Westchester Oratorio Society

David Štech, Artistic Director

Presents

GREEN & *GOLDEN*

John Corigliano
Fern Hill

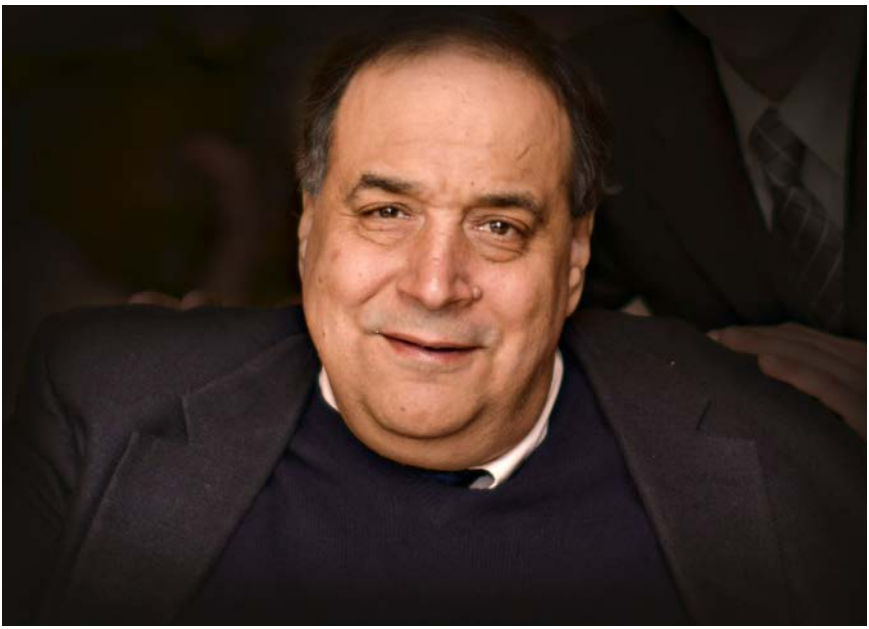
Maurice Duruflé
Requiem

Saturday, November 21, 2026 at 7:30 PM
Presbyterian Church of Mt. Kisco
605 Millwood Rd, Mt. Kisco, NY

In loving memory and honor of

Dean Stephen Travalino

May 12, 1954 – April 18, 2026



Longstanding
Westchester Oratorio Society
Board Member,
and an inspiration to us all.



Singing Brings People Together. We invite you to sing with us.

Westchester Oratorio Society, under the direction of David Štech, seeks potential new singers in all voice parts as we continue to rebuild our culturally important and recreational organization. If you love to sing and would like to join with a diverse community of people to bring rich choral music to Westchester County, then come and experience the joy and camararderie of making music together. We have two concerts a year with professional musicians and soloists. The ability to sight read is not required.

Join us this spring for a wonderful new program!



David Štech
Artistic Director

Rehearsals begin
Tuesday, January 12, 2027 at 7:00pm
St. Luke's Episcopal Church
331 NY-100, Somers, NY
westchesteroratorio.org

Westchester Oratorio Society

Presents

GREEN & GOLDEN

David Štech
Conductor

Saturday, November 21, 2026 7:30 PM
Presbyterian Church of Mount Kisco



Fern Hill

John Corigliano (b. 1938)

Emily Hughes, mezzo-soprano
MunTzung Wong, piano

Sonata for Presbyterian Church of Mount Kisco and Rev. Dale Southorn

Eric Kramer (2026)

I. Andante.
II. Scherzo: Presto.
III. Adagio cantabile.
IV. Finale: Allegro maestoso.

Intermission

Requiem

Maurice Duruflé (1902-1986)

James Mugavaro Hopkins, organ
1. Introit (Requiem aeternam)
2. Kyrie eleison
3. Offertory (Domine Jesu Christe)
4. Sanctus et Benedictus
5. Pie Jesu

MunTzung Wong, mezzo-soprano

6. Agnus Dei
7. Communion (Lux aeterna)
8. Libera me
9. In paradisum

Notes from the Podium

Dear Friends,

Last spring, word reached me that the organ in this beautiful space would soon undergo significant revoicing, with new flutes, gentler registers, and stops built for color rather than volume. I immediately thought of Duruflé's *Requiem*, a work made of shifting modality and color rather than bombast. Although its melodies are drawn almost note for note from the austere Gregorian chants of the *Liber usualis*, Duruflé gives them a luminous voice of his own. Tonight is a chance to hear the organ in its golden glory.

What draws me to this piece is what Duruflé chose to leave out. He completed it in 1947, in a Europe still reckoning with what the war had cost. Where we might expect the biting drama of the *Dies Irae,* as Verdi and Mozart both wrote in their famous *Requiems,* Duruflé does nearly the opposite, favoring unhurried harmonies, textures that shift like light rather than announce themselves, and moments of tenderness that settle in the body before the mind catches up.

Fern Hill asks something different of us. Dylan Thomas's poem tumbles: sentences arrive in fragments before their grammar resolves, like a memory before it settles into a story. Like the great composers of the past, Corigliano lets the music deepen our understanding of the text. This isn't only a poem of loss. It closes with Thomas's own words: "though I sang in my chains like the sea." Corigliano sets this ending as a mounting crescendo, voices entering one by one, link by link, until all sing as one: a piece of text-painting that finds freedom within the very bonds of time, unbounded, like the sea.

I've come to hear the two pieces together: if *Fern Hill i*s memory looking backward at innocence — green, growing, not yet touched by the knowledge of time's passing — the *Requiem* looks the other direction. Its ancient text asks not for a return to youth, but for an arrival at rest and light: *"Lux aeterna luceat eis"* (let eternal light shine upon them), culminating in the final movement, In paradisum, music that makes peace with time, assuring us the journey was worth taking. Where *Fern Hill*'s green is the color of a life's beginning, the *Requiem*'s gold is the color of its end, not diminished, but radiant.

I hope you feel both *Green and Golden* tonight, in every sense.

David Štech
Artistic Director and Conductor

President's Message

Welcome to the opening or our 29th season!

Our artistic director, David Štech, has chosen two wonderful pieces for his fifth concert as conductor with us.

Fern Hill, a Dylan Thomas poem, set to music by composer John Corigliano (who has a house in nearby Kent Cliffs) starts the concert off with both literary and musical artistry.

The next selection, the Duruflé Requiem, which we last performed in May 2016, is a fitting tribute to the passing of our hardest working, most valuable and beloved board member, Dean Travalino. I believe this requiem was a favorite of his.

Thank you to all of our supporters over the last 29 years, and all of you in the audience who continue to allow us to make beautiful music.



Westchester Oratorio Society

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Martha Brozski
Denise Cossu
Susan deCamp
Marvel Griepp
Peggy Gryska
Carol Jendras
Julia Korell*
Meg Allyn Krilov
Toni LaPietra*
Lisette Meyers
Georgiana Mitchell*
Donna Ray

ALTO

Irene Alcoforado*
Maev Brennan
Sally Brunner
Tina Cowles
Karen Glass
Jane Freeman
Anastasia Leopold
Vicki Lucas*
Joanne Marcus
Anna Mergen
Laure Milliot
Irene Muller
Anna Marie Spallina
Kathy Stillson
Linda F. Travis*
Caroline Walker

TENOR

Tim Brunner
Laurie Friedman
Aaron Gonzalez*†
Geoffrey Kidde
Eric Lamp*†
Jennifer Reed
Marcella Reed
Alyssa Reit
Liza Travalino

BASS

Jim Fogel*
Ralph Gorter
Robert Kessler
Peter Reit
Sol Schepps
Joe Spallina*

**Semi-chorus on Fern Hill*
† Guest artist

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Text

Dylan Thomas (1914 – 1953) – *Fern Hill*

Now as I was young and easy under the apple boughs
About the lilting house and happy as the grass was green,
    The night above the dingle starry,
        Time let me hail and climb
    Golden in the heydays of his eyes,
And honoured among wagons I was prince of the apple towns
And once below a time I lordly had the trees and leaves
        Trail with daisies and barley
    Down the rivers of the windfall light.

And as I was green and carefree, famous among the barns
About the happy yard and singing as the farm was home,
    In the sun that is young once only,
        Time let me play and be
    Golden in the mercy of his means,
And green and golden I was huntsman and herdsman, the calves
Sang to my horn, the foxes on the hills barked clear and cold,
        And the sabbath rang slowly
    In the pebbles of the holy streams.

All the sun long it was running, it was lovely, the hay
Fields high as the house, the tunes from the chimneys, it was air
    And playing, lovely and watery
        And fire green as grass.
    And nightly under the simple stars
As I rode to sleep the owls were bearing the farm away,
All the moon long I heard, blessed among stables, the nightjars
    Flying with the ricks, and the horses
        Flashing into the dark.

And then to awake, and the farm, like a wanderer white
With the dew, come back, the cock on his shoulder: it was all
    Shining, it was Adam and maiden,
        The sky gathered again
    And the sun grew round that very day.
So it must have been after the birth of the simple light
In the first, spinning place, the spellbound horses walking warm
    Out of the whinnying green stable
        On to the fields of praise.

And honoured among foxes and pheasants by the gay house
Under the new made clouds and happy as the heart was long,
In the sun born over and over,
I ran my heedless ways,
My wishes raced through the house high hay
And nothing I cared, at my sky blue trades, that time allows
In all his tuneful turning so few and such morning songs
Before the children green and golden
Follow him out of grace,

Nothing I cared, in the lamb white days, that time would take me
Up to the swallow thronged loft by the shadow of my hand,
In the moon that is always rising,
Nor that riding to sleep
I should hear him fly with the high fields
And wake to the farm forever fled from the childless land.
Oh as I was young and easy in the mercy of his means,
Time held me green and dying
Though I sang in my chains like the sea.

Maurice Duruflé (1902 – 1986) – *Requiem*

I. Introit
Requiem aeternam dona eis,
Domine, et lux perpetua
luceat eis.
Te decet hymnus,
Deus in Sion, et tibi reddetur
votum in Jerusalem;
exaudi orationem meam,
ad te omnis caro veniet.
Requiem aeternam dona eis,
Domine, et lux perpetua
luceat eis.

I. Introit
Eternal rest grant them,
O Lord, and let eternal light
shine upon them.
A hymn to you is fitting,
O God in Zion, and a vow made
to you in Jerusalem;
hear my prayer,
all flesh comes to you.
Eternal rest grant them,
O Lord, and let eternal light
shine upon them.

II. Kyrie
Kyrie eleison,
Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison.

II. Kyrie
Lord have mercy,
Christ have mercy,
Lord have mercy.

Text
continued

III. Domine Jesu Christe
Domine Jesu Christe, rex gloriae,
libera animas omnium fidelium
defunctorum de poenis
inferni et de profundo lacu.
Libera eas de ore leonis,
ne absorbeat eas tartarus,
ne cadant in obscurum.
Sed signifer sanctus Michael
repraesentet eas in lucem
sanctam,
quam olim Abrahae promisisti et
semini ejus.
Hostias et preces tibi, Domine,
laudis offerimus.
Tu suscipe pro animabus illis,
quarum hodie memoriam
facimus,
fac eas, Domine,
de morte transire ad vitam
quam olim Abrahae promisisti
et semini ejus.

III. Domine Jesu Christe
Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory,
free the souls of all the faithful
departed from the punishments
of hell and from the deep abyss.
Deliver them from the lion's mouth
so that Tartarus does not swallow
them, and that they do not fall
into darkness.
But holy Michael, describes them
as being in the holy light,
which long ago to Abraham and
his offspring you promised.
Offerings and prayers to you,
Lord, praise we offer.
Hear them for the sake of those
souls,
which today we remember,
grant, Lord, that they may pass
from death to life,
which long ago to Abraham and
his offspring you promised.

IV. Sanctus
Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth,
pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.
Hosanna in excelsis!
Benedictus, qui venit in nomine
Domini.
Hosanna in excelsis!

IV. Sanctus
Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of
Hosts. Heaven and earth are full of
your glory,
Hosannah in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the
name of the Lord,
Hosannah in the highest.

V. Pie Jesu, Alto solo
Pie Jesu Domine, dona eis
requiem sempiternam.

V. Pie Jesu
Gracious Lord Jesus, grant them
eternal rest.

VI. Agnus Dei
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata
mundi,
dona eis requiem sempiternam.

VI. Agnus Dei
Lamb of God, who takes away the
sin of the world,
grant them eternal rest.

VII. Lux aeterna
Lux aeterna luceat eis, Domine,
cum sanctis tuis in aeternum,
quia pius es.
Requiem aeternam dona eis,
Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.

VIII. Libera me
Libera me, Domine, de morte
aeterna,
in die illa tremenda, quando coeli
movendi sunt et terra,
dum veneris judicare saeculum
per ignem.
Tremens factus sum ego et timeo
dum discussio venerit
atque ventura ira, quando coeli
movendi sunt et terra.
Dies illa, dies irae, calamitatis
et miseriae,
dies magna et amara valde.
Requiem aeternam dona eis,
Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.

IX. In Paradisum
In Paradisum deducant Angeli,
in tuo adventu suscipiant te
Martyres
et perducant te in civitatem
sanctam Jerusalem.

Chorus Angelorum te suscipit
et cum Lazaro quondam paupere
aeternam habeas requiem.

VII. Lux aeterna
May eternal light shine on them,
Lord, with your saints forever,
because you are gracious.
Eternal rest grant them, O Lord,
and let eternal light shine upon
them.

VIII. Libera me
Deliver me, Lord, from eternal death
on that tremendous day
when the heavens and the earth are
disturbed,
when you will come to judge the
world through fire.
I am forced to tremble and I fear,
when the distruction comes and the
impending wrath, when the heavens
and the earth are disturbed.
That day, the day of wrath,
of calamity, of misery,
day immense and most bitter.
Eternal rest grant them,
O Lord, and let eternal light
shine upon them.

IX. In Paradisum
Into Paradise may the angels
lead you,
may the martyrs welcome you in
your coming and guide you into the
holy city Jerusalem.

A chorus of angels will greet you,
and with Lazarus, once a beggar,
may you have eternal rest.

Program Notes

By Caroline A. Walker

Green & Golden

John Corigliano, *Fern Hill* (1961)

John Corigliano (born 1938) is an American composer of contemporary classical music. He was just 22 years old when he composed *Fern Hill*, an early masterwork that remains one of his most beloved and frequently performed vocal creations. Long before winning an Academy Award, a Pulitzer Prize, and multiple Grammys, the young composer found deep inspiration in the lyrical stanzas of Welsh poet Dylan Thomas. Corigliano first read the poem in 1959 when he was an undergraduate student at Columbia College and was struck by the way Thomas imbued his words with melodic cadences. Captivated by Thomas's sentimental reverie on idyllic childhood summers spent at the Welsh farm of his aunt, Corigliano was irresistibly drawn to translate Thomas's words into a musical form. He dedicated the work to his high-school music teacher, Mrs. Bella Tillis, who first encouraged Corigliano's musical ambitions. The resulting cantata stands out in the contemporary repertoire for its open-hearted lyricism and emotional immediacy.

Architecturally, Corigliano structures his piece in an expanded ABA song form. It extends from an opening section focused on youth, through a middle section capturing mid-life realities, to the final section encompassing sage reflections on eternity. The first section opens with a serene, pastoral atmosphere, enveloping the listener in harmonic progressions that feel youthful and invincible in their optimism, evoking a world where the young narrator is "prince of the apple towns" and "happy as the grass was green." Corigliano explicitly litters the printed score with the performance directive "with simplicity," keeping the textures transparent and ensuring the complex internal rhythms of Thomas's text remain at the forefront. However, in the contrasting "B" section the piece is increasingly "touched by darkness," as the inevitable wisdom that

comes with adult maturity takes hold. Unlike the child who plays in absolute innocence, the adult must reckon with the inescapable force of the passage of time. The orchestration turns more poignant and urgent as the speaker realizes that youth is fleeting. In the final section the initial musical motifs return but are now heavily transfigured by this awareness. The piece culminates in one of the most haunting paradoxes in 20th-century literature: "Time held me green and dying / Though I sang in my chains like the sea." Here, the piece reaches an epiphany that combines a bittersweet celebration of human life with a deeply moving elegy.

Fern Hill would eventually become the second movement of Corigliano's massive, career-spanning project, *A Dylan Thomas Trilogy* (1976). Whether experienced as a standalone cantata or as part of that larger operatic oratorio, *Fern Hill* endures as an inspirational testament to the innocence of childhood and the inevitable passage of time.

Maurice Duruflé, *Requiem* (1947)

Maurice Duruflé (1902-1986) was a French composer, academic teacher, musicologist and organist. Raised in the countryside near Rouen, as a young adult he entered the Conservatoire de Paris, graduating with highest honors. After completing his studies, he served as the organist of St. Étienne-du-Mont in Paris, a position he held from 1929 through the rest of his life. In 1953 he married his organ assistant, Marie-Madeleine Chevalier, and the couple became a famous organ duo, performing on tour together in the sixties and seventies. Unfortunately, they both suffered severe injuries in a car crash in 1975 which caused them to give up performing. Duruflé was a perfectionist who was highly critical of his own compositions and felt that only a few of his works were worthy of publication.

Program Notes
CONTINUED

Of his known works, his *Requiem* (1947) is by far the most famous and stands as one of the most luminous, comforting and enduring masterpieces of twentieth-century choral music. Originally commissioned to write the work by the Vichy regime, Duruflé was still working on it in 1944 when the regime collapsed at the end of World War II. Completed in 1947 and dedicated to the memory of the composer's father, who died five months after the liberation of Paris, the work is a profound meditation on faith, tranquility, and eternal rest.

The piece is a brilliant synthesis of two very different musical worlds. It represents a blend of Gregorian plainchant, which the composer associated with spiritual purity, and French impressionism, as exemplified by the lush harmonies, colorful orchestration and shimmering textures typical of his mentors Gabriel Fauré and Maurice Ravel.

Emphasizing his reliance on Gregorian plainchant, Duruflé wrote, "My Requiem is composed throughout on the Gregorian themes of the Mass for the Dead." As Fauré had done sixty years earlier, Duruflé decided to eliminate some of the more terrifying and apocalyptic sections, such as the fire-and-brimstone *Dies Irae*, condensing his Requiem down into nine movements that focus on forgiveness, consolation and eternal light. The work opens with the *Introit*, establishing a mood of solemn reflection, followed by the *Kyrie* whose contrapuntal harmonies create a sense of collective prayer. In the *Domine Jesu Christe,* darker melodies evoke the soul's passage through death, while the *Sanctus* soars into a radiant expression of praise. The intimate *Pie Jesu* delivers a simple supplication for everlasting rest, followed by the *Agnus Dei* whose sustained melodic lines seem to suspend time. In the *Lux Aeterna*, the music gradually opens into an atmosphere of dazzling luminosity, while the *Libera Me* presents a contrast, with its recollection of the Day of Judgment. In the final movement, *In*

Paradisum, the choir invokes the angels to lead the departed soul into paradise, and the music seems to dissolve into light, leaving behind an impression of peace rather than finality.

Exquisite and sublime, Duruflé's *Requiem* is a timeless work that comforts listeners by offering a tender reassurance that transcends the finality of human mortality. Its enduring power lies in the way it joins the ancient and the contemporary, the personal and the universal, offering a golden vision of remembrance illuminated by compassion and the promise of peace.

—Caroline A. Walker

***Sonata for Presbyterian Church of Mount Kisco and Rev. Dale Southorn*, Eric Kramer (2026) - A Note From the Composer**

This sonata celebrates two events in the life of Presbyterian Church of Mount Kisco in 2026: the refurbishing of its fine Beckerath organ, and the beginning of the last year of service of its long-standing pastor, Rev. Dale Southorn. To commemorate the organ, the sonata attempts to provide for use of a wide range of registrations of the organ, while not being so specific that it can't also someday be enjoyed on other instruments. To commemorate Rev. Southorn, the sonata alludes to two pieces of music that are particularly significant in my relationship with Pastor Dale: The hymn tune "Abbot's Leigh," a favorite of his, that happened also to be a hymn I was asked to play at my audition; and the slow movement of Dvořák's ninth symphony, which he never forgot my spontaneously playing for the offertory, when I happened to be the organist for his candidating sermon at a different church a decade earlier. The hymn tune is subtly alluded to in fragments throughout the sonata, gradually becoming clearer toward the end. The symphony movement is alluded to more subtly throughout, mostly by the striking harmonic relationships heard in its opening chorale.

—Eric Kramer



David Štech
Conductor

David Štech is a conductor, pianist, and organist in New York City, where he serves as organist at St. John's Anglican Church in Passaic, NJ. He is also co-artistic director of the Riverdale Choral Society and makes his conducting debut at Bronx Opera this February with the Tales of Hoffmann.

He is Music Director Emeritus of the Astoria Symphony Orchestra and served as assistant conductor at Sarasota Opera, St. Petersburg Opera, Opera Southwest, Opera in Williamsburg, Charlottesville Opera, and several others throughout the country. Recent guest conducting engagements include The Florida Orchestra, Brooklyn Ballet, the University of North Texas, and Opéra Bastide in Aveyron, France.

As a vocal coach, he has worked at the Opera Theater of Lucca, Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts, and at the Manhattan School of Music, where he served for eight years. David earned his Bachelor of Arts in organ performance at California State University, Chico, and his Master's in orchestral conducting from Northwestern University. He studied Collaborative Piano at the Manhattan School of Music, and is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of North Texas. He studied conducting at Tanglewood with Kurt Masur and Christoph von Dohnányi, and is an alumnus of the Pierre Monteux School.



James Mugavaro Hopkins

Organist

Based in Brooklyn, Jim Hopkins enjoys playing all keyboard instruments, conducting and singing polyphony, and currently serves as Music Director at All Saints Episcopal Church in Manhattan. At All Saints, he directs the Levy Choir School, a music education program for neighborhood children. He's also a staff accompanist at St. Ann's School in Brooklyn Heights, where he also accompanies and co-directs the Bach Ensemble. He especially enjoys collaborating with other musicians, whether that be in a chamber music context, as an accompanist, or in a rock band, and can be heard playing electronic keyboards in the album A Fine Companion by Alkemie and Freelance Nun, available on all major streaming services.

A native of New York City, his early musical training was at the Pre-College division at the Juilliard School. He later earned degrees in organ from Westminster Choir College and the Cleveland Institute of Music, studying with Ken Cowan and Todd Wilson. When he's not making music, he enjoys cooking, cycling, sailing, and playing Super Smash Bros. Melee.



Emily Hughes

Mezzo-Soprano

Mezzo-soprano Emily Hughes recently made her German house debut as Flora in La Traviata with Theater Kiel. In the 2026/2027 season, she returns to the company to sing Ruggiero in Handel's Alcina. Other recent highlights include her Carnegie Hall debut with DCINY as the alto soloist in Vivaldi's Gloria. Her recent operatic roles include the title role in La Cenerentola with Salt Marsh Opera, Smeton in Anna Bolena with Winter Opera St. Louis, Cherubino in Le nozze di Figaro with the Southern Illinois Music Festival, and Despina in Così fan tutte with Bronx Opera.

A dedicated advocate for new music and historical performance, Emily has premiered works such as Lingbo Ma's The Pile at National Sawdust and appeared in a staged production of Jake Heggie's song cycle Camille Claudel: Into the Fire with New Camerata Opera. She has performed early music with Artek, the Amherst Early Music Festival, and Barockfest Darmstadt. Currently, she joins Teatro Nuovo in touring a concert series of bel canto duets with period accompaniment.

Emily has been recognized as a finalist in both the Joy in Singing and Federation of the Art Song competitions. She has developed her artistry as a young artist with Teatro Nuovo, Opera on the James, and Charlottesville Opera. www.emily-hughes.com



Eric Kramer

Composer, Organist

Eric Kramer's most recent conducting appearances include leading New York productions with Utopia Opera (in collaboration with UK's Forbear! Theatre), Amore Opera, and Bronx Opera. He has long been associated with Bronx Opera, conducting many performances, first as assistant conductor and later as music director for several productions.

As music director of Collegium Westchester and New York Symphonic Arts Ensemble, he has led performances of standard and new orchestral and choral/orchestral repertoire. Both groups combine high-level professional and accomplished avocational musicians, an approach Mr Kramer particularly values.

In Europe, Mr Kramer was assistant conductor to Iván Fischer with the Budapest Festival Orchestra and the Opéra National de Lyon. He has also guest conducted the Berlin Sinfonietta, the Sorrento International Music Festival orchestra, and the Moravian Philharmonic, among others.

Aside from conducting, Mr Kramer continues to compose, and also perform on piano, harpsichord, and organ. His first significant musical accomplishment was playing his first piano concerto with the Civic Orchestra of Chicago when he was 15. Presently he performs weekly as organist at Presbyterian Church of Mount Kisco.

His understanding of music is also shaped by his earlier study, research, and teaching in physics, with a focus on relativistic quantum field theory.



MunTzung Wong

Mezzo-Soprano, Pianist

Recognized for her artistry and musicality versatility, MunTzung Wong leads a professional career as a pianist, conductor, mezzo-soprano, vocal and instrumental coach, pedagogue, and recording artist. Ms. Wong is currently the Co-Music Director of the Riverdale Choral Society in New York City and Music Director and Choirmaster at St. John's Anglican Church in Passaic, NJ. She also serves as faculty and head coach at Opéra Bastide Royale in Aveyron, France.

Recently, she was the guest conductor of Donizetti's Anna Bolena with Dell'arte Opera Ensemble. She has served as assistant conductor at the International Vocal Arts Institute, St. Petersburg Opera Company, New Rochelle Opera, Regina Opera, Norwalk Symphony Orchestra, Missouri Symphony Orchestra, Macau Youth Symphony, and Orchestra dell'Opera di Parma.

MunTzung has appeared as a pianist on WQXR and performed at venues such as Carnegie Hall, Symphony Space, Alice Tully Hall, Steinway Hall, and Lincoln Center. Featured in an article on music entrepreneurship in Forbes Magazine, Ms. Wong is the founding executive director of the New York Conducting Institute. She maintains a private instrumental and vocal coaching studio in New York City. She has been on staff at the Manhattan School of Music and also serves as an adjunct faculty at Columbia University.



About *Westchester Oratorio Society*

Appointed summer of 2024, David Štech became WOS's artistic director, only the third since its founding in 1997 when a few individuals in South Salem joined with their neighbor, the noted choral conductor Harold Rosenbaum, to form a choral group that would create a high-quality musical experience for audiences and singers in Northern Westchester and surrounding areas. Since its inception, WOS has made a significant contribution to the musical fabric of the county, performing choral masterworks primarily of the 18th to 20th centuries accompanied by professional soloists and orchestras.

Benjamin Niemczyk was appointed artistic director in 2007. That year he conducted the Westchester premiere of James Bassi's *Wexford Carol*. In November 2010, WOS gave a widely praised presentation of Handel's *Messiah* with REBEL Baroque Orchestra. The 2011–12 season began with a moving performance of Mozart's *Requiem* with chamber orchestra and continued in March with WOS's first chamber music concert, which included a world premiere by local composer John Velonis. A stirring performance of Mendelssohn's *Elijah* at Temple Beth El of Northern Westchester concluded the season.

Other highlights include a May 2014 performance with REBEL featuring Vivaldi's *Gloria* and a November 2014 performance of Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* with James Kennerley at the Presbyterian Church of Mount Kisco and Mozart's *Requiem* with the WOS Festival Orchestra at the South Salem Presbyterian Church (May 2015). WOS began its 16th season with powerful performances of Schoenberg's *A Survivor from Warsaw* and Brahms's *Ein Deutsches Requiem* at Temple Shaaray Tefila in Bedford. Highlighting the season was a festive gala featuring renowned violinist Ani Kavafian, and the Robert C. McDonald Memorial Concert which featured Beethoven's Choral Fantasy performed with the incomparable Hélène Grimaud. 2017 was highlighted with a performance of Bach's *St. John Passion* in South Salem with WOS Baroque Ensemble. The group's concert in May 2018 at Bedford Presbyterian Church featured renowned composer and organist Anthony Newman performing Bach's *Cantata No.29* and his own, original choral works and Mr. Niemczyk conducting the Mozart *Requiem*.

The 2019 season was highlighted by a spring performance of Hayden's *Creation* in German (*Die Schöpfung*) at the Chappaqua Performing Arts Center on May 5, 2019, with soloists Catherine Steinbrink, Soprano, Jeffrey Strand, Tenor and David Salsbery Fry, Bass, accompanied by the WOS Festival Orchestra made possible with a grant from the Westchester Community Foundation.

Having been voted "Best Amateur Chorus in Westchester" by Westchester Magazine, WOS has also distinguished itself in guest appearances at Carnegie Hall with the Brooklyn Philharmonic (Verdi's *Requiem*), the Brooklyn Academy of Music (Messiaen's opera, *St. Francis of Assisi* premiere), and the Cathedral of St. John the





Divine. Among the group's most notable post-Covid performances was its 25th anniversary concert in memory of Don Harder, entitled "Conqu'ring," on April 23, 2023, featuring works by Bach, Mozart, and Handel. WOS gave its final performance under the baton of Mr. Niemczyk on May 4, 2024, entitled "Glorious Spring" featuring three of his favorite works, Brahms *Liebeslieder Waltzes, Op. 52*, Brahms *Schicksalslied, Op. 54* and Mozart, *Mass in C Minor,* with Francesca Federico, soprano, Christine Browne-Munz, mezzo soprano, Blake Friedman, tenor and Harrison Hintzsche, bass, and the WOS Festival Orchestra.

WOS began its journey under the baton of David Štech with an acclaimed performance of Arthur Honegger's dramatic oratorio, "King David," on November 23, 2024 at Presbyterian Church of Mount Kisco. The performance featured soloists Olivia Greene, Soprano, Emily Geller, Contralto and Aaron Blankfield, Tenor, and narrated by David Salsbery Fry. WOS's May 4, 2025 concert, "Visions of Peace," presented at a time of tumultuous world affairs featured themes of peace, spiritual reflection, and enduring hope: Randall Thompson's *Alleluia*, Leonard Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* and

Gabriel Fauré's *Requiem*. On November 21, the chorus presented "Sure on this Shining Night," a reflection of light and peace featuring works by Mendelssohn, Barber, Vaughn Williams, Bach,Thompson, and Stanford.

Tonight's *Requiem* ends in perpetual light. This spring, we follow that light to its source. Long before there was a Christmas, Rome kept a midwinter feast of the Unconquered Sun. Our "Sol Invictus" program traces its legacy from dawn to dusk, from the blazing Andean rhythms of Ariel Ramírez's *Misa Criolla* to Lili Boulanger's incandescent ***Hymne au soleil*** and our own suite from Rameau's *Les Indes galantes*, *L'adoration du Soleil*, in which the Incas greet the rising sun. With MacMillan's *O Radiant Dawn*, Rutter's *Lux aeterna*, and Rheinberger's beloved *Abendlied*. Join us on Saturday, May 8, 7:30pm at the Presbyterian Church of Mt. Kisco.

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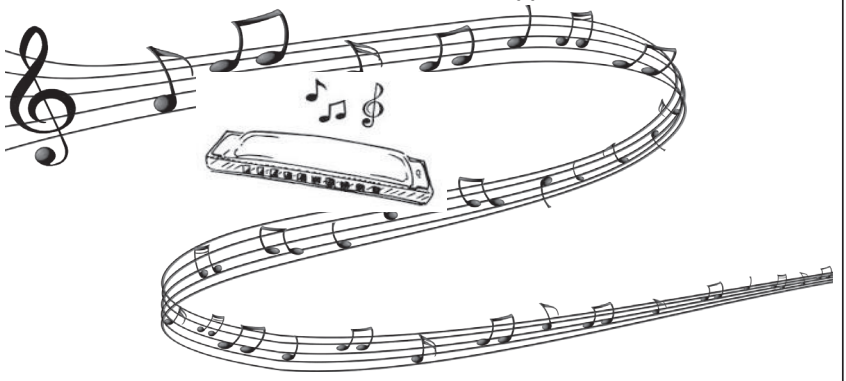

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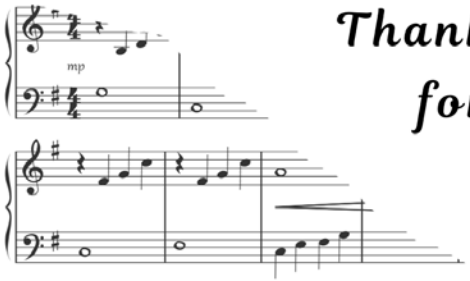

Thank you WOS for the joy of singing!

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