



## Light of a Brand New Day

Cynthia Powell, Artistic Director and Conductor  
Jenny Clarke, Founder and Executive Director

Taisiya Pushkar, piano  
Hilary Hawke, banjo; Ann Klein, guitar; Barbara Merjan, drums;  
Eleonore Oppenheim, double bass; Chelsea Starbuck Smith, violin

No flash photography. This performance is being video recorded.

***Bright Morning Stars are Rising***

Traditional arr. Paul Siskind

Soloist: Nicole Owen

***Down to the River to Pray***

American arr. Jenny Walker

***Angel Band***

William Batchelder Bradbury (1816-1868)  
arr. Marsha Genensky and Johanna Maria Rose

***Invitation (Hark! I Hear the Harps Eternal)***

William Hauser (1812-1880)  
arr. Marsha Genensky and Johanna Maria Rose

***Amanda***

Justin Morgan (1747-1798)

***Farther Along***

arr. Emmylou Harris and John Starling

Soloists: Kate Fiala, Jeanne Ruskin, Larissa Flint McDowell

***Bring Me Little Water, Silvy***

Huddie Ledbetter arr. Moira Smiley  
Original body percussion by Evie Ladin

***Instrumental interlude: the Melodia Bluegrass Band***

***Blackberry Blossom***

Traditional

***Tennessee Waltz***

PeeWee King

***Foggy Mountain Breakdown***  
***Sleep Song***

Earl Scruggs  
Margaret Bonds (1913-1972)

***Night***

Florence B. Price (1887-1953)

***Scarborough Fair***

Traditional English Folk arr. Michael Higgins

***Blowin' in the Wind***

Bob Dylan, arr. Mac Huff

***You Are the New Day***

John David, arr. Philip Lawson

***Let the River Run***

Carly Simon, arr. Kirby Shaw

***You've Got a Friend***

Carole King, arr. Mac Huff

Soloist: Ginny Bartolone

***Blue Bayou***

Roy Orbison and Joe Melson arr. Teena Chinn

Soloist: Anna Newton

***Light of a Clear Blue Morning***

Dolly Parton

Soloist: Julie Schoonover

arr. Craig Hella Johnson and Richard Gabrillo

Trio: Erin Siu, Ginny Bartolone, Larissa Flint McDowell

***Still I Rise***

Rosephanye Powell

Soloist: Larissa Flint McDowell

Instrumental arrangements by Antonio Truyols

*Our performance of Bob Dylan's Blowin' in the Wind is dedicated to Olenka Dzhezhora, former member of Melodia and resident of Lviv, Ukraine, who sends a message from her besieged homeasking Melodia to "sing for me."*

### **Melodia Singers**

#### **Soprano**

Ginny Bartolone  
Lindsay Cornelio  
Deliana Daskalova  
Kate Fiala  
Caroline Fjeldheim  
Deb Howard  
Colleen Maher  
Larissa Flint McDowell

#### **Nicole Owen**

Ashley Paskalis  
Chiara Pierangelo  
Julie Schoonover  
Erin Siu  
Sarah Woodruff

#### **Alto**

Michelle Ammirati  
Cara Brownell  
Jenny Clarke  
Stephanie Larriere  
Anna Newton  
Jeanne Ruskin  
Peggy Samuels  
Emily Segal  
Allison Sniffin

## **Melodia Women's Choir 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 their 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.

## **Notes on the Program**

As spring unfurls into summer, Melodia Women's Choir brings you a program full of hope, a dream of new beginnings, and, most of all – light. For inspiration, our program draws upon treasures from American roots music adapted for women's voices.

American roots music is a genre at the crossroads of gospel and blues, country and folk. Its sound is at once both familiar and revolutionary, thanks to its rich tradition as a "voice" for change throughout U.S. history. In our concert, favorites, old and new, are reimagined with unique adaptations that blend women's choral voices with our own Melodia Bluegrass Band, formed for this concert.

Our concert opens with "Bright Morning Stars are Rising," an Appalachian song dating back to at least the 1930s in Kentucky. "Down to the River to Pray" is a 19<sup>th</sup> century American hymn of unknown origin that has been sung and recorded in various interpretations over the years and was featured in the Coen brothers' movie, *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*

"Farther Along" is a widely performed Southern gospel song. A recording by Dolly Parton, Linda Ronstadt and Emmylou Harris on the "Trio" album inspired this arrangement.

Creator of "Bring Me Little Water, Silvy," Huddie William Ledbetter, better known as "Lead Belly," was an American folk and blues singer famous for his strong vocals and virtuosity on the twelve-string guitar. Lead Belly would often preface his performance of "Bring Me Little Water, Silvy" with a story about his uncle, hard-working in the fields, asking his wife to bring him some refreshment. This song gained popularity when Harry Belafonte recorded it in 1955. Our version, with body percussion, was arranged by Australian folk singer Moira Smiley.

For our instrumental interlude, the Melodia Bluegrass Band will play “Blackberry Blossom,” a Kentucky fiddle-tune; “Tennessee Waltz,” written in the 1940s and later immortalized by Patti Page, and “Foggy Mountain Breakdown” by the great Earl Scruggs.

“Sleep Song” by Margaret Bonds and “Night” by Florence B. Price highlight the music of two African American composers whose works are finding the illumination they deserve. Read more about Florence B. Price in the Melodia blog post: [\*Luck, Black Sisterhood, Loss, and Rediscovery: The Legacy of Florence B. Price\*](#) by Pam McAllister.

The next two pieces will be best remembered from the tumultuous 1960s, though the first, “Scarborough Fair,” originated in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Paul Simon and Art Garfunkle made it a mega-hit during the American folk revival. Bob Dylan’s “Blowin’ in the Wind” became a landmark protest song for the civil rights movement and the lyrics ring true today.

“You Are the New Day” was composed for and performed by The King’s Singers with lyrics that reflect hope for a brighter future: “You are the new day, send the sun in time for dawn, Let the birds all hail the morning!” The next songs, “Let the River Run” (Carly Simon) and “You’ve Got a Friend,” (Randy Newman) are iconic American songs also heard in the films *Working Girl* and *Toy Story* respectively. Our concert closes with Rosephanye Powell’s rousing song, “Still I Rise,” with poetry inspired by Maya Angelou, poet, activist and memoirist.

The music presented in *Light of a Brand New Day* reminds us that sounds from the past can guide us, but change, like spring, is ever present and calls upon us to be hopeful and resilient.

Notes by Colleen Christi Willett and Cynthia Powell

## Texts

### Bright Morning Stars are Rising

Bright morning stars are rising.  
Day is a-breakin’ in my soul.

Oh where are our dear mothers?  
Oh where are our dear fathers?  
Oh where are our dear mothers?  
Day is a-breakin’ in my soul.

Some are here together praying.  
Day is a-breakin’ in my soul.

Oh where are our dear sisters?  
Oh where are our dear brothers?

Oh where are our dear sisters?  
Day is, is a-breakin’ in my soul.

Some have gone to heaven shouting!  
Day is, day is a-breakin’, breakin’ in my  
soul!

Oh where is our future?  
Day is a-breakin’ in my soul.

We are here together singing.  
Day is a-breakin’ in my soul.

### **Down to the River to Pray**

As I went down to the river to pray  
Studyin' about that good ol' way  
And who shall wear the starry crown,  
Good Lord, show me the way.

O, sisters let's go down  
Let's go down, come on down  
O, sisters let's go down  
Down to the river to pray

O, brothers, let's go down,  
Let's go down, come on down  
Come on, brothers, let's go down,  
Down to the river to pray.

### **Angel Band**

My latest sun is sinking fast,  
My race is nearly run;  
My strongest trials now are past,  
My triumph is begun.

O come, angel band,  
Come and around me stand;  
O bear me away on your snowy wings,  
To my immortal home.

### **Invitation (Hark! I Hear the Harps Eternal)**

Hark! I hear the harps eternal  
Ringing on the farther shore.  
As I near those swollen waters,  
With their deep and solemn roar.

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!  
Hallelujah! Praise the Lamb!  
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!  
Glory to the GREAT I AM!

### **Amanda**

Death, like an over flowing stream,  
Sweeps us away; our life's a dream,  
An empty tale, a mourning flow'r

O, fathers, let's go down  
Let's go down, come on down,  
O, fathers, let's go down,  
Down to the river to pray.

O, mothers, let's go down,  
Let's go down, come on down,  
O, mothers, let's go down,  
Down to the river to pray.

O, sinners let's go down  
Let's go down, come on down  
O, sinners let's go down  
Down to the river to pray.

I know I'm near the holy ranks  
Of friends and kindred dear;  
I brush the dew on Jordan's bank,  
The crossing must be near.

I've almost gained my heav'nly home,  
My spirit loudly sings;  
The holy ones, behold they come!  
I hear the noise of wings

And my soul, though stained with sorrow,  
Fading as the light of day,  
Passes swiftly o'er those waters,  
To the city far away.

Souls have cross'd before me, saintly,  
To that land of perfect rest;  
And I hear them singing faintly,  
In the mansions of the blest.

Teach us, O Lord, how frail is man;  
And kindly lengthen out our span;  
Till a wise care of piety,

Cut down and wither'd in an hour.

### **Farther Along**

Tempted and tried, we're oft' made to wonder  
Why it should be thus all the day long,  
While there are others living about us,  
Never molested, though in the wrong.

When death has come and taken our loved ones  
It leaves a home so lonely and drear.  
Then do we wonder why others prosper,  
Living so wicked, year after year.

### **Bring Me Little Water, Silvy**

Bring me little water Silvy  
Bring me little water now  
Bring me little water Silvy  
Ev'ry little once in a while.

Silvy come a runnin'  
Bucket in my hand  
I will bring a little water  
Fast as I can.

### **Sleep Song**

Words by Joyce Kilmer

The Lady World is sleeping on her  
white and cloudy bed.  
Like petals furl'd Her eyelids close.

Beside her dream-filled head  
Her lover stands with silver cloak and  
shoon, The faithful Moon.

Fit us to die and dwell with Thee.

Farther along we'll know all about it,  
Farther along we'll understand why.  
Cheer up, my brother, live in the  
sunshine,  
We'll understand it all, by and by.

"Faithful to death" saith our loving  
Master,  
A few more days to labor and wait;  
Toils of the road will then seem as  
nothing,  
And with sweet true love beautiful  
days.

Bring it in a bucket Silvy  
Bring it in a bucket now  
Bring it in a bucket Silvy  
Ev'ry little once in a while

Can't you see me comin'  
Can't you see me now  
I will bring a little water  
Ev'ry little once in a while.

So Love, my Love, Sleep on, my Love  
My Life, be not afraid.  
So sleep, sleep.

## **Night**

Poetry by Bessie Mayle

Night is like an avalanche, sliding  
down the sky.  
It covers me with black and gold while  
other shades stand by.

Blackest nights show up the stars  
Stars of yellow gold;  
Royal stars which prove to be very,  
very old.

White against a sheen of black shows  
the finest lines,

Showing too, the falser tones, the finer  
ones entwine.

Background shades are ruling shades,  
And for the world it's black  
You can find it in the east and on the  
jungle's track.

What does it matter if white lights can  
boast their rays before brightest days  
burn out themselves and night rules  
evermore.

## **Scarborough Fair**

Are you going to Scarborough Fair?  
Parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme.  
Remember be to one who lives there,  
She was once a true love of mine.

Tell her to make me a cambric shirt  
Without any seam nor needle work,  
Then she'll be a true love of mine.

## **Blowin' in the Wind**

How many roads must a man walk  
down before you call him a man?  
How many seas must a white dove sail  
Before she sleeps in the sand?

How many times must the cannonballs  
fly before they're forever banned?

The answer, my friend, is blowin' in  
the wind.

How many years can a mountain exist  
before it's washed to the sea?  
How many years can some people  
exist before they're allowed to be  
free?

How many times can a man turn his  
head pretending he just doesn't see?  
The answer, my friend, is blowin' in  
the wind.

How many times must a man look up  
before he can see the sky?  
How many ears must one man have  
before he can hear people cry?

How many deaths will it take 'til he  
knows that too many people have  
died?  
The answer, my friend, is blowin' in  
the wind

## **You Are the New Day**

Words by John David

You are the new day.

I will love you more than me and more  
than yesterday

If you can but prove to me you are the  
new day.

Send the sun in time for dawn,  
let the birds all hail the morning.

Love of life will urge me say,  
You are the new day.

When I lay me down at night knowing  
we must pay,

Thoughts occur that this night might  
stay yesterday.

Thoughts that we as humans small  
could slow worlds and end it all  
Like around me where they fall before  
the new day.

One more day when time is running  
out for ev'ry one,  
Like a breath I knew would come I  
reach for a new day.

Hope is my philosophy, just needs  
days in which to be,  
Love of life means hope for me,  
Borne on a new day.

You are the new day.

## **Let the River Run**

Words by Carly Simon

Let the river run  
Let all the dreamers wake the nation.  
Come, the new Jerusalem.

Silver cities rise,  
The morning lights, the streets that lead  
them.  
And sirens call them on with a song.

It's asking for the taking, trembling,  
shaking.  
Oh, my heart is aching,  
We're comin' to the edge, runnin' on the  
water,  
Comin' thru the fog, your sons and  
daughters.

We're the great and small,  
Stand on a star and blaze a trail of desire  
through the dark'ning dawn.

It's asking for the taking,  
Come run with me now,  
The sky is the color of blue you've never  
even seen in the eyes of love.

My heart is aching,  
We're comin' to the edge, runnin' on the  
water,  
Comin' thru the fog, your sons and  
daughters.



## **You've Got a Friend**

Words by Carole King

When you're down and troubled,  
And you need a helping hand;  
And nothing, nothing is going right.

Close your eyes and think of me,  
And soon I will be there  
To brighten up even your darkest night.

You just call out my name,  
And you know wherever I am,  
I'll come running to see you again.

Winter, spring, summer or fall,  
All you've got to do is call,  
And I'll be there, yes, I will.

You've got a friend.

If the sky above you should turn dark and  
full of clouds,  
And that ol' north wind should begin to  
blow.

Keep your head together, and call my name  
out loud;  
Soon, I'll be knocking upon your door.

Ain't it good to know that you've got a  
friend,  
When people can be so cold.  
They'll hurt you, and desert you,  
They'll take your soul if you let them,  
But don't you let them.

## **Blue Bayou**

Words by Roy Orbison and Joe Melson

I feel so bad, I've got a worried mind,  
I'm so lonesome all the time  
Since I left my baby behind on Blue Bayou;

Saving nickels, saving dimes,  
Working 'til the sun don't shine  
Looking forward to happier times on Blue  
Bayou

I'm going back some day,  
Come what may to Blue Bayou,  
Where you sleep all day and the catfish play  
On Blue Bayou;

All those fishing boats with their sails afloat  
If I could only see that familiar sunrise  
Through sleep eyes, How happy I'd be

Go to see my baby again  
And to be with some of my friends  
Maybe I'd be happy then  
On Blue Bayou;

I'm going back some day,  
Gonna stay on Blue Bayou,  
Where the folks are fine and the world is  
mine  
On Blue Bayou;

Ah that love of mine by my side  
The silver moon and the ev'ning tide  
Oh some sweet day gonna take away this  
hurtin' inside.

I'll never be blue,  
My dreams come true on Blue Bayou.

## Light of a Clear Blue Morning

It's been a long dark night,  
And I've been waiting for the morning.  
It's been a long hard fight,  
But I see a brand new day a-dawning.

I've been looking for the sunshine  
'Cause I ain't seen it in so long.

## Still I Rise

Words by Rosephanye Powell

Though I have been wounded;  
aching heart, full of pain  
Still I rise, yes, still I rise.

Jus' like a budding rose,  
My bloom is nourished by rain.  
Still I rise, yes, still I rise.

Haven't time to wonder why,  
Though fearful I strive.  
Still I rise, yes, still I rise.

My pray'r and faith uphold me 'til my  
courage arrives.  
Still I rise, yes, still I rise.

Still I rise as an eagle,  
Soaring above ev'ry fear.  
With each day I succeed,  
I grow strong an' believe that it's all within  
my reach;

I'm reaching for the skies,  
Bolstered by courage, yes, still I rise.  
Yes, it's all within my reach;  
I'm reaching for the skies.

Gentle as a woman  
Tender sweet are my sighs.  
Still I rise, yes, still I rise.  
Strength is in my tears and healing rains in  
my cries.

Ev'rything's gonna work out fine.  
Ev'rything's gonna be alright,  
It's gonna be okay.

I can see the light of a clear blue morning.  
I can see the light of a brand new day.  
I can see the light of a clear blue morning.

Still I rise, yes, still I rise.

Plunging depths of anguish,  
I determine to strive.  
Still I rise, yes, still I rise.

Though you see me slump with heartache;  
Heart so heavy that it breaks.  
Be not deceived I fly on birds' wings, rusing  
sun, its healing rays.

Look at me, you see a woman;  
Gentle as a butterfly.  
But don't you think not for one moment,  
That I'm not strong because I cry.

Still I rise as an eagle,  
Soaring above ev'ry fear.  
With each day I succeed,  
I grow strong an' believe that it's all within  
my reach;

I'm reaching for the skies,  
Bolstered by courage, yes, still I rise.  
Yes, it's all within my reach;  
I'm reaching for the skies.

Higher and higher, yes, still I rise.  
By pray'r an' faith still I rise.  
Yes, it's all within my reach;  
I'm reaching for the skies.

Yes, still I rise!

## Meet the 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 31 years – in New York, including at Symphony Space, the NYC Arts in Education Roundtable, and Chamber Music America. Jenny is the Executive Director of the National Flute Association.



**Cynthia Powell**, Conductor and Artistic Director, celebrates her 20th 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 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.

## Meet the Ensemble



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](http://www.taisiyapushkar.com).



**Hilary Hawke** is a composer, teacher and writer who performs in solo and collaborative projects. Current projects include composing an album of cinematic/classical contemporary music for banjo/piano/synthesizer, and releasing her first album of instrumental banjo music. Hilary is known as a “go-to” coach and teacher for all ages of students and for actors in screen and theatre and she is proud to be a part of Melodia for this spring concert! [www.hilaryhawkemusic.com](http://www.hilaryhawkemusic.com)



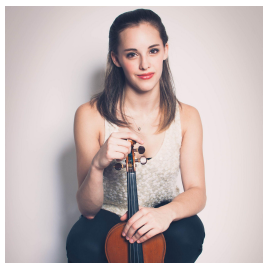
**Ann Klein** plays guitar and mandolin and other things with strings. As a singer/songwriter, she has performed in Europe consistently for many years. She has written music for three documentaries for French television and has had her music used in television shows all over the world. As an instrumentalist, credits include: Kate Pierson of the B-52s, Joan Osborne, Ani DiFranco, and the American Composers Orchestra. Theater credits: Ann held the guitar chair at “Head Over Heels” and “Superhero”. She has lent her guitar skills in “Grease”, “9 to 5,” “Baby It’s You,” “Everyday Rapture,” “Kinky Boots,” “Waitress” and “Trip of Love.” Ann has also produced recordings for several artists with her partner, Tim Hatfield and was a MacDowell Colony grant recipient. She was a guest teacher at the Danish Rhythmic Music Conservancy with 15 other teachers from NY and LA. She is most proud of her ability to wah wah her way out of any solo, anytime.



**Barbara Merjan** is a drummer and percussionist who has worked in a variety of musical contexts, including Jazz (Newport Jazz Festival, 1980, 2002), Broadway (Cabaret, Sunset Blvd., Cats, Miss Saigon, Fiddler on the Roof, Big, Elf, The Unsinkable Molly Brown....) Pop/Rock (Robert Palmer, Lesley Gore, Women of Woodstock) and Contemporary American Classical (Mad Coyote Ensemble, Linda Fisher). In addition to these musical styles, she has been studying, performing and teaching Japanese taiko for the past 15 years - Wesleyan University (2016-2020), Kaoru Watanabe Taiko Center.



Bassist, composer and all around musician **Eleonore Oppenheim** is a genre surfing musical polyglot. Some current projects include big dog little dog (a duo with composer/violinist Jessie Montgomery), an acoustic trio with art-pop auteur Glasser and multi-instrumentalist Robbie Lee, and the avant folk-jazz supergroup the Hands Free (with James Moore, Caroline Shaw, and Nathan Koci), among others. [www.eleonoreoppenheim.com](http://www.eleonoreoppenheim.com).



Acclaimed as a violinist of “compelling presence, fearless attack, and technical aplomb and bravado” (New London’s The Day), **Chelsea Starbuck Smith** is becoming recognized for her infectious enthusiasm for the violin. She has performed as solo and chamber artist in venues across the United States and abroad, including David Geffen Hall, Elbphilharmonie, Musikverein Wien, Citi

Field, Carnegie Hall, Palais de Fontainebleau, and Centre National des Arts. As a chamber and orchestral musician, Chelsea is at home with both classical and crossover styles. Recent collaborators include Baz Luhrmann for the Met Gala, Chris Thile of the Punch Brothers, Kelly Clarkson, Debbie Harry & Blondie, and The Knights Chamber Orchestra. Chelsea is a section-member of the Radio City Christmas Spectacular orchestra pit as well as concertmaster for Broadway's "A Christmas Carol." Beyond the concert stage, Chelsea can be seen in such television series as Glee and as the featured violinist in the long-running NYU Langone national television commercial set in New York's Grand Central Station. Her album, *Les Deux*, is available on iTunes and Spotify. Visit [www.chelseastarbuckmusic.com](http://www.chelseastarbuckmusic.com).

## Meet the Melodia Singers



After a brief hiatus from Melodia while she received her Master's degree at Parsons School of Design, **Michelle Ammirati** is excited to be back singing with these talented vocalists for her sixth year. Originally from Stonington, Connecticut, Michelle pursued her love for singing at Ithaca College, where she graduated with a minor in music in 2014. While at Ithaca, she performed with Janet Galván's Women's Chorale for four years. Continuing her dedication to promote, support and encourage women musicians, Michelle has been an active member of Sigma Alpha Iota, the international music fraternity, for ten years. In addition to Melodia, Michelle proudly sings with the Stonewall Chorale and has performed with the NY Pops at Carnegie Hall as part of Essential Voices USA. When she is not singing, Michelle is working as an AVP, UX Researcher at Valley Bank.



**Ginny Bartolone** has been a member of Melodia since 2020 and is delighted to be performing with the group in person for the first time. She currently works full time as a writer and an actor and has been singing with choirs across New York and New Jersey since childhood. She studied theatre at Drew University where she performed with a variety of choral and a cappella groups. She is also currently completing a book about her four long-distance hikes across Northern Spain.



**Cara Brownell** joined Melodia in 2013. Choral singing and harmony have been her intercessors from an early age, in church & community choirs, high school (and a folk rock band, of course), SUNY Binghamton University Chorus and Women's Madrigal Ensemble. Cara's guitar-playing soprano sister nourished the pathway! Transplanted from Saratoga Springs in the 1970's, early years in NYC found her accompanying dance classes at NYU, Marymount Manhattan College, active in the downtown Soho/Lower East Side performance scene (Simone Forti, Douglas Dunn, Collaborative Projects, Inc.) and teaching vocal and movement improvisation in her loft. Cara is a founding member of the Lafayette Inspirational Ensemble (celebrating 31 years), a gospel choir based at historic Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, Ft. Greene, Brooklyn and also sings in the classical Lafayette Choir.

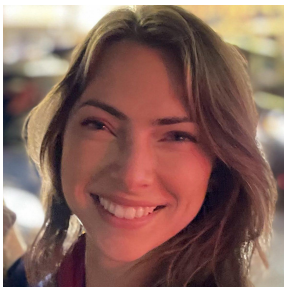




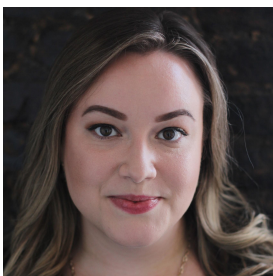
**Lindsay Cornelio** just recently joined Melodia in the fall of 2021 and is so happy to be singing again. Lindsay comes from a very musical family and was part of choirs and musical groups all throughout her youth and through college, and after a long hiatus, she is eager to jump back into singing with a choir, which has been one of her greatest sources of happiness. Lindsay currently lives in Brooklyn and is the Operations & Human Resources Director at a non-profit law firm. Lindsay is passionate about social justice, and loves live music, going out to dance, meeting new people, traveling, culture, running, yoga, meditation, nature and being outside.



**Deliana Daskalova** has been singing in choruses since the age of eight, starting with the youth chorus “Danube Waves” in her hometown of Ruse, Bulgaria. After moving to the US she continued singing mainly in the Washington, DC area with The Washington International Chorus and Rockville Chorus. With a background in Theatre (BA/University of Maryland), Visual Anthropology (MA/Goldsmiths, London), and Film/TV in New York, she is a documentary filmmaker and film editor with a soft spot for chorus singing. Deliana joined Melodia in January 2020 and is excited to help bring the Light of a Bright New Day in this Spring’s concert



**Kate Fiala** is thrilled to be singing with the Melodia Women’s Choir in her first season! A Midwest native, Kate moved from Chicago to New York in August 2021 prompted by a new job in Ad Tech, a nudge from her Brooklyn-based sister, and a sense of overdue adventure. Kate has been singing since she can remember but not with a choir since her college days at DePaul University. The opportunity to join together in song with a group of inspiring and diverse new faces is among precisely the reasons Kate now calls New York home. Thank you to Jenny, Cynthia, and Taisiya for their leadership and for building a wonderful community of singing ladies!



**Caroline Fjeldheim** is a soprano based in the New York City area. She is a graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi's graduate voice program where she received her Master of Music degree in Voice Performance in the studio of Dr. Maryann Kyle. During her time there she performed on stage in productions of Carmen (Micaela, Costume Designer), Trial by Jury (The Plaintiff), West Side Story (Rosalia), Mary Poppins (Mrs. Corry), and The Merry Widow (Sylviane). Her experience with the University led to the opportunity to work with Mississippi Opera

as the costume designer and the cover for Micaela in their production of Carmen. She spent two summers as a training artist at the International Performing Arts Institute in Kiefersfelden, Germany while in graduate studies. Before that she earned her Bachelor of Music degree in Voice Performance from the University of Florida where she performed in Die Fledermaus (ensemble), Dido and Aeneas (Spirit), Suor Angelica (Suor Osmina), and a world premiere of a new opera, The Red Silk Thread (Cocachin cover).



**Deb Howard** retired from a career in affordable housing and community development and sought to join another choir, which would be both challenging and rewarding. She has been singing in choirs since she was five years old and has sung at Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church in both the Inspirational Ensemble and classic choirs for 40 years. After attending several concerts given by Melodia, she knew that this was the choir of which she wanted to be a part as the sound was so beautiful and the repertoire amazing! She is very glad to be in this wonderful choir!



**Stephanie Larriere** is grateful to have been part of this talented and powerful women ensemble since 2018 and to learn and reach new harmonies under the guidance of their company. Aside from singing, she is the director of a children language and Art program based in Brooklyn and a multi-disciplinary teaching artist.



**Colleen Maher** is so thrilled to be singing again with such an amazing and talented group of women in Melodia! She currently works in cancer research at one of NYC's hospitals. In her free time, Colleen enjoys gelato, biking, and taming all the feral cats in her backyard.



**Larissa Flint McDowell** has been singing in choirs since the age of eight. She moved from Wisconsin to New York in 2012 with her now-husband to pursue her Masters of Music from NYU Steinhardt in Voice Performance with a Music Theater Concentration. She graduated in 2014 and has continued to perform both on the stage and in choirs around NYC. She is a proud member of the Stonewall Chorale and a repeat performer in NYU's New Plays for Young Audiences series in June. For more information about her various performances, go to [www.larissaflint.com](http://www.larissaflint.com).



**Anna Newton** is originally from Atlanta, GA, and currently lives in Queens where she works remotely for Harvard Medical School. In her free time, she enjoys going to dance class and spending time outdoors.



**Nicole Owen** is thrilled to be making music with Melodia! Nicole loves choir so much she made it the focus of her education, culminating in a Master of Music degree in Choral Conducting from the University of Florida. Now working in marketing, she enjoys baking and decorating cakes, playing board games, visiting Disney parks, and spending quality time with friends. Nicole's favorite duet partner is her husband, Brian.



**Ashley Paskalis** had been singing with Melodia since fall 2010. Singing since grade school, Ashley studied vocal performance and sang in the Treble Choir at Wagner College, where she graduated in 2006 with a degree in Arts Administration. Currently working in healthcare media relations, she spends her free time playing softball and of course, singing with Melodia. She'd like to thank her NYC family for continuing to support our concerts.



**Chiara Pierangelo** is thrilled to be joining Melodia for this amazing spring concert. She started singing at a very young age in various vocal groups in her hometown of Padova, Italy: Baroque Ensemble "La Fonte d'Elicona"; "J.S. Bach" Choir; Concentus Musicus Patavinus (Choir of the University of Padova); Caterina Ensemble, Chroma Ensemble. Since 2009 she has been singing with "Cantus Anthimi", conducted by Livio Picotti, with which she made three recordings of Medieval music and Josquin Desprez's works. She is a founding member of "SolEnsemble", a female vocal group performing mostly a cappella medieval and contemporary music. Chiara earned a Master's in Ancient Greek Literature at the University of Padova and has been studying classical voice with Elisabetta Tiso, Francesco Signor, Rosetta Pizzo and Sandro Naglia.

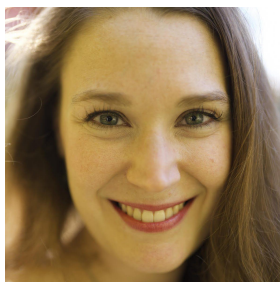


**Jeanne Ruskin** has appeared on Broadway, and in many roles for the Roundabout Theatre, regional theaters, summer stock, and television. She has taught acting, voice and speech in colleges and universities and as a private coach. She is founder/artistic director of RFTC, Inc/Red Flute Theatre, and has presented four productions to date, including "Awakenings", her dramatization of Kate Chopin's 1899 novel *The Awakening*. [www.awakeningsproduction.com](http://www.awakeningsproduction.com) As a teenager she toured South America with the Michigan Youth Chorale. She toured with the USO during the Vietnam years. She performed as Ma Joad in "The Grapes of Wrath" in Moscow. Her travels changed her life. She is very happy to be singing again in person with Melodia (of which she has been a member since 2010). Music is truly the international language and we need the arts now more than ever.



**Peggy Samuels** feels privileged to sing with such a talented group of women and is excited to be part of bringing new compositions and arrangements to life. She spent several decades teaching literature at Drew University, where she sang in the Drew University Choral Union. She and her husband, Lester, enjoy exploring the back roads of Vermont on their e-bikes. So grateful to be hearing these beautiful voices in person. Let music weave us together!





**Julie Schoonover** is a coloratura soprano studying voice with Sharla Nafziger and Carol Baggott-Forte. In New York, she has performed in concerts with Chelsea Musica and The Music and Medicine Choir and Orchestra at Weill Cornell, and on stage in *The Beggar's Opera* (ensemble) with the Morningside Opera Company, and *Così fan Tutte* (Despina) at Columbia University. In Europe, she performed in *L'Elisir d'Amore* (ensemble) with the Italian Operatic Experience, *Mireille* (Clémence) with the Compagnie Eleonore Jost, *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (ensemble) with L'Oeuvre d'Art Vivant. She currently practices as a family physician in a Federally Qualified Health Center in the Bronx.



Emily Segal has been a part of Melodia for a few years. She loves singing with this choir and to be a part of this very talented group of women! When not rehearsing, she peruses her longstanding interests in the arts and in live theatre. Spending time with her family is also something she loves to do.



Erin Siu is an editor and writer based in New York City. She joined Melodia Women's Choir as a Soprano 1 in 2020. Before Melodia, she sang with the NYU Steinhardt Women's Choir, and the San Francisco Girls Chorus for seven years. When she's not singing, you can find her playing piano, learning chords on her guitar, doing yoga, or cooking a bowl of ramen.



Sarah Woodruff is happy to be back with Melodia! She sang in multiple choirs during her time at Penn State University, and has been singing most of her life. After ten years in book publishing, she recently joined a Brooklyn-based environmental nonprofit to work on outreach around NYC's Curbside Composting program. She can frequently be found writing, hiking, and playing guitar.

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### **Institutional Supporters:**

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Special thanks to Erik Bottcher, New York City Council Member District 3.



Melodia's fall 2021 concert was made possible in part with funds from the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council and with public funds from Restart NY supported by the **New York State Council on the Arts** with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature and administered by LMCC.

**Donate to Melodia and help us find and sing music for women's voices** 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.melodiawomenschoirnyc.org](http://www.melodiawomenschoirnyc.org) or via Venmo: Melodia Women's Choir NYC @MelodiaWomensChoir. Your support truly makes a difference!

### **Special Thanks**

Special thanks to all those who have helped make this concert possible, including Antonio Truyols for Instrumental arrangements, Alva Bostick, stagementement; Michael Conwill for lighting; Cindy Cooper; Allison Sniffin; the staff at Holy Apostles Church, St. John's Lutheran Church and St. Luke in the Fields Church; and the Melodia Board of Directors for their endless help navigating the challenges of COVID19.

Postcard design: Jill Falcone Vedric

Thanks to Melodia singers for all the extras, including: Section leaders: Ashley Paskalis, Colleen Maher, Jeanne Ruskin, Jenny Clarke; program notes, Colleen Christi-Willett and Cynthia Powell; social media, Melodia singers.

### **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 July/August. Contact [melodiachoirNYC@gmail.com](mailto:melodiachoirNYC@gmail.com) to schedule an audition.

Melodia Women's Choir of NYC  
446 West 47<sup>th</sup> Street, 1B  
New York, NY 10036  
212-252-4134  
[www.melodiawomenschoirnyc.org](http://www.melodiawomenschoirnyc.org)  
[melodiachoirNYC@gmail.com](mailto:melodiachoirNYC@gmail.com)

### **Restaurants Recommendations**

**Melodia Women's Choir at Holy Apostles, 296 Ninth Ave. at 28<sup>th</sup> St, NYC**

#### **Immediate Vicinity**

##### **Chelsea Square**

Ninth Ave and W. 23 St., corner  
368 W 23rd St  
<https://menupages.com/chelsea-square-restaurant/368-w-23rd-st-new-york>  
(212) 691-5400  
Open 24 hours  
*One hundred percent everything diner*

##### **Grand Sichuan**

229 Ninth Ave  
Btw W. 24<sup>th</sup> St. and W. 25<sup>th</sup> St  
(212) 620-5200  
<http://www.grand-sichuan.com/>  
11:30 am to 11 pm  
*Delicious Sichuan dishes without a big bill; popular*

##### **Jun-Men Ramen Bar**

249 Ninth Avenue, New York, NY 10001  
Btw W 25th and W 26th  
<http://www.junmenramen.com/#home>  
646-852-6787  
Sun lunch 11:30AM-3PM; Sun dinner, Sun 5-10PM  
*Traditional ramen menu as well as unique flavors completed through high quality ingredients and attention.*

##### **Tequila Chitos Mexican Bar and Grill**

358 W 23rd St  
Btw Ninth Ave and Eighth Ave.

<https://www.tequilachitos.com/>

212-463-0535

Sun 3 pm to 11 pm

*Wide ranging Mexican fare*

**aRoqa**

206 Ninth Ave.

Btw W. 22 and W. 23

<https://aroganyc.com/>

646-678-5471

Sunday brunch: 11 am – 3 pm

Sunday dinner: 5 pm – 9:30 PM

*High-end Indian cuisine and fusion dishes*

*Outdoor seating*

**Harbs Chelsea**

198 Ninth Ave

Ninth Ave and W. 22, corner

646-336-6888

<https://www.harbsnyc.com/>

Sun: 11 am–8 pm

*Cakes, sandwiches, teas*

*Before the concert ...*

**Citizens of Chelsea**

401 W 25th St, New York 10001

W. 25th and 9th Ave

<https://citizens.coffee/theog>

(347)-554-7496

Sunday, 8:00am - 5:00pm

*Brunch, bowls, burgers, all day brekkies*

*Outdoor seating*

*Before the concert*

**Sullivan Street Bakery**

236 Ninth Ave

Btw W. 24 and W. 25 St.

<https://www.sullivanstreetbakery.com/location/chelsea-sullivan-street-bakery/>

212-929-5900

Sunday 8:00 am – 4 pm

*Fresh bread, rolls, Roman-style pizzas, and other treats*

*Before the concert ...*

**Tia Pol**

205 Tenth Ave.

Betw W. 22 and W.23  
<https://www.tiapol.com/>  
212-675-8805  
Sun- 12pm - 4 pm, 5 - 9:30 pm  
*Tapas from the richly varied regional cuisines of Spain*

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**Cookshop**  
156 Tenth Ave  
at W. 20th Street  
<https://www.cookshopny.com/>  
212.924.4440  
Brunch Sunday 10:00am-3:30pm  
Dinner Sunday 5pm-10pm  
*American fare, popular brunch, “energetic, greenmarket-driven hot spot” Reservations recommended*

**Lasagna Chelsea Restaurant**  
196 Eighth Ave  
Near W. 20th St  
<https://lasagnarestaurantchelsea.com/>  
212-242-4551  
Sun: 12 pm to 10 pm  
*17 different types of baked-to-order lasagnas, including vegan and gluten-free options, plus other Italian specialties*

**Motel Morris**  
132 Seventh Avenue  
Near W. 18th Street  
<https://www.motelmorris.com/>  
646-880-4810  
Brunch and Lunch Sunday: 11 am to 3:30 pm  
Dinner Sunday: 4 pm - 9 pm  
*Updated American classics in a retro motel setting; popular*

**Elmo**  
156 Seventh Ave, NYC  
W. 20 St and Seventh Ave  
<http://elmorerestaurant.com/>  
212-337-8000  
Sunday 10 am -11 pm  
*Popular, high-end comfort food  
Reservations recommended*

Special Thanks to: Joan Kane, Artistic Director, Ego Actus Theater  
Staying Put in New York Facebook Group