

MELODIA

WOMEN'S CHOIR NYC



A Virtual Concert

Welcoming words by Cynthia Powell, Artistic Director and Jenny Clarke, Executive Director

Reading of *The Rose* by Christina Rossetti, by Alinca Hamilton

Melodia Virtual Choir performance: *The Rose* by Ola Gjeilo

Melodia solo: Michelle Ammirati - *Before It's Over* from *Dogfight* by Pasek & Paul

Melodia solo: Blessing Agunwamba - *Songs for the People* by Rosephanye Powell

From the Melodia video archive: *Arzular "Dreams,"* by Tofiq Guliyev, soloist Naila Aziz
Concert: *Songs from the Heart*, May 2010

Melodia solo: Colleen Christi Willett - *You Are Not Alone* from *Into the Woods* by Stephen Sondheim

Melodia solo: Rachel Wifall - *His Eye is on the Sparrow* by Charles H. Gabriel

Alinca Hamilton poetry reading, *won't you celebrate with me* by Lucille Clifton

Instrumental interlude performed by Taisiya Pushkar, piano – *To a Yellow Rose* by Florence B. Price

Melodia solo: Larissa Flint - *This is Me* from *The Greatest Showman* by Benj Pasek and Justin Paul

From the Melodia video archive: *Cum Sancto Spiritu* from *Gloria* by Antonio Vivaldi
Concert: *Gloria – Lifting the Veil on Vivaldi's Masterpiece*, May 2019

Melodia solo: Steff Lyon - *How* by Regina Spektor

Melodia solo: Lauren D'Imperio - *Let it Be* by the Beatles

From the Melodia video archive: *Mas Que Nada* by Jorge Ben, soloist Emily Meszkat
Concert: *Visions of Peace*, November 2013

Closing words by Cynthia and Jenny

Reading of *Gaelic Blessing*, by Alinca Hamilton

Melodia Virtual Choir performance: *Gaelic Blessing* by John Rutter

Contributing Artists

Cynthia Powell, Artistic Director & Conductor

Taisiya Pushkar, piano

Emilie-Anne Gendron & Clara Kim, violins; Stephanie Griffin, viola; and Laura Andrade, cello

Alinca Hamilton, spoken word

Melodia Singers, Virtual Choir videos – *The Rose and Gaelic Blessing*

Soprano

Blessing Agunwamba
Morgan Russell Banino
Ginny Bartolone
Sasha Berger
Rosie Black
Sally Burgos
Bekah Calverley
Lauren D’Imperio
Larissa Flint
Deb Howard
Yvonne Kempes
Colleen Maher
Judy Fontana Minkoff
Jennifer Laurin
Steff Lyon

Maggie Parker
Ashley Paskalis
Annette Pierce
Rachel Porter
Julia Pugachevsky
Katherine Puma
Amanda Schulze
Kelly Shoemaker
Erin Siu
Faye Timmer
Rachel Younger

Alto

Michelle Ammirati
Frances Biedenharn
Cara Brownell
Gabiella Carr

Jenny Clarke
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Victoria Levy
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Rachel Wifall
Colleen Christi Willett

Melodia Soloists

Blessing Agunwambe
Michelle Ammirati
Lauren D’Imperio

Larissa Flint
Steff Lyon

Rachel Wifall
Colleen Christi Willett

A Message from Melodia Women’s Choir of NYC

Since March 2020, Melodia has been unable to meet in person or present concerts due to COVID19. This virtual concert marks one year since our most recent live performance. We offer this virtual event as a special way to stay connected and share the many voices of Melodia in the spirit of love and hope.

Melodia History

Founded in 2003, Melodia explores and performs rarely heard music for women’s voices in many different styles, and nurtures emerging women composers through commissions and performances. Under the leadership of Jenny Clarke, Executive Director, and Cynthia Powell, Artistic Director, Melodia has performed at Symphony Space, Merkin Concert Hall, DiMenna Center for Classical Music, the Church of Saint Ignatius Loyola in collaboration with Sacred Music in a Sacred Space, and others. Melodia has been heard on WQXR and WNYC radio, including as part of “Her Music: 24 Hours of Emerging Women Composers,” in 2014 and again in 2015 and 2016, and seen on NBC television.

Melodia was selected to participate in the WNYC/WQXR Radio's Salute the ARTS Initiative (STAR) 2013 – our second STAR award. Melodia was honored to receive a special proclamation from the New York City Council in April 2018 for “delighting listeners with high quality musical performances and for fostering greater harmony throughout our community and beyond.”

Melodia released its first commercial recording in 2014, *Lullaby*, a collection of soothing pieces selected from among the many rare and special works Melodia has performed over the first twelve years of music-making.



Texts

The Rose

Christina Rossetti

The lily has a smooth stalk,
Will never hurt your hand;
But the rose upon her brier
Is lady of the land.

There's sweetness in an apple tree,
And profit in the corn;

But lady of all beauty
Is a rose upon a thorn.

When with moss and honey
She tips her bending brier,
And half unfolds her glowing heart,
She sets the world on fire.

Gaelic Blessing

Deep peace of the running wave to you.
Deep peace of the flowing air to you.
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you.
Deep peace of the shining stars to you.
Deep peace of the gentle night to you.

Moon and stars pour their healing light on you.
Deep peace and light
The light of the world to you
Deep peace and light to you

Directors



Jenny Clarke, Founder and Executive Director of Melodia, combined her lifelong love of choral music and her career as an arts administrator to form Melodia in 2003. She has a B.A. in music and English from Leeds University, England, and an M.A. in arts management from New York University. In addition to singing with Melodia – her true passion – Jenny has sung with the Royal Choral Society in England, and Riverside Choral Society in New York, performing at venues including Avery Fisher Hall (Mostly Mozart Festival), Alice Tully Hall, Carnegie Hall, Symphony Space, and Merkin Concert Hall. Jenny has worked extensively in arts administration in music, theater, and dance in London including at the South Bank Concert Halls, the Royal Court Theatre and London Sinfonietta, and – for the past 28 years – in New York, including at Symphony Space, Theatre for a New Audience, and Chamber Music America. Jenny was recently the Executive Director of the Associated Chamber Music Players & ACMP Foundation and is currently providing interim leadership for a visual arts and heritage organization.



Cynthia Powell, Conductor and Artistic Director, celebrates her 17th season with Melodia. A graduate of Westminster Choir College, she has worked with many musical groups in the NY metropolitan area and has conducted major works for chorus and orchestra. She has served on the guest faculty at Sarah Lawrence College, led the St. George's Choral Society in NYC, and was a guest conductor at the International Choral Festival in Havana, Cuba. She is also the Artistic Director of the Stonewall Chorale, and currently serves as Director of Music Ministry at West End Collegiate Church in NYC, and Organist/Choirmaster of Temple Sinai in Tenafly, NJ. Her passion for music and commitment to the choral art is coupled with a desire to generate awareness and funds for timely causes, and she has produced recitals, oratorios and concerts to benefit Bailey House, a homeless residence for people with AIDS, for Doctors Without Borders, the Pastors for Peace Cuba Caravan, and Water is Life, Kenya.



Described as 'a graceful pianist', with an 'impeccable sense of timing', **Taisiya Pushkar** is in demand as a dynamic performer and a sensitive collaborator. A long-time musical partnership with the cellist Amber Docters van Leeuwen has led to the recording of their debut CD "Flavours", which has been released on the Brilliant Classics label. Together, the duo has made their debut at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall in New York, and at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam.

Dr. Pushkar has been on the faculty of the Lucy Moses School at Kaufman Center, the Ethical Culture Fieldston School and the Horace Mann School, and is a teaching artist for the Manhattan School of Music Distance Learning Program. In 2019, Taisiya joined the Young People's Chorus of New York City as their first full time collaborative pianist.

Dr. Taisiya Pushkar holds a Bachelor's Degree from Oberlin College, and a MM and DMA Degrees from the Manhattan School of Music. Taisiya has been the official pianist of the Melodia Women's Choir since 2009. www.taisiyapushkar.com.

More About Melodia

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And to all those who donated when registering to attend this virtual concert.

Institutional Supporters:

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PLEASE HELP keep women's choral music alive and well in New York City! Your fully tax-deductible donation helps us to perform gorgeous, rarely-heard music for women's voices and commission composers to write new works. Please help by mailing a check to the address below. Make checks payable to Melodia Women's Choir. You can also donate with a credit card at our website: www.melodiawomenschoir.org.

Special thanks to: Judy Fontana Minkoff for Audio editing – *The Rose*; Julia Pugachevsky for video editing *The Rose* and audio/video editing *Gaelic Blessing*; Suzanne Bennett, poetry consultant; Declan Zhang, Zoom Technical Presenter; section leaders: Ashley Paskalis, Colleen Maher and Colleen Christi Willett; and to the Melodia Board of Directors for their help navigating the challenges of COVID19.



Songs of Love and Hope image by Andrea Arroyo

Audition for Melodia

Do you love to sing? We are a women-powered organization exclusively dedicated to exploring, creating, and performing exemplary music for women's voices. Come and explore this wonderful repertoire with us! We're auditioning experienced choral singers in January/February. Contact Jenny Clarke: womenschoir@mindspring.com for virtual audition details.

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Melodia November 2019

