Manhattan School of Music

MSM CHAMBER CHOIR

All We Hold Dear

Deborah Simpkin King, Conductor

Nancy Chamberlain, Rehearsal Accompanist

Jessica Spina, Chamber Choir Manager

Dr. Carleen Graham, Dean of Vocal Arts

VETERANS' DAY, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2026 | 7:30 PM
GORDON K. AND HARRIET GREENFIELD HALL

A NOTE FROM THE CONDUCTOR

All We Hold Dear begins with a dream: that even a fractured world can be repaired. In Jake Runestad's *We Can Mend the Sky*, the words of 13-year-old Somali/American immigrant poet Warda Mohammed envision a world freed from hunger, violence, and suffering—and remind us that such a world can be created only when we come together.

Presented on Veterans Day, this program honors those who have sacrificed—and continue to sacrifice—to protect the fundamental human rights that allow such dreams to flourish: the rights to live freely and safely, to belong, to create, to speak, to sing, and to imagine a better future. In the international community that is Manhattan School of Music, we offer this tribute not as an expression of nationalism, but as an affirmation of values shared across borders and cultures.

To honor sacrifice is also to acknowledge loss. The communal lament of the South African *Indodana* and Janet Lanier's setting of *Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep* give voice to grief while affirming that those we mourn remain present in memory, love, and the lives they have touched. Peter Willsher's setting of Siegfried Sassoon's *Everyone Suddenly Burst Out Singing* then moves from the experience of war toward an astonishing release into freedom and collective song. Jeffery Ames's *In Remembrance* gathers grief, gratitude, and hope into a deeply personal act of tribute.

This year also marks the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Benjamin Britten, whose music consistently affirmed the dignity of the individual and questioned the forces that isolate, silence, or oppress. In *Rejoice in the Lamb*, Christopher Smart's wonderfully unconventional poetry becomes an exuberant celebration of creation in all its variety. Each creature, each instrument, each letter, and each distinctive voice has its own manner of praise. Britten invites us to recognize that individuality itself is precious—and that a true community does not erase difference, but makes room for every voice to sound fully.

Norman Dello Joio's *A Jubilant Song*, written only two years after *Rejoice in the Lamb*, carries that affirmation outward in a different musical language. Britten's visionary sacred rejoicing gives way to Dello Joio's kinetic, Whitmanesque celebration of life, movement, freedom, and communal song.

We mourn what has been lost. We honor those who protect what is precious. And, finally, we rejoice in all we hold dear.

—Deborah Simpkin King

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Program

We Can Mend The Sky — Music: Jake Runestad (b. 1986)
Text: Warda Mohammed

Jules Marlow Lee and **Eleni Spaliatsos**, Soprano
Will Hopkins, percussion

<u>Mourning Our Losses</u>

Indodana — Music: Trad. South African Song
(Arr. Michael Barrett & Ralf Schmitt)

Do Not Stand At My Grave And Weep — Music: Janet Lanier
Text: Mary Elizabeth Frye

The Men Of Chamber Choir

<u>Honoring Those Who Protect</u>

Everyone Suddenly Burst Out Singing — Music: Peter Willsher (b. 1951)
Text: Siegfried Sassoon

In Remembrance — Music: Jeffery L. Ames (b. 1969)
Text: Traditional and J.l.a.

Victor Schwartz, French horn

Hope And Rejoicing

Rejoice In The Lamb, Op. 30 — Music: Benjamin Britten (1913–1976)
Text: Christopher Smart

Soloists

Madeline Hansen, Cat
Giavanna J. Parker, Mouse
Quinn Langkammerer, Flowers
Shae L. Brodsky, Letters
Will Hopkins, percussion

A Jubilant Song — Music: Norman Dello Joio (1913–2008)
Text: Walt Whitman

Marissa S. Fiorentino, Soprano

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The MSM Chamber Choir is a select vocal ensemble at the Manhattan School of Music composed of advanced undergraduate and graduate singers. Through challenging repertoire spanning early music to contemporary works, members develop the artistic and collaborative skills necessary for professional ensemble performance.

The Chamber Choir's next appearance will be on January 29th, at Jazz at Lincoln Center.

And, mark your calendars for Friday, December 11th, 7:30, in Neidorff-Karpati Hall for the MSM Chorale's performance of Benjamin Britten's popular *Ceremony of Carols*.

SOPRANO 1
Marissa S. Fiorentino
Yuxiang Qiu
Meadow Webb
Iris Whalen

SOPRANO 2
Hadassah P. Coté
Jules M. Lee
Eleni M. Spaliatsos

ALTO 1
Annabelle Dalov
Iolanthe Demos
Chongrui Li

ALTO 2
Chenxi Pan
Giavanna J. Parker

TENOR 1
Utah Baggett
Quinn Langkammerer
Thomas A. Pickett

TENOR 2
Cameron J. Dunham
Jamil Sadizade

BARITONE
Henry Mauser
Micah Ruan
Daniel P. Wallace

BASS
Shae L. Brodsky
Jeffrey Emslie
Willem Sainvil

ABOUT THE CONDUCTOR

Deborah Simpkin King, Conductor

Deborah Simpkin King, Ph.D. is a conductor, new music advocate, and master teacher whose work spans performance, scholarship, and arts leadership. She serves as Director of Choirs at the Manhattan School of Music, Founding Artistic Director of Ember Choral Arts and its semi-professional ensemble Ember, and Director of Music and Arts at Trinity Episcopal Church in Asbury Park, NJ.

Dr. King is the founder of PROJECT : ENCORE™, the internationally recognized advocacy initiative that promotes post-premiere performances of new choral works. Through this and the Ember Ablaze Composer Lab, she has become a leading figure in advancing sustainable careers for contemporary composers and fostering meaningful collaboration between creators and performers.

Her dedication to education and community engagement is reflected in her leadership of the NJ-ACDA High School Choral Festival, her role as Chair of the New York Choral Consortium (NYCC), and her development of youth-focused initiatives such as the Big Sing Jr., which celebrates the region's young singers.

Dr. King's guest conducting credits include the 1,000-voice projects for Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival, preparation of the premiere choral ensemble for Jeanine Tesori's opera *Blue* (Lincoln Center), and appearances at the Tlaxcala Music Festival in Mexico.

A respected thought leader, she contributes a monthly column to ACDA's *The Choral Journal* and hosts *Sounds Choral*, a nationally syndicated public radio program on WWFM, and 2025 winner of the ASCAP Deems Taylor/Virgil Thomson Award. Her frequent conference presentations on choral consortia and new music reflect her broad influence on the choral arts. Connect with her at DeborahSKing.com.

Nancy Chamberlain, Piano

Nancy Chamberlain is a collaborative pianist at William Paterson University and Manhattan School of Music. She won the Premier Prix in Piano from the Conservatoire National in Nice, France, where she studied as a Rotary Foundation Scholar. While in Europe, Nancy performed with the Aspremont Quartet, winning First Prize in the International Chamber Music Competition in Tradate, Italy. She has taught K-12 vocal/choral/theatrical music in New York City and New Jersey and has worked as a Broadway audition pianist. Other NYC work has included cabarets at 54 Below, The Duplex, Triad, and Alchemical Theater on 14th Street. She has also played synthesizer for shows at MPAC and Plays in the Park in NJ. Nancy holds an M.M. in Piano Performance from Manhattan School of Music.

TEXT AND TRANSLATIONS

We Can Mend the Sky

Drawing upon a poem by Warda Mohammed, written when she was a fourteen-year-old Somali immigrant, and two Somali proverbs, Runestad traces a journey from the very sudden violence and displacement experienced by her family, toward hope for a better world. Its central image suggests that, by coming together, humanity can mend even a crack in the sky.

"Let My Dream Come True" by Warda Mohamed

In my dream I saw
a world free of
violence
hunger
suffering

a world
filled with
love

Now awake in this world
I beg, let my dream come true.

Soo baxa. [Let's go!]
Naftu orod bay kugu aamintaa. [To save your life, run with all your might.]
If we come together, we can mend a crack in the sky.

Indodana

This traditional isiXhosa lament mourns the crucified Son with the intimate grief of a parent and the collective voice of a community. Barrett and Schmitt's arrangement unfolds through repetition and accumulating sonority, transforming individual sorrow into a shared ritual of remembrance.

Ngob 'umthathile umtwana wakho, uhlale nathi hololo helele
The Lord has taken his son who lived amongst us
Indodana ka nkulunkulu bayi'bethelela hololo helele
The son of the Lord God was crucified.

Hololo Baba Jehova
Hololo Father Johovah
Zjem zja baba
Zjem zja father (Zjem zja is expressive with no meaning)

Do Not Stand At My Grave and Weep

Mary Elizabeth Frye's beloved text offers consolation by locating the departed not within the grave, but in the continuing life of the natural world—in wind, sunlight, rain, and morning light. Janet Lanier's setting for lower voices gives its quiet assurance particular warmth and gravity.

Do not stand at my grave and weep
I am not there. I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow.
I am the diamond glints of snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.
I am the gentle autumn rain.
I am the flowers that bloom. I am a quiet room.
When you awaken in the morning's hush
I am the swift uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft stars that shine at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry
I am not there. I did not die.

Everyone Suddenly Burst Out Singing

British poet and decorated First World War veteran Siegfried Sassoon describes an unexpected eruption of communal singing, widely understood as reflecting the release felt at the war's end. Willsher's setting moves from private wonder toward an expansive affirmation of freedom, fellowship, and renewed life.

Ev'ryone suddenly burst out singing,
And I was filled with such delight.
As prisoned birds must find in freedom,
Winging wildly across the white.

Orchards and dark green fields,
On, on and out of sight.

Ev'ryone's voice was suddenly lifted,
And beauty came like the setting sun.
My heart, my heart was shaken with tears,
And horror.

Drifted away
O, but ev'ryone was a bird,
And the song was wordless.
The singing, the singing will never be done

In Remembrance

In Remembrance gives voice to grief while reaching toward healing and hope. Its English and Latin texts affirm that sorrow endures through the night, but joy may yet return with the morning.

Lux aeterna, luceat eis, Domine
May light eternal shine upon them, O Lord.

Lux aeterna, lux aeterna, Luceat eis Domine, Domine.
Turn to me and be gracious, For my heart is in distress.

Oh God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?
My tears linger at night,
But joy comes in the morning light.

Luceat eis Domine.
Lord, in Your infinite mercy,
Lux aeterna, lux aeterna,
Grant them rest,
Luceat eis Domine, Domine.
Rest forevermore.

Rejoice in the Lamb

Christopher Smart's visionary poetry celebrates a created world in which every creature, object, letter, and musical instrument praises its Creator according to its own nature. Britten's 1943 festival cantata embraces the poem's eccentricity and tenderness, affirming both the dignity of the individual and the extraordinary joy of many distinctive voices joined in community.

"Jubilate Agno" by Christopher Smart

CHORUS:
Rejoice in God, O ye Tongues; give the glory to the Lord, and the Lamb.
Nations, and languages, and every Creature, in which is the breath of Life.
Let man and beast appear before him, and magnify his name together.
Let Nimrod, the mighty hunter, bind a Leopard to the altar, and consecrate his spear to the Lord.
Let Ishmael dedicate a Tyger, and give praise for the liberty in which the Lord has let him at large.
Let Balaam appear with an Ass, and bless the Lord his people and his creatures for a reward eternal.
Let Daniel come forth with a Lion, and praise God with all his might through faith in Christ Jesus.

Let Ithamar minister with a Chamois, and bless the name of Him, that cloatheth the naked.
Let Jakim with the Satyr bless God in the dance.
Let David bless with the Bear – The beginning of victory to the Lord – to the Lord the perfection of excellence – Hallelujah from the heard of God, and from the hand of the artist inimitable, and from the echo of the heavenly hard in sweetness magnifical and mighty.

TREBLE SOLO:
For I will consider my cat Jeoffry.
For he is the servant of the Living God, duly and daily serving him.
For at the first glance of the glory of God in the East he worships in his way.
For this is done by wreathing his body seven times round with elegant quickness.
For he knows that God is his Saviour.
For God has blessed him in the variety of his movements.
For there is nothing sweeter than his peace when at rest.
For I am possessed of a cat, surpassing in beauty, from whom I take occasion to bless Almighty God

ALTO SOLO:
For the Mouse is a creature of great personal valour.
For – this a true case – Cat takes female mouse – male mouse will not depart, but stands threat'ning and daring.
...If you will let her go, I will engage you, as prodigious a creature as you are.
For the Mouse is a creature of great personal valour.
For the Mouse is of an hospitable disposition.

TENOR SOLO:
For the flowers are a great blessings.
For the flowers have their angels even the words of God's Creation.
For the flower glorifies God and the root parries the adversary.
For there is a language of flowers.
For flowers are peculiarly the poetry of Christ.

CHORUS:
For I am under the same accusation with my Saviour –
For they said, he is besides himself.
For the officers of the peace are at variance with me, and the watchman smites me with his staff.
For Silly fellow! Silly fellow! is against me and belongeth neither to me nor to my family.
For I am in twelve HARDSHIPS, but he that was born of a virgin shall deliver me out of all.
BASS SOLO:
For H is a spirit and therefore he is God.
For K is king and therefore he is God.
For L is love and therefore he is God.
For M is musick and therefore he is God.

RECITATIVE:
For the instruments are by their rhimes.
For the shawm rhimes are lawn fawn moon boon and the like.
For the harp rhimes are sing ring string and the like.
For the cymbal rhimes are bell well toll soul and the like.
For the flute rhimes are tooth youth suit mute and the like.
For the bassoon rhimes are pass class and the like.
For the dulcimer rhimes are grace place beat heat and the like.
For the clarinet rhimes are clean seen and the like.
For the trumpet rhimes are sound bound soar more and the like.
For the trumpet of God is a blessed intelligence and so are all the instruments in heaven.
For GOD the father Almighty plays upon the HARP of stupendous magnitude and melody.
For at that time malignity ceases and the devils themselves are at peace.
For this time is perceptible to man by a remarkable stillness and serenity of soul.

CHORUS:
Hallelujah from the heart of God, and from the hand of the artist inimitable, and from the echo of the heavenly harp in sweetness magnifical and mighty.

A Jubilant Song
Drawing upon Walt Whitman's exuberant A Song of Joys, Dello Joio celebrates music as a physical and communal expression of life. Its restless rhythmic energy, lyrical central section, and ecstatic final summons to sing, dance, shout, and leap bring the program to an irrepressibly joyful conclusion.

O listen to a jubilant song
The joy of our spirit is uncaged, it darts like lightning.
For we sing to the joys of youth
And the joy of a glad light-beaming day.
For we sing to the joy of life
O our spirit sings a jubilant song
That is to life full of music
A life full of concord, of music, a life full of harmony.
We sing prophetic joys of lofty ideals
A universal love awaking in the hearts of men.
O to have life, a poem of new joys
To shout, dance, exult, and leap
O to realize space
And flying clouds, the sun and moon
O to be rulers of life
O to be rulers of destiny.

ABOUT MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Founded as a community music school by Janet Daniels Schenck in 1918, today MSM is recognized for its more than 1,000 superbly talented undergraduate and graduate students who come from more than 50 countries and nearly all 50 states; its innovative curricula and world-renowned artist-teacher faculty that includes musicians from the New York Philharmonic, the Met Orchestra, and the top ranks of the jazz and Broadway communities; and a distinguished community of accomplished, award-winning alumni working at the highest levels of the musical, educational, cultural, and professional worlds.

The School is dedicated to the personal, artistic, and intellectual development of aspiring musicians, from its Precollege students through those pursuing doctoral studies. Offering classical, jazz, and musical theatre training, MSM grants a range of undergraduate and graduate degrees. True to MSM's origins as a music school for children, the Precollege Division is a professionally oriented Saturday music program dedicated to the musical and personal growth of talented young musicians ages 8 to 18. The School also serves some 2,000 New York City schoolchildren through its Arts-in-Education Program, and another 2,000 students through its critically acclaimed Distance Learning Program.

Your gift helps a young artist reach for the stars!

To enable Manhattan School of Music to continue educating and inspiring generations of talented students and audiences alike, please consider making a charitable contribution today.

Contact the Philanthropy Office at **917-493-4434** or to make an online gift, **scan this code** or visit **msmnyc.edu/givenow**.

Land Acknowledgment

We want to acknowledge that we gather as Manhattan School of Music on the traditional land of the Lenape and Wappinger past and present, and honor with gratitude the land itself and the people who have stewarded it throughout the generations. This calls us to commit to continuing to learn how to be better stewards of the land we inhabit as well.