

Music at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church · 2024–25 Season

HANDTEL'S MESSIAH



Friday, December 6 &
Saturday, December 7 • 7 pm
The Sanctuary

The Fifth Avenue Choir & Orchestra
Ryan Jackson, director • Patrick Kreeger, organ



Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church

PRESENTED BY THE ARTS & OUR FAITH COMMITTEE

Welcome to Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church!
This evening's program will include a 15-minute intermission.
Please refrain from taking flash photos during the performance.

Music at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church

We hope you enjoy this evening's concert, the second in the twelfth season of our annual concert series. Please read on for more information about upcoming music events at Fifth Avenue.

Be sure to mark the dates in your calendar and join us again!

Tickets for choral concerts are available online at fapc.org/tickets.

Of Heaven and Earth

Friday, Feb. 7, 2025 • 7 pm, Location TBA

For their second recording project, the Fifth Avenue Choir offers a program of a cappella music evoking heaven and earth. Featuring Aaron Copland's vivid setting of the creation story, *In the Beginning*, alongside Frank Martin's ethereal *Mass for Double Choir*, the program also includes stunning recent works by American composer Caroline Shaw and Canadian composer Timothy Corlis. Following this special concert presentation, the choir will embark on an intensive weeklong recording process to record the program with celebrated producer Adrian Peacock and recording engineer David Hinitt.

The Brahms Requiem, featuring the Shelest Piano Duo

Friday, April 11, 2025 • 7 pm, Sanctuary

Experience the majestic scope of Brahms's German *Requiem* with the intimacy of chamber music. In the composer's own reduction of the orchestral accompaniment for piano duet, the work's hand-picked biblical texts come to life, and its stunning choral textures take center stage. Critically acclaimed concert pianists Anna and Dmitri Shelest join the twenty-four professional voices of the Fifth Avenue Chamber Choir to create the rich, Romantic sound of this year's Lenten concert.

Ryan Jackson Organ Recital

Sunday, May 25, 2025 • 1 pm, Sanctuary



Music at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church

Scan this code to join our email list to learn more about the incredible music at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church and our upcoming performances!

fapc.org/list

PROGRAM

The Fifth Avenue Choir and Orchestra
Ryan Jackson, director • Patrick Kreeger, organ

MESSIAH

A SACRED ORATORIO

**BY
GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL
(1685–1759)**

**1
PART
THE FIRST**

~ Intermission ~
(15 minutes)

**2
PART
THE SECOND**

&

**3
PART
THE THIRD**

PROGRAM NOTE

Dear Friends,

Welcome to tonight's performance of Handel's *Messiah*! It is a joy to gather with you in the historic Sanctuary of Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church for this special occasion. After more than two decades, *Messiah* returns to this space, brought to life by the Fifth Avenue Choir and Orchestra, featuring remarkable soloists drawn from within the ensemble.

Handel composed *Messiah* in the summer of 1741, completing the entire work in just 24 days. This astonishing feat of creativity produced an oratorio that has transcended its time, captivating audiences for nearly three centuries. Its premiere in Dublin in 1742 was a tremendous success, and the piece has since become a hallmark of the choral repertoire, cherished for its profound spiritual message and musical brilliance.

Tonight, we are thrilled to perform all three parts of *Messiah*. The first part foretells the coming of Christ and celebrates his birth, a perfect meditation for the Christmas season. The second part shifts to the Passion, reflecting on Christ's sacrifice and victory over death, culminating in the iconic "Hallelujah" chorus. Finally, the third part proclaims the promise of eternal life, leading to the triumphant "Worthy is the Lamb" and the resounding "Amen." To keep this evening's performance time within two hours, we've carefully selected movements that preserve the essence and emotional arc of this masterpiece.

A live performance of *Messiah* is a powerful journey through text and music, offering moments of tender introspection alongside bursts of jubilant exultation. Handel's genius lies in his ability to weave scripture into music that resonates deeply, creating an experience that is as moving today as it was centuries ago. Whether this is your first encounter with *Messiah* or a cherished holiday tradition, we hope this incredible music uplifts and inspires you.

Your presence makes this evening truly special, and it is our joy to share this timeless work with you. May tonight's performance fill your heart with peace and your holiday season with light and love.

Warmly,



Dr. Ryan Jackson
William S. Perper Director of Music & Fine Arts Ministries

PART THE FIRST

Overture | *Orchestra*

Arioso | *Kev Schneider, tenor*

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Isaiah 40:1–3

Air | *Kev Schneider, tenor*

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill made low: the crooked straight, and the rough places plain.

Isaiah 40:4

Chorus

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

Isaiah 40:5

Arioso | *Shafiq Hicks, baritone*

Thus saith the Lord, the Lord of Hosts: Yet once, a little while, and I will shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come. The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.

Haggai 2:6–7 and Malachi 3:1

Air | *Devony Smith, mezzo-soprano*

But who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire.

Malachi 3:2

Chorus

And He shall purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

Malachi 3:3

Recitative | *Devony Smith, mezzo-soprano*

Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son,
and shall call His name Emmanuel, "God with us."

Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23

Air and Chorus | *Devony Smith, mezzo-soprano*

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain! O
thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength! Lift it
up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah: Behold your God! Arise, shine, for
thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

Isaiah 40:9; 60:1

Chorus

For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be
upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The
Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:6

Pifa (Pastoral Symphony) | *Orchestra*

Recitative | *Hannah Penzner, soprano*

There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.
And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone
round about them, and they were sore afraid.

Luke 2:8–9

Arioso | *Hannah Penzner, soprano*

And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone
round about them, and they were sore afraid.

Luke 2:9

Recitative | *Hannah Penzner, soprano*

And the angel said unto them: Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of
great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of
David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

Luke 2:10–11

WORD BOOK

Arioso | *Hannah Penzner, soprano*

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying:

Luke 2:13

Chorus

Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good will toward men.

Luke 2:14

Air | *Elisse Albian, soprano*

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, thy King cometh unto thee. He is the righteous Saviour, and He shall speak peace unto the heathen.

Zechariah 9:9–10

Recitative | *Donna Breitzer, mezzo-soprano*

Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing.

Isaiah 35:5–6

Air | *Donna Breitzer, mezzo-soprano, and Adrienne Lotto, soprano*

He shall feed His flock like a shepherd, and He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those that are with young. Come unto Him, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and He will give you rest. Take His yoke upon you, and learn of Him, for He is meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Isaiah 40:11 and Matthew 11:28–29

Chorus

His yoke is easy, and His burthen is light.

Matthew 11:30

~ *Intermission* ~
(15 minutes)

PART THE SECOND

Chorus

Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.

John 1:29

Air | *Donna Breitzer, mezzo-soprano*

He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.
He gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair;
he hid not his face from shame and spitting.

Isaiah 53:3

Chorus

Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 53:4–6

Recitative | *Garrett Eucker, tenor*

All they that see Him laugh Him to scorn; they shoot out their lips,
and shake their heads, saying:

Psalms 22:7–8

Chorus

He trusted in God that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him,
if He delight in Him.

Psalms 22:8

Air | *Max Parsons, baritone*

Why do the nations so furiously rage together, and why do the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed.

Psalms 2:1–2

WORD BOOK

Chorus

Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their yokes from us.

Psalm 2:3

Recitative | *Pablo Rubin-Jurado, tenor*

He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn:
the Lord shall have them in derision.

Psalm 2:4

Air | *Pablo Rubin-Jurado, tenor*

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a
potter's vessel.

Psalm 2:9

Chorus

Hallelujah: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. The kingdom of this world is
become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever
and ever. King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. Hallelujah!

Revelation 19:6; 11:15; 19:16

PART THE THIRD

Air | *Francesca Lionetta, soprano*

I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. For now is Christ risen from the dead, the first-fruits of them that sleep.

Job 19:25–26; 1 Corinthians 15:20

Recitative | *Max Parsons, baritone*

Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet:

1 Corinthians 15:51–52

Air | *Max Parsons, baritone*

The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

1 Corinthians 15:52–53

Air | *Elisse Alban, soprano*

If God be for us who can be against us? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is at the right hand of God, who makes intercession for us.

Romans 8:31–34

Chorus

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by His blood, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. Blessing and honour, glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. Amen.

Revelation 5:12–13

THE FIFTH AVENUE CHOIR

Sopranos

Elisse Alban
Brittany Hewitt
Adrienne Lotto
Rachel Mikol

Choir Administrator

Claire Myers-McCormick
Hannah Penzner

Alto

Donna Breitzer
Sharon Byrne
Hilary Gardner
Mckenzie Kitchen
Francesca Lionetta

Devony Smith

Tenor

Garrett Eucker
Nathan Fletcher
Alex McCoy
Pablo Rubin-Jurado
Kev Schneider

Bass

Zak Fletcher
Shafiq Hicks
Emery Kerekes
Max Parsons
Christopher Seefeldt

ORCHESTRA

Concertmaster Jacob Ashworth • *Violin II* Aniela Eddy • *Viola* Annie Garlid
Cello Nathan Whittaker • *Double Bass* Josue Reyes • *Trumpet* Perry Sutton, Robby Garrison
Timpani Danny Mallon • *Harpsichord* Dongsok Shin
Organ Patrick Kreeger, Associate Organist, Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church
Orchestra Contractor Chloe Fedor


ABOUT THE FIFTH AVENUE CHAMBER CHOIR

Founded in 2013, the Fifth Avenue Chamber Choir is a vocal ensemble comprising some of New York's finest professional singers. With a diverse repertoire spanning Renaissance polyphony through contemporary American, the choir presents an exciting series of sacred music concerts each season at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church. Although the size of the choir varies between sixteen and twenty-four singers, the ensemble's primary goal never changes: we seek to uplift and inspire all who hear us through passionate, engaging, and highly polished performances of sacred choral music.

SPECIAL THANKS

...to all the members of the Arts and Our Faith Committee (chaired by Nancy Moore) for their vision, leadership, and hands-on support of this series, and to our dedicated team of volunteer ushers and greeters. This series could not take place without you!

...to Fifth Avenue's wonderful Communications and Facilities teams for all the ways they support this series and make it possible.



**We invite you back for our
Christmas Eve Candlelight Services**
Tuesday, December 24 • 7:30 pm & 11 pm

Music begins one half hour before the service.
The 7:30 pm service is also available on livestream.

Kirkland Chapel

THE NEXT 100



KIRKLAND CHAPEL is one of the most important and beloved centers of ministry in all of Manhattan. It has long been the home of our renowned sacred music concerts and our contemporary worship service, Chapel Church. This chapel provides services and outreach to the homeless and refugees. Here we celebrate weddings, mourn our faithful departed, and offer quiet respite to both friends and strangers on busy days.

We love this place. To ensure it continues to serve our congregation and city for another 100 years, Kirkland Chapel is currently undergoing an extensive renovation and restoration. During this time, concerts like tonight's will be held in the Sanctuary until the project is completed.

To learn more about this historic renovation and how you can help, please visit fapc.org/chapel.

Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church
7 West 55th Street • New York, NY 10019