

Presented at Carnegie Hall by
MidAmerica Productions, Inc.

1,511th Concert Worldwide, 1,171st in New York, 715th in Carnegie Hall

Peter Tiboris: Founder and General Director Emeritus
Sir John Rutter, CBE: Conductor Laureate

Sunday, June 15, 2025 at 2 PM
Isaac Stern Auditorium / Ronald O. Perelman Stage

New England Symphonic Ensemble

Preston Hawes, Artistic Director and Concertmaster

ANTONIO VIVALDI

Gloria in D Major, RV 589

- I. Gloria in excelsis
- II. Et in terra pax
- III. Laudamus te
- IV. Gratias agimus tibi
- V. Propter magnam gloriam tuam
- VI. Domine Deus
- VII. Domine fili unigenite
- VIII. Domine Deus, Agnus Dei
- IX. Qui tollis peccata mundi
- X. Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris
- XI. Quoniam tu solus sanctus
- XII. Cum sancto spiritu

Kelly Curtin, Soprano
Chantelle Grant, Mezzo-Soprano
Mary Nelson, Organ
Heather Wilcox, Conductor

Participating Choruses:

River Bluff High School Concert Choir, Lexington, SC (Heather Wilcox, Director)
The Voices of Lexington, Lexington, SC (Heather Wilcox, Director)
Fitz Intermediate Choir, Santa Ana, CA (Nora Hernandez, Director)

INTERMISSION

GEORGE
FRIDERIC HANDEL

Zadok the Priest, HWV 258

- I. Zadok the priest
- II. And all the people rejoiced
- III. God save the King

GEORGE
FRIDERIC HANDEL

Let Thy Hand Be Strengthened, HWV 259

- I. Let thy hand be strengthened
- II. Let justice and judgment
- III. Alleluja

GEORGE
FRIDERIC HANDEL

The King Shall Rejoice, HWV 260

- I. The King shall rejoice
- II. Exceeding glad shall he be
- III. Glory and great worship
- IV. Alleluia

Kelly Horsted, Organ
Alexander L. Shawn, Conductor

TRADITIONAL “Lift Every Voice and Sing” (arr. Christopher Cross)

CHRISTOPHER CROSS “Sinner Man”

TRADITIONAL “Walk With Me, LORD / Give Me Jesus”
(arr. Christopher Cross)

LaSheena Gordon, Soprano
Christopher T. Cross, Conductor

Participating Choruses:

Bangor Area High School Slater Chorale, Bangor, PA (Joseph Di Minico, Director)

Calgary Coronation Choir, Calgary, Alberta, Canada (Alexander L. Shawn, Director)

Hamburg High School Chamber Choir, Hamburg, AR (Leigh Rice, Director)

MacArthur High School Choirs, San Antonio, TX

(Christopher T. Cross and Kimberly Mendez, Directors)

San Antonio Community Singers and MacArthur High School Choir Alumni Singers,
San Antonio, TX (Christopher T. Cross, Director)

INTERMISSION

DAN FORREST “Arise, Shine!”

Naomi Isabel Wickson, Conductor

DAN FORREST Selections from *Jubilate Deo*

- I. Jubilate Deo...
- II. Ve adthdor vador
- IV. Ngokujabula!
- V. Bendecid su nombre
- VI. Song of the Earth
- VII. ...Omnis Terra

Kelly Curtin, Soprano

Chantelle Grant, Mezzo-Soprano

Alyson Moore, Conductor

Participating Choruses:

The St. Louis Children’s Choirs, St. Louis, MO (Alyson Moore, Director)

Toppenish High School Chamber Choir, Toppenish, WA (Naomi Isabel Wickson, Director)

Please hold your applause until the end of multi-movement works.

The Program

Program notes for this performance are available in the digital playbill at midamerica-music.com/programnotes615 or by scanning the QR code below:



Please note that the use of any type of mobile device during the performance is strictly prohibited.

The Artists

Heather Wilcox, Conductor

Heather Wilcox holds a Bachelor of Music Education and a Master of Music in Choral Conducting from Winthrop University. She currently serves as director of choirs at River Bluff High School in Lexington, South Carolina, where she leads five distinct choral ensembles. Under her direction, these choirs have consistently earned Superior ratings at state, regional, and national festivals and have performed in prestigious venues such as Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC. Her ensembles have been featured at state conferences hosted by the South Carolina Music Educators Association (SCMEA) and the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA). Most recently, in February 2024, her women's choir was honored as a featured ensemble at the ACDA Southern Division Conference in Louisville, Kentucky. Wilcox is a member of Pi Kappa Lambda, Delta Omicron, and the National Association for Music Education (NAfME). She also serves as the vocal jazz/contemporary commercial repertoire and resources chair for the South Carolina chapter of ACDA. Beyond her work in education, she performs professionally with several accomplished vocal ensembles, including King's Counterpoint, Cantores Charleston, and Vox Regis, based in Charleston, as well as Inspirar, based in Rock Hill.



Kelly Curtin, Soprano

Kelly Curtin has been lauded for her “crystal-clear soprano” (*Opera News*) and the “lovely fullness” of her voice (*New York Classical Review*). Her performance as Marie in *La fille du régiment* with St. Petersburg Opera was named “Best Opera Performance of the Decade” by Creative Loafing Tampa. She has appeared as Marie (*La fille du régiment*), Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*), Erste Dame (*Die Zauberflöte*), Despina (*Così fan tutte*), and Olympia (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*) with St. Petersburg Opera; Mabel (*The Pirates of Penzance*) with Ohio Light Opera and the Rome Symphony (Georgia); Josephine (*H.M.S. Pinafore*) with Opéra Louisiane; the Queen of the Night (*The Magic Flute*) with Shreveport Opera and In Series Opera; Tisbe (Hasse's *Piramo e Tisbe*) with Little Opera Theater of New York; Eurydice (*Orphée aux Enfers*), Galatea (von Suppé's *The Beautiful Galatea*), Clorinda (*La Cenerentola*), and Le Feu/Le Rossignol (*L'enfant et les sortilèges*) with Bel Cantanti Opera; and Valencienne (*The Merry Widow*) with OperaDelaware.





Chantelle Grant, Mezzo-Soprano

Toronto-born Chantelle Grant's 2023–2024 season included performances with the Metropolitan Opera in Verdi's *Requiem*, the Grammy Award-winning production of *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*, and the revised Anthony Davis opera *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X*. She also performed in the sold-out Seattle Opera production of *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X*. Last summer, Grant debuted with Tundi Productions in Vermont, singing the role of Grimmerde in *Die Walküre*. In 2022, she was a member of the cast of *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* in both the Detroit Opera and Opera Omaha productions. Grant was a finalist in the Voice of Black Opera Competition, representing Canada in the UK in December. She made her solo debut with City Lyric Opera in *The Medium* and with Riverside Opera Company in 2019. Grant has also performed with Trilog: An Opera Company as Erda in Wagner's *Siegfried*, Waltraute in *Götterdämmerung*, and Monisha in Joplin's *Treemonisha*.



Alexander L. Shawn, Conductor

Dr. Alexander Shawn's passion for music extends into his life as a conductor, composer, adjudicator, and instrumentalist. His conducting experience encompasses choral, orchestral, and symphonic band literature, with a focus on "bringing the music to life" for all. He earned his Bachelor of Music Education from the University of Alaska, a master's in conducting from the University of Calgary, and a Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Arizona. For 25 years, Shawn was a music educator in both Canada and the US, including on the faculty of the prestigious St. Gregory College Preparatory School in Tucson, Arizona. In addition to his work with school choirs and bands, he conducted community choirs and orchestras, including 16 years as the artistic director of Calgary's premier women's choir, the Savridi Singers; director of music at Desert Skies Church in Tucson, Arizona; guest conductor of the Calgary Civic Symphony, the Calgary Concert Band, and Calgary's Centennial Singers for Alberta's centennial celebrations. Currently, Shawn serves as the artistic director of SINGchronicity Singers and the Calgary Coronation Choir, and as director of music at Balzac United Church. In 2019, he was invited to perform at Carnegie Hall and is pleased to return to present Handel's *Coronation Anthems*.

Christopher T. Cross, Conductor

Christopher T. Cross is an esteemed music educator, conductor, and arranger currently serving as director of choirs at MacArthur High School in San

Antonio, Texas. He has developed award-winning choral and contemporary a cappella programs across Arkansas and Texas. His ensembles consistently earn honors at state and national levels, with students regularly advancing to ArkCDA and TMEA all-region and all-state choirs. His choirs have received multiple accolades, including several Arkansas State “Best in Class” titles and first-place awards at the Worlds of Fun Festival of Music. Cross has directed nationally recognized contemporary a cappella groups such as Natural State of Mind (Jacksonville, Arkansas), MacArthur PFC, and Iris Bulbs (San Antonio, Texas). These ensembles have earned finalist placements at the VoiceJam International Festival, successfully competing against collegiate-level groups, and have won multiple Best Soloist awards at the Varsity Vocals International Championship of High School A Cappella and Sing Texas A Cappella Festivals. His students have also earned Best Arrangement awards and nominations, including a Contemporary A Cappella Recording Award (CARA) nomination for Best High School Arrangement. Several of his ensembles were the only high school groups to reach the top-six finalist ranking at VoiceJam in 2017, 2019, and 2024. A native of Rixey, Arkansas, Cross holds a Bachelor of Arts in Vocal Music and a Master of Arts in Teaching from Arkansas Tech University. His leadership includes directing the Arkansas Youth Chorale and founding the Central Arkansas Community in Unity Chorus. He has served as a clinician for multiple ArkCDA all-region choirs. Dedicated to advancing innovative and inclusive music education, he has presented at the Arkansas All-State Music Conference, the Arkansas ACDA Summer Conference, the A Cappella Education Association’s National A Cappella Convention, and the Walton Arts Center’s VoiceJam Festival. His writing has been published in the *ArkMEA Journal*. Cross is the founder of 4L Music Group, a nonprofit organization mentoring young artists and bridging them to professional careers. A licensed and ordained minister, he also serves as an elder at True Vision Church in San Antonio.



LaSheena Gordon, Soprano

Soprano LaSheena Gordon is a dynamic and classically trained vocalist based in Red Oak, Texas. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Art and a Master of Arts in Secondary Education with an emphasis in Voice from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Gordon has performed with Fort Worth Opera in *An African American Requiem* and *Aida*, and appeared most recently with the Myles Tate III Soul Revolution during Fort Worth’s Jazz Heritage Month. She has also sung in various concerts across the Dallas-Fort Worth area, including solo



and ensemble work. A passionate educator and performer, she is honored to make her solo debut at Carnegie Hall.



Naomi Isabel Wickson, Conductor

Naomi Isabel Wickson is the director of choirs at Toppenish High School, where she is in her ninth year of inspiring students and the community through choral music. Under her leadership, the THS Choirs consistently earn Superior ratings at YVMEA Choir Adjudication and Solo and Ensemble competitions, with students advancing to the WMEA State Solo and Ensemble Competitions. The THS Chamber Choir garnered recognition when it recently won the Lynn Dupin Award at Central Washington University's Fall Choral Classic Festival. In June 2023, the THS Chamber Choir had the incredible honor of performing Fauré's Requiem at Carnegie Hall with MidAmerica Productions, marking the historic debut of Toppenish High School at this prestigious venue. A soprano soloist, Wickson has performed in concert and recital with Toledo Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, Schubert Club, the St. Cloud Symphony Orchestra, and the Yakima Symphony Orchestra. Additionally, she was a studio artist with Opera Santa Barbara and Des Moines Metro Opera and sang Mimi in *La bohème* with the Janiec Opera Company. Wickson portrayed the title role in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* with Tacoma Opera and the role of Musetta in *La bohème* with Minnesota Opera. She continues to actively perform in concerts and recitals throughout the Yakima Valley and beyond. Wickson holds a Bachelor of Music in Choral Music Education from Central Washington University and both a Performer Diploma and a Master of Music in Voice Performance from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music.



Alyson Moore, Conductor

Dr. Alyson Moore serves as the artistic director of the St. Louis Children's Choirs. A scholar, choral educator, and lyric soprano, she earned a Doctor of Musical Arts in Vocal Performance from Shenandoah Conservatory and holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in music education from Susquehanna and Marywood Universities. Her international experience includes teaching masterclasses at the Ho Chi Minh Conservatory and performing with the Ho Chi Minh Symphony Orchestra in Vietnam, as well as conducting focused research and performing the art songs of composer Carlos Guastavino in Buenos Aires. Moore's choirs have performed at Carnegie Hall, the

Kennedy Center, the US State Department, and the Blair House, as well as at the International Kodály Symposium in Kecskemét, Hungary. In collaboration with The St. Louis Children's Choirs, she worked with artist Cody Fry and the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra for the choral premiere of Fry's unreleased symphonic cover of *The Sound of Silence* in 2024. She regularly serves as a regional choral clinician and adjudicator. Prior to her tenure with SLCC, Moore was artistic director of the Fresno Choral Artists, director of vocal music at University High School in Fresno, and served on the voice faculty at Fresno Pacific University.

Preston Hawes, New England Symphonic Ensemble Artistic Director and Concertmaster

Hailed by the European Academy of Arts and Sciences as an “electrifying and virtuosic” performer with “exquisite taste and rare talent,” Canadian violinist Dr. Preston Hawes is a laureate of the Concours de musique du Canada, the Andrews International Music Competitions, and the Prix de Musique de Chambre à Fontainebleau, and is a recipient of the J.C. Van Hulsteyn Award and Peabody Career Grant. He has been heard as a soloist in more than 35 countries and in venues such as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, and Plovdiv Symphony Hall. Having earned a Master of Music degree and the coveted Artist Diploma at Yale University, Hawes completed his studies by earning a Doctorate of Musical Arts from the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University. Hawes is a professor of music and director of strings at Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Maryland, and is the artistic director of the New England Symphonic Ensemble.



New England Symphonic Ensemble

With performances described as “flawless” (*Rhodes Magazine*), the New England Symphonic Ensemble (NESE), under the artistic direction of Dr. Preston Hawes, is among the most frequently featured organizations in Carnegie Hall. Since its inception in 1989, the NESE has drawn global critical acclaim in hundreds of concerts on the world's most prestigious stages. In collaboration with MidAmerica Productions, the NESE has been led by a roster of guest conductors including John Rutter, Peter Tiboris, Sherrill Milnes, Helmuth Rilling, Simon Carrington, and Jonathan Willcocks, and regularly hosts international guest soloists. NESE world premieres include Dinos Constantinides's *Byron's Greece*, *Hymn to the Human Spirit*, and *Midnight Fantasy II* for wind ensemble; John Rutter's *Cantate Domino*, *Distant Land*, *Magnificat*, and *Mass of the Children*; and John Leavitt's *A Christmas Garland*. The NESE boasts multiple US premieres, including Mozart's *Die Schuldigkeit des ersten Gebots*, Reimann's

Concerto for Violin and Cello, Tchaikovsky's *Ode to Joy*, and René Clausen's *Hellas: In the Name of Freedom*. The NESE can be heard on the Naxos label in an award-winning recording of spirituals with internationally renowned mezzo-soprano, the late Barbara Smith Conrad.

New England Symphonic Ensemble

First Violins

Preston Hawes
Funda Cizmecioglu
Dylan Ebrahimiyan
Jason Garcia
Heather Frank Olsen
Celine Boulben
Agata Manka
Rachel Helm

Second Violins

Eun Jung Lee
Marina Fragoulis
Sunon Jones
Amneris Puscasu
Marc Szammer
Christopher Anderson
Andrew Michael
Herold III
Valentina Anzola

Violas

Kerrick Sasaki
Angel Contreras
Katie Pawluk
Thomas Purcell
Veronica Anzola
Luke Quintanilla

Cellos

Christopher Cortez
Kevin Charlestream
Karlos Rodriguez
Sofia Yasyshyna
Jerry Rittenhouse
Andrew Garcia

Basses

Kyle Colina
Laurence Goldman
Lorenzo Sandi

Flutes

Jessica Taskov
Jessica Schmitz
Hilary Jones

Oboes

Daniel Rodriguez
Roy Beason

Clarinets

Narek Arutyunian
Raissa Fahlman

Bassoons

Gili Sharrett
Mark Timmerman

Horns

Tim McCarthy
Taylor Peterson
Ser Konvalin
Matthew Jaimes

Trumpets

Christopher Delgado
Alejandor Samame
Angela Goss

Trombones

Eric Coughlin
Burt Mason
Ehren Valme

Tuba

Andrew Madej

Percussion

Zoey Cobb
Katherine Fortunato
Tarun Bellur
Stella Perlic

MidAmerica Productions, Inc.

Founded by Conductor, Music Educator, Entrepreneur Peter Tiboris over 40 years ago, MidAmerica Productions has brought together conductors, soloists, and choral and instrumental ensembles from the US and abroad to appear at New York's top venues, including Stern Auditorium / Perelman Stage, Weill Recital Hall, and Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall; and Alice Tully Hall and Avery Fisher Hall (now David Geffen Hall) at Lincoln Center. Additionally, MidAmerica Productions has presented concerts in numerous US cities and in countries throughout the world, including Greece, England, Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Italy, France, Portugal, Sweden, and Russia. MidAmerica Productions' concerts have showcased choral groups singing oratorios with talented conductors, full orchestra, and professional soloists; individual instrumental and choral groups performing as part of the Ensemble Spotlight Series; and solo recitals. Diverse programs have included Madrigal Festivals, Vocal Jazz Festivals, National Wind Ensemble, National Festival Youth Orchestra, and Sweet Adelines. Among the renowned guest conductors who have led MidAmerica's concerts are Sir John Rutter (who has conducted more than 140 concerts in Stern Auditorium / Perelman Stage at Carnegie Hall), Sherrill Milnes, Lukas Foss, Helmuth Rilling, H. Robert Reynolds, JoAnne Falletta, Michael Morgan, and Jonathan Willcocks. More than 800 conductors have conducted on MidAmerica's series in New York and abroad, sharing the stage with 1,300 solo artists from the world's greatest opera companies and concert stages, and 3,700 choral ensembles from the US and abroad. There have been 174 youth and collegiate orchestras as well as 146 youth and collegiate bands, jazz bands, and wind ensembles.

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