



# Harmonium

Choral Society

Anne Matlack, Artistic Director

World Premiere

## A CHILD'S CHRISTMAS IN WALES

By Matthew Harris

Words by Dylan Thomas

## CHRISTMAS ORATORIO

J.S. BACH, PART IV

AND  
MORE!

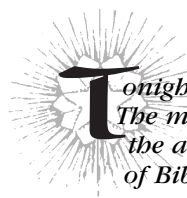
Saturday, December 7  
at 8 p.m.

Sunday, December 8  
at 3 p.m.

Church of the Redeemer  
36 South Street, Morristown, New Jersey



Funding has been made possible in part by funds from the Arts Council of the Morris Area through the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts. Funding from Meet the Composer, Inc. is provided with the support of the National Endowment for the Arts, ASCAP, and the Virgil Thomson Foundation.



*T*onight's concert celebrates the sacredness of the domestic. The memories of childhood, the naming of a child, the animals in the roof-leaking stable, the counting of Biblical names...God is in the little things.

## PROGRAM NOTES

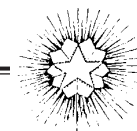
by Anne Matlack

**Johann Sebastian Bach's** six-part *Christmas Oratorio* (1734-35) is really six separate cantatas for different days of the Christmas season from Christmas Eve to Epiphany. Part IV, for the Feast of the Circumcision (New Year's Day), celebrates the naming of Jesus, and the joy and comfort that name brings. Bach's cantatas provided a very personal way of dramatizing scripture for the worshippers in Leipzig. The text is probably by Picander, Bach's librettist of the *Passions*, although Picander does not list it among his complete works. This is possibly because so much borrowed material was used. Bach parodied or "borrowed" about forty percent of the music for *Christmas Oratorio* from his secular cantatas, paying great attention to the appropriate adaptation of word and mood.

The opening chorus, "Fallt mit Danken, fällt mit Loben" (Kneel with thanks, kneel with praise) seems to depict the motion of bowing with its gentle triple time and lilting phrases. The horns and oboes are noble, yet more pastoral than regal. The music gets more dissonant in the inner sections which discuss how the baby will save the sinner from hell. The opening "bowing" theme closes off the ABA form.

### CHORUS

Fallt mit Danken, fällt mit Loben	Kneel with thanks, kneel with praise
Vor des Höchsten Gnadenthron!	Before the mercy seat of the most high!
Gottes Sohn	The Son of God
Will der Erden	Will be the Savior
Heiland und Erlöser werden.	And Redeemer of the earth.
Gottes Sohn	The Son of God
Dämpft der Feinde Wut und Toben.	Quenches the rage and fury of the fiend.



The tenor recitative fulfills the role of Evangelist, telling the scriptural story:

### EVANGELIST

Und da acht Tage um waren,  
dass das Kind beschnitten würde,  
da ward sein Name genennet Jesus,  
welcher genennet war von dem Engel,  
ehe denn er im Mutterleibe  
empfangen ward.

And when eight days were accomplished,  
that the child should be circumcised,  
he was given the name Jesus,  
as he was named by the angel  
before he was conceived  
in his mother's womb.

The bass recitative is the personal response to the story. Joined by soprano solo, on a chorale tune in the arioso section, this duet recalls the sacred duet of other cantatas in which the soul (soprano) is in dialogue with Christ.

### BASS

Immanuel, o süßes Wort!  
Mein Jesus heisst mein Hort,  
Mein Jesus heisst mein Leben,  
Mein Jesus hat sich mir ergeben,  
Mein Jesus soll mir immerfort  
Vor meinen Augen schweben.  
Mein Jesus heisset meine Lust,  
Mein Jesus labet Herz und Brust.

Immanuel, oh sweet word!  
My Jesus is my shepherd,  
My Jesus is my life,  
My Jesus has given himself to me,  
My Jesus shall evermore  
Hover before my eyes;  
My Jesus is my joy,  
My Jesus restores heart and breast.

### SOPRANO

Jesu, du mein liebstes Leben,  
Meiner Seelen Bräutigam,  
Der du dich vor mich gegeben  
An des bittern Kreuzes Stamm!

Jesu, Thou my dearest life  
Bridegroom of my soul,  
For that Thou gavest Thyself for me  
On the bitter tree of the Cross!

### BASS

Komm! Ich will dich mit Lust umfassen,  
Mein Herze soll dich nimmer lassen,  
Ach! So nimm mich zu dir!

Come! I will embrace Thee with joy,  
My heart shall never leave Thee,  
Oh, then take me to Thee!

### BASS

Auch in dem Sterben sollst du mir  
Das Allerliebste sein;  
In Not, Gefahr und Ungemach  
Seh ich dir sehnlichst nach.  
Was jagte mir zuletzt  
Der Tod für Grauen ein?  
Mein Jesus! Wenn ich sterbe,  
So weiss ich, dass ich nicht verderbe.  
Dein Name steht in mir geschrieben,  
Der hat des Todes Furcht vertrieben.

Even in death shalt Thou be  
Dearest of all to me,  
In distress, danger and discomfort  
Longingly I look to thee.  
What was the recent dread  
That death struck into me?  
My Jesus, when I die,  
I know by this I shall not perish.  
Thy name inscribed within me  
Has overcome the fear of death.



Charming intimacy is depicted in the soprano aria in which the soul asks whether she should fear or rejoice in the name of Jesus, and echoes give answer.

SOPRANO (AND ECHO SOPRANO)

Flösst, mein Heiland, flösst dein Namen	My Savior, does Thy name instill
Auch den aller kleinsten Samen	Even the tiniest grain
Jenes strengen Schreckens ein?	Of that fierce terror?
Nein, du sagst ja selber nein! (Nein!)	No, Thou Thyself say'st no! (No!)
Sollt ich nun das Sterben scheuen?	Shall I then fear death?
Nein, dein süßes Wort ist da!	No, Thy sweet word is there!
Oder sollt ich mich erfreuen?	Or, shall I rejoice?
Ja, du Heiland sprichst selbst ja! (Ja!)	Yes, my Savior, Thou say'st, yes! (Yes!)

Another aria with chorale gives symmetry to the cantata and highlights the previous aria as central.

BASS

Wohlan, dein Name soll allein	Come then, and shall Thy name alone
In meinem Herzen sein.	In my heart ever dwell.
So will ich dich entzückt nennen,	So will I call Thee, filled with joy,
Wenn Brust und Herz zu dir	When heart and bosom burn
vor Liebe brennen.	for love of Thee.

Doch Liebster, sage mir:	But tell me now, Beloved,
Wie rühm ich dich, wie dank ich dir?	How shall I extol or thank Thee?

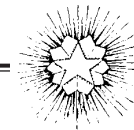
SOPRANO

Jesu, meine Freud und Wonne,	Jesu, my joy and bliss,
Meine Hoffnung, Schatz und Teil,	My hope, treasure and lot,
Mein Erlösung, Schmuck, und Heil,	My redeemer, defense and salvation,
Hirt und König, Licht und Sonne,	Shepherd, king, light and sun,
Ach, wie soll ich würdiglich,	Oh, how shall I worthily
Mein Herr Jesu, preisen dich?	My Lord Jesu, praise Thee?

As the soprano provided the innocent affectation, the tenor aria highlights the bravura called for in praising the name of Jesus, aided by virtuoso violin duet. This tenor part balances the opening recitative, making the form of the cantata a palindrome, as follows: chorus—tenor—bass/soprano—soprano—bass/soprano—tenor—chorus.

TENOR

Ich will nur dir zu Ehren leben,	I will live only to glorify Thee,
Mein Heiland, gibt mir Kraft und Mut,	My Savior, give me strength and courage,
Dass es mein Herz recht eifrig tut!	That my heart may do this zealously!



Stärke mich,  
Deine Gnade würdiglich  
Und mit Danken zu erheben!

Strengthen me,  
That I may worthily  
And with thanks extol Thy goodness!

The final chorale tune is ornately orchestrated, recalling the first movement with horns and oboes.

CHORUS

Jesu richte mein Beginnen,	Jesu, guide my beginning,
Jesu bleibe stets bei mir,	Jesu, remain ever near me,
Jesu zäume mir die Sinnen,	Jesu, restrain my sin,
Jesu sei nur mein Begier.	Jesu, be my only desire.
Jesu sei mir in Gedanken,	Jesu, ever in my thoughts,
Jesu, lasse mich nicht wanken!	Jesu, let me never falter.



The Chamber Singers present an eclectic collection of works beginning with the motet by English Catholic exile **Peter Philips**. *O beatum et sacrosanctum diem* (1612) begins with devotional wonderment and moves to joyous praise, and trumpet fanfare. The text painting of “in sono tubae” (with the sound of the trumpet) and “cithara” (a lyre-like instrument) is guileless and straightforward. The final “noe, noe” section shows the influence of Sweelinck.

O beatum et sacrosanctum diem,  
in qua dominus noster  
de Virgine Maria pro nobis  
nasci dignatus est.

O blessed and most holy day  
on which our Lord deigned  
to be born of the Virgin Mary  
for our sake.

Gaudeat itaque universus orbis,  
et cantemus illi, in sono tubae,  
cithara, psalterio et organo.  
Congratulemur  
cum multitudo angelorum exercitus,  
semper suas laudes cantantibus,  
Noe noe.

Let the whole world therefore rejoice  
and sing to him to the sound of the trumpet,  
strings, the harp and the organ.  
Let us rejoice  
with the numerous hosts of angels,  
ceaselessly singing his praise,  
Noel, Noel.

**Daniel Pinkham** is still a prolific composer after a long career as organist, harpsichordist, teacher (New England Conservatory), and choral conductor at Boston's King's Chapel. He is known for his “meticulous setting of language to render it as comprehensible as possible in performance” (DeBoer & Ahouse 1988). This is certainly true of *For Him She Sings* (2000, subtitled *Three Domestic Carols*) on texts by Boston-based poet, actress, and children's author Norma Farber (1910-1984).



FOR HIM SHE SINGS

**1. Come Learn of Mary**

Who can't rejoice,  
come learn of me  
that hold a baby  
on my knee,  
and keep him safe  
for what's to be.

Come, Joseph, share  
a mother's pride.  
Play with our boy  
at seek, at hide.  
Kneel, be a camel,  
let him ride.

Let him recall,  
in years to be,  
should day grow dark,  
too dark to see,  
how once in light  
we lived, we three.

**2. Easy Enough for Strangers**

Easy enough for strangers—  
far-come and famous kings—  
to lavish a child  
with wealthy offerings.

How shall I help his mother  
Mary, my sweet wife,  
raise him up to a long,  
abundant life?

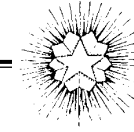
How teach him true reward,  
how tell him cost?  
How be father  
to a boy star-crossed?

**3. Even So She Sings**

Now is the intimate hour.  
The roof leaks, but the hay's  
dry within the stall  
where a newborn infant lies.  
The stable reeks of a score  
of animal breaths and all  
their damp coats and the farm  
or forest whence they've come.  
Even so she sings.

A rude place, she feels,  
for this family affair:  
her personal event.  
The kings disquiet her  
as each, approaching, kneels,  
his gift an embarrassment.  
A murmur takes her throat,  
thrumming to be let out.  
And so she sings.

What rough clamor, this noise  
of creature wing and hoof!  
They can't with the best will  
in the world, keep quiet enough  
to hear her lulling voice.  
They *do* try to be still.  
A child has heard her song  
separate among the throng.  
For him she sings.



**Benjamin Britten**, the most prolific and famous English composer of the mid-twentieth century, gained early fame with the broadcast of *A Boy Was Born*, op. 3, in 1933 when the composer was only 19. Yet, *A Wealden Trio*, or *Christmas Song of the Women*, was written in 1929 when the composer was still a schoolboy. It was not published as a choral work until the 1960s, with instructions that it could be sung by three soloists, soloists and SSA chorus, or tutti throughout. The work shows a mature level of bitterness and roughness, as the dark text by Ford Madox Ford describes hungry, cold peasant women out caroling, finding comfort in the realization that the baby was also hungry and cold. The music foreshadows *A Boy Was Born* by quoting and transforming an actual carol tune, "Hark the Herald."

A WEALDEN TRIO (Christmas Song of the Women)

1st Voice

When ye've got a child 'ats whist for want of food,  
And a grate as grey's y'r 'air for want of wood,  
And y'r man and you ain't nowise not much good;

Together

Oh— It's hard work a-Christmassing, Carolling,  
Singin' songs about "the Babe what's born."

2nd Voice

When ye've 'eered the bailiff's 'and upon the latch,  
And ye've feeled the rain a-trickling through the thatch,  
An' y'r man can't git no stones to break ner yit no sheep to watch -

Together

Oh— We've got to come a-Christmassing, Carolling,  
Singin' of the "Shepards on that morn."

3rd Voice

'E was a man as poor as us, very near,  
An' 'E 'ad 'is trials and danger,  
An' I think 'E'll think of us when 'E sees us singin' 'ere;  
For 'is mother was poor, like us, poor dear,  
An' she bore Him in a manger.

Together

Oh— It's warm in the heavens, but it's cold upon the earth,  
And we ain't no food at table nor no fire upon the hearth;  
And it's bitter hard a-Christmassing, Carolling,  
Singin' songs about our Saviour's birth;  
Singin' songs about the Babe what's born;  
Singin' of the shepards on that morn.



When one thinks of Wales, one hears singing, particularly men's choirs. The men of the Chamber Singers present one of the most famous Welsh songs, arranged by Summit Chorale Director **Garyth Nair** in homage to his own Welsh heritage. Mary Helms of Summit Chorale provided the following notes: "Ar Hyd y Nos began as a harp melody used with 18th century verses known as 'Poor Mary Ann.' Although the Welsh words are not the only ones sung to this tune, they are the best known.

AR HYD Y NOS

Holl amrant au'r ser ddywedant,  
Ar hyd y nos,  
Dyma'r ffordd i fro gogoniant,  
Ar hyd y nos.  
Golau ar all yw tywyllwch,  
I arddangos gwir brydferthwch  
Teulu'r nefoedd mewn tawelwch,  
Ar hyd y nos.

O mor siriol gwena seren,  
Ar hyd y nos.  
I oleu o'i chwaerddaearen,  
Ar hyd y nos.  
Nos yw henaint pan ddaw cystudd,  
Ond i harddu dyn a'i hwyrdydd,  
Rhown ein golau gwan i'n gilydd,  
Ar hyd y nos.

ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT

When the eyes of starlight glisten  
All through the night,  
See how shadows watch and listen,  
All through the night,  
And their glows forever gleaming,  
From the realms of darkness beaming,  
Show the heav'ns in slumber dreaming  
All through the night.

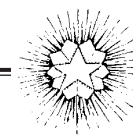
When our world lies dark in sadness,  
All through the night,  
Every star smiles down its gladness,  
All through the night,  
So our friends in pain or sorrow,  
Waiting for that far tomorrow,  
Rays of hope from us may borrow  
All through the night.

*Deck the Hall*, the most famous of all Welsh carols, is set here in a famous "Carols for Choirs" arrangement by **Sir David Willcocks**.

Paul Caldwell and Sean Ivory have collaborated on several arrangements for earthsongs publications. They provide the following notes:

"*Go Where I Send Thee!*" is a gospel arrangement of a spiritual from the African-American folk tradition which we first became familiar with through the work of Cynthia Wilson Felder in Texas. From the many variants of the text we have developed an extended version which allowed us to maximize the Gospel-style modulation and to give our singers significant one-line reminders of some of the biblical stories on which the African-American musical tradition is based. Some of the scriptural references are quite evident; others are somewhat cloaked:

- Eleven refers to the opinion that Judas Iscariot might not fare well on judgment day.
- Nine is the number which traditionally represents the nine choirs of angels.



Eight recalls the number of people instructed to board Noah's ark: the shipbuilder, his wife, their three sons and their wives.

Five refers to the loaves of bread that ultimately fed five thousand people.

Four gospel writers are Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Three Hebrew Children (Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego) were thrown into a fiery furnace by King Nebuchadnezzar."



**Matthew Harris** sent us these notes for our World Premiere of his composition *A Child's Christmas In Wales*:

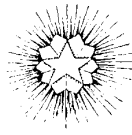
"When Anne Matlack asked me to write a large piece for Harmonium's holiday concert, I immediately thought of Dylan Thomas's Christmas classic. This recollection of the poet's typical Christmas day as a boy in Wales conjures up for each of us the lost magic of childhood. I made some cuts in the text, but otherwise my libretto is simply the story as Dylan Thomas wrote it. The music opens and closes with a tune reminiscent of Welsh folk songs; in between, it ventures into various byways as it follows the narrator's memories. This work is fondly dedicated to Anne and the Harmonium Choral Society."

Matthew Harris, born in 1956 in New York State, studied at The Juilliard School, New England Conservatory and Harvard University. His teachers include Elliott Carter, Milton Babbitt, Roger Sessions and Donald Martino.

Mr. Harris received two grants in composition from the National Endowment for the Arts and fellowships from the New York Foundation for the Arts, Tanglewood, Composers Conference at Wellesley, Ives Center, Conductors Institute, and the MacDowell and Yaddo artist colonies. Prizes he has won for his works include the Chautauqua Chamber Singers Choral Composition Contest, Georges Enesco International Composition Award, Society for New Music's Brian M. Israel Prize, the National Association of Composers USA Young Composers' Competition, and awards from ASCAP, BMI, Musicians' Accord, and the Taubman Institute.

The New York City Opera recently presented scenes from Mr. Harris's opera-in-progress, *Tess*, on their American Composers Showcase series. *Three Arias from Tess* was premiered by The Lake George Opera Festival and *Three Choruses from Tess* was premiered at Carnegie Hall.

The Minnesota Orchestra, Houston Symphony, and the Florida, Jacksonville, Chattanooga, Spokane, and Modesto Symphony Orchestras have played Mr. Harris's orchestral works. Chamber performances include those by the Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival (Berlin), Lark Quartet, Alea III, New York New Music Ensemble, and League-ISCAM. Mr. Harris's vocal works have been sung by Sheryl Studer and Faith Esham; his choral works by the Dale Warland



Singers and New Amsterdam Singers, who performed his music at the televised Three Tenors Concert at the Meadowlands. William Moersch and Daniel Druckman are some of the soloists who have performed his works. Harmonium Choral Society performed his *Shakespeare Songs* on a concert of the same name in spring 2000, and on tour in Eastern Europe.

Other commissions have come from the Fromm Foundation/Aspen Music Festival (where Mr. Harris was a Composer-in-Residence), I Cantori di New York, Verdehr Trio, Modesto Symphony Orchestra, Haydn-Mozart Orchestra, American Composers Forum, Schubert Club, Casa Verde Trio, Young Singers of Pennsylvania, and the US-Mexico Cultural Fund. G. Schirmer and C. F. Peters publish Mr. Harris's music and Albany Records released a CD of *Shakespeare Songs* with the New Amsterdam Singers (American Journey, Troy 108).

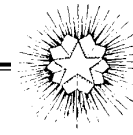
Mr. Harris has taught at Fordham University and Kingsborough College, CUNY. He has been a board member of League-ISCM and American Composers Alliance and serves on the board of the MacDowell Artists Executive Committee. Mr. Harris lives in New York City, where he works as a musicologist.

#### **Notes on the Commissioning, by Anne Matlack**

Nurturing a new work into being calls for a huge leap of faith (after careful research!). Harmonium's commissioning history actually began with another Dylan Thomas text. Our first commission was to celebrate our 15th anniversary (1995). I approached a former teacher and mentor, Yale Glee Club's Fenno Heath. The resulting *a capella* piece *Do Not Go Gentle* generated publicity excitement as our first "World premiere" followed by (on tour that summer) "London premiere." The work was accessible and only moderately difficult, and soon the chorus became interested in doing another commission.

The opportunity presented itself the following year when a member of the bass section, Jabez Van Cleef, wrote a libretto which we showed to a New York composer, the Western Wind's Elliot Z. Levine. He became interested in setting the work, *Animalium Cantata*. For Harmonium this was a huge leap in length and complexity (half hour, small chamber ensemble) and financial resources. Our board made the brave decision to move forward and we haven't looked back since! (It was a little scary when the final movement arrived two weeks shy of the performance.) The work has since been performed internationally by various choruses from Princeton to Tokyo, Atlanta to Chicago, as well as at the Eastern ACDA Convention (in Providence, RI, 1997) by Harmonium.

Next we found ourselves committing to support a composer-in-residence, the talented young Mark Miller, who has written us several works including *Before Too Long* (text from "I Never Saw Another Butterfly") which we now perform in our school shows; and a setting of the poem *The Mysteries Remain* for the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation Poetry Festival.



When we performed Matthew Harris's *Shakespeare Songs* in the spring of 2000, the composer came and heard Harmonium, and we opened a dialogue about the next step: a Christmas season commission for chorus with chamber orchestra. *A Child's Christmas In Wales* is the fortunate result. Every step of the commissioning process is exciting for me, from deciding on the libretto to seeing the first few movements and rehearsing music that no one has ever heard before. I'd like to thank the board, our supporters and our audience for allowing us to become a part of the process of creation and to support new music in this way.

#### **Notes and texts for *A Child's Christmas In Wales*:**

*The first movement uses a nostalgic theme reminiscent of a Welsh folk song. The central section introduces some of Harris's typical chromatic writing and segues into the second movement.*

##### **1. One Christmas Was So Much Like Another**

One Christmas was so much like another, in those years around the sea-town corner now and out of all sound except the distant speaking of the voices I sometimes hear a moment before sleep, that I can never remember whether it snowed for six days and six nights when I was twelve or whether it snowed for twelve days and twelve nights when I was six.

All the Christmases roll down toward the two-tongued sea, like a cold and headlong moon bundling down the sky that was our street; and they stop at the rim of the ice-edged fish-freezing waves, and I plunge my hands in the snow and bring out whatever I can find. In goes my hand into that wool-white bell-tongued ball of holidays resting at the rim of the carol-singing sea, and out come Mrs. Prothero and the firemen.

*The dissonance of these chords evokes the cacophonous atmosphere of the event. The text is declaimed in an operatic and homophonic manner allowing the story to be told and the humor to come through.*

##### **2. Fire!**

"Fire!" cried Mrs. Prothero, and she beat the dinner-gong.

And we ran down the garden, with the snowballs in our arms, toward the house; and smoke, indeed, was pouring out of the dining-room, and the gong was bombilating, and Mrs. Prothero was announcing ruin like a town crier in Pompeii. Something was burning all right; perhaps it was Mr. Prothero, who always slept there after midday dinner with a newspaper over his face. But he was standing in the middle of the room, saying, "A fine Christmas!" and smacking at the smoke with a slipper. "Call the fire brigade," cried Mrs. Prothero as she beat the gong.

"They won't be there," said Mr. Prothero, "It's Christmas."



There was no fire to be seen, only clouds of smoke and Mr. Prothero standing in the middle of them, waving his slipper as though he were conducting.

“Do something,” he said.

And we threw all our snowballs into the smoke—I think we missed Mr. Prothero—and ran out of the house to the telephone box.

“Let’s call the police as well,” Jim said.

“And the ambulance.”

“And Ernie Jenkins, he likes fires.”

But we only called the fire brigade, and soon the fire engine came and three tall men in helmets brought a hose into the house and Mr. Prothero got out just in time before they turned it on. Nobody could have had a noisier Christmas Eve. And when the firemen turned off the hose and were standing in the wet, smoky room, Jim’s Aunt, Miss Prothero, came downstairs and peered in at them. Jim and I waited, very quietly, to hear what she would say to them. She said the right thing, always. She looked at the three tall firemen in their shining helmets, standing among the smoke and cinders and dissolving snowballs, and she said, “Would you like anything to read?”

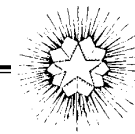
*The nostalgic feeling returns in the lyrical tenor solo, with soprano/alto interjections about the snows of today.*

### 3. Years and Years Ago

Years and years ago, when I was a boy, when there were wolves in Wales, and birds the color of red-flannel petticoats whisked past the harp-shaped hills, when we sang and wallowed all night and day in caves that smelt like Sunday afternoons in damp front farmhouse parlors, when we rode the daft and happy hills bareback, it snowed and it snowed. But here a small boy says: “It snowed last year, too. I made a snow-man and my brother knocked it down and I knocked my brother down and then we had tea.”

“But that was not the same snow,” I say. “Our snow was not only shaken from white-wash buckets down the sky, it came shawling out of the ground and swam and drifted out of the arms and hands and bodies of the trees; snow grew overnight on the roofs of the houses like a pure and grandfather moss, minutely ivied the walls and settled on the postman, opening the gate, like a dumb, numb thunderstorm of white, torn Christmas cards.”

*Here is a movement that needs to cover a lot of text and does so in the form of a patter song. Chromatics are used again and close dissonances text-paint the scratchy feeling of wool next to the skin!*



### 4. The Useful Presents

“And then the presents?”

“There were the Useful Presents: engulfing mufflers of the old coach days, and mittens made for giant sloths; zebra scarfs of a substance like silky gum that could be tug-o’-warred down to the galoshes; blinding tam-o’-shanters like patchwork tea cozies and bunny-suited busbies and balaclavas for victims of head-shrinking tribes; from aunts who always wore wool next to the skin there were mustached and rasping vests that made you wonder why the aunts had any skin left at all; and once I had a little crocheted nose bag from an aunt now, alas, no longer whinnying with us. And pictureless books in which small boys, though warned with quotations not to, would skate on Farmer Giles’ pond and did and drowned; and books that told me everything about the wasp, except why.”

*A list of mildly naughty and suggestive Christmas gifts is set to music in an extremely secular swing rhythm.*

### 5. The Useless Presents

“Go on to the Useless Presents.”

“Bags of moist and many-colored jelly babies and a folded flag and a false nose and a tram conductor’s cap and a machine that punched tickets and rang a bell; never a catapult; once, by mistake that no one could explain, a little hatchet; and a celluloid duck that made, when you pressed it, a most unducklike sound, a mewling moo that an ambitious cat might make who wished to be a cow; and a painting book in which I could make the grass, the trees, the sea and the animals any colour I pleased, and still the dazzling sky-blue sheep are grazing in the red field under the rainbow-billed and pea-green birds.

“Hardboileds, toffee, fudge and allsorts, crunches, cracknels, humbugs, glaciers, marzipan, and butterwelsh for the Welsh. And troops of bright tin soldiers who, if they could not fight, could always run. And Snakes-and-Families and Happy Ladders. And Easy Hobbi-Games for Little Engineers, complete with instructions.

“Oh, easy for Leonardo! And a whistle to make the dogs bark to wake up the old man next door to make him beat on the wall with his stick to shake our picture off the wall.

“And a packet of cigarettes: you put one in your mouth and you stood at the corner of the street and you waited for hours, in vain, for an old lady to scold you for smoking a cigarette, and then with a smirk you ate it.”

*This movement continues the operatic dramatic presentation, which starts like a choral recitative and proceeds through graphic musical depictions of the groaning of uncles, the scurrying of aunts and other domestic details. An Allegro section recalls the “presents” music as the child tries to put together a toy “following the instructions*



"Let's write, 'Mr. Daniel looks like a spaniel' all over his lawn."

Or we walked on the white shore.

"Can the fishes see it's snowing?"

We returned home through the poor streets where only a few children fumbled with bare red fingers in the wheel-rutted snow and cat-called after us, their voices fading away, as we trudged uphill, into the cries of the dock birds and the hooting of ships out in the whirling bay. And then, at tea the recovered Uncles would be jolly; and the ice cake loomed in the center of the table like a marble grave. Auntie Hannah laced her tea with rum, because it was only once a year.

And I remember that we went singing carols once, when there wasn't the shaving of a moon to light the flying streets. At the end of a long road was a drive that led to a large house, and we stumbled up the darkness of the drive that night, each one of us afraid, each one holding a stone in his hand in case, and all of us too brave to say a word. The wind through the trees made noises as of old and unpleasant and maybe webfooted men wheezing in caves. We reached the black bulk of the house.

"What shall we give them? Hark the Herald?"

"No," Jack said, "Good King Wenceslas. I'll count three."

One, two, three, and we began to sing, our voices high and seemingly distant in the snow-felted darkness round the house that was occupied by nobody we knew. We stood close together, near the dark door.

Good King Wenceslas looked out on the Feast of Stephen ...

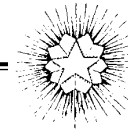
And then a small, dry voice, like the voice of someone who has not spoken for a long time, joined our singing: a small, dry, eggshell voice from the other side of the door: a small dry voice through the keyhole. And when we stopped running we were outside our house; the front room was lovely; balloons floated under the hot-water-bottle-gulping gas; everything was good again and shone over the town.

"Perhaps it was a ghost," Jim said.

"Perhaps it was trolls," Dan said, who was always reading.

"Let's go in and see if there's any jelly left," Jack said. And we did that.

*The folk-like music of the first movement is recalled here, and a solo violin seems to illustrate the line "an uncle played the fiddle." The movement grows to a climax with a sudden descriptive modulation, up a whole step, ("and hear the music rising"); and then ends gently, as the orchestra takes over and the child falls asleep listening to the music.*



*for little engineers." As the children go out exploring, soloists take on more recitative-like declamation ("What would you do if you saw a hippo?") From the catcalls to be late afternoon dock scenes, the music remains descriptive, until a memory of arol-singing evokes the actual carol ("Good King Wenceslas"), quoted first in the orchestra. Each time the text returns to the home front, the music returns to the opening recitative—like 12/8—but, like the story, the movement ends with a sprightly change of mood.*

## 6. Were There Uncles Like in Our House?

"Were there Uncles like in our house?"

"There are always Uncles at Christmas."

"The same Uncles."

For dinner we had turkey and blazing pudding, and after dinner the Uncles sat in front of the fire, loosened all buttons, put their large moist hands over their watch chains, groaned a little and slept. Mothers, aunts and sisters scuttled to and fro, bearing tureens. Auntie Bessie, who had already been frightened, twice, by a clock-work mouse, whimpered at the sideboard and had some elderberry wine. The dog was sick. Auntie Dosithe had to have three aspirins, but Auntie Hannah, who liked port, stood in the middle of the snowbound back yard, singing like a big-bosomed thrush. I would blow up balloons to see how big they would blow up to; and, when they burst, which they all did, the Uncles jumped and rumbled. In the rich and heavy afternoon, the Uncles breathing like dolphins and the snow descending, I would sit among festoons and Chinese lanterns and nibble dates and try to make a model man-o'-war, following the Instructions for Little Engineers, and produce what might be mistaken for a sea-going tramcar.

Or I would go out, my bright new boots squeaking, into the white world, on to the seaward hill, to call on Jim and Dan and Jack and to pad through the still streets, leaving huge footprints on the hidden pavements.

"I bet people will think there's been hippos."

"What would you do if you saw a hippo coming down our street?"

"I'd go like this, bang! I'd throw him over the railings and roll him down the hill and then I'd tickle him under the ear and he'd wag his tail."

"What would you do if you saw two hippos?"

Iron-flanked and bellowing he-hippos clanked and battered through the scudding snow toward us as we passed Mr. Daniel's house.

"Let's post Mr. Daniel a snow-ball through his letter box."

"Let's write things in the snow."





## 7. Always on Christmas Night There Was Music

Always on Christmas night there was music. An uncle played the fiddle, a cousin sang "Cherry Ripe," and another uncle sang "Drake's Drum." It was very warm in the little house.

Auntie Hannah, who had got on to the parsnip wine, sang a song about Bleeding Hearts and Death, and then another in which she said her heart was like a Bird's Nest; and then everybody laughed again; and then I went to bed. Looking through my bedroom window, out into the moonlight and the unending smoke-colored snow, I could see the lights in the windows of all the other houses on our hill and hear the music rising from them up the long, steady falling night. I turned the gas down, I got into bed. I said some words to the close and holy darkness, and then I slept.

*From A Child's Christmas in Wales by Dylan Thomas, ©1956 by New Directions.  
Used by permission.*

# ORCHESTRA

## **Violin I**

Ruth Zumstein\*  
Jonathan Dinklage  
Roxanne Bergman  
Peter Krysa

## **Violin II**

Claudia Chopek\*  
Sharon Gunderson  
Diana Smith-Barker

## **Viola**

Maggie Speier  
Mark Giannini  
Ya-Chin Pan

## **Cello**

Peter Levy\*  
Robert LaRue  
Marnie Kaller

## **Bass**

Richard Sosinsky

## **Trumpet**

Chuck Bumcrot

## **Clarinet**

David Hattner

## **Flute**

Kris Lamb

## **Oboe I/ English Horn**

Delia Montenegro

## **Oboe II**

Oscar Petty

## **Bassoon**

Peter Simmons

## **Horn I**

Ann Mendoker

## **Horn II**

Virginia Benz

## **Percussion**

Jim Thoma

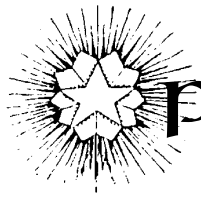
## **Timpani**

Adrienne Ostrander

## **Harp**

Elizabeth Panzer

*\*principal*



DECEMBER 2002

# PROGRAM

**Christmas Oratorio** ..... **Johann Sebastian Bach**  
(1685-1750)

**Part IV**

Chorus ..... Fallt mit Danken, fallt mit Loben

Recitative ..... Und da acht Tage um waren

*Marc Persing, tenor*

Recitative with Chorale ..... Immanuel, O süßes Wort

*Ken Hess, bass; Marjorie Berg, soprano*

Aria ..... Flösst, mein Heiland

*Hyunmi Parkoh, soprano; Nancy Bangiola, echo*

Recitative with Chorale ..... Wohlan, dein Name

*Ken Hess, bass; Marjorie Berg, soprano*

Aria ..... Ich will nur dir zu Ehren leben

*Marc Persing, tenor*

Chorale ..... Jesus richte mein Beginnen

**Harmonium Choral Society and Chamber Orchestra**



**O beatum et sacrosanctum diem** ..... **Peter Philips**  
(c.1561-1628)

**For Him She Sings: Three Domestic Carols** . . . . **Daniel Pinkham**  
(b.1923)

Come Learn of Mary  
Easy Enough for Strangers  
Even So She Sings

**A Wealden Trio (women)** ..... **Benjamin Britten**  
(1913-1976)

*Beth Lohner, Valerie Davia, Laura Kosmich, soloists*

**Ar hyd y nos (men)** ..... **arr. Garyth Nair**  
*John Lamb, soloist*

**Harmonium Chamber Singers**



**Deck the Hall** ..... **Welsh, arr. Willcocks**  
**Go Where I Send Thee!** ..... **arr. Caldwell and Ivory**

## INTERMISSION

*World Premier*

**A Child's Christmas in Wales** ..... **Matthew Harris**  
(b.1956)

I. One Christmas Was So Much Like Another

II. Fire!

*Jabez Van Cleef, Bill Corson, Mark Hewitt, Barbara Armenti, Jill Fedon,  
Beth Wilson, soloists*

III. Years and Years Ago

*Marc Persing, tenor*

IV. The Useful Presents

V. The Useless Presents

VI. Were There Uncles Like in Our House?

*Chris Roemmele, Jim Branigan, Bill Corson, Edward Corson, Beth Branigan,  
Meg McGrath, Ken Hess, Laura Kosmich, Alyssa Saunders, soloists*

VII. Always On Christmas Night There Was Music

*Laura Kosmich, John Lamb, Jim Branigan, Alyssa Saunders, soloists*

**Harmonium Choral Society and Chamber Orchestra**

# Harmonium

Choral Society

## Anne Matlack

Artistic Director

## Joan Tracy

Rehearsal Accompanist

### Soprano I

Leslie Adler  
 Nancy M. Bangiola<sup>o</sup>  
 Marjorie Berg<sup>c,o</sup>  
 Lauran F. Corson  
 Martha A. Domonkos<sup>c</sup>  
 Virginia Hicks  
 Randi E. Jermansen<sup>b,o</sup>  
 Linda Lancaster<sup>c,o</sup>  
 Meg McGrath  
 Hyunmi Parkah<sup>o</sup>  
 Diane Richton<sup>o</sup>  
 Barbara A. Shopiro  
 Susan White  
 Maria Wolansky  
 Michele Yurecko

### Soprano II

Barbara Armenti<sup>o</sup>  
 Roberta Brassard<sup>s</sup>  
 Linda K. Clark<sup>c</sup>  
 Linda Eriksen<sup>c,o</sup>  
 Linda L. Fagerstrom<sup>o</sup>  
 Emily Rauscher  
 Martha Robson  
 Alyssa Marie Saunders  
 Barbara Shalit<sup>o</sup>  
 Laurie J. Smith<sup>o</sup>  
 Mary Jane Wilkie<sup>o</sup>  
 Deborah Wohl<sup>s</sup>

### Alto I

Beth Branigan<sup>c,o,s</sup>  
 Katherine Clark<sup>c</sup>  
 Valerie Davia<sup>b,c,o</sup>  
 Jerilyn Herbert<sup>c</sup>  
 Kirsten Lamb  
 Beth Lohner<sup>c</sup>  
 Pam M. Morse  
 Amy H. Myers  
 Laura Napolitano  
 Susan Pilshaw  
 Joan Tracy<sup>c,o</sup>  
 Kimberly Williams

### Alto II

Jean L. Bowers  
 Dorothee Burchartz  
 Jill Fedon  
 Roberta Haines  
 Anne Kane  
 Laura L. Kosmich<sup>c</sup>  
 Joan O'Donnell<sup>b</sup>  
 Randi Spiegel<sup>o</sup>  
 Dorothy Stearns<sup>o</sup>  
 Beth Wilson<sup>s,o</sup>  
 Mary Wolfson<sup>o</sup>

### Tenor I

Max Calbick<sup>c,o</sup>  
 William C. Corson  
 James Kemp  
 Rob Liotard  
 Matt Snow

### Tenor II

Scott Albiston<sup>b,o</sup>  
 Jim Branigan<sup>c,o</sup>  
 Lamont Hill<sup>o</sup>  
 Andrew McDonough  
 Robert Morse<sup>b,s</sup>  
 Johnathan P. Reale<sup>o,s</sup>

### Bass I

Adam Aguano<sup>c</sup>  
 David H. Copp<sup>o</sup>  
 Jack Grier  
 Tracy W. Hart  
 Ken Hess<sup>c</sup>  
 Mark Hewitt  
 Daniel Karger<sup>b,s,o</sup>  
 Robert Marinovic  
 John McGrath  
 Christopher Roemmele

### Bass II

Mike Acocella  
 Bob Burke  
 Edward F. Corson  
 Ted Goodman  
 Christopher J. Hatcher<sup>c</sup>  
 David Hoadley<sup>o</sup>  
 John Lamb<sup>c</sup>  
 Murray Spiegel  
 Jabez Van Cleef<sup>c,o</sup>  
 Leo Wolansky

B = Board Member    O = Outreach Chorus    C = Chamber Singer    S = Section Leader

# Harmonium

Choral Society

## Anne Matlack

Artistic Director

Anne Matlack, (BA Music cum laude, Yale University, MM, DMA, Choral Conducting University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music) is celebrating her sixteenth year as director of Harmonium Choral Society. She is organist/choir director at Grace Episcopal Church in Madison where she directs a full program of children and adult choirs and a concert series, Grace Community Music. Dr. Matlack serves on the NJ board of the American Choral Directors Association as Repertoire and Standards Chair for Community Choirs. She is active as an adjudicator and clinician and on the board of the Yale Glee Club Associates. Dr. Matlack has conducted choirs at Yale and Lafayette College and concertizes as an organist and flutist. She has sung in the Robert Shaw Festival Chorus at Carnegie Hall. During her tenure as Artistic Director, Harmonium has been recognized for its musical excellence and innovative programming.



Harmonium Choral Society is a 70-voice volunteer community chorus based in Morris County, NJ, founded in 1979. Harmonium is dedicated to performing a diverse repertoire at a high artistic level, and increasing community appreciation of choral music through concerts, education and outreach. "Harmonium is more than a fine choral group...it is an educational organization par excellence." (William Storrer, *Classical NJ* March 1997) Harmonium has toured England, Wales, and, most recently, Eastern Europe. They appeared as one of twelve choirs selected by a competitive audition process to perform at the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) Eastern Convention in February 1998. In 1998 Harmonium was named "Outstanding Arts Organization" by the Arts Council of the Morris Area. For more information about Harmonium, call 973-538-6969 or visit us at [www.harmonium.org](http://www.harmonium.org)



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# Harmonium

Choral Society

## Board of Directors

**Anne Matlack** . . . . . Artistic Director

**Robert Morse** . . . . . President

**Scott Albiston** . . . . . Vice-President

**Randi Jermansen** . . . . . Treasurer

**Valerie Davia** . . . . . Secretary

**Daniel Karger** . . . . . Member-at-large

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**Stephen W. Smithson** . . . Community Board Member



**Joan Tracy** . . . . . Rehearsal Accompanist

**Jaelyn Connell** . . . . . Chorus Manager

**Beth Branigan** . . . . . Publicity Director

**Laurie Smith** . . . . . Advertising Chair

**Michele Yurecko** . . . . . Composition Contest Coordinator



**Barbara Shopiro** . . . . . Program Design

Tullen Sound Recording is the official recording studio for Harmonium Choral Society.