



P.O. Box 1317 • Morristown, NJ 07962-1317 • 973-538-6969 •

**Harmonium Choral Society announces the winners of their 27th Annual High School Composition Contest.**

**Contact: Jody Marcus**

[Jody.marcus@harmonium.org](mailto:Jody.marcus@harmonium.org)

**973-538-6969**

#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

MORRISTOWN, N.J. – Harmonium Choral Society is excited to announce the winners of the 27th Annual High School Composition Contest. John Wallace from Mountain Lakes High School won first prize; his composition *May Night* will be sung at Harmonium’s **Be Brave** concerts Saturday, June 1 at 7:30pm and Sunday, June 2 at 3:00pm, both at the Morristown United Methodist Church. The second prize winner is Gabriel Tarrow, who composed *Puppeteer* from a poem written by H. Cochran, one of the Her Words students; this will also be featured at the June concert. Third prize goes to Ella O’Neil, a Junior at Haddonfield Memorial High School, who composed a setting of *Invictus* by William Ernest Henley.

In addition to awarding three winners, Harmonium will award three Honorable Mentions to: Hannah Musilli a senior at Montville Township High School for her *May Night* (Fresh and Fearless) by Sara Teasdale; Job Campbell, a senior at Columbia High School for his *Psalm 3* setting; and Jonathan Lu, a senior at Madison High School, for his *Bravery* by Her Words poet Anastasia Adams.

Artistic Director Dr. Anne Matlack says, *"I am in awe of the talent of our student composers and thrilled to be supporting them for 27 years. There were so many excellent submissions we just had to recognize six students and perform the top two. You should come hear these pieces and know that the future of choral music is bright in the hands of these young composers."*

It has been exciting to collaborate with students from the Her Words program and have their poems offered as choices for the composers to set to music. This outreach to other students enhances the purpose of the contest – to engage young people in the choral music experience. Her Words, a Morris Arts and Morris School District partnership, offers a creative writing and wellness program to underserved teen girls and gender-expansive youth ages 11-18 from Morristown. Her Words works to empower them to share their stories, shape their future, and create change in their lives and communities. <https://www.morrisarts.org/her-words/>

Tickets are on sale now at: <http://www.harmonium.org/tickets>

## Student Composers

First prize winner John Wallace is 18 and lives in Budd Lake. He plans to study computer science at RIT in the fall and says that he has been composing with serious intent for the last four years at Mountain Lakes High School. His favorite pieces get a video backing and are uploaded to YouTube, under the moniker Pyromaniac Duck. John composes for choir and piano and tends to favor sentimental music with a strong grounding in traditional music theory. However, recently he has been branching out and listening to 20th century music that pushes the boundaries of what music can do, and that was the main inspiration behind the piece *May Night* that he wrote for the contest.

Second prize winner Gabriel Tarrow is a sophomore at Columbia High School in Maplewood. He has been playing the piano for eleven years and composing for nine years. He loves choir and choral music and has attended several summer music camps. He was the grand prize winner of Harmonium's contest last year. He draws inspiration from Baroque and modern choral music. Gabriel's sponsor is choral teacher Nicholas Diaz.

Third prize winner Ella O'Neil is a junior at Haddonfield Memorial High School. She has been playing piano for twelve years, singing for four years, and also enjoys songwriting, guitar, and composing. Ella is also involved in the student-led *a cappella* group *CoEd AcaPella* and the Madrigals at her school. She also participates in musical theatre both in and out of school.

Honorable mention recipient Hannah Musilli is a senior at Montville Township High School and an active member of jazz band, marching band, chamber band, and symphonic band as a trumpet player. She has been taking piano lessons for fourteen years and plans to major in music theory and composition in college, with a possible minor in performance.

Honorable mention recipient Job Campbell is a senior at Columbia High School. He has played viola in a variety of ensembles, most notably: the Ravina Youth Symphony, Harmabee Chamber Orchestra, New York Youth Symphony Chamber Program, New Jersey Symphony Youth Orchestra, and the Columbia High School Virtuosi. Job began music composition during his freshman year, and as a sophomore, he premiered his first work at the annual Jubilee concert. Since then, he has written works that were performed at various events from the Annual Black History Month Celebration: Living the Dream to the Kinhaven Music School Student Composers Concert. Job hopes to pursue music professionally, focusing on viola performance and music composition.

Honorable mention recipient Jonathan Lu is a senior at Madison High School. He has been playing piano for eleven years and been singing in his school's chorus every year. He has been cast in his school's musical all four years of high school. He loves music, and he has a passion for singing and playing piano. He plans to major in math at a four-year college or university.

## Our Judges

Our distinguished judges include **Amanda Harberg**, who has been commissioned by the Philadelphia Orchestra Association, the Juilliard School, Harmonium, and many other prestigious ensembles. She has won many fellowships and awards and currently teaches composition at Rutgers University and at the Interlochen Arts Camp.

Longest-running judge **Matthew Harris** is especially well-known by choirs for his many sets of Shakespeare Songs and to Harmonium fans for his *A Child's Christmas in Wales* for chorus and orchestra.

Judge **Sarah Rimkus** holds composition degrees from University of Southern California where she studied with Morten Lauridsen, and a PhD from the University of Aberdeen, Scotland. She has received numerous awards, including the ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award.

**Dr. Trevor Weston**, professor of music and chair of the music department at Drew University, holds many honors including a 2021 Arts and Letters Award in Music from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Artistic Director **Dr. Anne Matlack** rounds out the team of judges, who provide every student entrant (not just winners) with detailed written feedback and encouragement.

Harmonium invites the public to support and encourage young composers by attending the concerts.

Doors open one-half hour before the concert begins, but concertgoers are advised to leave plenty of time for parking in Morristown. The accessible entrance is on the east side of the church building, and no stairs are needed to enter the sanctuary. Morristown parking information may be found at <https://mpanj.org>.

Buy your tickets in advance to be guaranteed a seat. Advance ticket prices are \$30 for adults and \$25 for students and teachers. Tickets are available at <https://www.harmonium.org/gettickets>. After midnight on May 31 tickets will be available at the door for \$40 (\$35 for students and teachers); payment may be made by cash, check, or credit card.

Harmonium Choral Society is dedicated to ensuring that all our patrons are able to enjoy the arts equally. If you need a large print program or have accessibility needs, questions, or concerns, please contact us at least two weeks prior to the performance, and we will assist you in the best manner we have available. We are always looking to make your experience better and we welcome your input. For more information, contact [manager@harmonium.org](mailto:manager@harmonium.org) or (973) 538-6969. Thank you for supporting Harmonium as your entertainment choice.

Please take note that each concert is professionally taped live for video and audio reproduction; therefore, we do not allow audience videotaping via cell phones. We do not

allow pets (other than service dogs) into our performances. If you want to attend a concert with your service dog, please call us in advance.

Harmonium Choral Society is a participating arts organization that offers free tickets through the Families First Discovery Program.

<https://www.nj.gov/state/njsca/discoverypass/index.shtml>

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#### MORE ABOUT HARMONIUM CHORAL SOCIETY

Harmonium Choral Society, based in Morris County, is one of New Jersey's leading choral arts organizations. The 100-voice choral society, directed by Dr. Anne Matlack of Madison, has been recognized for its eclectic programming, choral excellence, and community spirit, and sponsors commissions and musicianship workshops to advance the choral arts. A subset of the chorus performs in schools, elder care facilities, and other venues. To learn more about Harmonium, please visit [Harmonium.org](http://Harmonium.org).