

A banner for the Lincoln Center's white light festival. The background is dark with abstract, glowing white light patterns that resemble rays or beams of light. The text is in white.

Lincoln Center's

white light festival

October 18–November 15, 2017

Saturday, November 11, 2017, at 3:00 pm

The Psalms Experience

CONCERT 10

Pilgrimage of Life

Norwegian Soloists' Choir

Grete Pedersen, *Conductor*

Introduction by Esther J. Hamori, Associate Professor of Hebrew Bible,
Union Theological Seminary

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.

James Memorial Chapel,
Union Theological Seminary

*Please make certain all your electronic devices
are switched off.*

WhiteLightFestival.org

American Airlines is the Official Airline of Lincoln Center

Nespresso is the Official Coffee of Lincoln Center

NewYork-Presbyterian is the Official Hospital of Lincoln Center

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:

Saturday, November 11, at 5:00 pm in James Memorial Chapel, Union Theological Seminary

The Psalms Experience
Concert 11: Celebration of Life
Netherlands Chamber Choir
Peter Dijkstra, conductor

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**

Sunday, November 12 at 3:00 pm in David Geffen Hall

Beethoven's Missa solennis
Swedish Chamber Orchestra
Thomas Dausgaard, conductor
Swedish Radio Choir
Peter Dijkstra, choral director
Malin Christensson, soprano
Kristina Hammarström, mezzo-soprano
Michael Weinius, tenor
Josef Wagner, bass
BEETHOVEN: Mass in D major ("Missa solennis")
Pre-concert lecture by Andrew Shenton at 1:45 pm in the Stanley H. Kaplan Penthouse

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.

Visit WhiteLightFestival.org for full festival listings.

Join the conversation: [#WhiteLightFestival](https://twitter.com/WhiteLightFestival)

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.

Pilgrimage of Life

FARTEIN VALEN

(1887–1952)

(arr. Kjell Mørk Karlsen)

Ich hebe meine Augen (Psalm 121)

ARVO PÄRT

(b. 1935)

Peace upon you, Jerusalem (Psalm 122)

GIOVANNI PIERLUIGI

DA PALESTRINA

(c. 1525–1594)

Ad te levavi oculos meos (Psalm 123)

PETER MAXWELL DAVIES

(1934–2016)

(arr. Grete Pedersen)

Old Scottish Tune (Psalm 124), from *Three Organ Voluntaries*

HEINRICH ISAAC

(c. 1450–1517)

Qui confidunt in Domino (Psalm 125)

JOHANNES BRAHMS

(1833–1897)

Selig sind die da Leid tragen, from *Ein deutsches Requiem* (Psalm 126)

HEINRICH IGNAZ VON BIBER

(1644–1704)

Nisi Dominus (Psalm 127)

CRISTÓBAL DE MORALES

(c. 1500–1553)

Beati omnes (Psalm 128)

EVELIN SEPPAR

(b. 1986)

Psalm 129 (U.S. premiere)

INGVAR LIDHOLM

(b. 1921)

De profundis, from *A Dream Play* (Psalm 130)

WILLIAM MUNDY

(c. 1529–1591)

Domine, non est exaltatum (Psalm 131)

GUILLAUME BOUZIGNAC

(c. 1587–c. 1643)

In pace, in idipsum. Si dederò somnum (Psalm 132)

JEAN RICHAFORT

(1480–c. 1547)

Ecce quam bonum (Psalm 133)

KARIN REHNQUIST

(b. 1957)

När natten skänker frid (Psalm 134)

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.

—Copyright © Neil W. Levin. Adapted from his essay accompanying the CD *Psalms of Joy and Sorrow* (Naxos, 2005).

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.

In this tenth program of *The Psalms Experience*, we hear psalm settings in which the texts consider “the Pilgrimage of Life.” The Israelites wandered long and far, not just in Biblical times but until very recently. This makes them a symbol for other peoples and individuals who have wandered the earth, from country to country and from continent to continent. “In fact, the pilgrim's journey serves as a model for the life of every person,” Swüste observes. “The so-called ‘pilgrimage psalms’—Nos. 120–134—together describe what happens to you on such a path of life. ...Each of these psalms is actually a brief moment of reflection on what someone may expect to encounter during his or her life. They are all fairly short psalms which a person can sing at a stop on his journey through life.”

The Norwegian Soloists' Choir has quite naturally included some Northern European works in its program, focusing on 20th- and 21st-century works. Norwegian Fartein Valen composed his extensive setting of Psalm 121 for choir and orchestra in 1909; the version with organ accompaniment is an arrangement by Kjell Mørk Karlsen. Arvo Pärt wrote his Psalm 122 in 2002 for a girls' choir in his native Estonia. A young Estonian composer, Evelin Seppar, has also created a new setting of Psalm 129. Psalm 130, by the Swede Ingvar Lidholm, was composed in 1983, its Biblical words interlaced with a text taken from August Strindberg's expressionistic drama *A Dream Play*. If we're willing to describe the Scottish island of Orkney as belonging to the Nordic countries—the Scots have much cultural crossover with their Scandinavian neighbors—then Peter Maxwell Davies may also join this list. His *Old Scottish Tune* began as an organ voluntary that he crafted out of a 16th-century setting of Psalm 124 by the Scottish church musician David Peebles;

Grete Pedersen subsequently reworked his organ composition for choir as a tribute to Maxwell Davies, who died last year. The final piece on the program, “När natten skänker frid,” is by Karin Rehnquist, a renowned composer in Scandinavia and professor of composition at the Swedish Royal Academy of Music.

Balancing these modern works from northern countries are High Renaissance pieces from Mediterranean climes: “Ad te levavi oculos meos” (Psalm 123) by Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, widely considered the epitome of Renaissance contrapuntal style in Roman sacred music, and “Beati omnes” (Psalm 128) by the Spaniard Cristóbal de Morales, who also spent some time working in Rome and from whose music Palestrina drew inspiration.

The psalm settings of Heinrich Isaac, Heinrich Ignaz von Biber, and Johannes Brahms (drawn from *A German Requiem*, a work of enduring consolation) take us to German-speaking lands, and those of Guillaume Bouzignac and Jean Richafort to French-speaking realms. Just as mankind has roamed from country to country in the pilgrimage of life, this program is in itself a veritable journey.

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.

—Copyright © 2017 by Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc.

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

Meet the Artists



Grete Pedersen

Grete Pedersen is internationally acclaimed for her stylistically assured and musically convincing performances of Baroque, Classical, and contemporary music. She is regarded as a pioneer for her work in bringing Norwegian folk music and traditional singing into the field of choral music. Ms. Pedersen studied conducting with Kenneth Kiesler, and choral conducting with Terje Kvam and Eric Ericson. She is a professor of choral conducting at the Norwegian Academy of Music and is in great demand as a guest conductor for professional choirs throughout Europe.

Ms. Pedersen founded the Oslo Chamber Choir in 1984, which she conducted until 2004. She is a frequent guest conductor with European choirs, including the BBC Singers and Swedish Radio Choir. Music for choir and orchestra will form an important part of her work in the coming years, in close collaboration with Ensemble Allegria and the Norwegian Radio Orchestra, among others.

Norwegian Soloists' Choir

The Norwegian Soloists' Choir is one of Norway's leading ensembles and among the foremost chamber choirs in Europe. Equally at home with Classical and Romantic repertoire as well as contemporary music, the choir also makes regular excursions into folk-derived music and national Romantic works. The Norwegian Soloists' Choir was founded in 1950 by the composer Knut Nystedt, who served as its conductor for 40 years. In 1990 he was succeeded by Grete Pedersen, who remains the choir's artistic director.

Comprising 26 singers, the choir organizes numerous concerts on its own and participates in festivals in Norway and abroad. In recent years, it has collaborated with ensembles such as the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra, Lautten Compagney, Mahler Chamber Orchestra, Norwegian Radio Orchestra, RIAS Kammerchor, Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, Accademia Bizantina, Oslo Sinfonietta, TrondheimSolistene, and Norwegian Chamber Orchestra.

The Norwegian Soloists' Choir was named performer of the year in 2012 by the Norwegian Society of Composers, receiving the Gammleng Award in the category of art music that same year. In 2015 the choir was nominated for a classical Spellemann prize for its recording *Meins Lebens Licht: Nystedt-Bach*. The ensemble's most recent recording, *J. S. Bach: Motets*, was released this year.

Esther J. Hamori

Esther J. Hamori is an associate professor of Hebrew Bible at Union Theological Seminary. She earned her bachelor of arts degree at Sarah Lawrence College with a major in violin performance in 1994, her M.Div. at Yale Divinity School in 1997, and her PhD in Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Literature from the Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies at New York University in 2004. She taught at Sarah Lawrence College and Cornell University before joining the Union faculty in 2005. Ms. Hamori's research is focused on ancient concepts of divine-human contact and communication as reflected in Israelite and other Near Eastern texts. Her latest book, *Women's Divination in Biblical Literature: Prophecy, Necromancy, and Other Arts of Knowledge* (Yale University Press, 2015), brings to light the full range of women's divinatory activities as portrayed in the Hebrew texts. Her courses at Union include the Book of Job, Monster Heaven, and the Psalms.

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 multidisciplinary 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.

Lincoln Center Programming Department

Jane Moss, *Ehrenkranz Artistic Director*

Hanako Yamaguchi, *Director, Music Programming*

Jon Nakagawa, *Director, Contemporary Programming*

Jill Sternheimer, *Director, Public Programming*

Lisa Takemoto, *Production Manager*

Charles Cermele, *Producer, Contemporary Programming*

Mauricio Lomelin, *Producer, Contemporary Programming*

Andrew C. Elsesser, *Associate Director, Programming*

Luna Shyr, *Senior Editor*

Regina Grande Rivera, *Associate Producer*

Daniel Soto, *Associate Producer, Public Programming*

Walker Beard, *Production Coordinator*

Nana Asase, *Assistant to the Artistic Director*

Olivia Fortunato, *Programming Assistant*

Dorian Mueller, *House Program Coordinator*

Janet Rucker, *Company Manager*

For the White Light Festival

Karissa Krenz, *Project Manager, The Psalms Experience*

Neil Creedon, *Production Manager*

Jo McNerney Farrow, *Stage Manager*

Steven Jude Tietjen, *Supertitles*



Norwegian Soloists' Choir

Grete Pedersen, *Artistic Director*

Soprano

Karin Lundström
Ingeborg Dalheim
Ditte Marie Bræin
Marie Köberlein
Karen Heier Hovd
Mari Øyrehagen

Alto

Astrid Sandvand Dahlen
Eva B. Landro
Jorunn L. Husan
Live Maartmann
Tobias Nilsson
Cecilia Tomter

Tenor

Håvard Gravdal
Masashi Tsuji
Paul Kirby
Øystein Stensheim
Robert Lind
Eirik Grøtvedt

Bass

Peder Arnt Kløvrud
Svein Korshamn
Arild Bakke
Olle Holmgren
Jan Kuhar
Oskar Olofsen

Organ

James Kennerley

Norwegian Soloists' Choir Staff

Ingvar Ørn Thrastarson, *Producer*
Ingvild Skaatan, *Managing Director*