

University of North Texas®
Grand Chorus & Symphony Orchestra Presents

Symphony of Psalms

IGOR STRAVINSKY

Gloria

FRANCIS POULENC

NEREIDA GARCÍA, SOPRANO
ALLEN HIGHTOWER, CONDUCTOR



04.24.24 • 7:30 P.M.
MURCHISON PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

3

ABOUT THE ENSEMBLE

5

SYMPHONY OF PSALMS
TRANSLATION

7

GLORIA TRANSLATION

8

PROGRAM NOTES

10

GRAND CHORUS &
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

14

BIOGRAPHIES

16

DEAN'S CAMERATA

18

UNT COLLEGE OF MUSIC
ADVANCEMENT BOARD &
COMMUNITY SUPPORT
COUNCIL

19

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**GRAND CHORUS IS COMPRISED OF
A CAPPELLA CHOIR, Allen Hightower, conductor
UNIVERSITY SINGERS, Marques L. A. Garrett, conductor
CONCERT CHOIR, Jessica Nápoles, conductor**

With rare exceptions and for many decades, the University of North Texas Grand Chorus has performed major works by Western classical composers.

The University of North Texas Grand Chorus is comprised of more than 140 singers

drawn from the A Cappella Choir, University Singers and Concert Choir. The ensemble has a distinguished history of performing under the leadership of many respected conductors. In the spring of 2013, the Grand Chorus, UNT Symphony Orchestra and

ABOUT THE ENSEMBLE



tenor Richard Croft performed the premiere of Jake Heggie's *Ahab Symphony*. The UNT Grand Chorus has also performed with such noted professional ensembles as the Houston and Dallas symphony orchestras. In April 2003, the Grand Chorus performed and recorded Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* in a new complete edition for wind symphony,

choir and soloists.

The UNT Symphony Orchestra was established in 1938 and thus has performed regularly for more than 80 years. During this time the orchestra has had only seven conductors. The 80-member ensemble has been under the direction of David Itkin since 2008.

ENSEMBLE HISTORY THROUGH THE YEARS

- 2023 *Symphony No. 9 in D minor*
Ludwig van Beethoven
- 2022 *Ein Deutsches Requiem*
Johannes Brahms
- 2019 *Elijah*, Felix Mendelssohn
- 2018 *Messa da Requiem*,
Giuseppe Verdi
- 2017 *Turandot*, Giacomo Puccini
- 2016 *The Creation*, Joseph Haydn
- 2015 *Five Mystical Songs*,
Ralph Vaughan Williams and
Symphony No. 9 in D minor,
Ludwig van Beethoven
- 2014 *Alto Rhapsody*, Johannes
Brahms, *Rest Now, My Sister*,
J.A.C. Redford, *Gloria*,
Francis Poulenc
- 2013 *Ahab Symphony*, Jake Heggie
- 2012 *Symphony of Psalms*,
Igor Stravinsky, *Chichester
Psalms*, Leonard Bernstein,
The Hymn of Jesus, Gustav Holst
- 2011 *Nänie*, Johannes Brahms,
Requiem in D minor,
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
- 2010 *Messa da Requiem*,
Giuseppe Verdi
- 2009 *Ein deutsches Requiem*,
Johannes Brahms
- 2008 *Alexander Nevsky*,
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- 2007 *All-Night Vigil*,
Sergei Rachmaninoff
- 2006 *Symphony No. 9 in D minor*,
Ludwig van Beethoven
- 2006 *Mass in C Major*,
Ludwig van Beethoven
- 2004 *War Requiem*, Benjamin Britten
- 2003 *Carmina Burana*, Carl Orff
- 2002 *Symphony No. 2 in C minor*,
Gustav Mahler
- 2001 *Symphony No. 9 in D minor*,
Ludwig van Beethoven
- 1993 *Psalms 150*, Alberto Ginastera
- 1992 *Gloria*, Antonio Vivaldi

THE INFORMATION ABOVE IS NOT
A COMPREHENSIVE LIST. THE
ENSEMBLE HAS BEEN PERFORMING
FOR MANY DECADES.

Symphony of Psalms

IGOR STRAVINSKY

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS



TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

The University of North Texas Grand Chorus and Symphony Orchestra perform Igor Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms* Allen Hightower, conductor

I

Exaudi orationem meam, Domine, et deprecationem
meam. Auribus percipe lacrimas meas. Ne sileas.
Quoniam advena ego sum apud te et peregrinus, sicut
omnes patres mei.
Remitte mihi, ut refrigerer prius quam abeam et
amplius non ero.

Hear my prayer, O Lord, and with Thine ears consider
my calling: hold not Thy peace at my tears.
For I am a stranger with Thee: and a sojourner, as all
my fathers were.
O spare me a little that I may recover my strength:
before I go hence and be no more.

II

Expectans expectavi Dominum, et intendit mihi.
Et exaudivit preces meas; et eduxit me de lacu miseriae,
et de luto fæcis.
Et statuit super petram pedes meos: et direxit gressus
meos.
Et immisit in os meum canticum novum, carmen Deo
nostro.
Videbunt multi, videbunt et timebunt: et sperabunt in
Domino.

I waited patiently for the Lord: and He inclined unto
me, and heard my calling.
He brought me also out of the horrible pit, out of the
mire and clay.
and set my feet upon the rock, and ordered my goings.
And He hath put a new song in my mouth: even a
thanksgiving unto our God.
Many shall see it and fear: and shall put their trust in the
Lord.

III

Alleluia.
Laudate Dominum in sanctis Ejus.
Laudate Eum in firmamento virtutis Ejus.
Laudate Eum in virtutibus Ejus.
Laudate Eum secundum multitudinem magnitudinis Ejus.
Laudate Eum in sono tubae.
Laudate Eum in timpano et choro.
Laudate Eum in cordis et organo;
Laudate Eum in cymbalis benesonantibus,
Laudate Eum in cymbalis jubilationibus.
Laudate Eum, omnis spiritus laudet Dominum.
Alleluia.

Alleluia.
Praise God in His sanctuary:
Praise Him in the firmament of His power.
Praise Him for His mighty acts:
Praise Him according to His excellent greatness.
Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet:
Praise Him with the timbrel and choir.
Praise Him with stringed instruments and organs.
Praise Him upon the high-sounding cymbals,
Praise Him upon the loud cymbals.
Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.
Alleluia.

Intermission

Gloria

FRANCIS POULENC

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS



TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

**The University of North Texas Grand Chorus and Symphony Orchestra
perform Francis Poulenc's *Gloria*
Allen Hightower conductor, featuring Nereida García, soprano**

I

Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.

Glory to God in the highest.
And on earth peace to all of good will.

II

Laudamus te, benedicimus te,
adoramus te, glorificamus te;
Gratias agimus, agimus tibi,
Propter magnam gloriam tuam.

We praise Thee, we bless Thee,
We adore Thee, we glorify Thee.
We give Thee thanks
for Thy great glory.

III

Domine Deus, Rex coelestis!
Deus, Pater omnipotens!

Lord God! Heavenly King!
God, the father Almighty!

IV

Domine, Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe!

Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son!

V

Domine Deus! Agnus Dei! Filius Patris!
Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem
nostram.

Lord God! Lamb of God! Son of the Father.
Thou, who takest away the sins of the world, have
mercy upon us.
Thou, who takest away the sins of the world, receive
our prayer.

VI

Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis.
Quoniam tu solus sanctus.
Tu solus Dominus.
Tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe!
Cum Sancto Spiritu in gloria Dei patris.
Amen.

Thou, who sits at the right hand of the Father, have
mercy upon us.
For Thou alone art holy,
Thou alone art Lord,
Thou alone art the most high, Jesus Christ.
With the Holy Ghost in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

PROGRAM NOTES

SYMPHONY OF PSALMS

The Symphony of Psalms was a commission to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1930. The orchestra wanted something symphonic, and Stravinsky's publisher wanted something popular. Stravinsky gave them both – but not in the way either party could possibly have envisaged. "I took the word, not in the publisher's meaning of 'adapting to the understanding of the people', but in the sense of 'something universally admired'," he said. That's how Stravinsky thought of the Psalms he sets in each of the symphony's three movements, and especially Psalm 150 in the final movement, which is by far the longest of the three, with its vision of a world celebrating God through music.

Stravinsky had apparently already had the idea of composing a piece that would include the psalms in an orchestral context, but he didn't want to follow in anyone's footsteps. "I even chose Psalm 150 in part for its popularity, though another and equally compelling reason was my eagerness to counter the many composers who had abused these magisterial verses as pegs for their own lyrico-sentimental 'feelings'. The Psalms are poems of exaltation, but also of anger and judgement, and even of curses." The two earlier movements set texts of human penitence, sinfulness and longed-for salvation: the sinner's cry to be heard in the first movement, the "new song" forged after the Lord has hauled the psalmist "out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay" in the second.

The secret of this 23-minute work's symphonism is its relationship between chorus and orchestra. Stravinsky composed for them so that "the two elements are on an equal footing, neither outweighing the other". He said he wanted "to create an organic whole without conforming to the various models adopted by symphonic custom, but still retaining the periodic order by which the symphony is distinguished from the suite."

The music of this period of Stravinsky's life is called neo-classical, which suggests an often ironic or coldly knowing refraction of past forms and manners through the prism of Stravinsky's way of hearing, seeing and imagining. There are references to previous styles and modes of musical discourse in the piece – especially the double fugue of the second movement, with a dense contrapuntal texture in the choir and the orchestra and a first melody that flirts with a memory of the main subject of Bach's musical offering – and there are moments that resonate with Stravinsky's other compositions, such as his opera-oratorio *Oedipus Rex*. But it's the new sounds, forms and shapes of the *Symphony of Psalms* that define the piece as a profoundly unironic, essentially sincere expression of Stravinsky's unique approach to the psalms, the symphony and even his faith (he was an observant Orthodox believer at this time in his life).

PROGRAM NOTES

GLORIA

Claude Rostand, a musicologist and friend of Poulenc, famously quipped that “in Poulenc there is something of the monk and something of the rascal.” Poulenc’s *Gloria* is perhaps the perfect fusion of both the composer’s spirituality and his sense of humor. In a talk, he explained:

“At its first performance in Paris, the *Gloria* caused a considerable shock because there’s a second verse which is clearly treated in a very joyful, almost secular manner. But I’m like Gozzoli. If you go to Florence, to the Riccardi Palace to admire Gozzoli’s sublime frescoes and angels—there’s a whole series of angels—and if you look at the angels carefully, there’s one who’s sticking his tongue out at his neighbor. I claim that angels aren’t always saints. And I have to tell you that the idea for this second verse, for this kind of levity, was suggested to me by Benedictines I saw playing football. I thought it was a delightful notion that these men who were dedicated to prayer, who don’t talk to each other, should be playing football with

enthusiasm and cheerfulness. The angels stick out their tongues and the Benedictines play football...Why in the *Gloria*, which is something cheerful, why produce something from a funeral parlor?!”

Poulenc divides the traditional text into six parts for his setting; the opening “Gloria in excelsis Deo” tempers traditional bombast with Poulenc’s characteristically tart harmonies and colorful orchestrations. The following “Laudamus te” is the “second verse” inspired by the football-playing Benedictines. The tempo then slows for a meditative “Domine Deus,” which introduces the soprano soloist, but picks up again in the spritely “Domine Fili unigenite.” The soprano soloist returns for the “Domine Deus, Agnus Dei,” leading the chorus with an otherworldly, almost uncanny melody. In the final “Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,” the extroverted music that began the *Gloria* returns, but ultimately fades to hushed silence, as if awed by the mystery of the divine.

- CALVIN DOTSEY



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SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



GRAND CHORUS &

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Erica Menasco
Forgey Autumn
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Hailey Stottlemyre
Hyejin Lee
Isabel Lara
Jacy Schoening
Julianna Carden
Kaitlyn Rivera
Katie Stephenson
Kayla Flores
Lauren Abell
Lindsay Warner
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* Principals on Poulenc

Principals on Stravinsky

BIOGRAPHIES



Allen Hightower

CONDUCTOR

Allen Hightower is a seventh generation Texan, and resides in McKinney, Texas with his wife, Dr. Kristin Hightower and their two daughters Caroline and Julianne. As the director of Choral Studies at the University of North Texas, Allen leads the master's and doctoral programs in choral conducting, and oversees a comprehensive choral program of eight ensembles. Allen serves as the conductor of the UNT A Cappella Choir, and the UNT Grand Chorus which collaborates annually with the UNT Symphony Orchestra in performances of major choral-orchestral works. As a member of UNT's Early Music faculty, he leads the vocal ensemble Vox Aquilae, an artistic partner of the UNT Baroque Orchestra.

Since arriving at UNT in 2016, the A Cappella Choir has received invitations to perform for the Texas Music Educators Association in 2020, the National Conference of the American Choral Directors Association in 2021, and the Southwestern Division of ACDA in 2022. Vox Aquilae and the UNT Baroque Orchestra were featured at the January 2022 virtual conference of the National Collegiate Choral Organization.

As a teacher and conductor, Dr. Hightower has visited 30 states, Asia, and Europe. His students hold positions of leadership as choral conductors in public schools, colleges and universities, and churches and community choirs throughout the United States.

Prior to his appointment at UNT, he held the Weston Noble Endowed Chair in Music at Luther College in

Decorah, Iowa, where he served as conductor of the renowned Nordic Choir and artistic director of Christmas at Luther. As Luther's Director of Choral Activities, he gave leadership to a choral program that included four conductors, six choirs, and over 530 singers. Under Hightower's direction, the Nordic Choir performed at the 2014 North Central Division of ACDA, recorded six compact discs, made annual concert tours throughout the United States, and toured Europe on two occasions.

From 2000-2010, Hightower served as Professor of Music and Director of Choral Studies at Sam Houston State University. During his tenure, the SHSU Chorale toured Europe, performed for the 2007 National Convention of the American Choral Directors Association, 2010 Southwestern Division of ACDA, and 2003, 2006, and 2010 conventions of the Texas Music Educators Association. His high school teaching career included tenures at Klein High School in Spring, Texas and at Odessa Permian High School in Odessa, where he led the PHS Kantorei and Satin Strings in performance at the 1996 TMEA convention.

Outside of his work in academia, Allen has served as the Artistic Director of the Houston Masterworks Chorus and Orchestra, leading an annual concert series of choral-orchestral masterworks. As a deeply committed church musician, he has served Baptist, Congregational, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches in Texas, California, and Minnesota. He currently serves on the music staff of Stonebriar Community Church in Frisco, Texas, and has served as the Church Music Vice-President of the Texas Choral Directors Association. He was as Adjunct Professor of Conducting at the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

As a conducting student of the Texas choral legend Bev Henson, Allen earned his undergraduate degree in music education and piano from Sam Houston State University. He went on to earn a master's degree in choral conducting from the Eastman School of Music where he was a student of Baroque scholar Alfred Mann, and a master's degree in orchestral conducting from Baylor University, where he served as assistant conductor to Stephen Heyde and accompanist to Donald Bailey and the Baylor Chamber Singers. Allen earned his doctorate in conducting from the University of California, Los Angeles, where he served as assistant conductor to Donald Neuen. Hightower pursued additional orchestral conducting studies with Jung-Ho Pak at the University of Southern California, choral conducting studies with Joseph Flummerfelt at Westminster Choir College and choral-orchestral conducting with Helmuth Rilling at the Oregon Bach Festival. After winning first prize in the graduate division of the American Choral Directors Association's Conducting Competition in 1997, Allen served as assistant to Paul Salamunovich, conductor of the Los Angeles Master Chorale.

BIOGRAPHIES



Nereida García

SOPRANO

George H. W. Bush, former Consul General of France Sujiro Seam, former Consul General of Italy Fabrizio Nava, and has represented her family's home state in Mexico at the International Festival of Tamaulipas. An advocate for foreign language studies and educational funding, Ms. García performed annually for the World Affairs Council of Houston Language Symposia.

Ms. García has served as instructor of music, voice, diction, opera and musical theatre for Texas A&M University; assistant professor of music, voice and opera at University of Texas at Arlington; lecturer in voice, diction and music advocacy, outreach and business at University of Texas Rio Grande Valley; instructor of music in voice, vocal pedagogy, and diction at Southeastern Oklahoma State University, professor of music, voice and class voice at Dallas College-Eastfield Campus and adjunct in voice at the University of North Texas.

This academic year Ms. García is expanding her pursuits in education advocacy and accessibility by establishing a non-profit organization to bring mentorship, private music lessons and academic support to students and individuals of all ages, locations and backgrounds.

Nereida García, Mexican-American soprano, has sung in the United States, Mexico, and Europe. Ms. García has performed with Opera in the Heights, The Living Opera, Sherman Symphony Orchestra, UNT Grand Chorus and Symphony Orchestra, Soma International Foundation, Foundation for Modern Music, was an Apprentice Artist with Sarasota Opera and Artist-in-Residence with Amarillo Opera.

She has sung as soprano soloist in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Brahms' Requiem, Handel's Messiah, Mozart's Requiem, Poulenc's Gloria, Schubert's Mirjam's Siegesgesang, the world premiere of Davies' chamber work Love Bade Me Welcome, and on the operatic stages as Nedda in Pagliacci, Cio Cio San in Madama Butterfly, Juliette in Roméo et Juliette, Mary Warren in The Crucible, Lauretta in Gianni Schicchi, Contessa Almaviva in Le nozze di Figaro, Donna Elvira in Don Giovanni, and the title role in Massenet's Cendrillon.

She has been the recipient of the "A Woman's Voice Award" granted by Women's Chorus of Dallas, a finalist in the Dallas Opera Guild competition, finalist in the Lois Alba Aria competition, and guest soloist for the TMEA Texas All-State Mixed Choir. She has performed for the late and Honorable



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