

THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC
VASSAR COLLEGE

Awakened Spirits

Actus tragicus by J.S. Bach, and works by
Jennifer Lucy Cook, Adolphus Hailstork, Ola Gjeilo,
Shavon Lloyd, Tarik O'Regan, and Kate Rusby

Vassar College Choir

Christine Howlett, *conductor*

Ruth Cunningham and Wendy Powers, *recorders*
Patricia Ann Neely '75 and Adam Young, *viols*
Christine Gummere, *cello*, James Fitzwilliam, *organ*
Joseph North, *saxophone*

Saturday, November 8, 2025 · 7:30 PM

Martel Recital Hall

Skinner Hall of Music

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in Skinner Hall of Music.



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PROGRAM

Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit, BWV 106

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685–1750)

1. Sonatina

2.a Chorus: Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit

2.b Arioso: Ach, Herr, lehre uns bedenken

Neil Kotru Gode '26, *tenor*

2.c Aria: Bestelle dein Haus; denn du wirst sterben

Mia Ryan '28, *bass*

2.d Chorus & Arioso: Es ist der alte Bund; Ja komm Herr Jesu, komm

Sarah Dworman '28, *soprano*

3.a Aria: In deine Hände befehl ich meinen Geist

Bass Arioso: Heute wirst du mit mir im Paradies sein;

Alto Chorale: Mit Fried und Freud ich fahr dahin

Xander Shumaker '26, *baritone*

Rey Lopez-Jenkins '26, Tatiana Wifall '26, Caroline Winchester '29, *altos*

4. Chorus - Glorie, Lob, Ehr und Herrlichkeit

Ruth Cunningham and Wendy Power, *recorders*

Patricia Ann Neely '75 and Adam Young, *viols*

Christine Gummere, *cello*, James Fitzwilliam, *organ*



Evening Prayer

Ola Gjeilo
(b. 1978)

Joe North, *tenor saxophone*, James Fitzwilliam, *piano*

For You I Will Be An Island

Jennifer Lucy Cook

Etta Hughes '29, *soprano*

Underneath the Stars

Kate Rusby
Arranged for VOCES8 by Jim Clements

Olivia Bragitikos '26, *soprano*, Daniel Allan '26, *tenor*

They Are Mother

Jennifer Lucy Cook

Noa Gafni '27, Rey Lopez-Jensen '26,
Olivia Bragitikos '26, Melody Hamilton '28, Neave Rynne '27,
Gillian Hart '29, Rebecca Sherber '28, Caroline Winchester '29,
James Fitzwilliam

Wake up, my Spirit

Adolphus Hailstork
(b. 1941)

James Fitzwilliam

Swing Low

Tarik O'Regan
(b. 1978)

Bryony Burns '29, Annabelle Hu '28,
Rachel Miller '29, Gabriella Restrepo '29

Motherless Child

Shavon Lloyd
(b. 1997)

Joe North and James Fitzwilliam

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

“Awakened Spirits” brings together one of Bach’s earliest and most unusual works along with compelling contemporary music for chorus.

Composed around 1707 when Bach was in his early twenties, *Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit*, often called “Actus Tragicus,” is among his earliest and most surprising sacred works. Scored for two recorders, two violas da gamba, and continuo, the cantata’s intimate instrumentation and structure create a meditative reflection on life, death, with the promise of eternal rest. Drawing on biblical texts and the Lutheran liturgy, Bach weaves contrasting moods of sorrow, consolation, and joy into music of spiritual depth and emotional balance, foreshadowing the power of his later masterpieces.

Unlike his mature cantatas, which typically follow a consistent structure with an opening chorus, central recitatives and arias, and a concluding chorale, “Actus Tragicus” unfolds as a continuous, through-composed work.

We are pleased to welcome **Patricia Ann Neely ’75** and her ensemble performing on historical instruments. The work will be presented at A=415, a half-step lower than modern concert pitch, reflecting the tuning practice of Bach’s time.

Chorus

Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit.

In ihm leben, weben und sind wir,
solange er will.

In ihm sterben wir zur rechten Zeit,
wenn er will.

(based on Acts 17:28)

God’s time is the very best time.

*In him we live, move, and are so long
as he wills.*

*In him we die at the right time,
when he wills.*

Arioso (Tenor)

Ach, Herr, lehre uns bedenken

Dass wir sterben müssen,

Auf dass wir klug werden.

(Psalm 90:12)

Ah, Lord, teach us to think

that we must die

so that we become wise.

Aria (Bass)

Bestelle dein Haus,

denn du wirst sterben

und nicht lebendig bleiben.

(Isaiah 38:1)

Put your house in order

For you will die

and not remain living.

Chorus

Es ist der alte Bund:

Mensch, du musst sterben!

(Sirach 14:17)

It is the old covenant:

Man, you must die.

Soprano: Ja, komm, Herr, Jesu, komm!

(Revelation 20:22)

Yes, come, Lord Jesus, come!

Alto

In deine Hände befehl ich meinen
Geist; (Luke 23:46)
du hast mich erlöst, Herr, du
getreuer Gott. (Psalm 31:5)

Into your hands I commit my spirit:

*You have redeemed me, Lord, you
faithful God.*

Arioso (Bass) and Chorale (Alto)

Heute wirst du mit mir im Paradies
sein. (Luke 23:43)

Today you will be with me in paradise.

Mit Fried und Freud ich fahr dahin
In Gottes Willen,
getrost ist mir mein
Herz und Sinn,
sanft und stille.
Wie Gott mir verheißen hat:
Der Tod ist mein Schlaf worden.
(based on Luke 2:29-32)

*With peace and joy, I travel there
In God's will,
My heart and mind
are confident
Peaceful and calm.
As God has promised me:
death has become my sleep.*

Glorie, Lob, Ehr und Herrlichkeit
sei dir, Gott Vater und Sohn bereit,
dem Heiligen Geist mit Namen!
(based on Revelation 7:12)

*Glory, praise, honor, and majesty
Be given to you, father and son,
To the holy spirit by name!*

Die göttlich Kraft
macht uns sieghaft
durch Jesum Christum,
Amen.
(based on 1st Corinthians 15:57)

*God's strength
Make us victorious
Through Jesus Christ.
Amen.*

Ola Gjeilo (b. 1978) is a Norwegian composer and pianist whose lush, cinematic style has made him one of today's most widely performed choral composers. A graduate of the Juilliard School and the Royal College of Music in London, Gjeilo blends classical, jazz, and film influences in his compositions.

Following Bach's *Actus Tragicus*, "Evening Prayer" offers a modern reflection on similar themes such as peace, transcendence, and longing for rest.

Evening Prayer

Watch, O Lord
With those who wake
Or watch or weep tonight
And give your angels charge
Over those who sleep
Tend your sick ones
O Lord Jesus Christ;

Rest your weary ones;
Bless your dying ones;
Soothe your suffering ones;
Pity your afflicted ones;
Shield your joyous ones;
And all for your love's sake
Amen.

Jennifer Lucy Cook is an award-winning Los Angeles-based composer and lyricist whose work spans musical theatre, choral music, pop songwriting, and film and television music. She holds a Master's degree in Musical Theatre Writing from Goldsmiths, University of London, and a Bachelor's in Media Music (or Contemporary/Media Music) from Brigham Young University.

Cook writes: "For You I will Be An Island" was written while in quarantine, when the greatest act of love that one person could show to another was to keep a healthy distance. This strange phenomenon stood in stark contrast to the tangible way I normally prefer to show love: with hugs, kisses, and closeness. Quarantine felt very similar to other rare times when distance means love, like when a relationship seems to have run its course, or when love flame isn't returned in kind. When all that's left to do is to keep a flame and wish them well from afar: 'Find me where love collides with letting go.'

For you I will be an island
A solo shelter
For you I will be an island
Miles away

For you, I will be surrounded
With only water
For you I will be surrounded
By blue and gray

And when the coast is clear
Come let me know
Find me where love collides
With letting go

And when the coast is clear
Come let me know
Find me where love collides with letting go
Now we divide to conquer
Only the waves for comfort

For you I will be an island
A solo shelter
For you, I will be an island
Miles away
Miles away

- *Jennifer Lucy Cook*

For you I will be uncharted
Except by starlight
For you I will be uncharted
Come what may

Kate Rusby (b. 1973) is an English folk singer-songwriter. She grew up in a musical family in South Yorkshire, began playing fiddle and guitar at a young age, and made her mark on the contemporary folk scene with a mix of fresh songwriting and traditional material. Jim Clements, arranger-in-residence for VOCES8, created this intimate arrangement, which has become one of the ensemble's most requested pieces.

Underneath the stars I'll meet you,
underneath the stars I'll greet you,
there beneath the stars I'll leave you
before you go of your own free will;

Go gently...

Underneath the stars you met me,
underneath the stars you left me;
I wonder if the stars regret me.
At least you'll go of your own free will;

Go gently...

Here beneath the stars I'm landing,
and here beneath the stars not ending
oh, why on earth am I pretending?
I'm here again, the stars befriending—
They come and go of their own free will.

Go gently...

Underneath the stars you met me,
underneath the stars you left me;
I wonder if the stars regret me,
I'm sure they'd like me if they only met me
They come and go of their own free will.

Go gently...

- *Kate Rusby*

They are Mother

What shall I call this force I know
Who do I come to when I wonder
The space that holds me when I'm low
More than a parent, friend, or lover

They are Mover
They are Maker
They are Mother, mm
They are Mother, mm

They are the breath I see in cold
The ready muscle in the sprinter
They are the glitter and the gold
The steady heat lamp in the winter

They are Mover...

They nod and know
They need nothing
They're god and grow
They bleed blessings

They nod and know
They need nothing
They're god and grow
They bleed blessings

They are solitude
They are multitude
They are gratitude
Gratitude

Laugh lines around the all-seeing eye
And I can lean into the sky
Laugh lines around the all-seeing eye
And I can lean into the sky

What shall I call this force I know
Who do I come to when I wonder

They are Mover
They are Maker
They are Mother, mm (*repeat*)

- *Jennifer Lucy Cook*

Wake Up, My Spirit

Adolphus Hailstork (b. 1941) is an award-winning American composer known for bringing together classical forms with the rhythms and harmonies of African-American music. A native of Rochester, New York, he studied at Howard University, the Manhattan School of Music, and Michigan State University and trained in France with Nadia Boulanger. His works range from symphonies and operas to choral and chamber music, often exploring themes of heritage, faith, and social justice. Hailstork retired as Eminent Scholar and Professor of Music at Old Dominion University, where he is now Professor Emeritus.

Wake up, my spirit!
I, myself, will waken the dawn.

Exalt Yourself above the heavens, O God,
And Your glory over all the earth.

I will sing praise to You above the nations,
Awake, lute and harp,
I will sing melody.

- *From Psalm 57: 6-9*

Swing Low, Sweet Chariot

Tarik Hamilton O'Regan is a London-born composer based in San Francisco, whose music explores themes of heritage, identity, and collective memory. Often shaped by his Arab and Irish backgrounds, his work spans orchestral, choral, operatic, and chamber music, and has been recognized with two GRAMMY® nominations and two Ivors®.

His output, described as “exquisite and delicate” (Washington Post) and “music of startling beauty” (The Observer), is published exclusively by Novello and has been recorded on over 47 albums. In addition to composing, he is an experienced broadcaster, having written and presented numerous documentaries, including *Composing LA* and *Composing New York* for BBC Radio. Bestowed with the Coronation Medal by King Charles III for his *Agnus Dei*, commissioned for the Coronation Service at Westminster Abbey, O'Regan is also the recipient of numerous prestigious awards, including the Yaddo Artist Medal.

Swing low, sweet chariot, coming for to carry me home.

- Traditional

Shavon Lloyd (b. 1997) is an award-winning composer, baritone, conductor, and educator from Middletown, NY. A graduate of the Crane School of Music and The Juilliard School, he has written for ensembles ranging from K–12 choirs to ensembles such as Cappella Festiva and the Orpheus Chamber Singers. His works have earned top prizes in multiple national composition contests. As a performer, he has sung alongside Patti LuPone and Canadian Brass, and recently appeared with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. Lloyd also serves on NYSSMA's BEDR and Composition Committees, advocating for creativity and equity in music education.

Motherless Child was commissioned by Dr. Jeffrey Francom and the Nassau Music Educators Association for the 2019 NMEA All-County Division IV Mixed Choir.

Sometimes I feel like a motherless child
Sometimes I feel like a motherless child
Sometimes I feel like a motherless child
A long way from home, a long way from home

True believer
True believer
A long, long way from home
A long, long way from home

Sometimes I feel like I'm almost gone
Sometimes I feel like I'm almost gone
Sometimes I feel like I'm almost gone (way up in the heav'nly land)
And a long, long way from home, a long way from home

- Traditional

Biographies

Ruth Cunningham, *recorder*, is a classically trained musician, a sound-healing practitioner, and a founding member of Anonymous 4. She creates improvisational sacred music that blends Western and Eastern traditions, performing with voice, harp, flute, recorder, and piano. With Anonymous 4, she toured internationally and recorded extensively for Harmonia Mundi. Her solo albums *Light and Shadow* and *Harpmodes* combine chant, prayer, and improvisation. As a sound healer, she works with individuals and groups to explore music's transformative power and has taught and performed in healthcare, interfaith, and contemplative settings. Cunningham holds a B.Mus. from the New England Conservatory and certification in cross-cultural music healing.

Christine Gummere, *violoncello*, has been performing in New York City for 35 years on modern and baroque cellos and in a wide variety of musical styles: 20th-century orchestral and chamber works; baroque and classical repertoire from Monteverdi to Mendelssohn; and American Swing music. In 2012, she moved back to her family home in the Hudson Valley, where she produces concerts for her group, The Hudson River Consort.

Patricia Ann Neely '75, *viol*, found her interest in early music when she was a student at LaGuardia High School of Music and Art & Performing Arts and was further cultivated at Vassar College as a music major. She went on to earn a Master's degree in historical performance at Sarah Lawrence College, with further studies on the viol with Wieland Kuijken in Belgium. As a viola da gamba, violone, and medieval fiddle player, Pat has performed with many early music ensembles, including Opera Lafayette, the Folder Consort, TENET, Boston Early Music Festival Orchestra, the Newberry Consort, and many others. Alongside her active performing career, she directs the student ensemble, The Vassar Viols.

Wendy Powers, *recorder*, is a historical musicologist specializing in late 15th- and early 16th-century Italian and French music. She earned her Ph.D. from Columbia University with a dissertation on Florentine chanson manuscripts and is editing the complete works of Hesdin (d. 1538) for Broude Brothers. An adjunct assistant professor at Queens College, CUNY, she co-directs the Collegium Musicum and teaches recorder. Powers co-directs the Amherst Early Music Festival, has written for *American Recorder* and the Metropolitan Museum of Art's *Timeline of Art History*, and previously served as Director of Development and Program Officer at the New York Council for the Humanities.

Adam Young, *viol*, is a versatile performer specializing in the cello and viola da gamba. While majoring in viola da gamba at The Juilliard School under Sarah Cunningham, he performed principal roles in several opera productions, including *Dido and Aeneas* with Avi Stein, *Hippolyte et Aricie* under the direction of Stephen Stubbs, and he was featured on a European tour with performances at London's Opera in the Park and the Palace of Versailles. This year, Adam has performed with several distinguished ensembles, including Abendmusik, Academy of Sacred Drama, American Baroque, Canterbury Choral Society, Christopher Street Collective, House of Time, and Salon Sanctuary. Recent opera credits include *Commet/Poppea* with American Modern Opera Company at Lincoln Center, *Agrippina* at Brooklyn College and *Blood Moon* at Baruch College.

James M. Fitzwilliam, organ and keyboard, earned a Bachelor and Master of Music in piano from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY. He frequently performs as a pianist, organist, and composer throughout the Hudson Valley. He regularly appears with Cappella Festiva and the Bard College Community Chorus and is a collaborative pianist at Vassar College. As an organist, he has served at several area churches and currently works at Christ Episcopal Church in Poughkeepsie. As a composer, he has had works commissioned and/or performed by members of the Hudson Valley Philharmonic, the SUNY New Paltz College Chorale, several church choirs, and Cappella Festiva. James lives in the wilds of Dutchess County with his wife Julie and their two cats.

Joseph North, a Dutchess County native, has been an active educator and performer in the Hudson Valley since 2013. He teaches at Vassar College, directs the Jazz Ensemble and teaches woodwinds at Dutchess Community College, and serves as Director of Bands and Department Chair at Poughkeepsie High School. Joe has led numerous honor bands across New York State. A vibrant presence in the local arts scene, he leads The True North Jazz Project, co-founded The Bottoms Up Band, and performs with NYC's Skydaddy. He holds degrees in Music Education from SUNY Fredonia and Jazz Studies from The University of the Arts.

Christine Howlett is Professor of Music on the George Sherman Dickinson Chair at Vassar College, where she conducts the Vassar College Choir and Treble Chorus and teaches music theory. Her ensembles have performed at Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, and abroad, and have appeared at NCCO and ACDA Eastern Division Conferences. In 2023, she became Music Director of the Greenwich Choral Society. She is in her 20th year as Artistic Director of

Cappella Festiva, and she is a guest conductor with the Hudson Valley Symphony Orchestra. She has commissioned and premiered works by Libby Larsen, Eleanor Daley, Tarik O'Regan, Caroline Shaw, and others, with an upcoming commission by record producer, composer, songwriter, arranger, and performer, Rob Mathes, with a new work by composer Colin Britt and Faculty Emeritus and poet, Paul Kane, to be premiered at Vassar's A Service of Lessons and Carols 2025.

Vassar College Choir

SOPRANO I

Olivia Bragitikos '26
Sarah Dworman '27
Madisen Karr '29
Charlotte Mathews '27
Neave Rynne '27
Madeleine Stone '29
Kaelin Walsh '29

SOPRANO II

Melody Hamilton '28
AnnaBelle Hu '28
Etta Hughes '29
Rebecca Li '28
Jade Eloise Miller '29
Rachel Miller '29
Gabriela Restrepo '29
Sophia Sklar '26

TENOR I

Jack Cellucci '28
Xuanyu Dai '29
Neil Kotru Gode '26
Finnegan Pucciarello '29
Benjamin Wolfson '28

TENOR II

Daniel Allan '26
Jordan Chafe '26
Vaughn Howard '26
Samuel Jacobs '27
Brendan McDonnell '29
Eduardo Navega

ALTO I

Tatiana Wifall '26
Bryony Burns '29
Gillian Hart '29
Rey Lopez-Jensen '26
Shuyang Wei '27
Caroline Winchester '29

ALTO II

Lil Carter '29
Noa Gafni '27
Tess Kronenberg '29
Sophia Moreau '28
Rebecca Sherber '28
Eva Weiner '29

BASS I

Caleb Chan '29
James Faulkner '28
Eric Hepp
Coleman Hunter '27
Harrison Phipps '26
Alexander Shumaker '26

BASS II

Henry Brylawski '29
Justin DuBeau '28
Mia Ryan '27
Evan Seker '28
Isaac Steinberg '26
James Zuckerman '26

Rehearsal pianists

Susan Brown and James Fitzwilliam

Skinner Hall of Music · Upcoming Events

Most concerts are free and open to the public | no reservations are required
Skinner Hall doors open 30 minutes before the performance.

Sun., 11/9 · 3:00 PM - **Vassar College & Community Wind Ensemble:**
James Osborn, *conductor*

Sat., 11/15 · 7:30 PM - **Vassar College Treble Chorus:**
Christine Howlett, *conductor*

Sun., 11/16 · 3:00 PM - **Dalí Quartet:** acclaimed for bringing Latin American quartet repertoire to an equal standing alongside the Classical and Romantic canon. Vassar faculty member Ari Isaacman-Beck, *violin*, with Carlos Rubio, *violin*, Adriana Linares, *viola*, Jesús Morales, *cello*

Sat., 11/22 · 7:30 PM - **Vassar College Orchestra:** Featuring Mozart Piano Concerto in B flat Major, K. 595, Anna Polonsky, *piano*
Eduardo Navega, *conductor*.

Sun., 11/23 · 3:00 PM - **Vassar College Chamber Singers:**
Drew Minter, *conductor*

Thur., 12/4 · 7:30 PM - **Vassar College Jazz Ensemble:**
James Osborn, *director*

Fri., 12/5 · 7:30 PM - **Vassar College Chamber Music Recital:**
Eduardo Navega, *conductor*

Sat., 12/6* · 7:00 PM - **A Service of Lessons & Carols.**
The annual Advent service features readings, choral anthems, and congregational carols, culminating in a candlelighting ceremony. Vassar College Choir, Chamber Singers, Treble Chorus, and Cappella Festiva Choirs will perform.

**Note location and day: Vassar College Chapel*

Coming Soon: *MODfest 2026* - January 23-February 7