

# SOUNDING LEGACIES



SPRING/SUMMER 2023

Matthew Dirst  
*Artistic Director*

JAN 29, 2023  
4:00 PM & 5:30 PM

**FROM CHINA WITH LOVE**

MAR 26, 2023 4:00 PM

**CLORI, TIRSI, E FILENO**

MAY 13, 2023 7:30 PM

**SONGS OF ZION**

ARS  
LYRICA  
HOUSTON 

# SONGS OF ZION



**SATURDAY | 7:30 PM**  
**MAY 13, 2022**

Zilkha Hall, The Hobby Center for  
the Performing Arts

## **ARTISTIC PERSONNEL**

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<b>Soprano</b>	Erica Schuller Elijah McCormack	<b>1st Violin</b>	Stephen Redfield, <i>concertmaster</i> Maria Lin Stephanie Noori Hae-a Lee
<b>Countertenor</b>	Scott Rogers		
<b>Tenor</b>	Steven Brennfleck	<b>2nd Violin</b>	Oleg Sulyga, <i>principal 2nd</i> Alan Austin Andrés Gonzáles
<b>Baritone</b>	Mark Diamond		
<b>Bass/ baritone</b>	Timothy Jones	<b>Viola</b>	James Dunham Erika Lawson
<b>Traverso</b>	Colin St. Martin Alaina Diehl	<b>Cello</b>	Barrett Sills Eric Taeyang Mun
<b>Oboe</b>	Stephen Bard Pablo Moreno	<b>Violone</b>	Deborah Dunham
<b>Bassoon</b>	Benjamin Kamins	<b>Organ</b>	Mario Aschauer
		<b>Harpischord/ conductor</b>	Matthew Dirst

**SONGS OF ZION**  
**PROGRAM**

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<i>Sonata a 4</i> <i>Shir hama'alot</i>	Salamone Rossi (c1570–1630)
<i>Domine salvum, fac regem</i> (BuxWV 18)	Dietrich Buxtehude (c1637–1707)
<i>Le dolcezze e l'amerezze della note</i>	Johann Joseph Fux (1660–1741)
<i>Der Nachtwächter</i> <i>Menuette &amp; Trio</i> <i>Fantasia notturne</i> <i>Ronfatore</i> <i>Aria</i>	
<i>Lobet den Herrn, alle Heiden</i> (BWV 230)	Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

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**INTERMISSION**

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<i>In convertendo Dominus</i> (RCT 14)	Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683–1746)
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*With thanks to the Moores School of Music, University of Houston,  
for use of its Bennett-Guittari continuo organ and to St Philip  
Presbyterian Church for its John Phillips harpsichord and for  
providing rehearsal space for this program.*

SONGS OF ZION  
**TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS**

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**Shir hama'alot, leDavid:**

*Lulei Adonai, sheheyah lanu;  
yomarna Yisrael.  
Lulei Adonai, sheheyah lanu;  
bequm aleinu adam.  
Achayim belanu;  
bacharot apam banu.  
Azai, hamayim shetafunu;  
nachlah avar alnafshenu.  
Azai avar alnafshenu;  
hamayim hazeidonim.  
Baruch Adonai; shelo netananu  
teref leshineihem.  
Nafshenu ketzipur nimletah;  
mipach yoqeshim hapach nishbar,  
va'anachnu nimlatenu.  
Ezrenu beshem Adonai oshe;  
shamayim vaaretz.*

**Domine salvum fac regem,**

*et exaudi nos in die qua invocaverimus te.  
Gloria Patri et Filio et  
Spiritui sancto,  
sicut erat in principio, et nunc,  
et semper, et in saeculorum. Amen.*

**Lobet den Herrn, alle Heiden;**

*Preiset ihn, alle Völker;  
Denn seine Gnade und Wahrheit  
Waltet über uns in Ewigkeit.  
Alleluja.*

**A Song of Ascents, of David:**

If the Lord had not been on our side—  
let Israel now say—  
If the Lord had not been on our side,  
when others attacked us,  
when their anger flared against us,  
they would have swallowed us alive;  
the flood would have engulfed us,  
the torrent would have overwhelmed us,  
the raging waters  
would have swept us away.  
Blessed be the Lord,  
who has not give us as prey.  
Our souls flew as birds  
out of the fowlers' snares;  
we have escaped.  
Our help is in the name of the Lord,  
who made heaven and earth.  
(Psalm 124)

God save our rulers,  
and hear us who daily call upon you.  
Glory to the Father, the Son, and the  
Holy Spirit,  
as it was in the beginning is now,  
and will be forever. Amen.  
(Psalm 19:10)

Praise the Lord, all ye nations;  
Praise Him, all ye people;  
For God, so gracious and righteous,  
watches over for us for evermore.  
Alleluia.  
(Psalm 117)

***In convertendo Dominus***  
*captivitatem Sion,*  
*facti sumus sicut consolati.*

*Tunc repletum est gaudio os nostrum,*  
*et lingua nostra exultatione.*  
*Tunc dicent inter gentes:*  
*Magnificavit Dominus facere cum eis.*

*Magnificavit Dominus facere nobiscum;*  
*facti sumus lætantes.*

*Converte, Domine,*  
*captivitatem nostram,*  
*sicut torrens in austro.*

*Laudate nomen Dei cum cantico,*  
*Et magnificate eum in laude.*

*Qui seminant in lacrimis,*  
*in exultatione metent.*

*Euntes ibant et flebant,*  
*mittentes semina sua.*  
*Venientes autem*  
*venient cum exultatione,*  
*portantes manipulos suos.*

When the Lord returned  
Zion from captivity,  
we were like those who dream.

Then our mouth was filled with laughter,  
and our tongue with songs of joy.  
Then said they among the nations:  
"The Lord has done great things for  
them."

The Lord has done great things for us;  
and we are glad.

Rescue us O Lord,  
from our captivity  
like the austral winds.

Let us praise God in song,  
and magnify God with thanksgiving.

They who sow in tears  
shall reap with shouts of joy.

Those who go out weeping,  
bearing seed for sowing,  
shall surely return home  
rejoicing all the way,  
bringing sheaves with them.

Psalms 126:1-6 and 68:31

SONGS OF ZION  
**ABOUT THE PROGRAM**

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Songs of Zion pays homage to the Book of Psalms, an ancient collection of texts shared by multiple religious traditions. As retitled from the original Hebrew by the Greeks, the word “psalm” implies a particular function: literally, these are “words to accompany music.” And they have done so for centuries, from ancient chants to contemporary settings. This program celebrates that rich legacy with music drawn from the Jewish and Christian traditions during the long Baroque era, from early seventeenth-century Hebrew polyphony to a theatrical concert work from the eighteenth century.

Like Claudio Monteverdi, Salamone Rossi served for many years the ruling Gonzaga family in Mantua. Descendent of a distinguished Jewish family of musicians and scholars, Rossi published the first trio sonatas (1607) and a seminal collection of motets in Hebrew (1622). The latter, in the prevailing “church” style but intended for the synagogue, are the earliest surviving works in the idiom. Though sung unaccompanied during services, these psalm and hymn settings were likely heard outside the synagogue as well, at which point instruments doubling the voice parts would have been common. Rossi’s sonorous *Shir hama’alot* (Psalm 124) alternates textures freely from verse to verse, in the manner of Latin church music from the same era. To introduce this motet, we have appended a brief sonata in the same mode.

Dietrich Buxtehude’s sacred concerto *Domine salvum, fac regem* sets a brief text from Psalm 19 that functioned in the Baltic city-states where he worked as a blessing for civic rulers. As such, it was likely heard multiple times for annual inaugurations of the Lübeck city council or its ecclesiastical consistory. One of a handful of Latin texts set by this Protestant composer, this verse likewise served absolutist regimes during the Baroque age as a liturgical salutation for the reigning monarch. Scored for a five-part string ensemble and five voices, Buxtehude’s setting invests this exhortatory text with a kind of toe-tapping grandeur.

Johann Joseph Fux is known among music students the world over as author of a textbook on counterpoint entitled, with less irony than one might think, *The Ascent to Parnassus (Gradus ad Parnassum)*. During his decades of service at the court of Emperor Leopold I of Austria, Fux also composed a lot of music, from operas and oratorios to instrumental works. His *Le dolcezze e l'amerezze della note* ("The Sweetness and Tenderness of the Night") is a suite of short pieces with a programmatic agenda. The work begins solemnly, with a "call of the watchman" built around a slow-moving *cantus firmus*, a "fixed song" in the manner of an old-fashioned psalm tune, before continuing in a lighter vein, with characteristic dances and an unpredictable "nighttime fantasy."

*Lobet den Herrn, alle Heiden* is the shortest of Bach's surviving motets and the only one scored for four voices. Long classified as undatable, its provenance has eluded scholars; and with no extant sources from the composer's hand or milieu, its authenticity remains a topic of some debate. The attribution to Bach stems mostly from its athletic yet carefully turned contrapuntal lines and a single reference to a "Signor Bach" on an early nineteenth-century copy. Further distinguishing this work from the other Bach motets is a mostly independent *basso continuo line*. A joyous setting of Psalm 117, *Lobet den Herrn* could have served several potential purposes at the time of its composition, from Sunday services to occasional services like funerals.

Even though he was employed as a church musician for nearly thirty years, Jean-Philippe Rameau left very little sacred music: there are but four surviving motets, all cast in the grandly theatrical manner of his day. He composed *In convertendo Dominus* in 1710–14, we think, while working in various churches in Dijon and Lyon. Its text is taken largely from Psalm 126, which mingles past trauma with present-day rejoicing.

Several decades later, Rameau's motets became concert fare: he rewrote and updated *In convertendo Dominus* for a performance at the *Concert spirituel* in Paris in 1751. This latter version of the work (as heard tonight) is scored for multiple voices, winds, strings, and continuo, and includes, after the fourth verse, a verse not in the original psalm, "Laudate nomen Deo cum cantico" ("Praise God in song"). Like Rameau's stage music, this motet has dramatic flair in abundance, with graphically descriptive passages and bold orchestral writing. Its elaborate arias and ensembles and vigorously independent orchestral writing recall the long tradition of *grands motets* in French royal chapels, as established by Michel Richard Delalande, master of the genre under Louis XIV.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

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Austrian conductor, harpsichordist, and musicologist **Mario Aschauer** has made his life's work the interface of music scholarship and performance. He is artistic director of Harmonia Stellarum Houston and has collaborated with early music ensembles such as Mercury Chamber Orchestra, La Follia Austin, Ensemble NovAntique Linz, Harmony of Nations Baroque Orchestra, Ars Antiqua Austria, and L'Orfeo Baroque Orchestra. Mario holds degrees from the University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna, the University of Vienna, and the Linz Bruckner Conservatory. Upon completion of a post-doctoral fellowship at the Yale School of Music, he accepted a faculty position at Sam Houston State University, where he is currently Associate Professor of Music and Director of the Center for Early Music Research and Performance. He also teaches harpsichord and basso continuo at Rice University and serves as organist at First Lutheran Houston.



Praised by the New York Times as “dramatically astute” and a “stand out” performer, tenor **Steven Brennfleck** has been consistently acknowledged for his consummate artistry, vocal flexibility, and moving interpretations on the operatic and concert stage. His recent operatic credits include performances with the American Opera Projects, the Caramoor Festival, Glimmerglass Opera, Portland Opera, Spoleto Festival USA, The Tanglewood Festival, and the Westminster Opera Theatre in roles including Don Ramiro (*Cenerentola*), Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*), Laurie in Adamo's *Little Women*, Gonsalve in Ravel's *L'Heure Espagnol*, Henrik (*A Little Night Music*), and Tobias Ragg (*Sweeney Todd*).

Highly regarded on the concert stage, Mr. Brennfleck made his Carnegie Hall debut in 2012. His recent collaborations include appearances with the Alabama Symphony Orchestra, American Bach Soloists, Austin Symphony Orchestra, Fall Island Vocal Arts Seminar, Georgetown Festival of the Arts, LA International New Music Festival, MET Chamber Ensemble, June in Buffalo Festival, Temple Symphony Orchestra, and the Victoria Bach Festival.





Complimented for his "virile and buzzy baritone", **Mark Diamond** is excited to be returning to one of the companies he considers home, Ars Lyrica Houston. This season you can hear him on the stages of San Antonio Opera, Cincinnati Opera, and Austin Opera. Mr. Diamond is a versatile singer who performs a wide range of operatic roles, concert, and recital repertoire. Highlights from his career include leading roles at

Houston Grand Opera, Seattle Opera, Opéra de Limoges, Théâtre de Caen, Opéra de Reims, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Glimmerglass Festival, Seoul Philharmonic, and more. A native of Augusta, Georgia, Mr. Diamond is on the voice faculty at Baylor University and holds degrees from Rice University, University of Houston, and Georgia Southern University.



Ars Lyrica Artistic Director **Matthew Dirst**, recently described in the Washington Post as an "efficient, extremely precise conductor who has an ear for detail," is the first American musician to win major international prizes in both organ and harpsichord, including the American Guild of Organists National Young Artist Competition and the Warsaw International Harpsichord Competition. Widely admired for his stylish playing and

conducting, Dirst leads a period-instrument ensemble with several acclaimed recordings, one of which—J. A. Hasse's *Marc Antonio e Cleopatra*—was nominated for a Grammy Award in 2011 for Best Opera. His degrees include a PhD in musicology from Stanford University and the *prix de virtuosité* in both organ and harpsichord from the Conservatoire National de Reuil-Malmaison, France, where he spent two years as a Fulbright scholar. Equally active as a scholar and as an organist, Dirst is Professor of Music at the Moores School of Music, University of Houston, and Organist at St Philip Presbyterian Church in Houston. His publications include *Engaging Bach: The Keyboard Legacy from Marpurg to Mendelssohn* (Cambridge University Press, 2012) and *Bach and the Organ* (University of Illinois Press, 2016).



American bass-baritone **Timothy Jones** enjoys a reputation as a charismatic presence on operatic and concert stages throughout the United States, Europe and South America. The Boston Globe hailed his voice as “stentorian and honeyed” and the Chicago Tribune called his “complete connection with the text extraordinary.” The Pittsburgh Tribune-Review praised him for his theatricality, noting that he “relished the dramatic possibilities of the songs’

text and music.” Mr. Jones has soloed with the Cleveland Orchestra singing Handel’s *Messiah* and Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion*. He has also performed with Boston Baroque, Baltimore Symphony, St. Petersburg Chamber Orchestra, Austin Symphony, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Dallas Symphony, Houston Symphony, and more. His repertoire includes the Bach’s *St. John Passion*, Haydn’s *Lord Nelson Mass*, Mozart’s Requiem, *Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9*, Verdi’s *Requiem* and “*A Sea Symphony*” by Vaughn Williams. He has commissioned and premiered numerous compositions by composers including Robert Avalon, James Balentine, Laura Carmichael, John Vasconcelos Costa, Pierre Jalbert, Marcus Maroney, and Kevin Puts. Mr. Jones is an alumnus of Centenary College and the University of Michigan. He is currently a professor of voice at the University of Houston Moores School of Music.



**Elijah McCormack**, male soprano, has recently garnered praise for his “luminosity” of tone (Washington Post) and “radiant soprano” (Dallas News). He has performed as a soloist and ensemble member all over the United States, with organizations such as the Washington Bach Consort, American Bach Soloists, and Dallas Bach Society. The 2022 season sees his appearance in Haymarket Opera Company’s *L’incoronazione di Poppea*

(Amore/Valletto); other recent opera credits include IlluminArts Miami’s *The Turn of the Screw* (Miles), and Lowell House Opera’s world premiere of “*NIGHTTOWN*” (Bell\* Cohen). He was a finalist in the Grand Rapids Symphony’s Keller Bach Competition. He received his Master’s degree in Historical Performance at Indiana University, where he studied with Steven Rickards.



**Key'mon W. Murrah**, a countertenor herald for his wide range and “hot coals-core of tone,” is a native to Louisville, Kentucky. In 2021, he was heard on the stage of The Houston Grand Opera as the 1st Place Winner of the 33rd Annual Concert of Arias, Grand Prize winner of the Premiere Opera Foundation + NYIOP International Vocal Competition, and Finalist and Encouragement award winner of Operalia.

Mr. Murrah has performed with the University of Kentucky Opera Theatre, Bluegrass Opera, Red River Lyric Opera, American Baroque Opera Co., American Spiritual Ensemble, Florida Grand Opera, Glimmerglass Opera Festival, Aspen Music Festival, Seattle Opera, and Grand Rapids Symphony. Murrah was selected for Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute Masterclass with Joyce DiDonato in 2019. Among other awards, he has won the Encouragement Award for the Metropolitan Opera Council Central District Auditions, 2nd place award for the Emerging Soloists Competition, and 1st place in the Camille Coloratura Competition.

In the 2022-23 season, Mr. Murrah's performances will include appearances with San Diego Opera in *El último sueño de Frida y Diego* and the Théâtre du Capitole Toulouse in the Bach *Christmas Oratorio*.



**Scott Rogers** is a 24-year-old non-binary countertenor, arranger, and composer who uses they/them pronouns. A native Texan, Scott grew up in San Antonio and attended the University of Houston for their undergraduate studies, receiving degrees in vocal performance and music education. While studying at the University of Houston, Scott made their international debut as a soloist in the University's 2018 Grand Prix winning performance at the

Béla Bartók International Choir Competition as well as their operatic debut as Nireno in the Moores Opera Company's 2022 production of Handel's *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*. Also in 2022, Scott performed as the alto soloist in BWV3 with Houston's Mercury Chamber Orchestra. Now a graduate student in the University of Notre Dame's Sacred Music program, Scott continues to study and perform works by the masters of the baroque era.



Praised for her “lively personality, abundant charm, and luscious vocalism” (*Chicago Tribune*), and “warm, agile soprano” (*Chicago Classical Review*), soprano **Erica Schuller** is a versatile performer, bringing committed artistry to a broad musical repertory. She has performed leading and supporting roles with the Boston Early Music Festival, Haymarket Opera Company, Apollo’s Fire, Odyssey Opera, Florentine Opera Company, Opera Siam (Bangkok) and Skylight Opera Theatre, among others. As a concert soloist, Ms. Schuller has appeared with Apollo’s Fire, Ars Lyrica Houston, the Lincoln Trio, New Trinity Baroque, Great Lakes Baroque, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, Elgin Symphony Orchestra, the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra, the San Francisco Bach Choir and Second City Musick Baroque Ensemble. Upcoming engagements include the title role in *L’Incoronazione di Poppea* with Haymarket Opera, and solo performances with Newberry Consort and San Antonio Symphony. Ms. Schuller founded Cantabile School of Voice and Piano in Chicago and teaches voice with the University of Chicago.



Recognized for her unique artistic curiosity in world-class performances spanning the music of Claudio Monteverdi and Johann Adolph Hasse through to Missy Mazzoli and George Benjamin, American **Lauren Snouffer** is celebrated as one of the most versatile and respected sopranos on the international stage.

Operatic performances on leading international stages have fortified the soprano’s place as one of the eminent interpreters of contemporary music; she sang the title role of Berg’s *Lulu* in a new production at the Teatro Municipal de Santiago and returned to Houston Grand Opera for the world premieres of *The Phoenix* and *The House Without a Christmas Tree*. Other appearances included Handel’s *Serse* for the Internationale Händel-Festspiele Karlsruhe and the role of Magnolia Hawks in Francesca Zambello’s production of *Show Boat* for The Glimmerglass Festival. An impactful discography includes Hasse’s *Siroe* and Handel’s *Ottone* with George Petrou for Decca, Gottschalk’s *Requiem for the Living* with Vladimir Lande on Novona Records, Grantham’s *La canción desesperada* conducted by Craig Hella Johnson on Harmonia Mundi, and Feldman’s *The Rothko Chapel* with Steven Schick for ECM. An alumna of the Houston Grand Opera Studio, Ms. Snouffer holds degrees from Rice University and The Juilliard School.

*Ars Lyrica Houston gratefully acknowledges our 22/23 season artist hosts: Sonja Bruzauskas & Houston Haymon, Bettie Cartwright, Elizabeth Duerr, Kinga & Jamie Ferguson, Ed & Janet Hess, Barrett Sills, and Travon Walker.*

2023/24  
SEASON

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Matthew Dirst  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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Friday 5/24 7:30 PM    Saturday 5/25 7:30 PM



Subscriptions are available now for our 2023/24 Season!

## beyond the sanctuary walls

Friday May 26  
7:30pm  
MATCH



Theo Chandler, composer



Charles Paul, double bass



Alexandra Smither, soprano

Kinetic Ensemble closes its eighth concert season with Tchaikovsky's *Serenade for Strings*, a new arrangement of songs by Clara Schumann, and the world premiere of Theo Chandler's *Beyond the Sanctuary Walls* for soprano, double bass, and string orchestra.

KINETIC

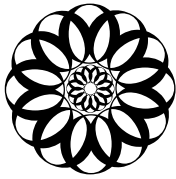
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*\*Denotes members of the Continuo Circle, a three-year pledge towards Ars Lyrica's artistic planning*

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Founded in 1998 by harpsichordist and conductor Matthew Dirst, Ars Lyrica Houston presents a diverse array of music in its original context while creating connections to contemporary life. Ars Lyrica's acclaimed programming features neglected gems alongside familiar masterworks, and extracts the dramatic potential, emotional resonance, and expressive power of music. Its local subscription series, according to the Houston Chronicle, "sets the agenda" for early music in Houston. Ars Lyrica appears regularly at international festivals and concert series because of its distinctive focus, and its pioneering efforts in the field of authentic performance have won international acclaim, including a Grammy nomination for Best Opera.

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