



CHRISTMAS WITH ORPHEUS

Orpheus
CHAMBER SINGERS

J.D. BURNETT, Artistic Director

Fort Worth

Fri. Dec. 15, 2023 7:30 PM
St. Stephen Presbyterian Church

Dallas

Sat. Dec. 16, 2023 7:30 PM
St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church

Dallas

Sun. Dec. 17, 2023 7:00 PM
Church of the Transfiguration

Christmas with Orpheus

Noel!	•••	Steven Sametz (b. 1954)
Svete Tihy Bogoroditse Devo	•••	Alexander Gretchaninoff (1864-1956) Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)
Un soir de neige	•••	Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)
	<i>I. De grandes cuillers de neige</i> <i>II. La bonne neige</i> <i>III. Bois meurtri</i> <i>IV. La nuit le froid la solitude</i>	
Hymn to the Creator of Light	•••	John Rutter (b. 1945)
SING ALONG - O Come, O Come Emmanuel		
Sing We Now of Christmas Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen	•••	Traditional French/arr. Prentice Traditional English/ arr. Parker/Shaw Traditional English/Pentatonix tr. Habermann
	INTERMISSION	
Cum Sancto Spiritu	•••	Hyo-Won Woo (b. 1974)
In the Bleak Midwinter The Unexpected Early Hour	•••	Joel Martinson (b. 1960) Reena Esmail (b. 1983)
SING ALONG - Silent Night		
Lully, Lulla, Lullay		Traditional English/arr. Stopford
	Kori Miller, soprano	
Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas		H. Martin (1914-2011) & R. Blane (1914-1995) arr. Brandau
	Katrina Burggraf, alto ~ Barrett Radziun, tenor	
Will There Really Be a Morning?		Craig Hella Johnson (b. 1962)
	Cody Conway, piano	



••• Indicates applause marker. Please silence all electronic devices. No unauthorized recording or photography.

J.D. Burnett, Artistic Director

Soprano

Hannah Allen
Rachel Jones
Jacki Miller
Kori Miller
Julia Durbin Nyoka
Ashley Townsley

Alto

Laura Warriner Bray
Katrina Burggraf
Madelaine Fell
Sarah Harvey
Erin Roth Thomas
Maiya Williams

Tenor

Johnny Brown
Eric Lewis
Travis Lowery
De'Courtneyous Miller
Barrett Radziun
Spencer Simpson

Bass

Hawkins Burns
Cody Conway
Matt Glass
De'Evin Johnson
Connor Lidell
Hastings Reeves

Noel!

Noel! Sing we Noel,
both all and some.
Out of your sleep awake,
for God, mankind,
now hath He take

Steven Sametz (b. 1954)

all of a maiden
without any make.
Noel! Sing we Noel!

~adapted from a Medieval carol

Svete Tihiy

Svete tikhyi svyatyya slavy,
Bezsmertnago, Otsa Nebesnago,
Svyatago Blazhennago, Iisuse Khriste!

Prishedshe na zapad solntsa, videvshe svet
vechernii, poyem Otsa,
Syna i Svyatago Dukha, Boga!

Dostoin esi vo vsya vremena pet byti glasi
prepodobnymi,
Syne Bozhii, zhivot dayai, temzhe mir Tya slavit.

Alexander Gretchaninoff (1864-1956)

Gladsome light of the holy glory of the
Immortal One—
the Heavenly Father, holy and blessed—
Jesus Christ.

Now that we have come to the setting of the sun,
and behold the light of evening,
we praise the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit—
God.

Thou art worthy at every moment
to be praised in hymns of reverent voices.
O Son of God, Thou art the Giver of Life;
therefore all the world glorifies Thee.

*~From the Great Vespers of the Russian
Orthodox Liturgy*

Bogoroditse Devo

Bogoróditse Dyévo, ráduisya,
Blagodátnaya Maríye, Gospód s tobóyu.
Blagoslovyéna ty v zhenákh,
i blagoslovyén plod chryéva tvoyevó,
yáko Spása rodilá yesí dush náshikh.

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)

Rejoice, virgin mother of God,
Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you.
Blessed are you among women,
and blessed is the fruit of your womb,
for you have borne the Saviour of our souls.

*~From Great Vespers of the Russian
Orthodox Liturgy*

Un soir de neige

I. De grandes cuillers de neige

De grandes cuillers de neige
Ramassent nos pieds glacés
Et d'une dure parole
Nous heurtons l'hiver têtu
Chaque arbre a sa place en l'air
Chaque roc son poids sur terre
Chaque ruisseau son eau vive
Nous nous n'avons pas de feu

II. La bonne neige

La bonne neige le ciel noir
Les branches mortes la détresse
De la forêt pleine de pièges
Honte à la bête pourchassée
La fuite en flèche dans le coeur
Les traces d'une proie atroce
Hardi au loup et c'est toujours
Le plus beau loup et c'est toujours
Le dernier vivant que menace
La masse absolue de la mort

III. Bois meurtri

Bois meurtri
bois perdu d'un voyage en hiver
Navire où la neige prend pied
Bois d'asile bois mort
où sans espoir je rêve
De la mer aux miroirs crevés
Un grand moment d'eau froide a saisi les noyés
La foule de mon corps en souffre
Je m'affaiblis je me disperse
J'avoue ma vie j'avoue ma mort
j'avoue autrui.

IV. La nuit le froid la solitude

La nuit le froid la solitude
On m'enferma soigneusement
Mais les branches cherchaient leur voie
dans la prison
Autour de moi l'herbe trouva le ciel
On verrouilla le ciel
Ma prison s'écroula
Le froid vivant le froid brûlant
m'eut bien en main

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

I. Great snowy spoons

Great snowy spoons
Pick up our icy feet
And with a harsh word
We confront stubborn winter
Each tree has its place in the air
Each rock its weight on the earth
Each stream its living water
But we have no fire

II. The good snow

The good snow, the black sky
The dead branches, the pain
Of the forest full of traps
Shame to the hunted creature
Flight like an arrow in its heart
The tracks of a ferocious prey
Onward, wolf, and it's always
The finest wolf and it's always
The last one alive threatened by
The absolute weight of death

III. Bruised woods

Bruised woods,
lost woods of a winter's journey
Ship where the snow takes hold
Sheltering woods, dead woods,
where without hope I dream
Of the sea with its gutted mirrors
A surge of cold water gripped the drowned
Making the crowd of my body suffer
I grow weak, I am scattered
I confess my life, I confess my death,
I confess the other

IV. Night cold loneliness

Night cold loneliness
They locked me in carefully
But the branches were seeking their way
into the prison
Around me grass found the sky
They locked and bolted the sky
My prison crumbled
The living cold the burning cold
had me right in its hand

~Paul Éluard (1895-1952)

Hymn to the Creator of Light

John Rutter (b. 1945)

Glory be to thee, O Lord, glory be to thee,
Creator of the visible light,
The sun's ray, the flame of fire;
Creator also of the light invisible and intellectual:
That which is known of God, the light invisible.
Glory be to thee, O Lord, glory be to thee,
Creator of the Light.

for writings of the law, glory be to thee:
for oracles of prophets, glory be to thee:
for melody of psalms, glory be to thee:
for wisdom of proverbs, glory be to thee:
experience of histories, glory be to thee:
a light which never sets.

God is the Lord, who hath shewed us light.

~Lancelot Andrewes, 1555-1626, tr. Alexander Whyte

Light, who dost my soul enlighten;
Sun, who all my life dost brighten;
Joy, the sweetest man e'er knoweth;
Fount, whence all my being floweth.
From thy banquet let me measure,
Lord, how vast and deep its treasure;
Through the gifts thou here dost give us,
As thy guest in heaven receive us.

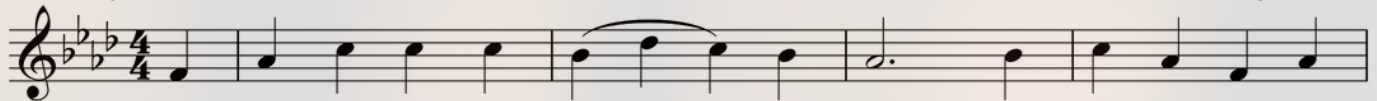
~J. Franck, 1618-77, tr. Catherine Winkworth
(adapted)

O come, O come, Emmanuel

9th century Latin

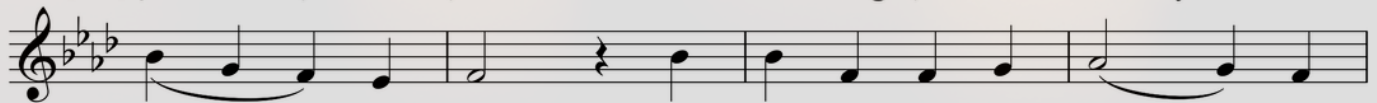
VENI EMMANUEL LM with Refrain

15th century French



[ALL] 1. O come, O come, Em - ma - nu - el, And ran - som cap - tive
[MEN] 2. O come, thou Rod of Jes - se, free Thine own from Sa - tan's
[Orpheus] 3. *Orpheus alone will sing the 3rd stanza. Please join us for the refrain printed below.*

[ALL] 4. O come, O come, thou Lord _____ of Might, Who to thy tribes on



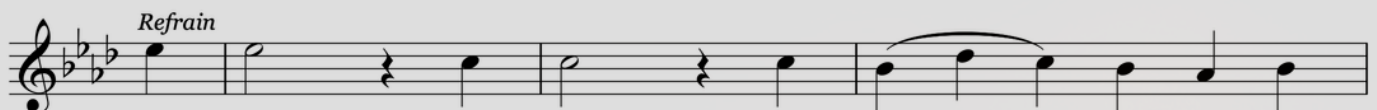
Is - ra - el, That mourns in lone - ly ex - ile
ty - ran - ny; from depths of hell thy peo - ple

Si - nai's height, In an - cient times did give _____ the



here, Un - til the Son of God _____ ap - pear:
save, And give them vic - t'ry o'er _____ the grave:

law In cloud and ma - jes - ty _____ and awe:



Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el Shall



come to thee, O Is - - ra - el.

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Sing We Now of Christmas

Sing we now of Christmas, sing we all Noel.
Of our Lord and Saviour, we the tidings tell.

Sing we Noel, for Christ the King is born.
Sing we now of Christmas, sing we all Noel.

Angels from on high say, "Shepherds come
and see.
He is born in Bethlehem, a blessed lamb
for thee."

Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day

Tomorrow shall be my dancing day;
I would my true love did so chance
To see the legend of my play,
To call my true love to my dance;

Sing, oh! my love, oh! my love, my love, my love,
This have I done for my true love.

Then was I born of a virgin pure,
Of her I took fleshly substance
Thus was I knit to man's nature
To call my true love to my dance.

God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen

God rest ye merry gentlemen
Let nothing you dismay
Remember Christ our Savior
Was born on Christmas Day
To save us all from Satan's pow'r
When we were gone astray
Oh tidings of comfort and joy
Comfort and joy
Oh tidings of comfort and joy

In Bethlehem, in Israel
This blessed Babe was born
And laid within a manger
Upon this blessed morn
The which His Mother Mary
Did nothing take in scorn
Oh tidings of comfort and joy
Comfort and joy
Oh tidings of comfort and joy

Cum Sancto Spiritu

Glória in excélsis Deo
et in terra pax homínibus
bonæ voluntátis.
Laudámus te, benedícimus te,
adorámus te, glorificámus te,
grátias ágimus tibi
propter magnam glóriam tuam,
Quoniam tu solus Sanctus,
tu solus Dominus,
tu solus Altíssimus,
Jesu Christe, Amen.

Traditional French/arr. Prentice

Shepherds found the child lying in a manger
stall.
Joseph standing by, and mother Mary mild.

Magi oriental journeyed from afar.
They did come to greet Him 'neath the shining
star.

Glory to God, for Christ the King is born,
Sing we all of Christmas, sing we all Noel.
~15th century French carol

Traditional English/arr. Parker/Shaw

In a manger laid, and wrapped I was
So very poor, this was my chance
Betwixt an ox and a silly poor ass
To call my true love to my dance.

Then afterwards baptized I was;
The Holy Ghost on me did glance,
My Father's voice heard I from above,
To call my true love to my dance.
~Traditional English carol

Traditional English/Pentatonix tr. Habermann

Fear not then, said the Angel
Let nothing you affright
This day is born a Savior
Of a pure Virgin bright
To free all those who trust in Him
From Satan's pow'r and might
Oh tidings of comfort and joy
Comfort and joy
Oh tidings of comfort and joy
~Traditional English

Hyo-Won Woo (b. 1974)

Glory to God in the highest
And on earth peace
to people of good will.
We praise you, we bless you,
we adore you, we glorify you,
we give you thanks
for your great glory,
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ, Amen.
~Luke 2:14; Greater Doxology

In the bleak midwinter

In the bleak midwinter
Frosty wind made moan
Earth stood hard as iron
Water like a stone
Snow had fallen
Snow on snow on snow
In the bleak midwinter
Long, long ago.

Our God, Heav'n cannot hold Him
Nor earth sustain;
Heav'n and earth shall flee away
When He comes to reign:
In the bleak midwinter
A stable place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him whom cherubim
Worship night and day,
Breastful of milk
And a manger full of hay;
Enough for Him
Whom angel fall down before,
The ox, ass, and camel
Which adore.

The Unexpected Early Hour

Praise be! praise be!
The dim, the dun, the dark withdraws
Our recluse morning's found.
The river's alive
The clearing provides
Lie down, night sky, lie down.
I feel the cold wind leaving, gone,
I feel the frost's relief.
My tracks in the snow can still be erased
In us, the sun believes.
Winter is, Winter ends,
So the true bird calls.
The rocks cry out
My bones cry out
All the trees applaud.
Ev'ry hard thing lauds.
Lie down, night sky, lie down.
I know the seeding season comes,
I know the ground will spring.
My fate is not night
I don't need to try

Joel Martinson (b. 1960)

Angels and Archangels
May have traveled there
Cherubim and Seraphim
Thronged the air
But only his Mother
In her maiden bliss
Worshiped the beloved
With a kiss

What can I give him?
Poor as I am
If I were a shepherd
I would give a lamb
If I were a wise man
I would do my part
But what I can I give him
Give him my heart
Give him my heart

~Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

Reena Esmail (b. 1983)

Behold! The dawn, within.
Horizon lights across my thoughts,
Horizon lines redraw.
Inside of my throat a rise of the gold
Inside my chest I thaw.
Winter is, Winter ends,
Nothing stays the same.
The moon strikes high,
The sun strikes high and
Now I hear your name:
Earth's Untired Change.
Praise be! praise be!
The unexpected early hour
grows the good light long.
Our darkness ends,
O mercy sun,
Trust can warm us all.
Begin again, again, again,
O may our day begin!

~Rebecca Gayle Howell

Silent Night

Joseph Mohr
trans. John Freeman Young

STILLE NACHT Irr.

Franz Xaver Gruber
arr. Carl Reinecke, ed. TRL

(ALL) 1. Sil - ent night, ho - ly night, all is calm, all is bright
(Women) 2. Sil - ent night, ho - ly night, Shep - herds quake at the sight;
(ALL) 3. Sil - ent night, ho - ly night, Son of God, love's pure light,

round yon vir - gin mo - ther and child. Ho - ly in - fant, so ten - der and mild,
glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far, heav'n - ly hosts sing, "Al - le - lu - ia,
Rad - iant beams from thy ho - ly face with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace,

sleep in heav - en - ly peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
Christ the Sav - ior is born! Christ the Sav - ior is born!"
Je - sus, Lord at thy birth, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth.

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Lully, Lulla, Lullay

Lully, lulla,
lully, lulla
Thou little tiny child
By by, lully, lullay.

O sisters too, how may we do
For to preserve this day
This poor youngling for whom we sing,
"Bye bye, lully, lullay"?

Traditional English/arr. Stopford

Herod the king, in his raging,
Chargèd he hath this day
His men of might in his own sight
All young children to slay.

That woe is me, poor child, for thee
And ever mourn and may
For thy parting neither say nor sing,
"Bye bye, lully, lullay."
~16th century English carol

Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas

Have yourself a merry little Christmas
Let your heart be light
From now on all our troubles will be out of sight
Have yourself a merry little Christmas
Make the Yuletide gay
From now on all our troubles will be miles away

Here we are, as in olden days
Happy golden days of yore

Will There Really Be a Morning?

Will there really be a "Morning"?
Is there such a thing as "Day"?
Could I see it from the mountains
If I were as tall as they?

Morning, morning,
Where does morning lie?

H. Martin (1914-2011) & R. Blane (1914-1995) arr. Brandau

Faithful friends who are dear to us
gather near to us once more

Through the years we all will be together
If the fates allow
Hang a shining star upon the highest bow
And have yourself a merry little Christmas now.
~Hugh Martin & Ralph Blane

Craig Hella Johnson (b. 1962)

Has it feet like Water lilies?
Has it feathers like a Bird?
Is it brought from famous countries
Of which I have never heard?

Oh some Scholar! Oh some Sailor!
Oh some Wise Men from the sky
Please to tell a little Pilgrim
Where the place called "Morning" lies!
~Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

J.D. Burnett enjoys a varied career as a conductor, singer, and teacher. He was named Orpheus's Artistic Director in March 2021 and assumed the role on January 1, 2022. Burnett is also Director of Choral Activities at the University of Texas at Austin Butler School of Music. In addition, he is the founding Artistic Director of Kinnara, Atlanta's premier professional chamber choir.

Formerly, he was Associate Professor of Music and Associate Director of Choral Activities at the University of Georgia Hugh Hodgson School of Music. He has served as Assistant Director of the Dallas Symphony Chorus, conductor of the New Jersey Youth Chorus Young Men's Ensemble, Associate Conductor of the Masterwork Chorus of New Jersey, and Acting Director of Choral Activities at Montclair State University. Earlier posts include Interim Director of Choral Activities at San Jose State University, Artistic Director of the New Jersey Chamber Singers, Music Director of the Houston Masterworks Chorus, and Founder of Men's Consort Houston. He also served as Choral Editor at McGraw-Hill, Inc.

Burnett did undergraduate study at Stanford University and Oklahoma State University. He holds advanced degrees in choral conducting from Westminster Choir College and the University of North Texas. As a professional choral singer, Burnett has performed and recorded with the Stillwater Chamber Singers, Cantare Houston, Fuma Sacra, Robert Shaw Festival Singers, Choir of Trinity Church Wall Street, Oregon Bach Festival Chorus, Santa Fe Desert Chorale, and Conspirare.

PROGRAM NOTES by Cody Conway

Countless ensembles have commissioned new repertoire by one of the most well-known living American composers, Steven Sametz (b. 1954). **Noel!** is a rousing adaptation of a medieval carol for Tenor-Bass choir which stacks parts atop a repeated Bass ostinato.

Свете тихий (Svete Tihiy) exemplifies Alexandre Gretchaninoff's (1864–1956) "symphonic" approach to choral composition. He utilizes the widest palette of choral colors, attaining the rich and majestic sounds typical of the 19th-century Russian Orthodox idiom. The most beloved work from this genre is Sergei Rachmaninoff's (1873–1943) *All-Night Vigil*. The sixth movement is the Church Slavonic *Ave Maria*, **Богородице Дево** (Bogoroditse Devo). This is the most revered and performed selection of the entire vigil and is quite unique from the others in its careful, reverent tone and silken melodies.

Francis Poulenc (1899–1963) became an accomplished pianist and modern composer, despite his father's forbiddance to attend a music conservatory. He was known to frequent Parisian and American Jazz clubs and was light-hearted and irreverent in his early compositions. Following the death of a close friend in 1936, Poulenc revealed a newfound gravity in his choral writing. **Un soir de neige** (An evening of snow) was composed between December 24 and 26, 1944, and is a setting of four poems by Paul Éluard. Poulenc's serene and delicate writing in this "Petite cantate de chambre" (Little chamber cantata) is often augmented by his angular and stunning harmonic shifts and jazz influences.

John Rutter (b. 1945) is one of the most prolific living English composers. Most of his choral music is lighter fare, making his pop and jazz-influenced melodies accessible and well-loved by many. Though he is not religious, he has said he finds great inspiration in the spirituality of sacred verses and prayers. **Hymn to the Creator of Light** is the opposite of his "easy listening" repertoire; the different approach could be explained by its dedication to the memory of Herbert Howells. Scored for double choir and up to ten parts, Rutter masterfully paints images of light colored with unusual harmonies in a soprano trio. The piece culminates in a moving rendition of the familiar Lutheran hymn, *Schmücke dich* (Deck thyself, my soul, with gladness).

Our first half concludes with three traditional carols. **Sing We Now of Christmas** is an English adaptation of the 15th-century French tune, *Noël Nouvelet*. True to the original melody and text, Fred Prentice's (1923–1994) arrangement describes the multiple characters of the nativity crèche. **My Dancing Day** is another 20th-century arrangement of a medieval carol by famous American choral figures, Robert Shaw (1927–1978) and Alice Parker (b. 1925). The text references "the legend of my play," a nod to the medieval English *mystery plays* of biblical stories. The first manuscript of **God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen** is from 1650, though the famous a cappella group, Pentatonix, has helped solidify the carol as a modern favorite. With virtuosic Baroque fugues weaving together the verses, their arrangement has reached over 83 million views on YouTube.

Hyo Won Woo (b. 1974) has enjoyed international acclaim for her compositions, stemming from her posts as composer-in-residence of multiple world-renowned South Korean choirs. Her music often blends Western styles with traditional Korean elements, making it wildly popular among American choirs. **Cum Sancto Spiritu** is the third movement of her *Gloria* trilogy, featuring challenging rhythmic passages ending in a pointillistic and thrilling *Amen*.

Orpheus' first ever commission in 1997 was Dallas-native Joel Martinson's (b. 1960) setting of Christina Rossetti's poem, **In the Bleak Mid-Winter**. This lush, eight-part arrangement uses Gustav Holst's familiar 1906 melody but explores textures and harmonies far beyond the original, making it a long-time favorite of Orpheus singers and audiences. Reena Esmail (b. 1983) is a renowned American-Indian composer whose unique voice has sparked collaborations with nearly twenty world-renowned professional choirs and symphonies in the past three years. Her cross-cultural music is known for melding Indian and Western styles. **The Unexpected Early Hour** is the third of the triptych, *Winter Breviary*. Reena writes:

This set of three carols traces a journey through the solstice, the longest night of the year. The texts follow the canonical hours of Evensong, Matins and Lauds, and the music maps onto Hindustani raags for those same hours (Raag Hamsadhvani, Malkauns and Ahir Bhairav). This set is a meeting of cultures, and of the many ways we honor the darkness, and celebrate the return of light.

The original Coventry Carol dates from the 16th-century and was traditionally performed in Coventry as part of a mystery play. The rocking lullaby tells the story of the Massacre of the Innocents—when King Herod ordered all male infants under the age of two to be killed. Philip Stopford's (b. 1977) **Lully lulla lullay** captures the mother's perspective, as a beautiful lament for her doomed child. Ryan Brandau (b. 1981) is a New York-based arranger and conductor whose arrangement of **Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas** is one in a series of jazz-inflected holiday favorites. Craig Hella Johnson (b. 1962) is the founding Artistic Director of one of the nation's finest choirs, Conspirare. His arrangements and compositions have become hallmarks of Conspirare's Christmas concerts in Austin, TX. **Will there really be a "Morning"?** is a treble-only setting of an Emily Dickinson poem which captures the hope of a new day from the darkness of night.



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Charles Sicking

Voices of Change

Melissa Young

*And thanks to those who
donated after our print
deadline!*



Orpheus Chamber Singers is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and relies on the support of generous individuals like you.

Scan the QR code or stop by the box office to make your tax-deductible contribution.

Orpheus Chamber Singers, Inc., is the premier professional choir in North Texas, committed to performances and activities that perpetuate and elevate the art of choral music.

Rachmaninoff's All-Night Vigil March 16 & 17, 2024

Rachmaninoff's *All-Night Vigil* is a monumental work of the choral repertoire, beloved by audiences and performers alike. Orpheus will be joined by nationally recognized artists as we expand to a 36-voice choir to perform this 75-minute masterpiece in its entirety.

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Production Crew: Eric Lewis & Travis Lowery
Social Media: De'Evin Johnson
Rehearsal Facilities: Royal Lane Baptist Church & Harry Wooten

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Donald Krehbiel, Founding Artistic Director Emeritus