



**CHAMPAIGN-URBANA
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

Stephen Alltop, Music Director & Conductor

PROFESSIONAL ORCHESTRA IN RESIDENCE AT KRANNERT CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

VERDI REQUIEM

SATURDAY, MAY 2, 2026

**KRANNERT CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
Stephen Alltop, Music Director & Conductor**

**featuring the University of Illinois Choirs
Andrea Solya and Andrew Major, Directors
The Meredith Chamber Singers
Oratorio Society
Varsity Men's Glee Club
Women's Glee Club**



**Maestro Stephen Alltop
and the Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra
are honored to welcome
Paul Yarrington and The Meredith Foundation
to our performance of Verdi's *Requiem*,
featuring The Meredith Chamber Singers
and the choirs of the University of Illinois.**

CUSO is grateful for our artistic partnership with Dr. Andrea Solya, Dr. Andrew Major, and the University of Illinois Choirs, as we are joined by more than 250 choral musicians to perform Verdi's masterpiece, one of the most moving and memorable works of the choral repertoire. From the sublime beauty of soaring solo voices to the awe-inspiring power of the full orchestra with large chorus, Verdi's magnificent music reaches deep into our souls.

We thank The Meredith Foundation for their generous annual support of CUSO concerts, bringing the astounding joy of music to our community.

WELCOME

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Dear Friends,

The 2025-26 season has flown by with so many memorable moments.

Tonight you will experience one of the most dramatic and moving sacred pieces ever composed. This music was conceived to memorialize two giants of Italian culture for whom Verdi had profound respect: the composer Gioachino Rossini and author and statesman Alessandro Manzoni. Verdi poured his utmost passion and feeling into this music, and performers must do the same.

One of the greatest pleasures for our orchestra is to collaborate with the choral program of the University of Illinois, and conductors Dr. Andrea Solya and Dr. Andrew Major. The combined forces of the Meredith Chamber Singers, the Oratorio Society, the Women's Glee Club and Varsity Men's Glee Club join together in service of Verdi's inspired music.

I first performed this masterwork as a choir member at the Eastman School of Music. How thrilling that so many of these talented singers are having their first experience with the *Missa da Requiem* this week. We are also joined by a quartet of wonderful soloists for whom the composer has written such heartfelt and compelling music.

Thank you for being a part of this season finale concert and for supporting great music in our community.

Stephen Alltop
Music Director and Conductor



CHAMPAIGN-URBANA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Stephen Alltop, Music Director & Conductor

CUSO is the professional orchestra in residence at the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts and is a member of the League of American Orchestras, the Illinois Council of Orchestras, the American Society of Composers, Authors & Publishers (ASCAP), and Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI). CUSO is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

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CHAMPAIGN-URBANA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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CELEBRATING 66 SEASONS OF LOCAL MUSIC



PROFESSIONAL ORCHESTRA IN RESIDENCE AT KRANNERT CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

1959

The Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra has been bringing music performed by local professional musicians to our community since 1959. In 1988, we were honored to be named the professional orchestra in residence at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts. Over the years, CUSO has performed more than 400 concerts to appreciative audiences. Under the leadership of Music Director and Conductor Stephen Alltop, the orchestra has earned a reputation for performance excellence. When Krannert Center patrons were asked in 2024 to name their most memorable performances, CUSO ranked in the top three on the survey, alongside Yo-Yo Ma and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Last season, CUSO concerts set records for audience attendance, bringing stunning music to more than 7,000 music-lovers of all ages. CUSO Youth Concerts have introduced thousands of grade school children to the magic of live orchestral music, inspiring the next generation to appreciate this extraordinary music.

For the past 67 years, CUSO has thrived with community support. The orchestra is an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and receives no funding from Krannert Center or the University of Illinois. Like most orchestras, more than 60% of our budget is funded by the generous support of sponsors and donors.

Your donation makes CUSO performances of great orchestral music by local musicians possible!

For information on how to donate or to make your donation online, scan the code to visit our website. You can also call the CUSO office at 217-351-9139. Thank you for support!





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2025-2026 Concert Sponsorship Gifts

The Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra gratefully recognizes these donors who have made sponsorship gifts for the performances of the 2025-2026 season.

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(\$10,000 sponsorships)

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(Happy Birthday, America!)

Anastasia Economy
in memory of James Economy
(The Thrill of the Orchestra)

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Richard and Judith Kaplan
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Anne and David Sharpe
(Verdi's "Requiem")

Iris Swanson
(Verdi's "Requiem")

Ruth Wyman
(Happy Birthday, America!)

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(Good Tidings! Holiday Concert)

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(Good Tidings! Holiday Concert)

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(Happy Birthday, America!)

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Verdi's "Requiem")*

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*(Timothy Ehlen, piano
The Thrill of the Orchestra)*

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(\$2,000 sponsorship)

Jane and Chris Scherer
(CUSO Youth Concerts at KCPA)

MAESTRO CIRCLE MEMBERS

2025-2026 Maestro Circle Members

The Maestro Circle recognizes donations of \$1,000 or more for the current season. CUSO gratefully acknowledges these donors for their support of the programs and performances of the 2025-2026 season, with gifts made to CUSO and the Guild from April 4, 2025 through April 22, 2026.

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2025-2026 Season Donations

The Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra warmly thanks these community members for their gifts made to CUSO and the Guild from April 4, 2025 through April 22, 2026 to support the programs and performances of the 2025-2026 season.

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It is with sincere gratitude that we recognize donations to CUSO and the Guild in the past 12 months for memorials and gifts made in honor of an individual for a birthday, anniversary, or special occasion.

In Memory of Ronayne “Ron” Cowan

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Walter and Jane Myers
Iris Swanson
Jane Swarr
Peter Tomaras

In Memory of Eric Dalheim

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In Memory of Diane Dold

Lyle and Paulette Brock
Susan and Andy Crawford
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In Memory of James Economy

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In Memory of Wolfgang Haken and Anna-Irmgard Haken

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Mars Gentry
Gerri Kirchner
Priscilla Kron and Gerald Frye
Walter and Jane Myers
Alice Vernon

In Memory of Joan Mary Shack

Daniel Michelson

In Memory of Claire Skaperdas

Walter and Jane Myers

In Memory of Case Sprenkle

Walter and Jane Myers

In Memory of Ina Tomaras

Peter Tomaras

In Memory of Jack Waaler

Byron and Jeanne Balbach
Kenneth and Mary Beth
Mary Gentry
Gregory and Rhonda Gilmer
Linda Goble
Brenda Kimble
Gerri Kirchner
Walter and Jane Myers
Nancy Rader
Sharon Scott
Annilee Shaul

In Memory of Dan Wheatman

Susan and Gerald Crawford

MUSIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR



STEPHEN ALLTOP

Stephen Alltop is celebrating his thirteenth season as Music Director and Conductor of the Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra. In 2022, he received the Conductor of the Year Award from the Illinois Council of Orchestras for his work with CUSO. He also serves as Music Director of the Apollo Chorus of Chicago and the Elmhurst Symphony Orchestra. Dr. Alltop has been a member of Northwestern University's conducting and keyboard faculties since 1994. His recent projects at Northwestern have included conducting the world premiere recording of Stacy Garrop's oratorio *Terra Nostra* for Cedille Records, and leading Handel's *Alcina* and Monteverdi's *The Coronation of Poppea*.

Stephen Alltop has appeared with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra as both a harpsichord and organ soloist, and performs frequently with Chicago's Music of The Baroque. He has appeared with Boston's Handel and Haydn Society and the Chicago Bach Project, Chicago Sinfonietta, Grant Park Symphony Orchestra, Joffrey Ballet, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, Omaha Symphony, and the Peninsula Music Festival and Ravinia Festival. Dr. Alltop served as coordinator and performer for WFMT's Chicago Bach Organ Project in the fall of 2014, a live performance series of all of Bach's organ works, and the WFMT Bach Keyboard Festival in the fall of 2015. His recordings are on the Albany, American Gramophone, Cedille, and Clarion labels.

Dr. Alltop has performed with many leading musicians and actors of our time, including Hilary Hahn, Orli Shaham, Tony Randall, Martin Sheen, and Brian Dennehy. He has prepared ensembles for the Ravinia Festival, Chicago Opera Theater, The Oprah Winfrey Show, Star Wars in Concert, Lollapalooza, and Josh Groban on Tour.

(continued on page 16)



THE ORCHESTRA

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Stephen Alltop, Conductor
[Margaret C. Goodman Memorial Chair]
Frances Ho, Assistant Conductor

FIRST VIOLIN

Maria Arrua, Concertmaster
[Homer Schmitt Memorial Chair]
Qimao Li,
Acting Associate Concertmaster
Luke Brann
Wei-Ting Chen
Noel Chi
Maiya Favis
Sierra Freund
Frantz Kjoniksen
Joe Madden
Armine Mortimer

SECOND VIOLIN

Bethany McClatchey, Principal
[Raymond E. Williams Memorial Chair]
Armgard Haken, Associate Principal
Jacy Jacobus
Alice Lee
Johnny Lusardi
Geoffrey Muckenhirn
Juliana Scofield
Abby Tolar

VIOLA

Erin Rafferty, Principal
[Wyndham J. Roberts Memorial Chair]
Isaac Henry, Associate Principal
[Ernest and Lois Gullerud Endowed Chair]
Noah Brown
Esteban Jaimes
Andreas Ruiz-Gehrt
Rebecca Saul

CELLO

Barbara Hedlund, Principal
[CUSO Guild Memorial Chair]
Frances Reedy, Associate Principal
[Carl and Nadja Altstetter Endowed Chair]
Andrew Gagliu
Kristen Johns
Oskar Norell
Zora Yo

BASS

Andrew French, Principal
Margaret Briskin
Todd Gallagher
Kristina Lee

FLUTE

Amanda Pond, Acting Principal
*[Thomas and Barbara Page
Memorial Chair]*
Farah Zolghadr
Ellen Elrick

PICCOLO

Ellen Elrick

OBOE

John Dee, Principal
*[Margaret R. and Michael Grossman
Endowed Chair]*
Peggy Grossman

CLARINET

Emily Cook, Acting Principal
Solomon Baer

BASSOON

Ben Roidl-Ward, Principal
Claire Taylor
Winfred Felton
Christine Breeden

HORN

Rebecca Salo, Principal
Nolan Turner
Christopher Woosley
Jancie Harris
Mary Monaghan, Assistant

TRUMPET

Charles Daval, Acting Principal
Tracy Parish
Robin Heltsley
Joshua Dolney

OFF-STAGE TRUMPET

Payton Borich
Nathanael Boston
Grayden Fields
Simon Heck

TROMBONE

Jonathan Whitaker, Principal
Matt Williamson
Reid Lasley

TUBA

Mark Moore, Principal

TIMPANI

William Moersch, Principal

PERCUSSION

Ricardo Flores, Principal

The Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra
acknowledges support from the Illinois Arts Council.

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CHORAL DIRECTORS



ANDREA SOLYA

Andrea Solya, DMA, is Director of Choral Studies and Teaching Professor of Choral Music at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where she is director of the UI Meredith Chamber Singers and Women's Glee Club. She teaches choral conducting and literature to undergraduate and graduate students. In addition to her duties at the University of Illinois, she serves as the Artistic Director of the Central Illinois Youth Chorus.

Each summer she teaches musicianship, conducting and choral methodology in the Master's program of the Kodály Institute at Capital University in Columbus, Ohio. Dr. Solya's research interests include the choral music of Andreas Rauch (1592-1656), as well as the art of teaching sight singing to the choral singer and beyond. She has performed and presented on national and international stages and is contributing author of *Choral Repertoire by Women Composers*, published by GIA Publications.

Under her direction, the UI Women's Glee Club has received numerous concert invitations and has undertaken memorable tours to Nashville, New Orleans, Atlanta and New York City. The UI Women's Glee Club also appears on renowned composer Augusta Read Thomas's CD recording, *Astral Canticle*, released by Nimbus Records.

Dr. Solya is a member of the National Board at the National Collegiate Choral Organization and serves as the Collegiate Repertoire and Standards Chair of the Midwest division of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA). She is the coordinator of the "Lift Every Voice" Symposium that takes place every other year at the University of Illinois, which is created for underrepresented junior and senior choral conductors and co-sponsored by ACDA.



ANDREW MAJOR

Andrew Major is a dynamic choral artist committed to crafting narrative concert experiences that explore the complexities of life in the 21st century. Hailing from Bozeman, Montana, Andrew has a proven track record of culturally relevant programming, innovative collaborations, and community building as the artistic director of *Roots in the Sky*, an amateur-turned-professional chamber choir he founded in 2012 as an undergraduate at Montana State University. In addition to his work with *Roots in the Sky*, Andrew

serves on faculty at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he helps administer a comprehensive choral program that serves more than 400 singers. At UIUC, Andrew teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in choral conducting and literature and directs the Varsity Men's Glee Club and the Oratorio Society, a symphonic choir comprising students, staff, faculty, and community members of all stripes.

Andrew holds graduate degrees in choral conducting from the Bienen School of Music (DMA and MM) at Northwestern University, where he studied with GRAMMY Award-winning conductor Donald Nally. During his doctoral residency, Andrew was the assistant conductor of the school's flagship choral ensemble and during the pandemic served as chorus master for Northwestern Opera Theatre's pioneering, virtual production of Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*. Andrew served as the assistant conductor of the Apollo Chorus of Chicago during their 150th anniversary season, helping to prepare performances of Handel's *Messiah*, Bach's *St. John Passion*, and Stacy Garrop's *Terra Nostra* as well as preparing members of the Apollo Chorus for performances of Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito* and *Don Giovanni* with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at the 2022 Ravinia Festival.

An active ensemble singer, Andrew's recent and upcoming engagements include performances with Music of the Baroque, the Grant Park Symphony Chorus, Chicago Opera Theater, *Stare at the Sun*, and with the GRAMMY Award-winning chamber choir *The Crossing*. For his 2025-26 season, Andrew will join *The Crossing* for performances with the Boston Symphony and Philadelphia Orchestra and will also prepare the University of Illinois Oratorio Society for performances of the Duruflé and Verdi Requiems and Poulenc's *Gloria*. A dedicated advocate for new works, Andrew recently conducted the U.S. premiere of Karin Rehnqvist's *Silent Earth* with the University of Illinois Oratorio Society and Symphony Orchestra.



Dr. Alltop has guest conducted numerous orchestras and choruses across the United States, Europe, and South Korea. In June of 2022, he stepped in on three-hours notice to lead the Grant Park Symphony Orchestra in a program of Beethoven, Schubert and Tchaikovsky broadcast live on WFMT Radio. He returned to the Grant Park Symphony Orchestra in August of 2023. He has worked closely with leading composers of the day, including residency projects with John Corigliano, Eleanor Daley, Stacy Garrop, Stephen Paulus and Eric Whitacre, and has conducted world premieres of works by John Luther Adams, Joseph Schwantner, Frank Ferko, Fabrizio Festa, Stacy Garrop, Stephen Paulus, and many others. In 2007, he made his Carnegie Hall debut conducting the music of Eric Whitacre.

He has conducted opera and orchestral concerts with a number of Italian orchestras, including I Soloisti di Perugia, Fondazione Arturo Toscanini (Bologna), Teatro Reggio Orchestra (Parma), Festival Mozart (Roverto), Orchestra Sinfonica (Bari), Teatro Piccinni (Bari), and the Festival Duni (Matera). In June of 2025, he led an all-American concert with Choeur Arsis in Fribourg, Switzerland.

Dr. Alltop lectures frequently for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Northwestern University Alumnae Continuing Education Series, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, and other organizations. Since 2014, he has given presentations on leadership for various programs in the Kellogg School of Management.

Stephen is an avid squash player and baseball fan. His latest fitness goal is to do fifty 5k races (17 still to go).



MEREDITH CHAMBER SINGERS

The University of Illinois Meredith Chamber Singers is the premier vocal ensemble of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, dedicated to the highest standards of choral artistry. Comprising advanced undergraduate and graduate singers, the ensemble specializes in a diverse repertoire, spanning Renaissance polyphony, masterworks of the choral canon, and contemporary compositions.

Known for its expressive performances and musical excellence, the Meredith Chamber Singers frequently collaborate with Illinois faculty, guest artists, perform at prestigious events, and engage in national and international tours. Through innovative programming and refined vocal technique, the ensemble continues to uphold the rich choral tradition of the University of Illinois. Our choir is generously supported by the Meredith Foundation and this performance concludes a wonderful first year of collaborations in music making.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS MEREDITH CHAMBER SINGERS

Andrea Solya, director

Jessica Mattiace, graduate assistant conductor

Andrey Ivanov, collaborative piano

SOPRANO

Cyanne Chan
Lila Dettelback
Jana Dinkeloo
Yoojin Jung
Sophia Katsma
Grace Kreps
Lily Mammaing
Levi Petrine
Whitley Smith
Sasha Van Den Berg

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Liz Brennecke
Amelia Cosenza
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Tingdan Deng
Jessica Mattiace
Dahlia Medvinsky
Esme Pelton
Xinyu Wu
Tsoi Yi Yeung

TENOR

Christopher Commiso
Christian Diaz
Santiago He
Tian Hu
Guandong Lin
Zihao Liu
Sam Naatz
Nick Pierle
Simon Tiffin

BASS

Graham Carlson
Owen Gonzalez
Hunter Merriman
Lukas Nederloe
Nick Schroeder
Wilmer Smilde
Samuel Stephenson
Albert Tay
Nathan Tilton



VARSITY MEN'S GLEE CLUB

Founded in 1886, the Varsity Men's Glee Club is the oldest recognized Registered Student Organization on campus, and from its beginning, has upheld a standard of musical excellence and brotherhood that continues today. As the premiere all-male choral ensemble, the Varsity Men's Glee Club consists of both undergraduate and graduate students who are gathered for their love of music and passion for singing. Members serve as ambassadors of the University of Illinois while participating in numerous U.S. and international tours and campus events.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS VARSITY MEN'S GLEE CLUB

Barrington Coleman, director

Andrew Major, director

Samuel Stephenson, graduate assistant conductor

Saffion Chung, collaborative piano

TENOR 1

Storm Benjamin
Cooper Coker
Seth Carl
Alex Kaufman
Joshua Knehans
Cailan Scire
Joseph Timberlake
Max Wanger
Albert Wei
Victor Williams
Elijah Yang
Michael Yang
Luke Zeng

TENOR 2

Brandon Chrones
Charlie Dilman
Kriteyuu Duggal
Charles Francis
Aidan Gister
Simon Li
Vinnie Magsombol
Anish Mukherjee
Finn Ormond
Jack Peng
Nibaw Robertson
Damian Vergara Salinas
Jacob Zhang
Peter Zhang
Shawn Zhang

BASS 1

Joshua De La Cruz
Michael Frerichs
Ian Meek
Dominic Mini
Logan McNichols
Zach Mullins
Samuel Pluister
Dalton Sala
Ray Scifres
Adam Shane
William Sieroslowski
August Strutzel
Surajh Yogeswaran
Evan Wang
Ethan Wankel
Jerry Zhang

BASS 2

Maxwell Bartlett
Kevin Brown
Robert Childs
Saffion Chung
Fritz Holsteen
Brody Kimmel
Arthur Kot
Jack Larson
Sean Marshall
Alex Mrazek
Jake Ning
David Sianghio
Tony Wu
Michael Wagner
Nathaniel Wiesbrook

WOMEN'S GLEE CLUB

Founded in 1895, the UI Women's Glee Club (WGC) is the premier treble choir at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The choir performs a wide variety of repertoire chosen from all periods and styles of Western art music but also includes works from other cultures. Membership is by audition and includes mostly undergraduates from all majors with approximately an even division between music majors and non-majors. This fine treble ensemble regularly performs major choral works with Sinfonia da Camera and the Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra. They have appeared at divisional and national conferences and enjoyed memorable tours to Nashville, New Orleans, Atlanta and New York City.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS WOMEN'S GLEE CLUB

Andrea Solya, director

Nick Pierle, graduate assistant conductor

Andrey Ivanov, collaborative piano

SOPRANO 1

Zach Ball
Molly Banos
Zoe Bohannon
Francesca Butera
Olivia Diericks
Belle Defanis
Tess Engerman
Angie Escarcida
Christine Ilo
Ashlin Jackson
Ellie Kollmeyer
Emily Kyroudīs
Marley Lammers
Nora Maier
Sydney Miller
Ariana Mizan
Kassidy Mullins
Rheann Pinley
Amabel Sebastian
Eleanor Stanton
Meghan Sullivan
Alyssa Thomas
Kira Trapkus
Rachel Wakelin

SOPRANO 2

Noreen Adoni
Siya Balapal
Margot Burm
Rachel Carlin
Gianna Casanova
Ange Chang
Keira Croegaert
Ellie Davidson
Dinah Garner
Lin Gilbertz
Nina Hannon
Mia Heinzel
Karis Kim
Mina Kostic
Alexa Lis
Anastasia Lucenko
Lauren Maher
Melania Mazur
Maggie McCabe
Shriya Navneetha
Lia O'Malley
Julia Pappalardo
Lexi Plonsker
Francine Posadas
Aarushi Sharma
Faith Shepherd
Lauren Storm
Julia Tejeda
Rachel Tseng

ALTO 1

Stella Catalano
Marianne Ciomek
Savindi Devmal
Lia Di Cola
Ysabella Dionisio
Maija Flannery
Ryann Gordon
Maggie Hancock
Isabella Hoerner
Avery Iiams
Kyriaki Karavasis
Elisha Karottu
Olivia Kawakita
Kaelyn Kmieciak
Gabriella Longo
Hazel Lu
Amelia McMahan
Ella McMahan
Simona Mickeviciute
Pippa Moody
Emory Naylor
Pearle Peterson
Melanie Poppewell
Lucy Roller
Iman Scire
Pavitra Shankar
Anna Sick
Madalynn Tymkiw
Reese Van Harlingen
Clara Williams

ALTO 2

Allison Adler
Addi Barclay
Amelia Bell
Grace Best
Ava Bogner
Lily Borkowicz
Marin Chalmers
Gabriella DalSanto
Natalie Dushane
Paige Greve
Lydia Issa
Devina Joshi
Ghantharini
Kanagasabapathi
Eirini Karavasis
Grace Kelly
Madison Lagasca
Morgan Lease
Emily Masters
Maria Paradies
Anna Polasky
Katie Puente
Meryl Resurreccion
Ava Saldana
Grace Sletten
Anna Slowinski
Ileana Stremsterfer
Kaylie Tribble
Bella Wang
Lai Wei



ORATORIO SOCIETY



The Oratorio Society is the symphonic choir of the University of Illinois. Conducted by Dr. Andrew Major, the ensemble brings together students, faculty, staff, and community members to perform significant works of the choral-orchestral repertory at a high level of artistic excellence.

Recent seasons have included collaborations with the finest local orchestras, including the University of Illinois Symphony Orchestra, Sinfonia da Camera, and the Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra, performing works including Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, Mozart's *Requiem*, and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*. Oratorio Society is also committed to discovering and presenting important new works. In 2015, they gave the world premiere of Lewis Spratlan's *Of War*, and in 2025 they presented the US premiere of Karin Rehnqvist's *Silent Earth*.

Concerts and rehearsals are enriched by the diversity of the members' life experiences — but all the singers of the Oratorio Society share a common passion for musical excellence and a belief in the ability of great choral music to transform the lives of those who perform and those who listen.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS ORATORIO SOCIETY

Andrew Major, conductor

Nick Pierle, graduate assistant conductor

Simon Tiffin, collaborative piano

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Lisa Anderson
Grace Beumler
Tori Boyle
Jessica Dager
Morgan Doud
Jennie Eagle
Laura Gray
Madison Hussey
Allyson Imig
Linda Hamman Moore
Roxanne Munch
Katlyn Ochs
Sabrina Ortiz Vazquez
Meghan Pierce
Naomi Saathoff
Heather Schultz
Haley Sechan
Peyton Sorensen
Yinglun Sun
Sylvia Techmanski
Stephanie Tillman
Angie Tomita

ALTO

Zoe Ahluwalia
Elena Andrews
Paula Bachman
Alexis Baldwin
Sophia Bengtson
Ellen Brewer
Melinda Burden
Marsha Clinard
Naomi Cobb
Susan Cobb
Barbara Curtis
Anne Ellison
Emily Hackett
Colleen Hammel
Margaret Harper
Madison Hussey
Allyson Imig
Jane Kuntz
Luisa Matzner
Marissa Michael
Libbie Morley
Weiran Ren
Kathy Richards
Robin Sahner
Mary Sanderson
Haley Sechan
Stella Shiffrin
Janice Shiu
Kathie Spegal
Meelie Stephens
Iris Swanson
Susan Teicher
Karen Tow
Amy Tram
Lisa Travis
Joanne Vician
Irene Wilken
Gaye Wong
Xiangtian Zhao

TENOR

Tony An
Maia Battis-Wyatt
Pasquale Bottalico
Rob Chambers
Yaman Erzurumlu
Jorge Garcia
Gideon Ghartey
Nathan Hayes
Eric Ives
Salvadore Macias
Nick Pierle
Kirsten Pullen
Derryl Singley
Ada Stelzer
Sebastian Stirnkorb
Stephen Taylor
Simon Tiffin
June Welker
David Willcox
Grant Witynski

BASS

Raymond T. Anderson
Ted Bachman
George Bell
Kenneth Buchanan
Bradley Burla
Bill Busen
Felix Chan
Terry England
Kelly Findley
Abraham Frank
Brpmspm Kprdam
Richard L. Kaplan
Mathias Kronlund
Isaak Kumar
James Kumar
Florian Loizl
Richard McClary
Chris Petterson
Matthew Salek
Tristan Steffen
Sam Tillman
Jacob Tolar
Eric Toliver
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VERDI REQUIEM

THE CHAMPAIGN-URBANA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Stephen Alltop, Music Director & Conductor

Concert No. 323, May 2, 2026 | 7:30 pm

Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, Foellinger Great Hall

Stephen Alltop, conductor

Meredith Chamber Singers, Andrea Solya, director

Oratorio Society, Andrew Major, director

Varsity Men's Glee Club, Andrew Major, chorusmaster

Women's Glee Club, Andrea Solya, director

Laura Strickling, soprano

Susan Platts, mezzo-soprano

Norman Reinhardt, tenor

Stephen Clark, bass

Giuseppe Verdi

(1813-1901)

Requiem Mass

Requiem and Kyrie

Dies irae

Dies irae

Tuba mirum

Mors stupebit

Liber scriptus

Quid sum miser

Rex tremendae

Recordare

Ingemisco

Confutatis

Lacrimosa

Offertory: Domine Jesu Christe

Sanctus

Agnus Dei

Lux aeterna

Libera me

Text and translations begin on page 24.

Requiem will be performed without intermission.

TEXT AND TRANSLATIONS

VERDI'S REQUIEM MASS

REQUIEM AND KYRIE

Chorus and Solo Quartet

| | |
|--|--|
| Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine: et lux perpetua luceat eis. | Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord; and let perpetual light shine upon them. |
| Te decet hymnus Deus in Sion, et tibi reddetur votum in Jerusalem: exaudi orationem meam, ad te omnis caro veniet. | To you we owe our hymn of praise, O God, in Sion; to you must vows be fulfilled in Jerusalem. Hear my prayer; to you all flesh must come. |
| Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine: et lux perpetua luceat eis. | Eternal rest give to them, O Lord; and let perpetual light shine upon them. |
| Kyrie eleison. Christe eleison. Kyrie eleison. | Lord, have mercy on us. Christ, have mercy on us. Lord, have mercy on us. |

DIES IRAE

Chorus

| | |
|--|---|
| Dies irae, dies illa, Solvat saeculum in favilla: Teste David cum Sibylla. | Day of wrath, day of anger when the world will dissolve in ashes, as foretold by David and the Sibyl. |
| Quantus tremor est futurus, Quando iudex est venturus, Cuncta stricte discussurus! | There will be great trembling when the judge descends from heaven to scrutinize all things. |

TUBA MIRUM

Chorus

| | |
|--|--|
| Tuba mirum spargens sonum Per sepulcra regionum, Coget omnes ante thronum. | The trumpet will send its wondrous sound into the earth's sepulchres and gather all before the throne. |
|--|--|

MORS STUPEBIT

Bass

Mors stupebit et natura,
Cum resurget creatura,
Judicanti responsura.

Death and nature will be astounded,
when all creation rises again
to answer to judgment.

LIBER SCRIPTUS

Mezzo-soprano and Chorus

Liber scriptus proferetur,
In quo totum continetur,
Unde mundus judicetur.

A book will be brought forth,
in which all is written,
by which the world will be judged.

Judex ergo cum sedebit,
Quidquid latet, apparebit:
Nil inultum remanebit.

When the judge takes his place,
what is hidden will be revealed,
nothing will remain unavenged.

Dies irae, dies illa,
Solvat saeculum in favilla:
Teste David cum Sibylla.

Day of wrath, day of anger
when the world will dissolve in ashes,
as foretold by David and the Sibyl.

QUID SUM MISER

Soprano, Mezzo-soprano, Tenor, and Chorus

Quid sum miser tunc dicturus?
Quem patronum rogaturus?
Cum vix justus sit securus?

What shall a wretch like me say?
Who shall intercede for me,
when even the just ones need mercy?

REX TREMENDAE

Chorus and Solo Quartet

Rex tremendae majestatis,
Qui salvandos salvas gratis,
Salva me, fons pietatis.

King of tremendous majesty,
who freely saves the worthy ones,
save me, source of mercy.

RECORDARE

Soprano and Mezzo-Soprano

Recordare, Jesu pie,
Quod sum causa tuae viae:
Ne me perdas illa die.

Remember, sweet Jesus,
that my salvation caused your suffering;
do not forsake me on that day.

Quarens me, sedisti lassus:
Redemisti crucem passus:
Tantus labor non sit cassus.

Faint and weary you have sought me,
redeemed me, suffering on the cross;
may such great effort not be in vain.

Juste judex ultionis,
Donum fac remissionis,
Ante diem rationis.

Righteous judge of vengeance,
grant me absolution
before the day of retribution.

INGEMISCO

Tenor

Ingemisco, tamquam reus:
Culpa rubet vultus meus:
Supplicanti parce Deus.

I groan as one who is guilty:
owning my shame with a red face;
suppliant before you, Lord.

Qui Mariam absolvisti,
Et latronem exaudisti,
Mihi quoque spem dedisti.

You, who absolved Mary,
and listened to the thief,
give me hope, too.

Preces meae non sunt dignae:
Sed tu bonus fac benigne,
Ne perenni cremer igne.

My prayers are unworthy,
but, good Lord, have mercy,
and rescue me from eternal fire.

Inter oves locum praesta,
Et ab haedis me sequestra,
Statuens in parte dextra.

Give me a place with the sheep,
and separate me from the goats;
lead me to your right hand.

CONFUTATIS

Bass and Chorus

Confutatis maledictis,
Flammis acribus addictis,
Voca me cum benedictis.

When the accused are confounded,
and doomed to flames of woe,
call me among the blessed.

Oro supplex et acclinis,
Cor contritum quasi cinis:
Gere curam mei finis.

I kneel with submissive heart,
my contrition is like ashes,
help me in my final state.

Dies irae, dies illa,
Solvat saeculum in favilla:
Teste David cum Sibylla.

Day of wrath, day of anger
when the world will dissolve in ashes,
as foretold by David and the Sibyl.

LACRIMOSA

Solo Quartet and Chorus

Lacrimosa dies illa,
Qua resurget ex favilla
Judicandus homo reus:
Huic ergo parce Deus.
Pie Jesu Domine
Dona eis requiem.
Amen.

That day of tears and mourning,
when from ashes shall arise
all humanity to be judged.
Spare us by your mercy, God.
Gentle Lord Jesus,
grant them eternal rest.
Amen.

DOMINE JESU CHRISTE

Solo Quartet

Domine Jesu Christe, Rex gloriae,
libera animas omnium fidelium
defunctorum de poenis inferni,
et de profundo lacu;
libera eas de ore leonis,
ne absorbeat eas tartarus,
ne cadant in obscurum:
sed signifer sanctus Michael
repraesentet eas in lucem sanctam:
Quam olim Abrahae promisisti,
et semini ejus.

Hostias et precis tibi Domine
laudis offerimus:
tu suscipe pro animabus illis,
quarum hodie memoriam facimus:
fac eas, Domine, de morte
transire ad vitam.
Quam olim Abrahae promisisti,
et semini ejus.

Libera animas omnium fidelium
defunctorum de poenis inferni.
Fac eas de morte transire ad vitam.

O Lord Jesus Christ, King of Glory,
deliver the souls of all the faithful
departed from the pains of hell
and from the bottomless pit;
deliver them from the lion's mouth,
that hell swallow them not up,
that they fall not into darkness,
but let the holy standard-bearer Michael
bring them into that holy light which
you promised of old to Abraham and
to his seed.

We offer you, O Lord, sacrifices and
prayers of praise;
receive them in behalf of those souls we
commemorate this day.
Grant them, O Lord, to pass from death
to that life
which you promised of old to Abraham
and to his seed.

Deliver the souls of all the faithful
departed from the pains of hell.
Grant them to pass from death to life.

SANCTUS

Double Chorus

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus,
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.
Hosanna in excelsis.
Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.

Hosanna in excelsis.

Holy, holy, holy,
Lord God of Hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name
of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

AGNUS DEI

Soprano, Mezzo-soprano, and Chorus

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi:
dona eis requiem.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi:
dona eis requiem.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi:
dona eis requiem sempiternam.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins
of the world:
grant them rest.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins
of the world:
grant them rest.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins
of the world:
grant them eternal rest.



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LUX AETERNA

Mezzo-soprano, Tenor, and Bass

| | |
|---|---|
| Lux aeterna luceat eis, Domine: | May eternal light shine upon them, O Lord, |
| Cum sanctis tuis in aeternum, quia pius es. | with your saints forever, for you are gracious. |
| Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis. | Eternal rest give to them, O Lord; and let perpetual light shine upon them: |
| Cum sanctis tuis in aeternum, quia pius es. | with your saints forever, for you are gracious. |

LIBERA ME

Soprano and Chorus

| | |
|--|---|
| Libera me Domine de morte aeterna, in die illa tremenda: Quando coeli movendi sunt et terra: | Deliver me, O Lord, from everlasting death on that day of terror: When the heavens and the earth will be shaken. |
| Dum veneris judicare saeculum per ignem. | As you come to judge the world by fire. |
| Tremens factus sum ego, et timeo, dum discussio vererit, atque ventura ira. | I am in fear and trembling at the judgment and the wrath that is to come. |
| Quando coeli movendi sunt et terra. | When the heavens and the earth will be shaken. |
| Dies irae, dies illa, calamitatis et miseriae, dies magna et amara valde. | That day will be a day of wrath, of misery, and of ruin: a day of grandeur and great horror. |
| Dum veneris judicare saeculum per ignem. | As you come to judge the world by fire. |
| Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine: et lux perpetua luceat eis. | Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord; and let perpetual light shine upon them. |
| Libera me Domine de morte aeterna, in die illa tremenda: Quando coeli movendi sunt et terra: | Deliver me, O Lord, from everlasting death on that day of terror: When the heavens and the earth will be shaken. |
| dum veneris judicare saeculum per ignem. | As you come to judge the world by fire. |
| Libera me. | Deliver me. |

GUEST SOLOISTS



LAURA STRICKLING

Soprano Laura Strickling received two GRAMMY® award nominations in the Best Classical Vocal Solo Album category and widespread critical acclaim for her solo albums, *40@40* (2024) and *Confessions* (2022): "...a compellingly honest performer, whose rich, expressive soprano conveys vulnerability with a balance of shimmering tone and unaffected diction," (*Opera News Magazine*). Celebrated for her work performing and promoting

art song, with an emphasis on new additions to the canon through her landmark *40@40 Project*, she is the host of *SongCycle* podcast, has been featured twice in *Classical Singer Magazine*, and curates song anthology publications for *NewMusicShelf*. Equally acclaimed for her work on the concert stage, her, "powerful and expressive voice across a large range, her variety of timbre and character," (*Classical Scene*), make her a welcome guest soloist for a versatile range of chamber, oratorio, concert, and opera works. These include *Fourth Symphony* (Mahler) with San Antonio Philharmonic, Knoxville Symphony, and Rockford Symphony, *Ninth Symphony* (Beethoven) with Seattle Symphony and Elgin Symphony, *Bachianas Brasileiras* (Villa-Lobos) with San Antonio Philharmonic, *Messiah* (Handel) with Indianapolis Symphony, Pacific Symphony, and Richmond Symphony, *Gloria* (Poulenc) with Asheville Symphony, *Requiem* (Verdi) with Consonance, *Mass in c minor* (Mozart) with Richmond Symphony, Cathedral Choral Society, *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* (Barber) with Norwalk Symphony Orchestra and Mexicoliederfest, *Elijah* (Mendelssohn) with Berkshire Choral International, and *Luonnotar* (Sibelius) and *Les Illuminations* (Britten) with Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra.

Ms. Strickling also works extensively in modern opera and created the role of the evil Dr. Slade in the nine-episode opera film, "Everything for Dawn" with Experiments in Opera, which received its broadcast premiere in a collaboration between AllArts and Opera Philadelphia. Her performance of Libby Larsen's *Songs from Letters* with Opera Moderne was lauded by *The New York Times* for her "flexible voice, crystalline diction, and warm presence." A Chicago native, Ms. Strickling is an avid traveler, having lived in Fez (Morocco), Kabul (Afghanistan), and for the past nine years in St. Thomas (U.S. Virgin Islands). She recently relocated to Wisconsin where she is learning to appreciate cheese, beer, and being cold. www.laurastrickling.com

SUSAN PLATTS

British born Canadian mezzo-soprano Susan Platts brings a uniquely rich and wide-ranging voice to the concert and recital repertoire. She is particularly esteemed for her performances of Gustav Mahler's works. She is a Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative Fellow, which gave her the opportunity to study with world-renowned soprano Jessye Norman.



Ms. Platts has performed with, amongst others, the Philadelphia, Cleveland and Minnesota Orchestras, Orchestre de Paris, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Montreal, Vancouver, Toronto, Detroit, Milwaukee, Baltimore and Houston Symphonies, as well as the Los Angeles and St. Paul Chamber Orchestras. She has collaborated with many of today's leading conductors, including Marin Alsop, Christoph Eschenbach, JoAnn Falletta, Jane Glover, Vladimir Jurowski, Carlos Kalmar, Keith Lockhart, Kent Nagano, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Carlos Miguel Prieto, Peter Oundjian, Osmo Vänska and Pinchas Zuckerman.

Ms. Platts' opera highlights include Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* at London's Royal Opera House, Wagner's *Die Walküre* with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, and John Adams' *Nixon in China* for BBC Proms. Orchestral highlights include Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* and the premiere of a new work by Howard Shore with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Verdi's *Requiem* with the National Arts Center Orchestra, Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* in Mexico City with the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional and Mahler's Third and Eighth Symphonies with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra.

Ms. Platts appears on Naxos releases *La Tragédie de Salomé* (Florent Schmitt) and Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* (chamber version). She has recorded the full version of *Das Lied von der Erde* with the Tokyo Metropolitan Orchestra, Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* with the Smithsonian Chamber Players, and Lieder of Robert and Clara Schumann and Johannes Brahms on the ATMA label.

In 2021, she pursued her love of baking and wrote a cookbook, *Aria Ready for Dessert? – A Musician Takes Center Stage in the Kitchen*, available on Amazon.

GUEST SOLOISTS



NORMAN REINHARDT

Norman Reinhardt is an internationally acclaimed American tenor whose career has brought him to major opera houses across Europe, Asia, and the United States in more than 120 productions to date. He is especially recognized for performances of Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*, Alfredo in *La traviata*, Lensky in *Eugene Onegin*, Don José in *Carmen*, and Tony in *West Side Story*.

His bel canto repertoire includes Pollione in *Norma*, Roberto in Rossini's *Elisabetta, regina d'Inghilterra*, Roberto Devereux in Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda*, Arturo in Bellini's *La straniera*, and Rodrigo in Rossini's *La donna del lago*.

He has appeared with many of the major opera companies and festivals, including San Francisco Opera, Houston Grand Opera, English National Opera, Dutch National Opera, Teatro Real Madrid, Theater an der Wien, Staatsoper Berlin, Semperoper Dresden, Staatsoper Stuttgart, Komische Oper Berlin, Palau de les Arts Reina Sofía, Opéra national du Rhin, Opéra de Lille, Oper Köln, Bregenzer Festspiele, the Salzburg Festival, Whitsun Festival Salzburg, Festival della Valle d'Itria, and Shenzhen Opera and Dance Theater.

Recent engagements have included Števa in *Jenůfa* at Palau de les Arts Reina Sofía, Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* at English National Opera, Pollione in *Norma* at Opéra national du Rhin, Lensky in *Eugene Onegin* with Northern Ireland Opera, and Don José in *Carmen* in China, in cooperation with Staatsoper Hamburg.

Originally from North Carolina, Reinhardt trained at the University of Kentucky, Asbury College, and the Aspen Music Festival before joining the prestigious Houston Grand Opera Studio, where he laid the foundation for his international career. In the 2025–2026 season, he serves as Artist in Residence at Northwestern University. Reinhardt is also Co-Founder of Living Opera Music, whose releases are distributed worldwide by Universal Music Group. His recent recorded work includes "Radio Days: The Golden Age of American Song," a Living Opera Music project developed with Grammy-nominated producer Jeff Trott, Academy Award-winning arranger Patrick Warren, and operatic soprano Soula Parassidis. He currently resides in Chicago and Vienna, Austria.

STEPHEN CLARK

Noted for his “powerful, stalwart and metallic” bass voice, as well as his “appealing and enthusiastic stage presence,” Stephen Clark has developed a reputation for giving engaging performances. From 2018 until 2023, he was an ensemble member with the Theater am Goetheplatz in Bremen, Germany. In his time there, he performed a number of roles, including Sarastro and The Speaker in *The Magic Flute*, Dulcamara in *L'elisir d'amore*, Don Basilio in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Osmin in *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, Mustafà in *L'italiana in Algeri*, Harašta in *The Cunning Little Vixen*, the Mill Foreman in *Jenůfa*, Pistola in *Falstaff*, Truffaldino in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, and Roy Cohn in Péter Eötvös' modern opera, *Angels in America*.



While in Germany, Stephen made guest appearances with the Volkstheater Rostock as Harašta in *The Cunning Little Vixen* and (most notably) with the Staatsoper unter den Linden in Berlin as the Mill Foreman in *Jenůfa*. He also performed in concert with the Bremen Cathedral Choir as Pilate and Bass Soloist in Bach's *St. John Passion* on Good Friday in 2022, and was the soloist for a concert of selections of Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, which Theater Bremen performed during the pandemic.

Before his time in Germany, Stephen was a member of Yale University's prestigious opera program, where he studied with Richard and Doris Cross. Highlights from his time there include Sarastro in *The Magic Flute*, Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*, and appearing as the bass soloist in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Yale Philharmonia under the baton of Marin Alsop. He currently resides in Chicago, where he has performed with the Chicago Opera Theater and as the bass soloist in Handel's *Messiah* with the Apollo Chorus of Chicago.

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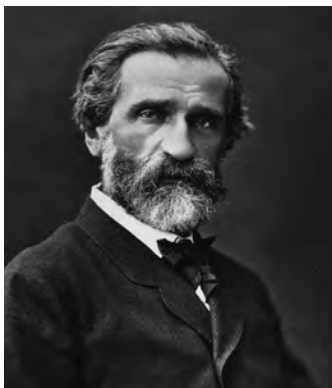
FRANCES HO

Frances Ho currently holds the Assistant Conductor position with the Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra. She is completing a doctorate in Orchestral Conducting at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign under the tutelage of Dr. Kevin Gerald and Dr. Rebecca Macleod.

Recently, she was chosen to be a Conducting Scholar at the Eastern Music Festival under the mentorship of Gerard Schwartz. Frances worked with the Nashville Opera with their Mary Ragland Emerging Artists Program and was the repetiteur for their mainstage production of *The Magic Flute*. Previously, she held the Assistant Conductor position at La Porte County Symphony Orchestra in 2022-2023. Frances was formerly the Music Director for the Belmont University Opera in Nashville, Tennessee, where she coached and conducted their mainstage productions. She also established the Belmont University Student Orchestra in 2019. In 2016, she directed the Washington State premiere of Bill Rauch's *Medea/Macbeth/Cinderella* with the nationally renowned Roosevelt HS Theatre and was nominated for best pit direction through the 5th Avenue Theatre Awards.

Frances was invited to conduct the Corporación Universitaria Reformada Symphony Orchestra in Barranquilla, Colombia, where she debuted *Symphony No. 2* by composer James Schutmaat. Frances was also selected to conduct at the 2022 College Orchestra Directors Association Masterclass with Teddy Abrams. Frances has had former instruction under Dr. Robert Gregg and has received instruction from Mark Shapiro through the European American Music Alliance (EAMA) and Juilliard, Robin Fountain at Vanderbilt University, and Donald Schleicher through additional courses and workshops.

PROGRAM NOTES



GIUSEPPE VERDI

Born October 10, 1813, La Roncole, Italy.
Died January 27, 1901, Milan.

Requiem Mass

More than one hundred years ago, when Giuseppe Verdi lay dying of a stroke in the Grand Hotel in Milan, only steps from La Scala, the city covered the street with straw so that the clatter of horseshoes wouldn't disturb the composer's final days. For nearly a week,

the hotel maintained a special press office on the ground floor, regularly posting bulletins on Verdi's condition, sometimes even with his heart and respiration rates. The king and queen of Italy were sent hourly updates. (For just one day, the death of Queen Victoria of England stole the spotlight.)

On January 26, Verdi fell into an irreversible coma; he died the following afternoon, "like a formidable, silent fighter," in the words of Arrigo Boito, who had written the librettos for his last operas, *Otello* and *Falstaff*. Verdi's death made headlines around the world.

Verdi was a man of great spirituality. But, after his childhood—when he walked three miles to church every Sunday morning, sometimes barefoot, to his job as organist—he wasn't a churchgoer. Later, when he was famous and wealthy, he would drive his wife Giuseppina to church, but wouldn't go in with her. He was never an atheist—simply, as Giuseppina put it, "a very doubtful believer." Like Brahms's A German Requiem completed five years earlier, Verdi's Requiem Mass is a deeply religious work written by a great skeptic.

Before the requiem, Verdi was known exclusively for his operas. The early success of *Nabucco* in 1842 made his name; the melody of its grand "Va, pensiero" chorus swept the nation. In the early 1850s, a great midcareer trio of operas—*Rigoletto*, *Il trovatore*, and *La traviata*—made Verdi the most popular composer in all Europe. After that, with a series of increasingly inventive stage works—including *Simon Boccanegra*, *A Masked Ball*, *The Force of Destiny*, *Don Carlos*, and *Aida*—Verdi continued to stretch his gifts in new directions, testing the expressive possibilities of Italian opera. After the great success of *Aida* in 1871, Verdi seemed set on retirement; he spent his days sowing wheat and corn, raising chickens, and puttering in the garden at Sant'Agata, his farmhouse south of Milan.

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By then, however, part of a requiem mass was already written. The story begins in 1868, with the death of Rossini in Paris. Verdi suggested that the city of Bologna, where Rossini grew up and first tasted success, honor him with a composite requiem, commissioning separate movements from Italy's leading composers. The idea was approved, the various movements assigned—diplomatically, Verdi was given the final *Libera me*—and the mass completed. But a performance never took place. (There were disputes, as there often are, over scheduling and money.)

At the time of Rossini's death, Verdi called him "one of the glories of Italy," asking, "When the other one who still lives is no more, what will we have left?" The other one was Alessandro Manzoni, a celebrated poet and the author of the landmark nineteenth-century novel, *I promessi sposi* ("The betrothed"); and when he died, on May 22, 1873, Verdi returned to the idea of a requiem.

Verdi first read *I promessi sposi* at sixteen; it remained his favorite novel throughout his life. Manzoni was a great national hero in Italy. To Verdi, Manzoni was a personal hero; he was both a great artist and a great humanitarian—a leader, like Verdi, in the Risorgimento, the movement for Italian independence and unification.

Knowing that Manzoni treasured his privacy as much as he himself, Verdi never attempted a meeting. Even after his wife was introduced to Manzoni, through a mutual friend, Verdi was satisfied with the autographed photograph she brought home, inscribed "to Giuseppe Verdi, a glory of Italy, from a decrepit Lombard writer." Verdi hung the picture in his bedroom and sent Manzoni his photo, writing across the bottom, "I esteem and admire you as much as one can esteem and admire anyone on this earth, both as man and a true honor of our country so continually troubled. You are a saint, Don Alessandro!" The two men didn't meet until the spring of 1868, when Verdi visited Milan for the first time in twenty years. Verdi reported to the Countess Maffei, who arranged the meeting, "I would have knelt before him if it were possible to adore mortal men."

Verdi didn't attend Manzoni's funeral, preferring instead to visit the grave "alone and unseen." He proposed that "after further reflection and after taking stock of my strength," he might "suggest a way of honoring his memory." In fact, the very night of his visit to Manzoni's grave, he wrote to Giulio Ricordi, head of the publishing house, of his intention to compose a requiem mass to be performed on the first anniversary of Manzoni's death.

Verdi completed his Requiem Mass in April 1874 and conducted the first performance on May 22, 1874, at the church of San Marco in Milan. The work is scored for solo quartet, mixed chorus, and an orchestra consisting

(continued on page 38)



of two flutes and piccolo, two oboes, two clarinets, four bassoons, four horns, four trumpets (with four additional trumpets off stage), three trombones and tuba (replacing the obsolete ophicleide), timpani, bass drum, and strings. Performance time is approximately one hour and twenty-four minutes.

Reading Manzoni's obituary notices, Verdi noticed that "not one speaks the way it should. Many words, but none of them deeply felt." Verdi was a man of few words and genuine expression. The requiem he composed to honor two men for whom he had the greatest admiration is a work of the most highly concentrated emotion. Seldom had he traversed the range of human feeling in so few pages. Music so direct and powerful was unexpected, and therefore disquieting, in a somber religious work.

The very beginning of this requiem might be mistaken for a moment from a Verdi opera—a dark cloister, a procession of mourners, a few strands of melody to set the scene. But the movement quickly grows and blossoms in ways unknown to the opera house; the chorus makes a fugue of "Te decet hymnus," and then the music opens heavenward, as the soloists enter one by one. It's music of an almost unimaginable sweep and grandeur, and would be out of place even in opera, except in a grand finale.

The *Dies irae*, the largest of the seven pieces in this requiem, has ten small sections, each one a vivid scene. In writing opera, Verdi had quickly learned to seek the *parola scenica*—the key word in each passage that would unlock his imagination. The "Dies irae" explodes with its sheer force and rage—the *ffff* thunderbolts of the bass drum are particularly alarming; Verdi increases the drama by adding off-stage trumpets in the "Tuba mirum."

We next hear from various individuals, each a commentator, an observer, or an eyewitness—what is known today as human interest. At the end of the bass's "Mors stupebit," sung quietly and full of terror, his voice catches repeatedly on the word "death." "Liber scriptus," a powerful aria for mezzo-soprano, was written for the London premiere in 1875 to replace a choral fugue that marred Verdi's sense of pace and drama, particularly since a brief outburst of the "Dies irae" music directly follows. "Quid sum miser" is a trio of lamentation. (A solo bassoon provides a haunting accompaniment.)

"Rex tremendae" is a dialogue between chorus and the four soloists, reaching some common ground only in the final measures. The prayer "Recordare" is the duet Verdi conceived with the voices of his favorite Aida and Amneris in mind, though here they don't sing as adversaries (for a moment, at the words "O Judge of Justice," their voices join as one). Two arias follow—the tenor's "Ingemisco" and the bass's "Confutatis"—before the chorus again interjects the refrain of "Dies irae." The lament "Lacrimosa" (based on a duet withdrawn from *Don Carlos*) brings together chorus and

soloists in a magnificent, sobering conclusion to a movement that began with fire and fury. The final “Amen” momentarily lifts the music into full sunlight, but darkness quickly falls.

Domine Jesu Christe is scored for solo quartet, though Verdi saves the soprano solo for a breathtaking moment well into the movement, when the entire fate of the music hangs, seemingly forever, on her one sustained note. At “quam olim Abrahae” the music gathers force (maintaining tradition, it behaves like a fugue); the central “Hostias” is quiet and utterly still.

Verdi’s *Sanctus* is a brilliant double fugue for split choirs, moving quickly and with great energy straight through the “Hosanna” and “Benedictus” texts that detain most composers.

The *Agnus Dei* begins with thirteen measures for the soprano and mezzo-soprano soloists, unaccompanied, singing in octaves. The melody is a nineteenth-century version of plainchant—it is diatonic, rather than modal—and it’s repeated, alternately by the two soloists and the chorus, to an increasingly rich accompaniment.

The soprano solo withdraws, leaving the three lower solo voices to the *Lux aeterna*, a trio of urgent drama and death-scene tremolos.

The soprano now reenters, unaccompanied, declaiming the text of the *Libera me*. This powerful final scene, for soprano and chorus, is based on the music Verdi wrote for the Rossini Requiem in 1869. It could only have been composed by someone steeped in opera, yet it’s unlike anything else in Verdi’s output. The music moves freely from dramatic recitative to soaring arioso, reprising both the “Dies irae,” in all its concentrated terror, and the opening Requiem aeternam, here magically rescored for soprano and unaccompanied chorus.

The last stretch, climaxed by the urgent pleas of the soprano, and finally dissipating into hushed and desperate prayer, is as compelling as anything Verdi ever put on the stage.

Phillip Huscher

Program notes provided courtesy of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.



CUSO GUILD MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS



The Guild of the Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra is CUSO's key partner in advancing the orchestra's youth music education mission, providing valuable volunteer and financial support for programs that engage and inspire the youth of our community. On Saturday, March 28, 2026, the Guild held live auditions for the annual scholarship awards to young musicians in grades 6 through 11. Thirty junior and senior high school students auditioned for one of twelve \$400 scholarships to

be applied to the Illinois Summer Youth Music Camp at the University of Illinois, or another music camp of their choice. Students performed for an audition panel of three judges—Jennifer Mandel, Dr. Rodney Mueller, and Susan Crawford.

CUSO thanks Guild Scholarship Committee Chair, Paula Jones, for her dedicated leadership in managing this program, and Committee members: Guild President Sue Crawford, Charmian Bulley, Andy Schuchart, Marilyn Whittaker, and Jim Young. The Guild thanks Jane and Wally Myers for their special scholarship donation and all of the Guild members for their generous support of this program. Congratulations to these twelve talented young musicians who won scholarship awards.

Congratulations!

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Gordon Liu—clarinet, Grade 5, Next Generation School
Emma Long—violin, Grade 9, University Laboratory High School
Lia Long—violin, Grade 6, Campus Middle School for Girls
Mattox Pugh—flute, Grade 10, University Laboratory High School
Eian Webb—alto saxophone, Grade 7, Mahomet-Seymour Jr. High
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