make it supple  
Ready for a novel shape

Shape the clay  
With careful hands  
Add the breath enmolding hope

Mold the clay  
With clear design  
And build its world for it to see

See the clay  
To final form  
Removing what is not for fire

Fire the clay  
To set resolve  
Now the vessel sings its use

Use the clay  
And fill the form--  
Exalted vessel, living day.

ix. Canto

*Timeless, ancient. Sotto voce building gently to full voice.*

Love is tolerant  
Love is welcome  
Love is patient  
Love is loyal

Love is humble  
Love is earned  
Love demanding  
Love is active!

Love is gracious  
Love is playful  
Love expansive  
Love is generous

Love is gentle  
Love unbordered  
Love is unrepentant  
Love courageous, always so

Love embroidered on the soul

Love is soulful  
Love is generative  
Love is movement  
Love commands

Love expectant  
Love immoderate  
Love momentous  
Love naive

Love is native  
Love understanding  
Love understates  
Love is nature, naturally

Love ungendered  
Love attended  
Love satiated  
Love unbending

Love sanctity  
Love sensate  
Love calamity  
Love is sane

And love will save—  
If you want it to.

x. CREDO

*Mysterious, slowly building intensity.*

What interiors yet to find and chart?  
What guides us, yet we live apart?

What scans the quick'ning day for light?  
Sometimes unreach'd yet always in sight?

What is the lack we share in plight?  
And how is it found to set things right?

Riddles you say are nothing new.  
Nor is there novelty in this world.

Yet what I say now, heed or not—  
This is the crux; this is the plot—

You think that things are just and so.  
Settled like the sun and snow.

The rain the light the night the sky  
The day the moon the planets high.

No change can make a difference now.  
The board is set, the moves are known.

You're tired, you're lost, you're hurt, you're sad  
You're traumatized, you're weak, you're mad.

This thing we've sung, raged, incanted,  
Deliberated, sniffed, decanted.

It's real, it's all, it's time, it's tough.  
Its strength is in the warp and weft.

This life won't go away, it's true.  
The sound and fury, blur and hue,  
The blood and scuff, the rue and rough—  
Take it, leave it, grab it, shove it,  
Get the hell away from it—

Nothing matters but what we've sung.  
This thing we know is on the tongue,  
It's on the brain, it's not the same  
As any other thing we know—

Yes, it's strife  
And yes it's pain  
But a life that's full  
is full of rain

The sky is hung  
The mind is wrung  
The skin is stung  
The limbs are strung

As the heart will break  
when all's at stake  
what we say is God  
Is just a nod,  
    it's just a nod

What we want is  
What we need is  
What we ache is  
What we know is  
What we dream is  
What we breathe is  
What we yearn is  
What we scream is

Is

Is...

Is—

And will be again.