

Lincoln Center's

white light festival

October 18–November 15, 2017

Thursday, November 9, 2017, at 8:30 pm

The Psalms Experience

CONCERT 6

Gratitude

The Tallis Scholars

Peter Phillips, *Conductor*

Introduction by Rev. Winnie Varghese,
Director of Justice and Reconciliation, Trinity Church Wall Street

This program is approximately one hour long and will be performed without intermission.

(Program continued)

The White Light Festival presentation of *The Psalms Experience* is supported by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

This program is supported as part of the Dutch Culture USA program by the Consulate General of the Netherlands in New York.

This performance is made possible in part by the Josie Robertson Fund for Lincoln Center.

New York Society for Ethical Culture

Please make certain all your electronic devices are switched off.

WhiteLightFestival.org

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Artist Catering provided by Zabar's and Zabars.com

The Psalms Experience was created and first produced by Tido Visser, managing director of the Netherlands Chamber Choir.

The Netherlands Chamber Choir was supported by the Netherland-America Foundation for the development of this project.

UPCOMING WHITE LIGHT FESTIVAL EVENTS:

Friday, November 10, at 6:30 pm at the New York Society for Ethical Culture

The Psalms Experience

Concert 7: Abandonment

Norwegian Soloists' Choir (New York debut)

Grete Pedersen, conductor

Visit PsalmsExperience.org for full concert details.

Friday, November 10, at 8:30 pm at the New York Society for Ethical Culture

The Psalms Experience

Concert 8: Lamentation

Netherlands Chamber Choir

Peter Dijkstra, conductor

Visit PsalmsExperience.org for full concert details.

Saturday, November 11, at 1:00 pm in James Memorial Chapel

The Psalms Experience

Concert 9: Security and Trust

The Tallis Scholars

Peter Phillips, conductor

Visit PsalmsExperience.org for full concert details.

Saturday, November 11, at 8:30 pm in Alice Tully Hall

The Psalms Experience

Concert 12: Consequences of Power

The Tallis Scholars

Peter Phillips, conductor

With members of **The Choir of Trinity Wall**

Street, Netherlands Chamber Choir, and

Norwegian Soloists' Choir

For tickets, call (212) 721-6500 or visit WhiteLightFestival.org. Call the Lincoln Center Info Request Line at (212) 875-5766 to learn about program cancellations or to request a White Light Festival brochure.

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We would like to remind you that the sound of coughing and rustling paper might distract the performers and your fellow audience members.

In consideration of the performing artists and members of the audience, those who must leave before the end of the performance are asked to do so between pieces. The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment are not allowed in the building.

Gratitude

CLAUDIO MERULO
(1533–1604)

In tribulatione mea (Psalm 18)

TOMÁS LUIS DE VICTORIA
(c. 1548–1611)

Credidi propter quod (Psalm 116)

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN
(1732–1809)

Maker of all! Be Thou my guard (Psalm 41)

ORLANDO GIBBONS
(1583–1625)

Sing unto the Lord (Psalm 30)

PHILIPPE DE MONTE
(1521–1603)

Donnez au Seigneur gloire (Psalm 107)

MOGENS PEDERSØN
(1583–1623)

Min Siel nu loffue herren (Psalm 103)

SAMUEL SEBASTIAN WESLEY
(1810–1876)

Blest is the man (Psalm 32)

JEAN MOUTON
(c. 1459–1522)

Benedicam Dominum in omni tempore
(Psalm 34)

FRANCISCO GUERRERO
(1528–1599)

In conspectu angelorum (Psalm 138)

SALAMONE ROSSI
(c. 1570–1630)

Odesha ki anitani (Psalm 118)

FRANZ SCHUBERT
(1797–1828)

Tov lehodos, D. 953 (Psalm 92)

NICO MUHLY
(b. 1981)

Marrow (U.S. premiere) (Psalm 63)

PIERRE DE LA RUE
(c.1452 or later–1518)

Lauda anima mea Dominum (Psalm 146)

Please hold applause until the end of the performance.

The Book of Psalms and Its Musical Interpretations

By Neil W. Levin

Common to the liturgies, histories, and spirit of Judaism and Christianity, the Book of Psalms is one of the most widely familiar and frequently quoted books of the Hebrew Bible. The Psalms are also basic to Western culture as literature. Their expression in musical notation spans more than ten centuries. Their unnotated musical traditions predate Christianity, extending to Jewish antiquity and the Temple eras when the Psalter served in effect as the Temple music manual and prayer book.

LITERARY and RELIGIOUS CONTENT.

Most current biblical scholarship places the Psalms' composition as well as unified canonization substantially prior to the second century BCE, by which time their popularity was well established. Their common attribution to King David as a popular post-biblical tradition notwithstanding, it is impossible to know the identity of the Psalms' author(s) or compiler(s). But we can celebrate their uninterrupted endurance through their embrace of a broad spectrum of human experience and their perceived manifestations of a respectable form of popular theology.

Taken together, the Psalms express human thirst for moral, ethical, and spiritual grounding as well as the common search for a guiding faith. Viewed from theological or even deist perspectives, they encapsulate human pursuit of the Divine essence. "In the Torah and the Prophets," wrote biblical scholar Nahum Sarna, "God reaches out to man. In the Psalms, human beings reach out to God. The language is human." Indeed, in their singular blend of majestic grandeur, lofty sentiments, and poignant simplicity, the Psalms address nearly every human emotion and mood. Judaic origin and Judeo-Christian association

aside, their ageless attraction abides in the universality of their appeal and teachings, transcending religious orientation, time, and geography.

MUSICAL RECONSTRUCTION. From musicological scholarship and Judaic sources, we understand something about psalmody—the manner of musical Psalm rendition—in the ancient Temple in Jerusalem, including probable vocal range and predominance of particular tones; syllabic versus melismatic articulation; embellishment; type of choirs and performance formats (responsorial, antiphonal, etc.); and instrumental accompaniment. But this knowledge is academic and theoretical rather than aesthetic or artistic. It cannot effectuate authentic Temple-era reproductions of Psalms vis-à-vis modalities, pitches, melodic progressions, timbres, or precise rhythms. Similar limitations apply to reasonable suppositions concerning early Church psalmody, in which some musical practices may have been borrowed from Hebrew psalmody. Despite various irresponsible claims over the years to have deciphered imagined encoded systems of musical information, all attempts to replicate Temple psalmody aurally are at best naively romantic exercises in fantasy.

Although ancient psalmody has not survived intact in any synagogue music tradition, one hears presumed echoes in certain Sephardi and Near Eastern repertoires. In some of those, however, as in Ashkenazi practice inherited from Europe or expanded elsewhere, Psalm renditions have also acquired artificial meter through superimposed syllabic patterns or adaptations to secular tunes. Rarely have modern composers employed perceived psalmodic features.

THE PSALMS IN HEBREW and CHRISTIAN LITURGIES. The development of Hebrew liturgy relied heavily on the Psalms, which provided an obvious foundation. They permeate the traditional prayer books of every rite, and they infuse Reform

worship as well. No other biblical book is so directly, richly, or consistently represented. Outside formally designated services, societies of “Psalm reciters” are features of many fervently pious communities, such as one in contemporary Jerusalem whose two distinct subgroups divide between them the daily recitation of the entire Psalter at the Western Wall.

The Psalter also offered a wellspring of liturgical material for the nascent Church. Latin translations are thought to have predominated its earliest services; eventually, usage differed between Eastern and Western rites. Aside from a few extant fragments, their musical notation survives only from the ninth century on.

In the Roman, or Western Church, the continuum of unabridged Psalm singing is most conspicuous in the Office of Vespers, though not exclusive to it. In the Mass and other liturgies, however, Psalms became abbreviated or partially quoted. Many polyphonic settings for Roman Catholic liturgy continued even past the Renaissance to reflect or incorporate elements of psalmody. But in the various Protestant movements, Psalm composition followed the course of art music in which those historical references were largely abandoned: Bach motets, for example. The Reformation also led to emphasis on Psalm singing in the vernacular: German, English, etc. To encourage congregational singing, metrical—even superficially rhymed—versions and paraphrases were created, often only approximating the original Hebrew loosely if at all. These were set to hymn-like strophic tunes with simple chordal accompaniments. Communal singing in 19th- and early 20th-century classical Reform Jewish worship exhibited a similar fashion.

PSALMS IN THE WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSICAL TRADITION. Original Psalm settings proliferated in Europe from the 15th century on as sacred music from Western

artistic perspectives, and eventually also outside religious contexts altogether. Psalm composition in the 17th and 18th centuries is intertwined with contemporaneous paths of motet and anthem genres; English and American anthems of that time both display abundant reliance on Psalm texts. During the 19th century, throughout the modern era, and into the 21st century in both sacred and secular worlds, composers of nearly every stripe and orientation have engaged the Psalms in expressions ranging from large-scale choral and orchestral works to art songs and a cappella choral settings—even in exclusively instrumental inspirations such as solo organ sonatas or Krzysztof Penderecki’s electronic *Psalmus* (1961). There is no stylistic approach or treatment, no technical procedure (including 12-tone serialization), no melodic, contrapuntal, or harmonic language—in short, no aspect of Western musical development—from which the Psalms have escaped.

The unrelenting appeal of the Psalms for mainstream and avant-garde composers alike in each generation lies not only in their poetic religious spirit, but in their transcendent humanistic content. They continue to invite musical engagement both from Judaic or Judeo-Christian sensibilities and from basic Western literary-cultural worldviews. And some works communicate on intersecting planes. Thus, the Psalms may be understood not only as an ecumenical bridge between two faiths—which is no new observation—but as *artistic* mediators between sacred and secular music in the evolving, expanding Western canon.

Neil W. Levin is artistic director and editor-in-chief of the Milken Archive of Jewish Music, an emeritus professor of Jewish music at the Jewish Theological Seminary, and professor-in-residence at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York.

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Notes on the Program

By James M. Keller

Examine a well-used Bible and you will find that one of its most heavily thumbed sections is the Book of Psalms. It is easy to understand why. Whereas much of the Old Testament is given over to tribal histories, prophetic pronouncements, and declarations of rules for society (often with threats of divine retribution against those who don't toe the line), the Psalms are utterances of the human heart. They are not unique in that regard. We encounter personalized expression of specific human aspects elsewhere in the Old Testament, particularly in several of the Psalms' immediate neighbors—desolation in The Book of Job, sagacity in the Book of Proverbs, cynicism in Ecclesiastes, eroticism in The Songs of Songs. The Psalms, however, give voice to an exceptional breadth of the human spirit. In the 150 psalms, man is searching for his *condition humaine*, his right to exist, his country and culture, guided by his faith and his doubts, bemoaning his fate and dancing with joy. The Psalms are about him and belong to him.

Created as songs, these prose poems have appealed greatly to composers through the centuries, yielding a repertoire of many thousands of compositions. For this project, a team of Dutch scholars—Tido Visser, managing director of the Netherlands Chamber Choir, musicologist Leo Samama, and theologian Gerard Swüste—divided the corpus of Psalms into 12 groups by subject and then selected settings that would form musically balanced and satisfying programs out of each of those chapters. They established some ground rules: The settings would be for a *cappella* chorus (allowing very occasional organ accompaniments); each psalm might be represented through either its complete or partial text; and each composer, whether renowned or obscure, would figure exactly once throughout the entire project.

This evening's program presents settings of 13 psalms that focus on the theme of gratitude. The subject of gratitude and thanksgiving have already come up in other concerts of *The Psalms Experience*, but this installment focuses entirely on songs of praise in which, to quote Swüste, "man voices his realization of just how much he has received—life, a new opportunity in life, the feeling that things are going well, that success is assured. You could say that the Psalms of thanks result from the feeling that not everything is man-made, that though we as people are capable of a lot, we are also given a lot."

Franz Joseph Haydn sets the tone in Psalm 41: simplicity and clarity, very much in the 18th-century English mode and quite like contemporaneous part-songs he was composing. Following a restructuring of the Austrian Esterházy court, which he had served diligently for three decades, Haydn undertook two residencies in London. During the second, he contributed six pieces to the *Improved Psalmody* collection of William Dechair Tattersall, who noted in the preface that Haydn "may be justly esteemed the most celebrated composer of the present day"—which was true. This concert also includes the premiere of a celebrated composer of our day, the American Nico Muhly, who grew up immersed in choral music and whose credits include the opera *Two Boys*, premiered by the English National Opera in 2011 and produced by the Metropolitan Opera in 2013.

The end-of-Renaissance British composer Orlando Gibbons follows another tradition. He set Psalm 30 as a verse anthem, with a splendid polyphonic vocal exchange between soloists and choir, supported by an organ. Frenchman Jean Mouton, Flemings Pierre de la Rue and Philippe de Monte, Italian Claudio Merulo, and Spaniards Francisco Guerrero and Tomás Luis de Victoria likewise follow the rich examples of Franco-Flemish polyphony, with sophisticated vocal imitations in all parts. Danish composer and instrument maker Mogens Pedersøn, who learned his trade from Giovanni Gabrieli in Venice in the years around 1600, set Psalm 103 in a taut, homophonic manner; as a result, the Danish text sounds as clear as possible, almost like a chorale, in accordance with Lutheran tradition. Salamone Rossi's beautiful Psalm 118 and Franz Schubert's Hebrew Psalm 92 form a special pair. Around 1600 in Mantua, Rossi was the only composer who served the ducal family while also having permission to practice his Jewish faith publicly and to compose music to Hebrew texts. Schubert composed his psalm during the last year of his life for the temple of the Viennese reformist cantor Salomon Sulzer in central Vienna.

Adapted from essays by Leo Samama

James M. Keller is program annotator of the New York Philharmonic (The Leni and Peter May Chair) and of the San Francisco Symphony. He also serves as critic-at-large for The Santa Fe New Mexican, the oldest newspaper west of the Mississippi.

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Please turn to page 22 for an article on the enduring resonance of the Psalms.

Meet the Artists

ALBERT ROSENBURG



Peter Phillips

Peter Phillips has dedicated his life's work to the research and performance of Renaissance polyphony. Having won a scholarship to Oxford in 1972, Mr. Phillips studied Renaissance music with David Wulstan and Denis Arnold, and gained experience conducting small vocal ensembles, experimenting with rarer parts of the repertoire. He founded The Tallis Scholars in 1973, with whom he has now appeared in nearly 2,000 concerts and recorded over 60 discs, encouraging interest in polyphony all over the world.

Apart from The Tallis Scholars, Mr. Phillips continues to work with other specialist ensembles, including the BBC Singers, Collegium Vocale Gent, and the Netherlands Chamber Choir. He also works with the Chœur de Chambre de Namur, Intrada of Moscow, Musica Reservata of Barcelona, and El León de Oro of Oviedo. Each year, he gives numerous master classes and choral workshops around the world, including Rimini (Italy), Évora (Portugal), and Barcelona. In 2014 he launched the London International A Cappella Choral Competition held at St. John's Smith Square, attracting choirs from all over the world.

Mr. Phillips has made numerous television and radio broadcasts. Besides those featuring The Tallis Scholars (which include many live broadcasts from the BBC Proms), he has appeared several times on Music Weekly (BBC Radio 3) and the BBC World Service, on Kaleidoscope and Today (both on BBC Radio 4), National Public Radio in the U.S., as well as on German,

French, Italian, Spanish, and Canadian radio. He was also featured with The Tallis Scholars on ITV's *The South Bank Show* in 1990, as well as in a special television documentary made for the BBC in 2002 about the life and times of William Byrd.

Mr. Phillips was appointed Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres in 2005, and was appointed a Reed Rubin Director of Music and Bodley Fellow at Merton College, Oxford, where he helped establish a new choral foundation which began singing services in 2008, and gave their first live broadcast in 2011 on BBC Radio 3's Choral Evensong.

The Tallis Scholars

With over four decades of performances and a catalogue of award-winning recordings, The Tallis Scholars have been paramount in establishing sacred vocal music of the Renaissance as one of the great repertoires of Western classical music.

The Tallis Scholars have sought to bring Renaissance works to a wider audience in churches, cathedrals, and venues on almost every continent. The ensemble gives concerts at some of the most intimate local venues and at the world's most established concert halls alike, with appearances at Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, London's Royal Albert Hall, Wigmore Hall, and Globe Theatre, the Sistine Chapel, St. Mark's Basilica in Venice, Berlin Philharmonie, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, Seoul Arts Centre, Beijing Concert Hall, Megaron in Athens, and the Sydney Opera House.

Praised for their supple clarity and tone, The Tallis Scholars continue to develop their exclusive sound, bringing fresh interpretations to music by both contemporary and past composers including Arvo Pärt, John Tavener, Eric Whitacre, Nico Muhly, and Gabriel Jackson. The group has been instrumental in a number of new commissions, and its recording catalogue

continues to flourish since winning a Gramophone Award in 1987. The Tallis Scholars' recent releases, Tavener's *Missa Gloria tibi Trinitas* and *Missa Corona spinea*, and a disc of music by Pärt called *Tintinnabuli*, all reached the top spot on the Specialist Classical Chart in the U.K. The ensemble plans to complete its full series of Josquin Masses on disc by 2021.

Rev. Winnie Varghese

The Rev. Winnie Varghese is the priest and chief justice and reconciliation officer at Trinity Church Wall Street. Rev. Varghese oversees the domestic grants program; direct service and outreach from Trinity Church; and programming in areas of service and justice for Trinity Church. Before joining Trinity, Rev. Varghese was the rector of St. Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery, a historic Episcopal congregation in New York City. From 2003 to 2009, she served as the Episcopal chaplain at Columbia University. From 1999 to 2003 she served as the curate at St. Alban's Episcopal Church, Westwood and Episcopal chaplain to UCLA.

She graduated from the Union Theological Seminary (M.Div., 1999) and Southern Methodist University (B.A., Religious Studies, 1994). As an intern in the Episcopal Service Corps (1994–95), she worked with the Mental Health Association of Los Angeles as an outreach worker to people who were homeless and living with severe mental illness. She is a blogger for the *Huffington Post*; author of *Church Meets World*; editor of *What We Shall Become*; and author of numerous articles and chapters on social justice and the church.

White Light Festival

I could compare my music to white light, which contains all colors. Only a prism can divide the colors and make them appear; this prism could be the spirit of the listener.
—Arvo Pärt. Now in its eighth year, the White Light Festival is Lincoln Center's annual exploration of music and art's power to reveal the many dimensions of our interior lives. International in scope, the multi-disciplinary festival offers a broad spectrum of the world's leading instrumentalists, vocalists, ensembles, choreographers, dance companies, and directors, complemented by conversations with artists and scholars and post-performance White Light Lounges.

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc.

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (LCPA) serves three primary roles: presenter of artistic programming, national leader in arts and education and community relations, and manager of the Lincoln Center campus. A presenter of more than 3,000 free and ticketed events, performances, tours, and educational activities annually, LCPA offers 15 programs, series, and festivals including American Songbook, Great Performers, Lincoln Center Festival, Lincoln Center Out of Doors, Midsummer Night Swing, the Mostly Mozart Festival, and the White Light Festival, as well as the Emmy Award-winning *Live From Lincoln Center*, which airs nationally on PBS. As manager of the Lincoln Center campus, LCPA provides support and services for the Lincoln Center complex and the 11 resident organizations. In addition, LCPA led a \$1.2 billion campus renovation, completed in October 2012.



The Tallis Scholars

Peter Phillips, *Director*

Soprano

Amy Haworth
Emma Walshe
Charlotte Ashley
Gwen Martin

Alto

Caroline Trevor
Alex Chance

Tenor

Simon Wall
Guy Cutting

Bass

Stephen Charlesworth
Rob Macdonald

Organ

Avi Stein

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