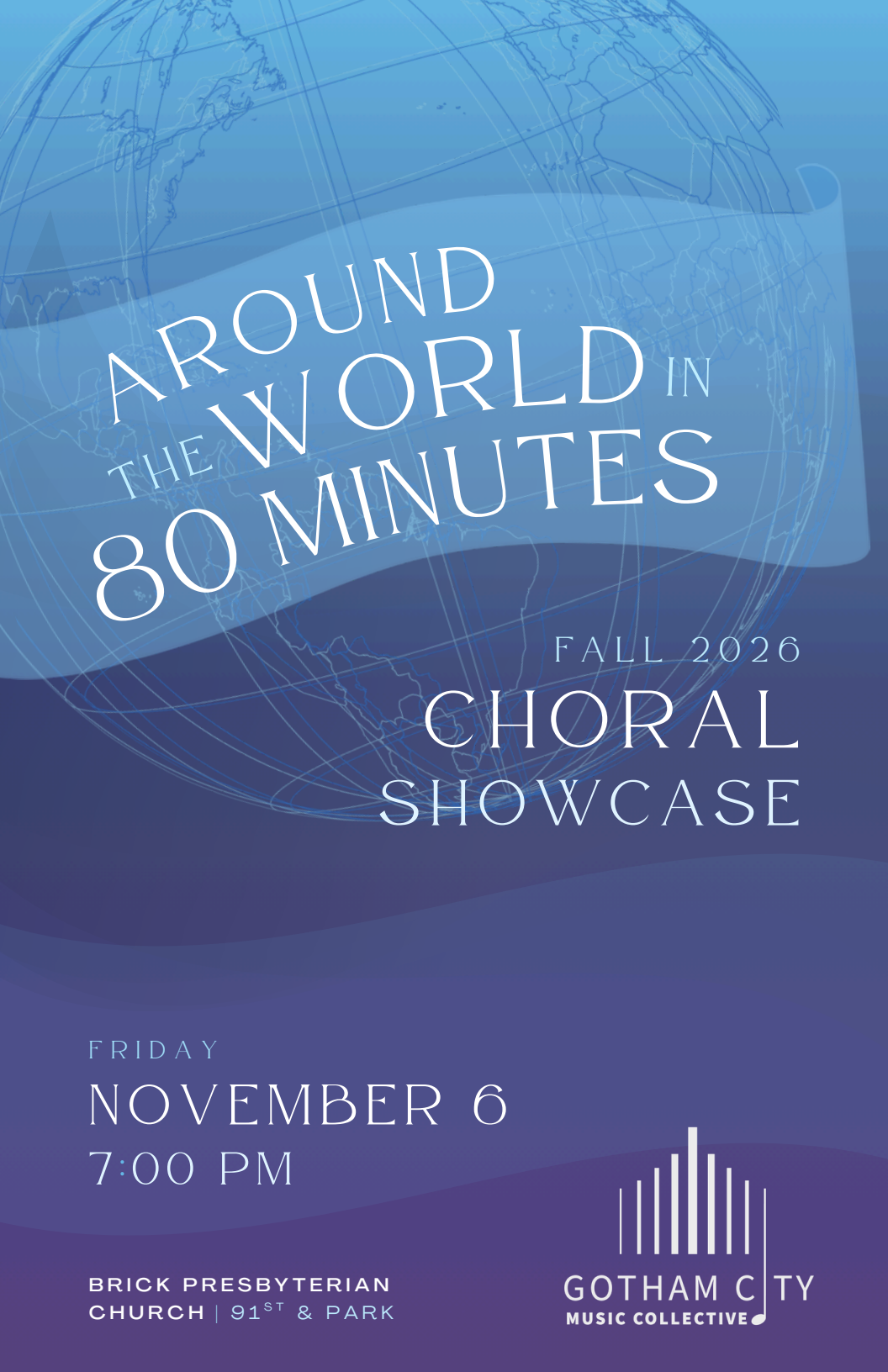

AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 MINUTES
FALL 2026
CHORAL SHOWCASE
FRIDAY
NOVEMBER 6
7:00 PM
BRICK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH | 91ST & PARK
GOTHAM CITY MUSIC COLLECTIVE

GOTHAM CITY
MUSIC COLLECTIVE
presents

AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 MINUTES

FALL 2026 CHORAL SHOWCASE
Friday, November 6, 7:00 PM
BRICK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Victor Martinez, conductor
Danny Farah, piano

TāReKiṬa . . . . . Reena Esmail

La Llorona . . . . . Mexican Folk Song, arr. David Conte
Fiona Brickey & Samuel Rodriguez, violin • Matt Gershowitz, guitar

Ngizocula . . . . . Thomas Yonke, translation by Mpumeleo Manyathi
Emma Dietrich, soloist • Zahir Lara, percussion

Loch Lomond . . . . . Scottish Folk Song, arr. Jonathan Quick
Jonathan Zaccarini, soloist

Wild Mountain Thyme . . . . . Scottish Folk Song
Matt Gershowitz

San Francisco . . . . . John Phillips
Mofieni Iniya

Shallow . . . . . Lady Gaga, Mark Ronson, Anthony Rossomando, Andrew Wyatt
Barbara Gao Shapiro, Mohit Sani, and Kevin Shapiro

Vienna . . . . . Billy Joel
Kat Savina

Vois Sur Ton Chemin . . . . . Christophe Barratier, Bruno Coulais
Ariel Kaye, conductor

Błogosławieni Miłosierni . . . . . Marek Raczyński
Xenia Clement, conductor

Umi Sono Ai . . . . . Kousaku Dan, Tokiko Iwatani, arr. Rachel Stenson
Jeff Christianson, conductor • Kevin Shapiro, soloist

Bogoroditse Devo . . . . . Sergei Rachmaninoff, ed. Ken Fleet

Dilmano, Dilbero . . . . Bulgarian Folk Song, arr. Gabriela Hristova, Joshua DeVries
Sarah Rosenblatt, soloist • Zahir Lara & Kevin Shapiro, percussion

THE GCMC CHOIR

SOPRANOS
Claudia Caceres
Anisha Chatterjee
Madeline de la Parra
Emma Dietrich
Jordyn Gross
Mofieni Iniya
Ariel Kaye*
Anya Knoth
Kelly Lu
Janelle Myers
Beata Raczyńska
Mary Elizabeth Warren

ALTOS
Lauryn Allums
Ginelle Bamfo
Xenia Clement*
Maggie Fernicola
Maddy Hally
Abbey Klotz
Chanel Lopez
Kelley McAndrews
Julia Natto
Rachel Padowicz
Kat Savina
Ky Sharon
Anne Zhu

TENORS
Matt Gershowitz
Connor Karboski
Sarah Rosenblatt
Shane Scott
Jonathan Zaccarini

BASSES
Jeff Christianson*
Kevin Shapiro
Matheus S. Populim
Abraham Thomas

* = Section Leader

AROUND THE WORLD

Ever since I was a kid, I've been fascinated by languages—I'd pick a new one each summer and unsuccessfully try to learn it from whatever cassette tapes and guidebooks were available in our small library. While my childhood dream of learning every single language didn't quite pan out, it did lead me to develop a love for the stories that people share through song around the world.

Communal singing and music-making are so integral to the human experience. Across every border and tradition, song serves as a powerful bridge, allowing us to feel together and immortalize our experiences, myths, and tales. That universal human connection is the heartbeat behind *Around the World in 80 Minutes*.

Our program is designed to celebrate and amplify the rich cultural expressions of our city's diverse populations. Many of the languages and pieces presented were suggested by our own choir members who grew up speaking them, and they were able to coach our singers on the pronunciation and meaning. Our Collective strives to make the arts available and accessible to everyone—connecting neighbors across backgrounds, heritage. By weaving together these global vocal traditions, our goal is to celebrate and amplify the diverse cultures of our city and build a sense of belonging in our local community.

Thank you for being part of this communal journey tonight. Sit back, stow your tray tables in the upright position, and let's travel the world together.

▪ Victor Martinez, Artistic Director

TāReKiṬa



Reena Esmail and the Urban Voices Project

I wrote TāReKiṬa as a gift for a choir called Urban Voices Project. They are a choir of people who are currently or have recently experienced homelessness on Skid Row in Los Angeles. They are so dear to me, and one day I just decided to teach them about Indian rhythm. They enjoyed the lesson so much that I wanted to write them a piece that would use what I had taught them. The result was TāReKiṬa—I literally wrote it in an hour, just in a single moment of inspiration, and recorded myself singing all the parts for them to learn. It has since become a staple of their repertoire, but it's also been sung by so many choirs around the world. There is just something about the piece, perhaps borne out of my love for this choir, that just seems to resonate with people.

Practically speaking, this piece is based on sounds the Indian drum, the tabla, makes, called "bols"—they are onomatopoeic sounds that imitate the sound of the drum. The result is something like a scat would be in jazz—ecstatic, energetic, rhythmic music that feels good on the tongue.

▪ Reena Esmail

La Llorona

Salías del templo un día, llorona,
cuando al pasar yo te vi.
Hermoso huipil llevabas, llorona,
que la virgen te creí.

Llorona de azul celeste.

Dicen que no tengo duelo, llorona,
porque no me ven llorar.
Hay muertos que no hacen ruido, llorona,
y es más grande su penar.

Llorona de azul celeste.

— Spanish text, traditional

You were going out of the temple, llorona
When I saw you passing by.
A beautiful huipil you were wearing, llorona
That I thought you were the virgin.

Llorona of heaven's blue color.

People say I'm not in mourning, llorona
Because they don't see me cry.
There are dead that don't make noise, llorona
And whose suffering is so much greater.

Llorona of heaven's blue color.

— Translation by Martha Rodríguez-Salazar

Many of us know this song from the movie *Coco*, or maybe we grew up hearing the spooky ghost story about a woman crying by the river. But historians point out that the "crazy ghost" story actually grew out of Spanish colonization. Before the Spanish arrived in Mexico, "The Weeping Woman" was linked to an Indigenous mother goddess Cihuacōātl who in the form of a woman dressed in a flowing white gown, with long black hair, floating over the waters of Lake Texcoco, weeping and

crying out, “Ay mis hijos, ¿dónde los llevaré para que escapen de tan funesto destino?” (“Oh my children, where shall I take you so that you may escape such a dreadful fate?”) She came to represent the real-life grief of Indigenous mothers who had their land, their culture, and even their children taken from them.

While the colonial ghost tale painted her as a monster, the song comes from the Indigenous Zapotec people of Oaxaca, Mexico. They suffered greatly under Spanish colonial rule, but ultimately resisted Spanish erasure, and today they claim La Llorona as a symbol of Indigenous beauty, dignity, suffering, and survival.

Today, nearly half a million people still speak Zapotec in a thriving matriarchal society where women run the local economy and lead the community, alongside revered third-gender people known as Muxes, the master artisans who embroider those exact huipil tunics mentioned in the first verse of this song. Like many other Indigenous peoples of Mexico—such as the Yaqui, Wixárika, Nahua, and Mixtec—they keep these sentiments of survival and perseverance alive through song.

▪ Lauren Bowden

Ngizocula

Kuzozonke izinkinga zami, ngizocula.
Kuyoyonke injabulo yami, ngizocula.
Kuyoyonke impilo yami, ngizocula.
Ngizocula ngoba, nginen jabulo.
Nginen jabulo ngoba ngiyacula.

– isiZulu translation by Mpumelelo Manyathi

Through all my troubles, I will sing.
Through all my joys, I will sing.
Through all my life, I will sing.
I will sing, for I have joy.
I have joy because I sing.

– Text by Thomas Yonke

“Ngizocula” is a song about joy. It is my personal belief that joy is different than happiness. While happiness can be felt and lost in a moment, I believe that joyfulness is a much more intrinsic quality that we can spend our entire lives searching for. Life is not always happy, but neither is it only made up of trials and tribulations. Rather, life is a constant back and forth, an emotional roller coaster that we try and make sense of. “Ngizocula” is intended to reconcile both extremes. Throughout the piece there is a sense of warmth, but there is also an underlying tension that surfaces during the more tumultuous passages. Yet at its core, there is acceptance and peace. It is my hope that others may learn, as I have, the significance of joy.

▪ Thomas Yonke

Loch Lomond

This song was written in the 1700s, during the Jacobean uprising against the Protestant Hanoverian government. The battle saw thousands fight against political and cultural oppression, with Scottish and English men on both sides of the battlefield. During the Battle of Culloden, large numbers of Highlanders were imprisoned within an English prison known as Carlisle Castle. It’s here that the cross between reality and fiction gets a little sketchy, however.

"Loch Lomond" is about two Scottish soldiers imprisoned on the Scottish border. One of them was going to be set free, but the other one was going to be executed. In Scottish legend, anyone who dies outside Scotland takes the "low road" back to their homeland, where they will finally be at peace. The doomed soldier is comforting the soldier who will be set free. He tells them that "ye'll take the high road and I'll take the low road, and I'll be in Scotland before ye."

He recalls a life full of love and happiness, harkens back to his time by the "bonnie banks of Loch Lomond" where he met his wife, and comes to peace with the fact that his "broken heart ken nae second Spring again"—he will never return to the loch to be with his true love, merely in spirit.





Loch Lomond and Balquhidder, Scotland

Rather than describing anything factual or historical, this song describes a feeling, pinpointing the enduring beauty of the loch. When we know that death is coming, it is hoped that we will look back on the special moments in our life, and the places that we loved the most. For this soldier, that place and those moments existed at Loch Lomond, where the "wee birdies sing" and the "wildflowers spring." The loch feels like a heaven that is waiting for him on the distant horizon. A place that he will revisit in spirit.

▪ Ariescape, adapted

Wild Mountain Thyme

Few songs capture the emotional atmosphere of Celtic folk music as beautifully as "Wild Mountain Thyme." Gentle, romantic, and filled with imagery from the natural world, the song has become one of the most beloved ballads in Irish and Scottish music. Although many listeners assume it is an ancient traditional tune that has existed for centuries, the song actually has a more recent and traceable history than many folk standards.

The modern version of is most closely connected to Francis McPeake, a Belfast musician who adapted and popularized the song during the mid-twentieth century. McPeake came from a respected musical family and helped introduce the tune to wider audiences through performances with the McPeake Family ensemble. Yet even though the song became famous through his version, its roots stretch much further back into older Scottish and Irish folk traditions.

Many historians and folk musicians believe the song was inspired by "The Braes of Balquhidder," a Scottish song by poet Robert Tannahill in the early nineteenth century. Over time, the melody and themes evolved through oral tradition. This blending of old melodies, evolving lyrics, and regional performance styles is typical

of folk music. Songs survive because communities continue reshaping them while preserving their emotional core. That is one reason "Wild Mountain Thyme" feels both timeless and deeply rooted in Celtic tradition.

▪ Charlton Bruce

San Francisco

One of the defining anthems of [1967's] the Summer of Love is Scott McKenzie's "San Francisco (Be Sure To Wear Flowers In Your Hair)." The song was written by John Phillips of the Mamas and Papas and, more than anything else, was conceived as a way to promote the Monterey International Pop Festival he was organising. Despite being, on the surface, a shimmering piece of perfect pop, "San Francisco" has a deeply counter-cultural message buried within it. It's a message that resonates in our troubled times as well:

All across the nation, such a strange vibration
People in motion
There's a whole generation with a new explanation
People in motion, people in motion

1967 was no picnic, despite the Summer of Love doing its best to convince you it was. Vietnam was in full swing. Young men were drafted to fight in a brutal war far from home. Many never came home. Even those who survived were never the same. No less than in 1967, today the scent of change is in the air.

Young people are marching, agitating, protesting, and making their voice heard. Maybe in there somewhere is the John Phillips of this new generation. Even now they're writing an anthem to capture the essence of how they feel, think, and act. Perhaps a new Scott McKenzie is working their way around the pubs and clubs to develop their vocal and performance skills so that, when the time is right, we'll hear their song at the top of the charts, giving a voice to a group of people society has ignored for too long.

▪ No Words, No Song, adapted

Shallow

Lady Gaga, star of the 2018 film A Star is Born, wrote, produced, and performed "Shallow," the movie's lead single. "Shallow" won the Oscar for Best Original Song, and went #1 on the charts in more than 15 countries across 4 continents. Tonight's instrumentation incorporates the cajón, a Peruvian box drum, and 3 performers who claim at least 5 different countries of origin. Covers of the song in Portuguese, Norwegian, and French charted in their respective countries. That said, I am still working on my vowel placement in English, so that's the version being performed tonight. We are excited to honor our fellow New Yorker (Lady Gaga was born not far from Brick Church at Lenox Hill Hospital) and celebrate the impact her music has made worldwide.

▪ Barbara Gao Shapiro

Vienna



Vienna's music history reads like a "Who's who" of the great composers... but permit me to focus on more popular, contemporary fare: Billy Joel and his song "Vienna" from his 1977 album The Stranger, also released as the B-side to his better-known "Just the Way You Are" single.

Joel's parents had separated in the late 1950s when he was eight, and his father returned to Europe from the US. He remarried, had another son (Joel's half-brother) and this family now lived in Vienna. At age 24, Joel decided to reconnect with his father and meet his half-brother for the first time.

"When I wrote "Vienna," I meant that it's a place where you close the circle. By going to Vienna, suddenly things started to make sense in the world for me. Which is really what the song is about: Slow down, look around you and have some gratitude for the good things in your life. That's what Vienna represented to me."

Walking through Vienna with his father, he noticed a nonagenarian lady sweeping the streets, which shocked Joel. But his father pointed out she was content to still be useful to society even in old age, unlike in the US, where the elderly are "put out to pasture." So there is a dual message in the song: Don't "kill yourself in the rat-race" (to paraphrase Joel from another 2008 interview) in young age; and you can still be useful ("Vienna waits for you") when you are old.

▪ Luis Dias

Vois Sur Ton Chemin

Vois sur ton chemin	*Look to your path*
Gamins oubliés égarés	*Lost, forgotten children*
Donne leur la main pour les mener	*Give them your hand to lead them*
Vers d'autres lendemains	*To a different tomorrow*
Sens au coeur de la nuit	*Feel at the heart of the night*
L'onde d'espoir	*The wave of hope*
Ardeur de la vie	*Ardor of life*
Sentier de gloire	*Path of glory*
Bonheurs enfantins	*Youthful happiness*
Trop vite oubliés effacés	*Forgotten too soon, erased*
Une lumière dorée brille sans fin	*A golden light glows without end*
Tout au bout du chemin	*At the very end of the road*

Les Choristes is a French film directed by Christophe Barratier and released in 2004. It is set mainly in 1949, in the years after the Second World War, at a boys' boarding school called Fond de l'Étang. The name itself is suggestive: literally "the bottom of the pond," it implies a place where children have been abandoned, hidden or forgot-

-ten. Many of the pupils are orphans, difficult children or boys whose families cannot cope with them.

The film follows Clément Mathieu, an unemployed musician who becomes a supervisor at the school. He discovers a world of fear, punishment and emotional neglect. Rather than accepting the headmaster's brutal system, he forms a choir. Through music, he gives the boys structure, confidence, and a sense of dignity.

The songs are also emotionally important. "Vois sur ton chemin" links the children with the idea of lost or forgotten lives: the song asks the listener to look at children who have strayed from the path. These songs help the viewer feel that the boys' inner lives are larger than the institution allows.

Błogosławieni Miłosierni

Błogosławieni miłosierni *Beati misericordes* *Quoniam ipsi misericordiam consequentur.*	*Blessed are the merciful,* *Blessed are the merciful,* *For they will be shown mercy.*

— Polish and Latin, from Matthew 5:7

Marek Raczyński (born 1982) belongs to a prominent generation of contemporary Polish composers whose creative output is primarily centered around vocal and choral music. Having refined his craft under the guidance of Professor Paweł Łukaszewski at the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music in Warsaw, Raczyński is widely recognized for his sensitive approach to text-setting.

Marek Raczyński's Błogosławieni miłosierni is a deeply contemplative sacred work structured around one of the eight Beatitudes spoken by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of St. Matthew. It begins calmly and moodily, and the narrative is initially built using only a few words: "blessed are the merciful." The culmination of the work occurs at the moment when the Latin text of the whole blessing appears. Later, there is a calming down and return to the initial text.

Umi Sono Ai



This arrangement of Kousaku Dan's "Umi Sono Ai" is by Rachel Stenson, a vocal music instructor residing in Tokyo, Japan. She accompanies the Tokyo International Music School choirs as well as the Stenson Alumni Voices. At St. Mary's International School in Tokyo, Japan, she taught and accompanied the St. Mary's Men's Choir as well as the award-winning St. Mary's International Varsity Ensemble.

Yuzo Kayama, more commonly known as Kousaku Dan, is one of Japan's most popular entertainment personalities. A musician, television, and film star, he

Umi ni dakarete, otoko naraba,
Tatoe yaburetemo, moeru yume o motou.
Umi ni dakarete, otoko naraba,
Tatoe hitori demo, hoshi o yomi nagara.
Nami no ue o yukuo.

Umi yo oreno umi yo, ooki na sono aiyo,
Otoko no omoi o, sono muneni dakitomete.
Ashita no nozomi o oretachi ni kureru no da.

Umi ni dakareta otoko naraba,
Tatoe hitotsudemo inochi azukeyou.
Umi ni dakarete, otoko naraba.
Tatoe ichido demo arashi norikoete,
Tooi kuni he yukou.

— Japanese text by Tokiko Iwatani

If you are a man adrift at sea,
Even in defeat, let us hold a dream.
Embraced by the sea, if you are a man,
Even if you are alone, while reading the stars.
Let us cross the waves.

Oh sea my sea, that great big love,
A man's thoughts, hold them to your chest.
Give us hope for tomorrow.

If you are a man adrift at sea,
Although we have only one, let us entrust our lives
If you are a man embraced by the sea,
Even just this once, let us overcome the storm,
To cross to a land far away

— Translation by Shane Scott

is best known for his role in the *Wakadaishi* film series and was cast by world-renowned director Akira Kurosawa in the 1965 film *Red Beard*. Drawing inspiration from American instrumental group The Ventures, Kayama composed numerous 1960s hits, including "Umi Sono Ai," and remains one of the highest-selling recording stars in Japanese history. Vocally compared to Perry Como and possessing the star presence of John Wayne, he remains an international performing icon.

This song tells of a man who goes to the ocean to reflect upon his life. In each wave he sees opportunity: though the retreat of a wave may reflect past failures, a new wave of hope soon appears to carry him toward his destiny. The ocean offers a conviction that everyone we touch along life's journey helps chart a course for a better tomorrow—a simple force that gives meaning to us as individuals and to our fellow travelers. In Japan, "Umi Sono Ai" is recognized as a symbol of the country's spirit and the hope of a life fulfilled.

Bogoroditse Devo

Bogoroditse Devo, raduysia
Blagodatnaya Mariye,
Hospod s'Toboyu
Blagoslovenna Ti v'zhenah.
i Blagosloven Plod chreva Tvoyego
yako Spasa rodila yesi dush nashih.

Rejoice, virgin, God-bearer
Mary, full of grace,
the Lord be with you.
Blessed are you amongst women
and blessed is the Fruit of your Womb
for you have borne the Savior of our souls

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1942) was born in Russia and studied music at the St. Petersburg Conservatory and the Moscow Conservatory. It was in Moscow that he met many influential Russian musicians, including pianist Anton Rubinstein and composer Peter Tchaikovsky. In 1892, Rachmaninoff graduated from the conservatory (a year early) in both piano and composition and was awarded the Great Gold Medal.

As a professional musician, Rachmaninoff was equally famous as a pianist (he was one of the best of the time), composer and conductor. In 1917 he moved his family to Stockholm and then Copenhagen to escape the problems of the Russian Revolution. In 1939 he moved to Beverly Hills in the United States to escape the Nazis and World War II.

Rachmaninoff wrote "Bogoroditse Devo" in 1915 as part of the *Vespers*, the night long service celebrated in Russian Orthodox churches on the eve of holy days. It is the sixth of fifteen pieces in the *Vespers*, (he wrote the entire work in two weeks) and his last and greatest liturgical composition.

Dilmano, Dilbero

Dilmano dilbero	*Dilmana, beautiful one,*
Kazhi mi kak se sadi pipero.	*Tell me how to plant pepper.*
Da tsafti da varzhe	*So it blossoms, gives fruits,*
Da beresh ka sakash.	*And you can pick as much as you want.*
Pomunigo, pobutsnigo,	*Poke the ground, plant it there*
Teta kak se sadi pipero.	*That's how to plant pepper.*

Decades ago, there was an anecdote in Bulgaria that the State Folk Song and Dance Ensemble would probably no longer be allowed to tour the world. Why? "They have given out a state secret: how to plant pepper." The reason was the enormous popularity of the humorous song from Shopluk region "Dilmano, dilbero," which became a real hit in the choir version of the Ensemble's repertoire. The original was part of a traditional wedding ritual performed during the wedding night—"planting pepper" a metaphor for what should happen between the newlyweds. In folk beliefs, it is not just a demonstration, but a specific magical rite for health, fertility, and the continuation of the family. The folk song first became famous from the performance of singer Vasilka Petkova, born in 1923 in the village of Yarlovtsi, near the western border of Bulgaria. In the 1950s, the song was noticed by Ivan Kavaldzhiev, a folklore researcher, conductor, composer, and one of the founders of the State Folk Song and Dance Ensemble.

▪ Tsvetana Toncheva

Join us post-concert for a reception at **The District 1679 3rd Ave @ 94th St**

GCMC BOARD & STAFF

Mary Goebel Chair of the Board
Laurel Stinson Vice Chair
Shane Scott Secretary
Kevin Shapiro Executive Director
Victor Martinez Artistic Director
Kat Savina Community Director
Ky Sharon Social Media Manager

SPECIAL THANKS

Marilyn and Paul Eastman
Dr. Terika Harris
Sebastien Issa
John Goebel
Mary and Bob Rehan
Linda Stabile
Lauren Bowden

Strike the harp & Join the chorus!

Sunday, Dec. 13



Whether classically trained or new to singing, come caroling with us!

Sign up at gothamcitymusic.org/join

Your tax-deductible gift helps make community music performance accessible to everyone by providing music, rehearsal space, and performance opportunities.

gothamcitymusic.org/donate

Coming in 2027

Immigrant Voices

Celebrating the songs, stories, and resilience of those who built a future against all odds



