



# ORATORIO SINGERS

WESTFIELD, NEW JERSEY

TRENT JOHNSON, MUSIC DIRECTOR



## *Sonic Spectacular*

Sunday, March 31, 2019

at 3 PM

First United Methodist Church  
One East Broad Street, Westfield, NJ



Made possible by funds from the Union County Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs, a partner of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.



## Oratorio Singers of Westfield

**Trent Johnson** is the Music Director of the Oratorio Singers of Westfield and is the Organist and Assistant Director of Music of All Souls Unitarian Church in New York City. He is an organist, composer, pianist and conductor. As conductor of the Oratorio Singers, he has led this organization in much of the standard literature for chorus and orchestra, as well as several premieres of his own works. He is a graduate of the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University and The Juilliard School.

An active organ recitalist, Mr. Johnson frequently performs in the major churches of New York City, Washington, D.C., Boston, Northern New Jersey and in Europe and Asia. He has recorded the organ works of Pulitzer Prize winning composer George Walker for Albany Records and is an organist at Radio City Music Hall in New York City where he plays for the Christmas Spectacular Show.

As a composer, recent premieres include his opera *Kenyatta*, commissioned by Trilogy: An Opera Company, which premiered in 2017 at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark, NJ, the oratorio *Wittenberg - The Story of Martin Luther* (2018), *The Wisdom of Solomon* (2016), a work for chorus, brass ensemble, organ, timpani and percussion, *Saint Augustine* (2014), a cantata for soloists, chorus and orchestra and his *Concertante for Organ and String Quartet* (2011), commissioned by the American Guild of Organists. Mr. Johnson is the recipient of grants from Meet The Composer, funding from the NEA, and is the recipient of the Wladimir and Rhoda Lakond Award in composition from the American Academy of Arts and Letters in New York City.

Accompanist and organist, **Yang Hee Song** is the organist and accompanist of the Princeton United Methodist Church in Princeton, New Jersey and is the accompanist of the Oratorio Singers of Westfield, NJ. She is a graduate of Kei Myoung University in Daegu City, South Korea, and The Juilliard School in New York City. Her organ and piano teachers have included Seung Paul Lee, Lionel Party, and Dr. John Weaver. As an organ recitalist, Ms. Song has performed at St. Paul's Chapel Columbia University, Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall, Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, Rutgers Presbyterian Church in New York City, Morristown Presbyterian Church, and in Daegu, South Korea. In 2017 she performed an organ recital as part of the American Guild of Organists' series: Metro Mid-day. She has accompanied choruses throughout America and abroad including the Daegu City Chorus. She has appeared several times on tour with noted soprano Cho Lee throughout Mississippi, Tennessee, Louisiana, Alabama, New Jersey and New York City. Ms. Song is a piano teacher and member of MEA in New Jersey who takes pride in sharing the joy of music with her students.

Now in its 39th year, the **Oratorio Singers of Westfield** is a community chorus which performs major choral works by various composers of the past and present with orchestra. Under the direction of Mr. Trent Johnson, this community organization continues the high standards and tradition developed by the Rev. Phillip R. Dietterich, who founded the chorus in 1980 and who was its director until 1994. It was in 1970 that after forming both the chorus and orchestra in the Baroque style, that Rev. Dietterich conducted Handel's *Messiah* with a standing room only audience in attendance. The huge success of this concert was to give rise to the formation of the Oratorio Singers ten years later. The reputation of the Oratorio Singers is widespread in the metropolitan area. Each year the goal is to select and perform choral masterpieces, some better known than others. We are privileged to have performed several times at Carnegie Hall with Mid America Productions.

Past performances in Westfield include the *Passions*, *Christmas Oratorio*, *the Mass in B Minor*, motets and other works of J. S. Bach; the *Requiems* of Brahms, Verdi, Dvorak, Mozart and Faure; Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, and Lobgesang, and Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast*. Works of Handel include the *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day*, *the Coronation Anthems*, and the oratorios *Judas Maccabaeus*, *Israel in Egypt* and *Messiah*. Other composers represented include Haydn, Poulenc, Elgar, Richard Wagner, Dello Joio, Kodály, Leonard Bernstein, and P.D.Q. Bach. The Oratorio Singers have also premiered new works by the Rev. Philip R. Dietterich and Trent Johnson. Some recent premieres by Mr. Johnson include his oratorio *Wittenberg - The Story of Martin Luther*; the cantatas *Saint Augustine*, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, *In Homage of Spring*, *Celebration Overture for orchestra*, *The Paschal Lamb*, and *Cantus Avium Solamen Est*, or *Birdsong Brings Relief*, a concerto for clarinet, bird whistles, chorus and orchestra.

**Next year we celebrate our 40th Anniversary, please stay tuned for information about our next season!**

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



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*A special thank you to our hardworking volunteers who built the stage we stand on!*

*We extend our grateful thanks to  
The First United Methodist Church in Westfield  
for providing us with rehearsal and performance space.*

# Program Notes

By Paul Mack Somers

## *Anthems*

While hymn-tunes have become the artistic backbone of Protestant church music, anthems have a longer history, reaching back as early as plainsong chanting by people who had taken religious orders. The laity stood at a distance and listened to the sacred drama of the Mass with the professionally sung texts resounding through the stone edifice. The larger the church, the richer its architecture, and the higher its status, the more elaborate the music would sound. With the invention of written music around 1000 AD, the singing became more complex, filled with multiple musical lines both imitating and utilizing the echoes which would resonate through Romanesque and Gothic sanctuary vaults. It was music performed by an educated literate literary elite.

With the rise of religious populism we call the Reformation, church music became simpler while music literacy rose in the congregations. It was not long before hymnals expanded beyond only the texts and included the tunes and even a harmonization or two. As the music literacy level rose in the Protestants, the Roman Catholics responded with their own Counter Reformation versions, and the level and numbers of the combined musical elite rose. Soon the musical medium ultimately labeled as the “church choir” appeared in both branches of Christianity.

In Catholicism, both Continental and English, the choir sang music written for the Ordinary of the Mass, as well as separate Psalm or prayer texts in Latin. European Protestants specialized in cantatas while in England large anthems were more popular. Because in England a composer often had to show no affiliation to survive in the shifting religious landscape, he (they were all male) might have to produce both Anglican and Roman works at different times in his life. Outside an actual service and since opera was forbidden during Lent, it was popular English composers to create an oratorio, a large, dramatic work for chorus, soloists, and orchestra on a Biblical theme. Handel was a master of the genre since he was already a master of opera.

## *Brass Instruments*

Today’s concert incorporates a brass ensemble. These instruments have a history of carrying symbolic meanings. The use of trumpets was often symbolic of the king on the battlefield or with his army. In church music this was obviously used for God as ruler and a battler against the forces of evil. Horns, since they were used by hunters and messengers, often are used to suggest outdoors settings and the delivery of news. Though in English we use the phrase “the last trumpet” in connection with “the last days”, in Ger-

man the instrument is the trombone, so it is no surprise that its use often indicates death, especially in opera.

Often brass is chosen by a composer or arranger simply for its sheer, exhilarating brilliance but low, soft brass with its velvet sonority is equally as important in the palette of tonal colors. Historically, brass was often used with organ and chorus as three separate, almost independent musical entities. The antiphonal echoes of Giovanni Gabrieli’s 16th and 17th century music composed for the wide spaces within St. Mark’s Cathedral in Venice appear centuries later in music which also echoes the dramatic effect of treating blocks of sound geographically in a performance space.

## *Today’s music*

Eugene Gigout’s *Grand Choeur Dialogue* (1881) is an example of this use of the Venetian historic model. Composed around 300 years after Gabrieli’s music, the word “Dialogue” alone makes one ready to listen for the play between the areas of the church reserved for the choirs of the organ and, in this arrangement, the brass. Shifting tonalities influenced by Wagner and Liszt, and Gigout’s close friends Camille Saint-Saëns and Cesar Franck fill this work with a naturally flowing chromaticism..

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s *Te deum laudamus*, K. 141 (1769) finds the thirteen-year-old making full use of his study of the 1760 *Te deum* by Michael Haydn (1737-1806) (Josef’s lesser known younger brother). It was common to study composition by modeling as closely as measure-by-measure a pre-existing older work. Michael, who also worked at Salzburg with the Mozarts, was an older, more experienced composer, but Mozart, in following his model, equalled or exceeded it with his own touches and increasingly fluid skills.

The requirements to include all the text, to get through it in good time with certain music affects are met with elegant style. The text can be understood, since there is barely any counterpoint until the final fugue, which was the most important requirement.

John Ireland’s anthem *Greater Love Hath No Man* has often been used at military funerals. Yet it was composed before World War I and published in 1912, five years before he became an overnight sensation as a composer of a violin sonata. Ireland was the organist and choirmaster at St Luke’s Church, Chelsea, London. *Greater Love* is his most famous choral work, and since his chamber and orchestral music is rarely played in the United States, it is certainly Ireland’s most famous work in America.

John Rutter’s arrangement of *All Creatures of Our God and King* had its origin in Psalm 148, which was the basis of *The Canticle of the Sun*, a prayer by St. Francis of Assisi written in 1225. In writing

about St. Francis, Pope John Paul II said, "As a friend of the poor who was loved by God's creatures, Saint Francis invited all of creation — animals, plants, natural forces, even Brother Sun and Sister Moon — to give honor and praise to the Lord. The poor man of Assisi gives us striking witness that when we are at peace with God we are better able to devote ourselves to building up that peace with all creation which is inseparable from peace among all peoples."

The next step toward Rutter's creation was the German counter-reformation tune *Laßt uns erfreuen herzlich sehr* (Let us rejoice very heartily), which appeared in 1623. This was ironically during the Thirty Years War, which so divided Europe.

Sometime in the decade before 1919, William Draper, the rector of the parish church in Adel, Leeds, wrote a paraphrase translation of St. Francis' famous *Canticle* for use by children. It was published in 1919, using *Laßt uns erfreuen* as the tune, so effective with its recurring Alleluias at the ends of phrases.

Finally, the famous British church musician John Rutter arranged the hymn-tune into an uplifting anthem supported by larger instrumental forces.

Michael Maybrick's (1841-1913) religious ballad *The Holy City* dates from 1892. It was the most popular piece of music of the early 20th century with sheet music sales achieving records. It is listed as the single most pirated musical work before the modern internet world. What was it that brought it to such heights?

Maybrick, already known as an operatic baritone, used the pseudonym Stephen Adams as he composed and then toured the US as a more popular styled soloist. His mostly romantic, sentimental ballads and a few sacred pieces were major hits everywhere he went. In the case of *The Holy City*, singing along with the big resounding chorus — it had become widely known very quickly— was the highlight of his performances. Apocryphal stories spread about the miraculous conversions and healings resulting from the singing of the grand tune and lyricist Fred Weatherly's inspiring words.

In a bizarre twist, Maybrick was once considered a prime suspect in the Jack the Ripper murders but recent DNA evidence appears to have cleared him of those crimes.

Sir Edward Elgar's now rarely performed oratorio *The Apostles*, op. 49, begins with a prologue including "The Spirit of the Lord Is Upon Me". As in this concert, it is often performed as an independent work, a cathedral anthem. Elgar's gifts are fully shown as he moves from ethereal mysticism to tremendous climaxes smoothly, taking the listener along on the journey without the sudden shocks of overly operatic effects.

Charles Wood (1886-1926) came to church music late in his all-too-short life. *O Thou, the Central Orb* has come to be expected for royal events in the UK. A few years ago it was featured at the service recognizing the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. It is filled with musical craft, melodies which appeal to singers and listeners alike without pandering, and an honest reverence for large occasions.

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) spent over one-tenth of his life in the UK. He was the one and only singing teacher of Queen

Victoria. He is most associated with J. S. Bach, since it was he who personally resurrected the *St. Matthew Passion* from obscurity. But he also produced scholarly editions of Handel oratorios for publication in England. If one measures Mendelssohn's output by number and not by length of time, the largest percentage is Protestant church music! Indeed, at his early death, he left an incomplete oratorio which was published posthumously as *Christus*, a name supplied by his younger brother Paul. Texts for the planned large work were chosen from the Bible by the great polymath and active liberal Protestant Christian Karl Josias Bunsen. As he had done for his entire life, Mendelssohn knew and often collaborated with the cream of the early 19th century intelligencia.

"Behold a Star from Jacob Shining" is from the earliest pages of *Christus*. It follows as commentary on a narrative chorus about the search for the newborn king. The Biblical passage followed by a meditation is right out of the Bach Passions model. It is the only piece of the oratorio performed regularly, having become a popular Christmas anthem.

Mendelssohn was famous quite early and for good reason. He took on worthwhile major projects and had the abundance of both talent and energy to pull them off. Of course, if anyone was ever born with the proverbial silver spoon, it was he. Born into a wealthy family which afforded him the best possible education, he had every known advantage (including what amounted to his own full orchestra to compose for); he made full use of it while never appearing as spoiled or lazy. He refused to live off his family money but like any other musician, lived off his earnings. Of course, since he was one of the major stars, he did quite well.

He was commissioned to compose a major work for a large choral festival in Birmingham, England. An English text on the subject of the prophet Elijah was translated into German and sent to him. He worked on it but needed it retranslated back into English for its premiere. Mendelssohn's correspondence with the translator shows clearly that his English was as good, possibly even better, than that of the translator. The piece was composed to fit both languages. Mendelssohn, one of the first two super-star conductors (his friend Hector Berlioz was the other), was on the podium for the English premiere. Mendelssohn died before the German premiere, which took place on his birthday, February 3, in Leipzig. The conductor was his friend the composer Niels Gade.

"He Watching Over Israel" is number 29 in *Elijah*, a lovely work in a pastoral mood without the typical swaying meter of a baroque pastorale. Mendelssohn uses skillful but never showy counterpoint in this piece, which is often performed as an independent anthem.

"And Then Shall Your Light Break Forth" is the final grand chorus of *Elijah*. Modeled more on Handel than Bach, it has a strong introduction followed by a vigorous and well-worked-out double fugue and a big final coda, worthy as the ending to a monumental oratorio. It also works well as a summation of the afternoon's exploration of great church anthems.

*Our concert is dedicated to the memory of Judy Corello,  
our friend and longtime member of the Oratorio Singers.*

*Sonic  
Spectacular*

## **Grande Choeur Dialogue for Brass and Organ**

***Eugene Gigout (1844-1925)***

### **Te Deum Laudamus (K 141)**

***Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)***

Te deum laudamus; te dominum confitemur;  
Te aeternum patrem omnis terra veneratur.  
Tibi omnes angeli, tibi coeli et universae potestates  
Tibi cherubim et seraphim incessabili voce proclamant:  
Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus dominus deus sabaoth.  
Pleni sunt coeli et terra majestatis gloriae tuae.  
Te gloriosus apostolorum chorus:  
Te prophetarum laudabilis numerus;  
Te martyrum candidatus laudat exercitus.  
Te per orbem terrarum sancta confitetur ecclesia:  
Patrem immensae majestatis:  
Venerandum tuum verum et unicum filium;  
Sanctum quoque paraclitum spiritum  
Tu rex gloriae, Christe,  
Tu patris sempiternus es filius  
Tu ad liberandum suscepturus hominem  
non horruisti virginis uterum.  
Tu devicto mortis aculeo aperuisti credentibus  
regna coelorum.  
Tu ad dexteram dei sedes, in gloria patris.  
Judex crederis esse venturus.

Te ergo quaesumus, tuis famulis subveni, quos  
pretioso sanguine redemisti.  
Aeterna fac cum sanctis tuis in gloria numerari.  
Salvum fac populum tuum, domine, et benedic hereditati tuae,  
Et rege eos, et extolle illos usque in aeternum.  
Per singulos dies, benedicimus te,  
Et laudamus nomen tuum in saeculum et in saeculum saeculi  
Dignare domine die isto sine peccato nos custodire  
Miserere nostri, domine, miserere nostri.  
Fiat misericordia tua, domine super nos  
quemadmodum speravimus in te.

In te domine speravi non confundar in aeternum.

You are God: we praise you; You are the Lord: we acclaim you;  
You are the eternal Father: All creation worships you.  
To you all angels, all the powers of heaven,  
Cherubim and Seraphim, sing in endless praise:  
Holy, holy, holy, Lord, God of power and might,  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
The glorious company of apostles praise you.  
The noble fellowship of prophets praise you.  
The white-robed army of martyrs praise you.  
Throughout the world the holy Church acclaim you:  
Father, of majesty unbounded,  
Your true and only Son, worthy of all worship,  
The Holy Spirit, advocate and guide.  
You, Christ, are the king of glory,  
The eternal Son of the Father.  
When you became man to set us free  
you did not spurn the virgin's womb.  
You overcame the sting of death,  
and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.  
You are seated at God's right hand in glory.  
We believe that you will come, and be our judge.

Come then, Lord, and help your people,  
bought with the price of your own blood,  
and bring us with your saints to glory everlasting.  
Save your people, Lord, and bless your inheritance.  
Govern and uphold them now and always.  
Day by day we bless you.  
We praise your name for ever.  
Keep us today, Lord, from all sin.  
Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy.  
Lord, show us your love and mercy;  
for we put our trust in you.

In you, Lord, is our hope: and we shall never hope in vain.



## Greater Love Hath No Man

**John Ireland (1879-1962)**

**Arranged for brass instruments by Trent Johnson**

Many waters cannot quench Love, neither can the floods drown it.  
Love is strong as death.

Greater Love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.  
Who his own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree,  
that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness.

Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus;  
Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation,  
that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you  
out of darkness into His marvellous light.

I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies, a living sacrifice,  
holly acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

## All Creatures of Our God and King

**John Rutter (b.1945)**

*Congregation sings on verses 1, 2, 5 and 7.*

3. Thou flowing water, pure and clear,  
make music for thy Lord to hear,  
alleluia, alleluia!  
Thou fire so masterful and bright,  
that givest man both warmth and light,  
O praise him, O praise him,  
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

4. Dear mother earth, who day by day.  
Unfoldest blessing on our way  
alleluia, alleluia!  
The flowers and fruits that in thee grow,  
Let them his glory also show,  
O praise him, O praise him,  
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

6. And thou most kind and gentle death,  
waiting to hush our latest breath,  
O praise him, alleluia!  
Thou leadest home the child of God,  
And Christ our Lord the way hath trod:  
O praise him, O praise him,  
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!



## **The Holy City**

**Stephan Adams (1831-1913)**

**Arranged for brass instruments by Trent Johnson**

Last night I lay asleeping,  
There came a dream so fair;  
I stood in old Jerusalem,  
Beside the Temple there.  
I heard the children singing,  
And ever as they sang,  
Methought the voice of Angels  
From Heav'n in answer rang:

Jerusalem, Jerusalem,  
Lift up your gates and sing  
Hosanna in the highest,  
Hosanna to your King!

And then methought my dream was chang'd,  
The streets no longer rang,  
Hush'd were the glad Hosannas,  
The little children sang,  
The sun grew dark with mystery,  
The morn was cold and chill.  
As the shadow of a cross arose,  
Upon a lonely hill,

Jerusalem, Jerusalem,  
Lift up your gates and sing  
Hosanna in the Highest!  
Hosanna to your King!

And once again the scene was chang'd,  
New earth there seem'd to be!  
I saw the Holy City  
Beside the tideless sea;  
The light of God was on its street,  
The gates were open wide;  
And all who would might enter,  
And no one was denied.  
No need of moon or stars by night,  
Or sun to shine by day,  
It was the new Jerusalem,  
That would not pass away!

Jerusalem! Jerusalem!  
Sing, for the night is o'er,  
Hosanna in the highest!  
Hosanna forevermore!



*Ten-minute Intermission*





## **The Spirit of the Lord is Upon Me**

***Edward Elgar (1857-1934)***

***Arranged for brass instruments by Trent Johnson***

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because He hath anointed me to  
preach the Gospel to the poor:  
He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted,  
to preach deliverance to the captives  
and recovering of sight to the blind,  
to preach the acceptable year of the Lord;  
to give unto them that mourn  
a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning,  
the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;  
That they might be called trees of righteousness,  
the planting of the Lord that He might be glorified.

For as the earth bringeth forth her bud,  
and as the garden causeth the  
things that are sown in it to spring forth;  
So the Lord God will cause  
righteousness and praise to  
spring forth before all nations.

## **O Thou the Central Orb**

***Charles Wood (1866-1926)***

***Arranged for brass instruments by Trent Johnson***

O Thou the central orb of righteous love,  
Pure beam of the most high,  
Eternal light of this our wintry world,  
Thy radiance bright awakes new joy in faith,  
Hope soars above, above.

Come, quickly come, and let thy glory shine,  
Gilding our darksome heaven with rays divine.

Thy saints with holy lustre round Thee move,  
As stars about thy throne, set in the height  
of God's ordaining counsel, as Thy sight  
gives measur'd grace to each, Thy power to prove.

Let Thy bright beams disperse the gloom of sin,  
Our nature all shall feel eternal day,  
In fellowship with Thee,  
Transforming day to souls while ere unclean,  
now pure within, now pure within. Amen.



## **Behold a Star from Jacob Shining**

***Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)***

***Arranged for brass instruments by Trent Johnson***

Behold a star from Jacob shining,  
and a scepter from Israel rising,  
to reign in glory over the nations.

Like some bright morning star is he,  
the promise of the coming day,  
beyond the night of sorrow.  
Break forth, O light!  
We, our joyful hearts uplifting  
with thanksgiving,  
hail the brightness of thy rising.

## **He Watching over Israel from *Elijah***

***Felix Mendelssohn***

***Arranged for brass instruments by Trent Johnson***

He, watching over Israel,  
slumbers not, nor sleeps.  
Shouldst thou, walking in grief languish,  
He will quicken thee.

## **And Then Shall Your Light Break Forth from *Elijah***

***Felix Mendelssohn***

***Arranged for brass instruments by Trent Johnson***

And then, then shall your light break forth  
as the light of morning breaketh,  
and your health shall speedily spring forth then.  
And the glory of the Lord ever shall reward you.  
Lord, our Creator, how excellent Thy name is in all the nations,  
Thou fillest heaven with Thy glory. Amen!





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Margo Bradley  
Gloria Brodersen  
Stephanie Kissenberth  
Cindy Lamy  
Annie McNair  
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\*Soloist in *Greater Love Hath No Man*

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