



D A Z Z L I N G

# LIGHT

Music by Tallis, Whitacre, Rutter, Elgar, Howells, & more

SAT | **08.19.23** | 7PM

St. Paul's Church, Cambridge, MA

SUN | **08.20.23** | 3PM

Blessed Sacrament Church, Providence, RI

e n s e m b l e

/ALTE·RA/

*directed by*

CHRISTOPHER LOWREY

*organ*

JOHN BLACK

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Recently I've been thinking quite a bit about nudging. In 2010, the UK government (in)famously established its so-called nudge unit, the street name for the rather innocuously named "Behavioral Insights Team". As a social purpose organization, the nudge unit applies its scientific findings in psychology, behavioral economics, and marketing, to influence public policy and decision making. Most of the insights of the nudge unit center around a theory of human behavior, namely that slight modifications to surrounding conditions and environment can lead to small shifts in individual behavior that, in the aggregate, add to something huge. To name just one example, by increasing the number of reminders taxpayers receive about their tax bill, the government was able to increase revenues by millions of pounds. The benefits of the theory have been proven in retirement savings, education, and healthcare, to name a few.

Here at Ensemble Altera, we too believe that nudging can go a long way, starting with our young people. This year we inaugurated *Sing Out In Schools!*, a series of interactive demonstrations aimed at children in Title I schools throughout the region. These students are learning in critically underfunded or underperforming schools, and may not have access to the music education that has benefited many of us. One nudge in the right direction can set some of them on the path to a lifetime of music. We also had the chance to serve as clinicians with students at Wheaton College and the University of New Hampshire this year. Watching the faces of these students brighten when they make a breakthrough is one of the most intoxicating feelings for me. One of the students writes "this was one of the best experiences of my life, solidifying the fact that I want to do this for the rest of it". A nudge can go a long way. Next year, supported by the Rhode Island State Council of the Arts, Choral Arts New England, and the Rhode Island Foundation, we expand the program to reach even more young hearts, minds, and ears.

Artistically, a few years of nudging our artists in rehearsals has paid dividends. This year we were signed by world-leading Alpha Records, and we eagerly anticipate the release of our debut album, *The Lamb's Journey*, in March. Our recording partnership with Alpha will expand over the coming years with plans to record our Feminine Voices project, which surveys a huge history of music written by women, arrayed around Britten's beloved *Ceremony of Carols*. Altera continues to nudge the classical music industry by lifting up under-represented voices, including women and people of color. Last year we debuted the work of Zuzanna Koziej and Joanna Marsh, and next year plan to commission up-and-coming Karensa Briggs. Today we are also proud to share with you the work of South African composer, Motshwane Pege, winner of our 3rd Composition Competition, who joins us from Johannesburg. Next year our free February community concert at the Providence Public Library will foreground some of the neglected stories of our national musical heritage to compliment the familiar and uplifting.

It is in the context of all this work, artistically exciting and socially engaged, that I hope to nudge you, our loyal audience. Small acts, in the aggregate, can electrify Altera's engines as we zoom into the future. Spread the word to your friends, bring them to our winter concert, *A Christmas Present*, on Dec 9 in Boston and Dec 10 in Providence, join our email list, sign up to house a visiting artist, volunteer for board service, or make a gift today to nudge all of this a few inches into the future.

I would be remiss not to mention the many kind nudges from the fleet of volunteers behind the scenes of today's concert: our board led by the brilliant Simon Holt; the volunteer efforts of our wonderful corps of ushers, organized by Dwight Porter and Trevor Neal; the sheer competence and perseverance of our Treasurer Charlie Oliver, the humble service of our Secretary Donna Lowrey, the many, many hours put in by Production Manager Tim Harbold; the adaptability and positivity of our Accommodations Officer Camilla de Rochambeau, the thousands of texts answered by our marketing and graphic design manager Olivia Kleyla; the administrative assistance of Janet Stone, Michael Garrepy's counsel and friendship, to say nothing of his glorious music, the venues that open their doors to us and the hosts who open their home to our artists, and most of all to you, our loyal audience. Thank you for believing in this little juggernaut!

Yours in music,  
Christopher Lowrey  
*Founder & Artistic Director*

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D A Z Z L I N G

L I G H T

*directed by*

C H R I S T O P H E R L O W R E Y

*organ*

J O H N B L A C K

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**PROGRAM**

*Seek Him that maketh the seven stars*, Jonathan Dove (b. 1959)

*Hymn to the Creator of Light*, John Rutter (b. 1945)

*Te lucis ante terminum*, Thomas Tallis (c. 1505-1585)

\**Te lucis ante terminum*, Michael Garrepy (b. 1990)

*Te lucis ante terminum*, Matthew Martin (b. 1976)

*Dominus illuminatio*, David Hill (b. 1957)

*Evening Prayer*, Joanna Marsh (b. 1970)

\**Light*, Toby Young (b. 1990)

**15 Minute**

*Interval*

*Hail, gladdening light*, Charles Wood (1866-1926)

\*\**In Principio*, Motshwane Pege (b. 1998)

*O lux beata Trinitas*, Ko Matsushita (b. 1962)

*Lux Aeterna*, arr. John Cameron (b. 1944), based on 'Nimrod' from *Enigma Variations*, Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

*Bring us, o Lord God*, William Henry Harris (1883-1973)

*Sleep*, Eric Whitacre (b. 1970)

'Nunc Dimittis' from *St Paul's Service*, Herbert Howells (1892-1983)

\**World-Premiere of an Ensemble Altera Commission*

\*\**2023 Composition Competition Winner*

# PROGRAM

## Notes

Our program explores the theme of light. The first act recounted in the Bible was the creation of light, which has always held symbolic significance both within and beyond the Judeo-Christian tradition. Poets and composers of many centuries have been inspired by the primal miracle of light—one preceding even life itself—and there is a remarkable body of choral music embodying the response of their imaginations to the many facets of light: morning and evening light, holy light, light as a symbol of Christ, light as the conqueror of darkness and sin, even (in our age of the James Webb Telescope) the light of distant galaxies. It is a universal constant, an element so integral to human existence that it has left indelible marks on our language, culture, spirituality, science, and arts. It was with us in the beginning, bringing order to chaos, and reputedly appears to us *in extremis*.

The word 'light' traces its origins to the Old English 'lēoht', which was linked to the Proto-Germanic 'leuhtam' and the Proto-Indo-European root 'leuk-' meaning "brightness" or "to shine". Over time, it has come to symbolize not only physical illumination but also understanding, clarity, and enlightenment. In the Christian narrative, even before the formation of stars, moons, or the sun, God decrees: "Let there be light," and, as a testament to His power, "there was light" (Genesis 1:3). This initial act serves as a profound metaphor. God's first act is to dispel darkness, setting a precedent for light as a symbol of order, clarity, and divine presence. This primordial light is not just the illumination of the cosmos but an affirmation of the intention to bring knowledge and goodness into existence. The Psalmist, too, frequently invokes this imagery. Psalm 27:1 declares, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" Here, light is synonymous with divine protection and the dispelling of fear. The prophets of the Old Testament speak of a coming Messiah, a servant imbued with divine purpose. Isaiah 9:2 prophesies, "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light." This passage alludes to the advent of a figure who would deliver humanity from its spiritual myopia, guiding them into an era of enlightenment.

The New Testament crystallizes the motif of light through the persona of Jesus Christ. In the Gospel of John, Jesus is introduced as the Logos or Word, which is also "the light of men" (John 1:4). This light "shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:5). Jesus Himself claims, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12). In Christ, the abstract concept of divine light becomes tangible, offering salvation and clarity to all who believe in Him. And the culmination of the biblical narrative in the Book of Revelation reintroduces the theme of light in its portrayal of the New Jerusalem. This divine city has no need for the sun or moon because "the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp" (Revelation 21:23). In this eschatological vision, light signifies the eternal presence of God, where darkness is forever banished, and believers bask in unending luminosity.

The centrality of light is of course not unique to Christianity, and can be found, for example, in the flickering of The Menorah, in the Islamic concept of Nur, the Hindu festival of Diwali, the lanterns lit on Vesak, or Buddha Day, and in the central flames of the Zoroastrian fire temples. At a basic biological level, life on Earth is deeply dependent on light. Photosynthesis, the process by which plants convert light into energy, forms the foundation of the food chain. Without sunlight, this intricate web collapses, and life as we know it ceases to exist. It is little wonder, then, that early human societies, which were closely tied to the rhythms of nature, revered light as a giver of life. Religious motifs often arise from observable natural phenomena, with light, as a sustainer of life, becoming a prime candidate for veneration.

Throughout our evolutionary history, daylight has offered safety, while darkness often brought danger. Light means visibility, a decrease in vulnerability to predators, and, later on, to threats from rival human groups. A positive bias towards light, and a wariness of the dark, is thus deeply ingrained in our psyche. In many ancient cultures, mastering fire was a pivotal achievement. Fire provided warmth, a means to cook food, and protection from threats. Fire, as a source of light, was central to communal activities, storytelling sessions, and ritualistic ceremonies. Over time, this likely translated into spiritual and religious contexts, with fire and light taking on sacral significance. The daily cycle of dawn and dusk is a universal experience, one imbued with symbolic possibility. Dawn, with its gradual dispelling of the night's darkness, can represent hope, rebirth, and a new beginning. Dusk, conversely, with its descent into night, can symbolize endings, reflection, and introspection. These transitions are moments of profound beauty and evoke powerful emotions, making them apt symbols in religious narratives. There's an undeniable aesthetic and emotional allure to various illuminations: the serenity of moonlight, the warmth of candlelight, the majesty of a sunrise, or the mystery of stars. These experiences can evoke feelings of wonder, transcendence, and a connection to something greater than ourselves. The music on this program conjures the omnipresence of light, whether in blazing glory or in quiet crepuscularity, in its natural cycles, the beauty it reflects and creates, and the power it holds over the senses, the imagination, and life itself.

Jonathan Dove (b. 1959) is a distinguished figure in the British contemporary musical landscape, with significant contributions to orchestral, chamber, theater, and film music. Among his oeuvre, his operatic works such as *Flight*, *The Adventures of Pinocchio*, and *Mansfield Park* have garnered considerable acclaim. Additionally, this summer, audiences can anticipate the premiere of *Itch* at Opera Holland Park. Characterized by robust rhythmic structures, **Seek him that maketh the seven stars** is perhaps Dove's most notable work for choir, drawing its text from the Book of Amos and Psalm 139. The use of twinkling ostinati in the organ conjures images of a vast, starry expanse and mirrors the earnest nature of the prophet's call. After the jagged eruptions of Creation in the middle section, Alleluias transport us to a peaceful and assured conclusion.

John Rutter composed the double-choir anthem **Hymn to the Creator of Light** for the dedication of the Howells memorial window in Gloucester Cathedral at the Three Choirs Festival in 1992. The piece is a love letter to Howells' rich and distinctive harmonic language, most obviously in the opening, a vision of the creation of light which grows from a mystery to incandescence at 'the sun's ray, the flame of fire'. The text is a translation of a prayer by Lancelot Andrewes (1555–1626), which itself is inspired by the opening of the Book of Genesis. The middle section is a lively dialogue between the two choirs, In a masterstroke, the final word, 'light', of this section, becomes the opening of the hymn 'Light who dost my soul enlighten' (the chorale 'Schmücke dich'), under which are musical allusions to the opening motive, in the tradition of Bach or Brahms. The anthem arrives at an affecting conclusion to anticipate the soul's entry into heaven.

Thomas Tallis wrote two settings of the compline hymn **Te lucis ante terminum**, both of which were published in the 1575 *Cantiones Sacrae*. The first setting, based on the festal tone of the chant, sets only the middle of the three verses in polyphony. The top line parodies the chant melody note for note (with the addition of a single ornamental leading note at the final cadence) in a lilting triple-time rhythm, and the accompanying harmonization is a model of economy and placidity, nowhere more so than at the delicate Picardian cadence in the third phrase. The importance of the hymn is reflected in the great abundance of settings by composers through the ages, and I thought it might be illuminating to hear the evolution of the form by pairing Tallis' work with two modern examples, the first from resident collaborator Michael Garrepy. Like Tallis before him, the chant melody is audible throughout, handed off between the different voice parts. The verses evolve from an austere English tonal language to a more distinctive American



expansiveness for which the composer has become known. Matthew Martin marshalls his vast ingenuity to fashion an accompanied setting of the related ferial tone (Tone VIII) hymn that sounds deceptively straightforward. It is perhaps the only composition by Martin I know of that limits itself to just four voices, but by means of subtly shifting key centers that always slyly diverge from and return to G minor, the work has the feeling of an impressionistic organ improvisation in the French school or perhaps one of its best English proponents, such as David Griggs.

In something of a marriage between traditional plainchant psalmody and the Anglican tradition, David Hill's **Dominus illuminatio** employs modal drones to support the psalm tones of Psalm 27, *The Lord is my light and my salvation*. The call and response is shared between solos and duets throughout the choir as the harmonies spool in chromatic mediants from F major to A flat major, which flirts a few times with G major before resolving to D major.

Drawing on the same devotions of Lancelot Andrewes used by Rutter, *Preces Privatae*, Dubai-based English composer Joanna Marsh's **Evening Prayer** takes its formal inspiration from Rheinberger's beloved six-part *Abendlied*, swapping out one of the tenor lines for a baritone part. Commissioned in 2019 by British ensemble Sonoro for the Choral Inspirations project, the work is infused with Marsh's instantly identifiable harmonic palette, characterized chiefly by acerbic bitonal dissonances surrounded by sweetly familiar progressions.

Toby Young has emerged as a composer unbound by the typical genre limitations in classical music. His work is rooted in the theatricality of opera, the energy of electronic dance music and the emotion of film scores, and has been played around the world at venues ranging from the Royal Albert Hall to Glastonbury Festival. His eclectic output made me think of him right away when seeking a composer to set Rabindranath Tagore's sensational poem **Light**. Tagore was a Bengali polymath, excelling in poetry, literature, composition, philosophy, social reform, and painting. Though he was the first non-European writer to be awarded a Nobel Prize in Literature, sadly his work remains largely neglected by Western audiences. He modernized Bengali art by rejecting rigid classical forms and resisting linguistic strictures. Tagore makes a natural bedfellow with Young, whose music dances from the page often resisting classical symmetry. Flitting between jazz and pop and secreting the organ into the climax, the work defies expectations and allows the expressionistic text to breathe, stretch, and shine.

Like Sullivan and Stanford, two other leaders of the so-called Oxford Revival of English church music at the turn of the 20th century, Charles Wood was born in Ireland. After studying at the Royal College of Music, he took up the life of a Cambridge don at Selwyn College, succeeding Stanford as the Professor of Music in 1924. Most of Wood's church music was written with the professionalized collegiate choirs of Oxbridge in mind, and it should not surprise us to discover how much of his output was in double choir format. **Hail, gladdening light** is the best known of his works, showcasing the interplay of two choirs throughout.

Hailing from Johannesburg, Motshwane Pege, winner of our third Composition Competition, began his musical training in the ranks of the world-renowned Drakensburg Boys Choir School. After pursuing a bachelor's degree at the University of Pretoria he began to compose for choirs in his native South Africa. Happily for Altera, one of these pieces, **In principio**, was unable to have its intended premiere during the disruption of the pandemic, and Pege successfully entered it into competition. The work demonstrates masterful pacing and facility with texture, ideally reflecting the slow but monumental unfolding of the moment of creation.

Ko Matsushita was born and raised in Tokyo and studied composition at the Kunitachi College of Music and the Kodály Institute in Hungary. A prolific composer and arranger, Matsushita's works are performed around the world. His works take inspiration from a wide variety of sources, from traditional Japanese music to Latin masses, motets, and etudes for choirs. Matsushita's best known work, his setting of the Ambrosian hymn, **O lux beata Trinitas**, is relentlessly propulsive throughout, requiring great stamina and concentration.

John Cameron's arrangement of Edward Elgar's *Nimrod* from the Enigma Variations, **Lux aeterna**, is a glove fit for Altera's forces. One of the more successful choral transcriptions of orchestral repertoire in the vein of Clytus Gottwald's output, *Lux*, with its mainly conjunct lines, lends itself well to the voice (though Cameron transposes the piece down a tone to save the sopranos from punishing top Cs).

For most of his life Sir William Harris was a cathedral organist and teacher; from 1933–61 he was organist at St George's Chapel, Windsor. His published compositions are few, all of them church or organ music. **Bring us, o Lord God**, written in 1959, is similar in style and substance to *Faire is the heaven*, Harris's best-known work, dating from 1925. Both pieces are spacious double-choir anthems in the creamy key of D flat, both have exceptionally fine texts that concern the soul's longing for heaven, and both combine an unmistakably English aura with a rather un-English intensity of passionate emotion overtly revealed. Yet it would be wrong to regard *Bring us, O Lord God* as a mere repeat of an earlier success; its music seems to spring just as spontaneously out of Donne's magnificent text, penned as a sermon preached at White-hall in 1628, as *Faire is the heaven* did from Spenser's. Both anthems are works of stature and vision, these qualities none the less real for being found in what some music critics dismiss as the provincial backwater of English church music.

Eric Whitacre has often expressed his admiration for the poetic talents of Charles Anthony Silvestri, a historian hailing from Las Vegas and currently based in Los Angeles. Silvestri's poem, **Sleep**, emerges as a creative adaptation crafted to meet specific legal requirements. In 2000, Whitacre was commissioned by a Texan lawyer and soprano to set Robert Frost's cherished 'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening' to music, a piece dedicated to her late parents. However, Whitacre soon encountered a hurdle when he learned that the Robert Frost Estate had restrictions against adapting the poem to musical compositions, notwithstanding several other versions in existence. Faced with the daunting possibility of withholding the work's publication until its copyright expiration in 2038, Whitacre sought Silvestri's expertise to compose an alternate text. This new poem was to retain the original structure and infuse specific elements from Frost's poem, notably the recurring motif of 'sleep'. This sophisticated approach provided a graceful resolution to a challenge that was clearly a source of profound frustration for Whitacre, who openly acknowledges the oversight in not initially securing the necessary permissions. This incident poignantly underscores the occasional tensions between the law and the unbridled spirit of artistic expression.

The *St Paul's Service* is one of Howells' most celebrated settings of the canticles. Fashioned especially for a building with a spectacular acoustic quite like this one, it moves with a slower harmonic rhythm than would be possible in a less resonant building. This is a work in which Howells seems at his most confident and optimistic. It is the biggest boned and most expansive of all his treatments and justifies its reputation as one of the best of his settings for the Anglican liturgy. The **Nunc Dimittis** begins with a hush and builds steadily and majestically to its climax. The Gloria section sweeps all before it and makes a feature of Howells' characteristic 'Lydian' fourth, stretching the tonality before pulling back to the tonic to almost overwhelming effect.

1.

Seek Him that maketh the seven stars and Orion  
and turneth the shadow of death into the  
morning. Alleluia, yea, the darkness shineth as the  
day, the night is light about me.

2.

Glory be to thee, O lord, glory be to thee,  
Creator of the visible light,  
The sun's ray, the flame of fire;  
Creator also of the light invisible and intellectual:  
That which is known of God, the light invisible.  
Glory be to thee, O Lord, glory be to thee,  
Creator of the Light.  
for writings of the law, glory be to thee:  
for oracles of prophets, glory be to thee:  
for melody of psalms, glory be to thee:  
for wisdom of proverbs, glory be to thee:  
experience of histories, glory be to thee:  
a light which never sets.  
God is the Lord, who hath shewed us light.

Light, who dost my soul enlighten;  
Sun, who all my life dost brighten;  
Joy, the sweetest man e'er knoweth;  
Fount, whence all my being floweth.  
From thy banquet let me measure,  
Lord, how vast and deep its treasurer;  
Through the gifts thou here dost give us,  
As thy guest in heaven receive us.

3. & 5.

Te lucis ante terminum,  
rerum Creator, poscimus,  
ut solita clementia,  
sis praesul et custodiam.

Procul recedant somnia,  
et noctium phantasmata:  
hostemque nostrum comprime,  
ne polluantur corpora.

3. & 5. *continued.*

Praesta, Pater omnipotens,  
per Iesum Christum Dominum,  
qui tecum in perpetuum  
regnat cum Sancto Spiritu. Amen.

*To thee, before the end of the light, Creator of all things, we pray, that thy accustomed mercy may be our protector and guard.*

*Let dreams depart from us, and the phantoms of night, and restrain our enemy, that our bodies may not be polluted.*

*Grant this, all-powerful Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with thee in eternity reigns with the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

4.

Te lucis ante terminum,  
rerum Creator, poscimus,  
ut solita clementia,  
sis praesul et custodiam

Te corda nostra somnient,  
te per soporem sentiant,  
tuamque semper glóriam  
vicina luce concinant.

Vitam salubrem tríbue  
nostrum calorem refice,  
tættram noctis caliginem  
tua collustret claritas.

Praesta, Pater omnipotens,  
per Iesum Christum Dominum,  
qui tecum in perpetuum  
regnat cum Sancto Spiritu. Amen.

4. *continued*

*To thee, before the end of the light, Creator of all things, we pray, that thy accustomed mercy may be our protector and guard.*

*Lord, when we sleep, be in our hearts,  
Your Spirit peace and rest imparts;  
Then, with the light of dawn, may we  
Your glory praise unendingly.*

*Your living power breathe from above,  
Renew in us the fire of love;  
And may your brightness drive away  
All darkness in eternal day.*

*Grant this, all-powerful Father, through Jesus  
Christ our Lord, who with thee in eternity reigns  
with the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

6.

Dominus illuminatio. The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom then shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life: of whom, then, shall I be afraid? Therefore will I offer in his dwelling an oblation with gladness: the Lord is the strength of my life. I will sing and speak praises unto the Lord: whom then shall I fear?

7.

The day is gone, and I give thee thanks, O Lord. Evening is at hand, make it bright unto us. As day has its evening, so also has life; make it bright unto us. Cast me not away in the time of age; forsake me not when my strength faileth me. Abide with me, Lord, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent of this fretful life. Let thy strength be made perfect in my weakness.

8.

Light, my light, the world-filling light,  
the eye-kissing light,  
heart-sweetening light!

Ah, the light dances, my darling,  
at the center of my life;  
The light strikes, my darling,  
the chords of my love;  
The sky opens, the wind runs wild,  
laughter passes over the earth.

The butterflies spread their sails  
on the sea of light.  
Lilies and jasmines surge up  
on the crest of the waves of light.

The light is shattered into gold  
on every cloud, my darling,  
and it scatters gems in profusion.

Mirth spreads from leaf to leaf, my darling,  
and gladness without measure.  
The heaven's river has drowned its banks  
and the flood of joy is abroad.

9.

Hail! gladdening Light, of His pure glory poured  
Who is th'immortal Father, heavenly, blest,  
Holiest of Holies - Jesus Christ our Lord!

Now we are come to the Sun's hour of rest;  
The lights of evening round us shine;  
We hymn the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit divine!

Worthiest art thou at all times to be sung  
With undefiled tongue,  
Son of our God, giver of life, alone:  
Therefore in all the world thy glories, Lord, they  
own. Amen.

10.

In principio creavit Deus caelum et terram.  
Terra autem erat inanis et in tenebris:  
Et spiritus Deus ferebatur super aquas.  
Dixitque Deus: Fiat lux: Et facta est lux.

*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.*

11.

O lux beata Trinitas,  
Et principalis unitas,  
Iam sol recedat igneus,  
Infunde lumen cordibus.

Te mane laudum carmine,  
Te deprecemur vespere:  
Te nostra supplex gloria  
Per cuncta laudet sæcula.

*O Trinity of blessed light,  
O Unity of princely might,  
The fiery sun now goes his way;  
Shed Thou within our hearts Thy ray.*

*To Thee our morning song of praise,  
To Thee our evening prayer we raise;  
Thy glory suppliant we adore  
Forever and forevermore.*

12.

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

*Let perpetual light shine upon them, O Lord, with your saints for ever, for you are merciful. Grant them eternal rest, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.*

13.

Bring us, o Lord God, at our last awakening into the house and gate of Heaven, to enter into that gate and dwell in that house, where there shall be no darkness nor dazzling, but one equal light; no noise nor silence, but one equal music; no fears or hopes, but one equal possession; no ends or beginnings, but one equal eternity, in the habitations of thy glory and dominion, world without end.

14.

The evening hangs beneath the moon,  
A silver thread on darkened dune.  
With closing eyes and resting head  
I know that sleep is coming soon.

Upon my pillow, safe in bed,  
A thousand pictures fill my head.  
I cannot sleep, my mind's a-flight;  
And yet my limbs seem made of lead.

If there are noises in the night,  
A frightening shadow, flickering light,  
Then I surrender unto sleep,  
Where clouds of dream give second sight,

What dreams may come, both dark and deep,  
Of flying wings and soaring leap  
As I surrender unto sleep,  
As I surrender unto sleep.

15.

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace: according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen: thy salvation, which thou hast prepared: before the face of all people; to be a light to lighten the Gentiles: and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

DON'T MISS

*A Note*

To learn more about all our exciting artistic activities, both in-person and digital, be sure to sign up for our newsletter at:

WWW.ENSEMBLEALTERA.COM/SUBSCRIBE

Or scan the QR code below:



**Christine Noel**  
*Artistic Director*

**2023-24** 53rd Season

November 18-19: **Rachmaninoff, *Vespers***

*Saturday 7:30 PM, St. Mary of the Bay, Warren*  
*Sunday 3:00 PM, Grace Episcopal, Providence*

December 10, 3:00 PM: **Handel, *Messiah***  
*with the RI Philharmonic Orchestra at the Vets*

March 9, 7:00 PM: **Considering Matthew Shepard**  
*with orchestra and video at the WaterFire Arts Center*

May 11, 7:00 PM **A Night at the Opera**





*World-Class Music*

# HOMETOWN PRIDE



Fast-rising **ENSEMBLE ALTERA** was founded to be the beating heart of professional choral music in the United States. Led by internationally celebrated countertenor Christopher Lowrey, the group has quickly become known for thoughtful programming, passionate performances, and tireless advocacy for the importance of ensemble singing in the broader music culture.

Recent programs include a boldly reimagined chamber version of Handel's *Messiah*, co-presented with Newport Classical, *The Lamb's Journey*, drawing on many periods and styles to depict the Christ narrative, *We Watch & Welcome: Feminine Voices at Christmas*, featuring works by seven female composers for treble voices arrayed around Britten's Ceremony of Carols, and *We Remember*, a musical journey of healing and reflection in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Throughout its short history, Altera has received universally rave reviews, creating "some of the best choral singing by an American choir". Upcoming projects include *A Christmas Present*, a sumptuous collection of seasonal music written in the new millennium, and *The Tree of Life*, an homage to the beauty and wonder evoked by the natural world in all its forms. Deeply committed to championing new works and lifting up new voices, over the past few seasons Altera has premiered works by Motshwane Pege, Toby Young, Joanna Marsh, Daniel Gledhill, Zuzanna Koziej, and Michael Garrepy.

In addition to performing, Ensemble Altera undertakes an extensive education and outreach program. Such activities include clinics and interactive presentations with school students in a variety of settings, with a particular focus on opening musical horizons to those from underserved backgrounds. Additionally, Altera has a profound faith in the healing power of music both in and out of the concert hall, and is proud to offer its complete recorded music library free of charge in collaboration with select partners in music therapy.



Founder and Artistic Director Christopher Lowrey was born and raised in Johnston, RI, and trained at Brown University, the University of Cambridge, where he sang under Stephen Layton with Trinity College Choir, and the Royal College of Music. In addition to conducting, he enjoys a dynamic international solo career as a countertenor, working at some of the world's leading opera houses and concert platforms, including The Metropolitan Opera, Royal Opera House, Philharmonie de Paris, Teatro Real, The London Symphony Orchestra, and this season he makes his debut at Sydney Opera House, Theater an der Wien, the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington DC, and the Grange Festival in the UK. More at [www.christopherlowrey.com](http://www.christopherlowrey.com).

John Black is in demand as organist, pianist, conductor, and collaborative artist, currently working toward a Doctorate of Musical Arts in Conducting at Boston University. Mr. Black is the Director of Music at Greenwood Church, where he conducts the semi-professional Chancel Choir, teaches the youth and handbell ensembles, and serves as principal organist. At BU, he is Assistant Conductor of the Symphonic Chorus and Teaching Assistant for the BU Singers. Mr. Black was an organ student of Peter Sykes at BU, graduating summa cum laude with a master's degree in sacred music. He has performed solo recitals across the east coast, delivering pinnacles of the repertoire including Max Reger's *Fantasy and Fugue on BACH*, the Duruflé *Toccata*, and the Bach *F Major Toccata and Fugue*. Mr. Black has served as Assistant Conductor for the Providence Singers, recently conducting rehearsals for Handel's *Messiah*, Verdi's *Requiem*, and Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*. Mr. Black has performed as pianist in the Newport Music Festival, and regularly appears as collaborative artist with premiere local ensembles, including performances of early music at the organ and harpsichord. Mr. Black is passionate about teaching music and enjoys introducing young people to historic keyboard instruments. For more information, please visit [www.johnblackorganist.com](http://www.johnblackorganist.com).



Motshwane Pege is a captivating composer and percussionist hailing from Johannesburg, South Africa. His journey as a composer began during his time as a chorister at the prestigious Drakensberg Boys Choir School in KwaZulu-Natal. One of his most notable compositions from this period is *Mandela's Last Prayer*, which was written for the Midlands Chamber Choir. Motshwane then went on to pursue a Bachelor of Music degree (with Honours) in Composition and Orchestral Percussion at the University of Pretoria. He also had the privilege of singing in the University of Pretoria (TUKS) Camerata led by Dr. Michael Barrett. Motshwane has garnered significant acclaim for his choral works in recent months, achieving 2nd place prizes in international composition competitions hosted by Chorus Austin and Busan Choral Festival. Furthermore, he was awarded 1st place in the 3rd Annual Composition Competition hosted by the dazzling Ensemble Altera. At present, Motshwane teaches music and percussion at a number of schools in Johannesburg and Pretoria whilst being an active percussionist, performing with many professional orchestras and ensembles in South Africa.



UPCOMING

*Events*





*A Christmas Present*

A sumptuous program of holiday music written in the new millennium,  
including some truly luscious arrangements of timeless classics

Saturday 9 December 2023 | Boston  
Sunday 10 December 2023 | Providence

Featuring the best in local talent, joined by some of the nation's top choral artists, as well as overseas singers from world-renowned groups Voces8, Tenebrae, and The Queen's Six. You don't want to miss this! Stay up to date by subscribing to our newsletter at [ensemblealtera.com/subscribe](https://ensemblealtera.com/subscribe).



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# THANK YOU

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Deepest thanks to Father Charles Grondin, Father William Kelly, Richard Webster, Nancy Nicolaou, and the entire staff and community of St Paul's Parish, Cambridge and Blessed Sacrament Church, Providence, for welcoming us into their spaces. It is always an honor and privilege to be servants of this music in such glorious buildings. Heartfelt thanks also to Rob Maloof for his videography of our recording sessions, Olivia Kleyla for marketing and front of house help, Brad Kleyla for his peerless audio engineering, and the support of producer Gabriel Crouch and audio consultant Andrew Mellor.



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