

# 13 | THE THIRTEEN

*presents*

## Sorrow To The Stars

**October 24, 2020 | 7:30 PM**

St. Thomas' Parish | 1517 18<sup>th</sup> St. NW | Washington, DC 20036

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## CONDUCTOR'S NOTE

Welcome! I'm so glad that you've joined us for tonight's concert. I've been tremendously inspired this week to make music with the musicians of The Thirteen, and we're so pleased to be performing *Sorrow to the Stars* for you today.

This season, *Transfigured*, is marked by a search for the apotheosis of beauty through transfiguration, and *Sorrow to the Stars* seeks to explore this concept through works of remembrance and catharsis.

We had originally planned to perform Howells' *Requiem*; unfortunately, due to the need for smaller performing forces, we replaced the Howells with Schütz's *Musikalische Exequien*, which begins tonight's program. *Musikalische Exequien* has long been on my 'to do' list, and it was felicitous that it fit so well into this program's theme. Small performing forces, masks, limited instrumental options, and the search for meaning in times of adversity would have been familiar to Schütz, who wrote this work in 1636, as the Thirty Years War and the bubonic plague decimated present-day Germany's population by as much as 90%. Not only was there widespread war and plague, there was an associated collapse of the economy, and destruction of the countryside (and musical instruments); the challenges of the mid-seventeenth century in Europe can hardly be overstated. In fact, *Musikalische Exequien* was commissioned by Prince Posthumous who chose its texts, which he also had inscribed on his coffin.

Following *Musikalische Exequien*, we'll turn to American Jake Runestad's *Gaelic Prayer*, Estonian composer Arvo Pärt's comforting *Da pacem Domine*, and a virtual performance of Arnold Schoenberg's *Friede auf Erden*. Schoenberg wrote this pillar of the canon early in his career, as the First World War and modernity loomed ominously on the horizon. Unlike his later twelve-tone works, *Friede auf Erden* is imbued with hope, passion, and great beauty.

As you can tell, tonight's musical selections all tackle weighty subjects. Yet it is how these composers transmute darkness into light that enlivens me, and I hope will enliven you as well.

-Matthew Robertson

# PROGRAM

Musikalische Exequien Heinrich Schütz (1585 - 1672)

- i. *Konzert in Form einer teutschen Begräbnis-Messe*
- ii. *Motet: Herr, wenn ich nur Dich habe*
- iii. *Canticum Simonis: Herr, nun lässest du deinen Diener*

Da Pacem Domine Arvo Pärt (b. 1935)

Friede auf Erden Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951)

Gaelic Prayer Jake Runestad (b. 1986)

*The Thirteen gratefully thanks tonight's concert sponsors,  
Clint & Missy Kelly.*

**Upcoming**  
**An Evening of Readings and Carols**

*December 20, 2020 5:00pm*

## Artists

Katelyn Aungst, *soprano*

P. Lucy McVeigh, *mezzo-soprano*

Sylvia Leith, *mezzo-soprano*

Jacob Perry Jr., *tenor*

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Adam Pearl, *organ*

## Recording Artists

Katelyn Aungst, *soprano*

Julie Bosworth, *soprano*

Sara MacKimmie, *soprano*

Doug Dodson, *countertenor*

Heather Kayan, *mezzo-soprano*

Caroline Olsen, *mezzo-soprano*

Jonas Budris, *tenor*

Matthew Hill, *tenor*

Jacob Perry Jr., *tenor*

Steven Berlanga, *bass-baritone*

Enrico Lagasca, *bass-baritone*

Ross Tamaccio, *baritone*



*Teil I: Konzert in Form einer deutschen Begräbnis-Missa*

*Part I: Concerto in the form of a German burial Mass*

**INTONATIO (Tenor I)**

*Nacket bin ich von Mutterleibe kommen,*

Naked came I out of my mother's womb,

**(Tenor I/II, Bass II)**

*nacket werde ich wiederum dahinfahren. Der Herr hat's  
gegeben, der Herr hat's genommen, der Name des  
Herren sie gelobet.*

naked shall I return. The Lord  
gave and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name  
of the Lord.

**(Capella)**

*Herr Gott, Vater im Himmel, erbarm dich über uns!*

Lord God, Father in heaven, have mercy upon us!

**(Soprano I/II, Tenor I)**

*Christus ist mein Leben, Sterben ist mein Gewinn. Siehe,  
das ist Gottes Lamm, das der Welt Sünde trägt.*

Christ is my life and to die is gain. Look, this is the  
Lamb of God, which carries the sin of the world.

**(Capella)**

*Jesu Christe, Gottes Sohn erbarm dich über uns!*

Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon us!

**(Alto, Bass II)**

*Leben wir, so leben wir dem Herren; sterben wir, so  
sterben wir dem Herren; darum, wir leben oder sterben  
so sind wir des Herren.*

When we live, we live for the Lord; when we die, we die  
for the Lord: therefore, whether we live or die, we are  
the Lord's.

**(Capella)**

*Herr Gott, Heiliger Geist erbarm dich über uns!*

Lord God, Holy Spirit, have mercy upon us!

**INTONATIO (Tenor I)**

*Also hat Gott die Welt geliebt, daß er seinen eingebornen  
Sohn gab,*

God loved the world so much, that he gave his begotten  
son,

**(Soprano I/II, Alto, Tenor I/II, Bass II)**

*auf daß alle, die an ihn gläuben, nicht verloren werden,  
sondern das ewige Leben haben.*

so that all who believed in him would not be lost, but  
have everlasting life.

**(Capella)**

*Er sprach zu seinem lieben Sohn:  
die Zeit ist hie zu erbarmen;  
fahr hin, mein's Herzens werte Kron, und sei das Heil  
der Armen,  
und hilf ihn' aus der Sünden Not, erwürg für sie den  
bittern Tod und laß sie mit dir leben.*

He spoke to his beloved Son:  
now is the time for mercy, go,  
my heart's worthy crown, and be the salvation of the  
poor  
and help them from the distress of sin; take upon  
yourself the bitterness of death and let them live with  
you.

**(Soprano II, Tenor II)**

*Das Blut Jesu Christi, des Sohnes Gottes, machet uns  
rein von allen Sünden.*

The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from  
all sin.

**(Capella)**

*Durch ihn ist uns vergeben  
die Sünd, geschenkt das Leben. Im Himmel soll'n wir haben,  
o Gott, wie große Gaben!*

**(Soprano I, Bass I)**

*Unser Wandel is im Himmel, von dannen wir auch  
warten des Heilandes Jesu Christi, des Herren, welcher  
unsern nichtigen Leib verklären wird, daß er ähnlich  
werde seinem verklärten Leibe.*

**(Capella)**

*Es ist allhier ein Jammertal,  
Angst, Not und Trübsal überall,  
des Bleibens ist ein kleine Zeit,  
voller Mühseligkeit,  
und wer's bedenkt, ist immer im Streit.*

**(Tenor I/II)**

*Wenn eure Sünde gleich blutrot wäre, soll sie doch  
schneeweiß werden; wenn sie gleich ist wie rosinfarb, soll  
sie doch wie Wolle werden.*

**(Capella)**

*Sein Wort, sein Tauf, sein Nachtmahl dient wider allen  
Unfall,  
der heilige Geist im Glauben  
lehrt uns darauf vertrauen.*

**(Alto)**

*Gehe hin, mein Volk, in deine Kammer und schließ die  
Tür nach dir zu! Verbirge dich einen kleinen Augenblick,  
bis der Zorn vorübergehe.*

**(Soprano I/II, Bass II)**

*Der Gerechten Seelen sind in Gottes Hand, und keine  
Qual rühret sie an;*

*für den Unverständigen werden sie angesehen, als  
stürben sie, und ihr Abschied wird für eine Pein  
gerechnet, und ihr Hinfahren für Verderben,  
aber sie sind in Frieden.*

*Aber sie sind in Frieden.*

Through Him our sin is forgiven,  
our life restored. In heaven we shall have,  
O God, what wondrous benefactions!

Our life is for heaven: from there also we look for the  
Savior, Lord Jesus Christ:  
he will transfigure our futile body to become similar to  
His glorious body.

Here all around is a vale of tears,  
need and sorrow everywhere,  
our stay here is for but a brief time  
full of hardship,  
and if you think about it, you are always in disharmony.

If your sin were as red as blood, it shall be as white as  
snow, were it red like crimson,  
it shall be as wool.

His word, His baptism, His Eucharist serve against all  
misfortune;  
belief in the Holy Spirit  
teaches us to have faith.

Go, my people into your chamber and shut the door  
behind you! Hide yourself for a little moment until the  
wrath has passed.

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God and no  
torment shall touch them;

In the sight of the unwise they seem to die, and their  
departure is taken for torment, and their going away  
from us to be destruction;  
but they are in peace.

But they are in peace.

**(Tenor I, Alto, Tenor II, Bass)**

*Herr, wenn ich nur dich habe, so frage ich nichts nach  
Himmel und Erden.*

*Wenn mir gleich Leib und Seele verschmacht', so bist du,  
Gott, allzeit meines Herzens Trost und mein Teil.*

**(Capella)**

*Er ist das Heil und selig Licht  
für die Heiden,*

*zu erleuchten, die dich kennen nicht, und zu weiden.*

*Er ist seines Volkes Israel*

*der Preis, Ehr, Freud und Wonne.*

**(Bass I/II)**

*Unser Leben währet siebenzig Jahr, und wenn's hoch  
kommt, so sind's achtzig Jahr, und wenn es köstlich  
gewesen ist, so ist es Müh und Arbeit gewesen.*

**(Capella)**

*Ach, wie elend ist unser Zeit allhier auf dieser Erden,  
gar bald der Mensch darniederleit, wir müssen alle sterben,  
allhier in diesem Jammertal  
ist Müh und Arbeit überall,  
auch wenn dir's wohl gelinget.*

**(Tenor I)**

*Ich weiß, daß mein Erlöser lebt, und er wird mich hernach  
aus der Erden auferwecken, und werde darnach mit dieser  
meiner Haut umgeben werden und werde in meinem Fleisch  
Gott sehen.*

**(Capella)**

*Weil du vom Tod erstanden bist, werd ich im Grab nicht  
bleiben,  
mein höchster Trost dein Auffahrt ist, Todsfurcht kannst  
du vertreiben, denn wo du bist, da komm ich hin, daß  
ich stets bei dir leb und bin, drum fahr ich hin mit  
Freuden.*

**(Soprano I/II, Alto, Tenor I/II, Bass II)**

*Herr, ich lasse dich nicht, du segnest mich denn.*

**(Capella)**

*Er sprach zu mir: Halt dich an mich, es soll dir itzt gelingen,  
ich geb mich selber ganz für dich,  
da will ich für dich ringen.*

*Den Tod verschlingt das Leben mein, mein Unschuld trägt  
die Sünden dein, da bist du selig worden.*

Lord. If I have but You, I ask neither for  
heaven nor earth.

And when my body and soul are dying, You, God, are  
always the comfort of my heart and part of me.

He is the salvation and blessed light  
for the heathen,

to enlighten those who don't know You and to tend them.

He is of His people Israel

the prize, honor, joy and delight.

We live for about seventy years. and at best  
for eighty years, and if it was delightful,  
it was trouble and labor.

Ah, how wretched is our time here on earth.

Soon man lies down, as we all must die:

Here, in this vale of tears,

is everywhere trouble and labor,

even if you prosper.

I know that my Redeemer lives, and he shall make me  
then stand up from the earth: and this my skin then shall  
cover my body and in my flesh I shall  
see God.

Since You arose from death, I shall not remain in the  
grave,

Your Ascension is my greatest comfort, You can drive  
away the fear of death, for where You are, I will go too,  
so that I may live and be with You forever, therefore I die  
with Joy.

Lord, I won't let You go, except if You bless me.

He said to me: Hold on to me, you will succeed;

I give myself all for You,

and I struggle for you.

My life swallows up Death, my innocence bears your  
sins, and you found salvation.

*Teil II: Motette "Herr, wenn ich nur dich habe"*

**(Capella)**

*Herr, wenn ich nur dich habe, so frage ich nichts nach  
Himmel und Erden.*

*Wenn mir gleich Leib und Seele verschmacht', so bist du  
doch, Gott, allezeit meines Herzens Trost und mein Teil.*

*Teil III: Canticum Simeonis*

**INTONATIO (Tenor)**

*Herr, nun lässest du deinen Diener*

**(Capella)**

*in Frieden fahren, wie du gesagt hast. Denn meine  
Augen haben deinen Heiland gesehen, welchen du  
bereitet hast für allen Völkern, ein Licht, zu erleuchten  
die Heiden, und zum Preis deines Volks Israel.*

**(Chorus II - Seraphim)**

*Selig sind die Toten, die in dem Herren sterben, sie ruhen  
von ihrer Arbeit, und ihre Werke folgen ihnen nach. Sie  
sind in der Hand des Herren, und keine Qual rühret sie.*

**Part II: Motet "Lord, if I have but Thee"**

Lord, if I have but You, I ask neither for  
heaven nor earth.

And when my body and soul are dying, You, God, are  
always the comfort of my heart and part of me.

**Part III: Canticum of the blessed Simeon**

Lord, now You let Your servant

go in peace, as You said. For my eyes have seen Your  
salvation which You offered for all people, a light to  
enlighten all Gentiles, and for the glory of Your people  
Israel.

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; they rest from  
their labors, and their works do follow them. They are in  
the hand of the Lord, and no torment touches them.

**Da Pacem Domine**

A. Pärt

Arvo Pärt is a 20<sup>th</sup> century Estonian composer who has spent much of his career in Germany. He fought a lengthy battle to leave Soviet-controlled Estonia in the 1970s, and the government censored much of his music from before this period. During a period of withdrawal from writing in the 1970s he developed a new style of composition called tintinnabular music, which is modeled after the sound of a struck bell and the series of overtones left sounding after the initial strike has died out. Since 2011, Arvo Pärt has been the most performed living composer in the world. Written to fulfil a commission from Spanish gambist Jordi Savall, Pärt began work on *Da Pacem Domine* just days after the 2004 train bombings in Madrid. Since its premiere in 2006, the work has been performed annually in Spain to commemorate the victims of this terror attack.

*Da pacem, Domine, in diebus nostris  
Quia non est alius  
Qui pugnet pro nobis  
Nisi tu Deus noster.*

Grant peace, Lord, in our time;  
for there is none else  
who would fight for us  
if not you, our God.

**Friede auf Erden**

A. Schoenberg

Tremendously influential, Schoenberg's compositional techniques, particularly the twelve-tone system he pioneered, shaped the development of Western music in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Born into a lower middle-class Jewish family in Vienna, Schoenberg later converted to Christianity in an effort to avoid anti-Semitic violence in Europe. By the early 1930s, however, Schoenberg had recommitted to his Jewish heritage and faith, and was advised to flee Germany in 1933, settling in Southern California where he taught at UCLA until his death in 1951.

*Friede auf Erden* was written in 1906 and was the last work Schoenberg wrote in a tonal style. He later commented to conductor Hermann Scherchen that it “is an illusion for mixed choir, an illusion, as I know today, having believed, in 1906 (?), when I composed it, that this pure harmony among human beings was conceivable. Since then I have performed and learned that peace on earth is possible only if there is the most intense vigilance as to harmony...”

Schoenberg’s obvious disillusionment with tonality and conventionally beautiful music is evident vis-a-vis his dramatic stylistic departure from the piece almost immediately after its completion. Through treacherous and triumphant choral writing, the work communicates an emotional poem by Conrad Ferdinand Meyer. A pleading opening, which recalls the salvation narrative, makes way through undulating harmonic twists and turns before its triumphant conclusion declaring that our society shall rise above war and death to seek an eternal peace on Earth.

*Da die Hirten ihre Herde  
Ließen und des Engles Worte  
Trugen durch die niedre Pforte  
Zu der Mutter mit dem Kind,  
Fuhr das himmlische Gesind  
Fort im Sternenraum zu singen,  
Fuhr der Himmel fort zu klingen:  
"Friede, Friede! auf der Erde!"*

When the shepherds left their flocks  
and carried the words of the angel’s  
through the lowly gate  
to the Mother and the Child.  
the heavenly host continued to sing  
in the starry spheres,  
and the heavens echoed their sound:  
“Peace, peace on Earth

*Seit die Engel so geraten,  
O wie viele blut'ge Taten  
Hat der Streit auf wildem Pferde,  
Der geharnischte vollbracht!  
In wie mancher heiligen Nacht  
Sang der Chor der Geister zagend,  
Dringlich flehend, leis verklagend: "Friede, Friede... auf  
der Erde!"*

Since the angels thus admonished  
o, how many bloody deeds  
has strife on its wild steed  
and in its warlike armor done!  
In how many holy nights  
has the chorus of spirits hesitantly sung  
with urgent prayer and mild reproach.  
“Peace, peace on Earth!”

*Doch es ist ein ewiger Glaube,  
Dass der Schwache nicht zum Raube  
Jeder frechen Mordgebärde  
Werde fallen allezeit:  
Etwas wie Gerechtigkeit  
Webt und wirkt in Mord und Grauen  
Und ein Reich will sich erbauen,  
Das den Frieden sucht der Erde.*

Yet it is an eternal belief  
that the weak should not forever  
fall victim to every bold  
murderous gesture.  
Something akin to justice  
dwells in the midst of murder and horror,  
and a kingdom shall gradually arise  
that shall seek peace for the earth.

*Mählich wird es sich gestalten,  
Seines heiligen Amtes walten,  
Waffen schmieden ohne Fährde,  
Flammenschwerter für das Recht,  
Und ein königlich Geschlecht  
Wird erblihn mit starken Söhnen,  
Dessen helle Tuben dröhnen:  
Friede, Friede auf der Erde!*

Gradually it shall take shape  
and carry out its holy task,  
shall forge weapons that are without danger,  
fiery swords of justice;  
and a kingly race  
shall flourish with strong descendants  
whose shining trumpets shall resound:  
“Peace, peace on Earth!”

Jake Runestad is a Minneapolis-based composer who has become well-known in recent years for his lush and moving choral music. His *Gaelic Prayer* sets a traditional Irish text alongside a characteristically sweet, harmonically rich musical embrace. The piece ebbs and flows, reminiscent of running water, and, lingering on the final phrase, “you do not fall”, closes with a warm reminder of hope in the face of life’s many difficulties.

As the rain hides the stars,  
as the autumn mist hides the hills,  
as the clouds veil the blue of the sky,  
so the dark happenings of my life  
hide the shining of your face from me.  
Yet, if I may hold your hand in darkness, it is enough,  
since I know that if I stumble,  
you do not fall.

## The Thirteen

Praised for performing with “striking color and richness” (The Washington Post) and “a tight and attractive vocal blend and excellent choral discipline” (American Record Guide), **The Thirteen** is an all-star professional ensemble known for reimagining the potential of vocal music. Since its founding in 2012, the choir has been at the forefront of invigorating performances of choral masterworks ranging from early chant to world premieres and the centuries in between.

The Thirteen draws its artists from among the finest ensembles in the world, including Chanticleer, Seraphic Fire, Apollo’s Fire, Conspirare, I Fagiolini, Opera Philadelphia, Boston Early Music Festival, and Trinity Wall Street. The choir’s peerless singers are best described by National Public Radio commentator M.D. Ridge: “to talk about the remarkable abilities and sound of the individual singers would... be like trying to say which whitecaps on the ocean reflect the sun most beautifully, or which leaves on a tree dance most gracefully with the wind... I stand in awe.”

The Thirteen’s growing discography includes “Truth and Fable,” which premiered in October 2019, “Voice Eternal,” which was pre-nominated for a Grammy® award, the critically-acclaimed Christmas album “Snow on Snow,” “RADIANT DARK,” which features the finest works of the late Tudor period and reached #28 on the iTunes Classical Charts, as well as The Thirteen’s debut recording “...to St. Cecilia.”

In past seasons, The Thirteen has performed and been in residency at Yale University, Bowling Green State University, Eastern Illinois University, the University of Central Oklahoma, York College, The University of Tampa, Virginia Wesleyan University, St. Ambrose University, Southern Illinois University – Carbondale, Guilford College, as well as concerts at colleges and concert series throughout the United States. In 2018 The Thirteen was awarded the Greater Washington Area Choral Excellence award for Most Creative Programming.

The Thirteen is committed to educating and inspiring the next generation of musicians, and frequently coaches students at the high school and collegiate levels in masterclass, workshop and collaborative performance sessions.

For more information about The Thirteen, please visit [www.TheThirteenChoir.org](http://www.TheThirteenChoir.org)



## Matthew Robertson



Matthew Robertson, praised for his “sensitive and nuanced” conducting, is acclaimed as the driving force behind the all-star professional choir, The Thirteen, and is hailed as a leader in the field. As Founder and Artistic Director of The Thirteen, he has conducted the ensemble throughout the United States and on multiple recordings.

Robertson’s 2019-2020 season promises to be unlike any before it, with numerous live-streamed performances, including performances of Schütz’s *Musikalische Exequien*, Handel’s *Messiah*, Lang’s *the little match girl passion*, a staged performance of J.S. Bach’s *St. John Passion*, Monteverdi’s *The “Lost” Mass*, and more.

Robertson’s 2018-2020 seasons with The Thirteen saw nearly forty performances, repertoire spanning more than half of a millennium, collaborations with many of the finest instrumentalists of his generation, and world premieres by Scott Ordway and Melissa Dunphy. Additional highlights of his 2018-2020 seasons included performances of Mozart’s *Requiem*, Handel’s *Messiah*,

Monteverdi’s *The “Lost” Vespers (1641)*, Ordway’s *The Outer Edge of Youth*, Kile Smith’s *The Consolation of Apollo*, Handel’s *Dixit Dominus*, Steffani’s *Stabat Mater*, Lang’s *the little match girl passion*, Poulenc’s *Figure Humaine*, Duruflé’s *Requiem*, and much of J.S. Bach’s oeuvre including his *St. John Passion*. Additionally, from 2018-2020 Robertson led workshops throughout the East Coast and served on the faculty of Oberlin Conservatory’s Baroque Performance Institute, a premiere summer institute and festival dedicated to music of the Baroque.

From 2010-2012 Robertson served as Assistant Conductor for the Westminster Symphonic Choir, conducting the choir in performance and assisting in preparation for concerts with the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra and the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, for such conductors as Yannick Nezet-Seguin, Peter Schreier, Alan Gilbert and Jacques Lacombe.

Mr. Robertson was the Robert P. Fountain Scholar at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, earning a degree in Organ Performance. While at the Oberlin Conservatory he conducted the Oberlin College Choir, College Singers, Musical Union, Conservatory Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra.

Robertson received his M.Mus. in conducting from Westminster Choir College where he studied with Andrew Megill and Joe Miller. He has also worked with such luminary conductors as Norman Scribner, Stan Engebretson, Robert Spano, Joseph Flummerfelt, Gary Graden and JoAnn Falletta.

A Washington, DC native, Robertson serves as Director of Music at Bradley Hills Church, in Bethesda, MD. Additionally active as an organist, Mr. Robertson has performed throughout the United States and in Western Europe.

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The Thirteen is grateful for your generosity, and never more so than in navigating these unprecedented times. Like most organizations, The Thirteen depends for its existence upon the generosity of those who have come to know and love the music we make.

While the Board of Trustees has taken steps to help The Thirteen survive the first months of the Covid-19 pandemic, we ask you to please consider giving now to support our season. No matter how much you give, it is important that you do give—whether \$5 or \$5,000. It is vital to us that as much of our audience as possible is part of our musical family. Join us in making music.

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Help ensure The Thirteen's future through a bequest in your estate. The Thirteen's Legacy Society recognizes our cherished friends who have included The Thirteen in their long-range financial plans with a gift or trust arrangement.

If you have made a bequest to The Thirteen, please let us know so that you can be recognized as a member of The Thirteen's Legacy Society. Your gift will serve as an inspiration for others.

For more information about making a gift to The Thirteen through your will or trust, or if you have already included The Thirteen in your plans, please contact Valerie Simonsen at [valerie@thethirteenchoir.org](mailto:valerie@thethirteenchoir.org).

**Legacy Society**  
Dr. Patricia Stocker