

# QERDDORION

VOCAL ENSEMBLE

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*James John*

*Artistic Director*

PRESENTS

## *And Love Waits*

*American Composers and American Poets*



Friday, November 16, 2018, 8 pm  
St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
199 Carroll Street, Brooklyn

Sunday, November 18, 2018, 3 pm  
St. Ignatius of Antioch  
87th Street & West End Avenue, Manhattan

# THE PROGRAM

*Emily Dickinson (1830–1886)*  
Musicians Wrestle Everywhere  
Heart Not So Heavy As Mine

Elliott Carter (1908–2012)

*Genevieve Taggard (1894–1948)*  
Lark

Aaron Copland (1900–1990)

*Ken Short, tenor*



*William Carlos Williams (1883–1963)*  
And Love Waits (World Premiere)  
In Memoriam, Carrie Sogg

Susan Kander (b. 1957)

*Walt Whitman (1819–1892)*  
Carols of Death

William Schuman (1910–1992)

Prologue  
The Red Wheelbarrow

The Last Invocation  
The Unknown Region  
To All, To Each

*Ellen Schorr, soprano; Jamie Carrillo, alto;  
Ken Short, tenor; Stephen Iger, bass*

The Grass Shakes  
She Sits with Tears on Her Cheek  
This Is Just to Say

*Ralph Bonheim, tenor*

All Gentleness  
And Love Waits

*e.e. cummings (1894–1962)*  
i carry your heart

Eric Whitacre (b. 1970)

i thank you god

Elliot Z. Levine (b. 1948)

*Dean Rainey, baritone*



*Marianne Moore (1887–1972)*  
A Jelly-Fish (World Premiere)

Robert Applebaum (b. 1941)

*Jennifer Oates, soprano*

*Langston Hughes (1901–1967)*  
Democracy (World Premiere)

Robert Applebaum

❖❖❖ *Intermission* ❖❖❖

## THE ARTISTS

Now beginning its twenty-fourth season, **CERDDORION** (Welsh for “musicians”) is one of New York’s most highly regarded volunteer choral ensembles. A chamber group of up to twenty-eight mixed voices, it is known for its eclectic repertoire, encompassing music from the Renaissance to the contemporary. Audiences have come to appreciate the group’s interpretive depth and technical excellence in many styles. Cerddorion has also frequently commissioned new works by such composers as Paul Moravec, David Schober, Lisa Bielawa, David Lang, Elliot Z. Levine, Robert Dennis, Julie Dolphin, and Martha Sullivan.

Recent appearances include an invited performance at the November 2016 New York State American Choral Directors Association Conference in Garden City, NY; a featured performance on the cable television series *American Music* in February 2016; and a collaborative concert with Sweden’s highly acclaimed professional choir *Voces Nordicae* in June 2015. In 2011, the men of Cerddorion sang with esteemed French organist Francis Chapelet in the second inaugural recital of the Manton Memorial Organ at the Church of the Ascension in New York. Other collaborations have included the North American premiere of Sir John Tavener’s all-night vigil, *The Veil of the Temple*, performed at Lincoln Center’s Avery Fisher Hall (with Dessoff Choral Consortium and choristers from London’s Temple Church); several appearances with the Christopher Caines Dance Company; and Baroque opera performances with the early music instrumental ensemble Concert Royal.

In 2006, Cerddorion performed at the Eastern Divisional Convention of the American Choral Directors Association the works they had commissioned from three New York composers for their tenth anniversary season. September 2007 marked the release on the Tzadik label of *A Handful of World*, Cerddorion’s first commercial recording. The CD is dedicated to vocal works by New York composer Lisa Bielawa and includes Cerddorion’s performance of her *Lamentations for a City*, which was commissioned and first performed by Cerddorion in 2004.

Cerddorion is a proud member of the New York Choral Consortium.



## JAMES JOHN, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

**JAMES JOHN** is in his ninth season as Artistic Director of the Cerddorion Vocal Ensemble. He is also Professor of Conducting and Director of Choral Activities at the Aaron Copland School of Music, Queens College–CUNY, where he conducts the Queens College Choir, Vocal Ensemble, and Choral Society; and heads the graduate program in choral conducting. Under his leadership the choral program at the School of Music has become recognized as one of the finest collegiate choral programs in the region, with performances by the Queens College Choir at both the New York State School Music Association Winter Conference (2010), and the Eastern Division Conference of the American Choral Directors Association (2012).

Dr. John’s guest conducting appearances include Brahms’s *Requiem* and Beethoven’s *Missa Solemnis* with the Tokyo Oratorio Society and Oratorio Sinfonica Japan, Avery Fisher Hall’s annual *Messiah* Sing-In, a concert of American choral music with the Virginia Chorale, and honor choirs throughout New York State. He has given presentations at both divisional and national conferences of the American Choral Directors Association, and is in demand as a clinician and adjudicator throughout the United States.

As a teacher and scholar, Dr. John has served as guest lecturer in conducting at the Hochschule für Musik in Freiburg, Germany, and has presented seminars on American choral music in Basel and Stockholm. His dissertation on Brahms won the Julius Herford Prize from the American Choral Directors Association, and will be published in revised form as a book by Edwin Mellen Press. From 2011 to 2016 he served as Editor of *American Choral Review*, published biannually by Chorus America, and he has also served as a member of ACDA’s National Research and Publications Committee.

Dr. John received his Doctor of Musical Arts in Conducting from the Eastman School of Music. His prior appointments include Director of Choral Activities at both Tufts University (Boston, MA) and Nassau Community College (Garden City, NY), as well as Conducting Fellow at Dartmouth College. He received his Master of Arts in Conducting from the Aaron Copland School of Music.



# AND LOVE WAITS

## PROGRAM NOTES AND TEXTS

### A NOTE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

For quite some time I have had the idea for a program featuring American composers and American poets. It was not until Cerddorion commissioned New York composer Susan Kander to refashion choruses from her opera about William Carlos Williams into a choral cycle, however, that I felt the spark of inspiration necessary to move forward. Kander's resulting work, *And Love Waits*, is a centerpiece of our program.

One of the biggest challenges in choosing repertoire to complement this world premiere was narrowing down what seemed like countless possibilities. Ultimately, I decided to select well-known poems by poets of Williams's generation (i.e., standard twentieth-century poets), as well as works by two nineteenth-century literary giants. I'm well aware that this list—Emily Dickinson, Marianne Moore, Langston Hughes, Genevieve Taggard, Walt Whitman and e. e. cummings—includes no living authors (a regrettable, though hopefully understandable, omission). Nonetheless, their words frequently seem as relevant today as when they were originally written, and it has been fascinating to experience the wealth of musical responses they elicited from American composers both past and present.

It is my hope that immersion in this beautiful music and poetry will lead to new discoveries. One of mine has been Williams's line "And love is a curious, soft-winged thing," made indelible by Susan Kander's extraordinarily sensitive, poignant setting. May similar joys reveal themselves as you listen!



*Emily Dickinson*

**Elliott Carter, *Musicians Wrestle Everywhere*  
*Heart Not So Heavy As Mine***

Elliott Carter is one of the most-renowned American composers of the twentieth century. Born in Manhattan in 1908, his life spanned 103 years, and he continued writing music until shortly before his death—publishing twenty new works after the age of 100. He attended Harvard College, and following graduation studied with Nadia Boulanger in Paris (from 1932 to 1935), as did many composers of his generation, including Aaron Copland.

Carter's interest in choral music stems from his years as an undergraduate, when he sang in the Harvard Glee Club under legendary director G. Wallace Woodworth. Woodworth encouraged Carter to write for the group and premiered several of his works. Almost all of Carter's choral compositions (comprising only about twelve pieces in a catalogue of over 150 works) were composed in the 1930s and 1940s. After 1947, he stopped writing choral music altogether, resuming only in 2007, when he completed three John Ashbery settings for vocal sextet, entitled *Mad Regales*. Looking back on his career in the 1980s, Carter commented that "My complete choral works [were] all written before the lessons of the 1940s had sunk in, when I saw life very differently than I do now... Choral music represents a social cohesiveness and agreement about worthy goals—which I no longer see in the world we live in, except on very superficial matters..." He also felt that choruses were not generally capable of performing the kind of avant-garde music he wanted to write—an opinion that changed during the sixty-year hiatus leading up to the composition of *Mad Regales*, a very difficult work that has received excellent performances.

In 1937 Carter tried to form a madrigal choir in New York City, and it was around this time that he wrote *Heart Not So Heavy As Mine* (1937) and *Musicians Wrestle Everywhere* (1945). With texts by Emily Dickinson, both pieces naturally complement one another, though they were not specifically intended as a set. *Musicians Wrestle Everywhere* features vexing syncopations that interweave in dense counterpoint—an apt and witty analogy for the "wrestling musicians" described in the poem's first line. By contrast, the opening motive of *Heart Not So Heavy As Mine* is a plaintive descending third in Bb-minor, followed by a passing semitone emphasizing the word "heavy." Its successive iterations suggest the repetitive heartbeat of someone overcome by melancholy—a mood that dominates Carter's setting (and Dickinson's poem), but which is lightened momentarily by the fleeting sound of someone whistling outside the window.

—James John

MUSICIANS wrestle everywhere:  
 All day, among the crowded air,  
 I hear the silver strife;  
 And — waking — long before the dawn —  
 Such transport breaks upon the town  
 I think it that “new Life!”  
 It is not bird, it has no nest;  
 Nor Band, in brass and scarlet dressed,  
 Nor tambourine, nor man;  
 It is not hymn from pulpit read,—  
 The morning stars the treble led  
 On time’s first afternoon!  
 Some say it is the spheres at play!  
 Some say that bright majority  
 Of vanished dames and men!  
 Some think it service in the place  
 Where we, with late, celestial face,  
 Please God, shall ascertain!

HEART not so heavy as mine,  
 Wending late home,  
 As it passed my window  
 Whistled itself a tune —  
 A careless snatch, a ballad,  
 A ditty of the street;  
 Yet to my irritated ear  
 An anodyne so sweet —  
 It was as if a bobolink,  
 Sauntering this way,  
 Caroled and mused and caroled,  
 Then bubbled slow away.  
 It was as if a chirping brook  
 Upon a toilsome way  
 Set bleeding feet to minuets  
 Without the knowing why.  
 Tomorrow, night will come again,  
 Weary, perhaps, and sore.  
 Ah bugle, by my window,  
 I pray you stroll once more.

**William Carlos Williams**

**Susan Kander, *And Love Waits***

Susan Kander received her B.A. in Music at Harvard University in 1979 and was a playwright until “coming home to music” in the mid-1990s. In 2015, after composing busily for twenty years, she decided to attend graduate school in composition. She studied with Du Yun and Huang Ruo at Purchase Conservatory, rearranging the furniture in her mind and earning her M.M. in Composition in 2017.

Ms. Kander has received commissions from notable ensembles and organizations, including the National Symphony Orchestra, Southampton Chamber Music Festival, the Copland Fund, the Kansas City Chorale, and the Columbia Foundation. In the opera world, she has been commissioned by Opera Minnesota, Opera Theater of St. Louis, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, and Columbus Opera. Her chamber opera *The News from Poems* received a concert reading in April 2016 at the National Opera Center. Erie Opera Company commissioned a chamber orchestration for *She Never Lost a Passenger*, about Harriet Tubman and black abolitionist William Still, and it was premiered by Lyric Opera of Kansas City in 2016. She is a Fellow of the MacDowell Colony, and her music has been recorded on the MSR, Navona and Loose Cans labels.

“Cerddorion Vocal Ensemble member Ralph Bonheim gave me a real gift when he invited me to revisit some settings of William Carlos Williams that he had heard in a concert reading of my opera *The News from Poems* in 2016. I have been in a passionate musico-literary clutch with Williams for many years; an invitation to return to his plain-spoken, crystalline language, his jewel-like images and his sparely limned emotions is, indeed, a gift. Some of these movements are expanded versions of settings from the opera. However, the final movement, which lends its name to the whole cycle, sets lines I had not come upon before. I think this movement sums up the very special endeavor of composing *in memoriam*, and it is brand new.”—*Susan Kander*

**1. Prologue** (From *Asphodel, that greeny flower*)

It is difficult  
 to get the news from poems  
                                   yet men die miserably every day  
   for lack  
 of what is found there.

**2. The Red Wheelbarrow** (from *Spring and All 1923*)

XXII

so much depends  
 upon  
 a red wheel  
 barrow  
 glazed with rain  
 water  
 beside the white  
 chickens

**3. The Grass Shakes** (from “March Is a Light”)

The grass shakes, the houses  
 seem ... to turn  
 their angles ... into  
 the wind to let it pass—

#### 4. Young Woman At A Window

She sits with  
tears on  
  
her cheek  
her cheek on  
  
her hand  
the child  
  
in her lap  
his nose  
  
pressed  
to the glass

#### 5. This Is Just To Say

I have eaten  
the plums  
that were in  
the icebox  
  
and which  
you were probably  
saving  
for breakfast  
  
Forgive me  
they were delicious  
so sweet  
and so cold

#### 6. from *All Gentleness*

...a profusion  
of pink roses bending ragged in the rain—  
speaks to me of all gentleness and its  
enduring.

#### And Love Waits

(excerpt from “Prelude to Winter”)

And love is a curious  
soft-winged thing  
unmoving under the eaves  
when the leaves fall.

#### *Marianne Moore (1887–1972)*

#### Robert Applebaum, *A Jelly-Fish*

Robert Applebaum was a physics and chemistry teacher at New Trier Regional High School in Winnetka, Illinois, from 1965 to 2000, with music as an avocation. Starting in 1980, he composed Jewish liturgical music, including three complete Sabbath services, one for choir and jazz trio. In 2000, the Chicago Children’s Choir performed his setting of “V’ahavta” at the White House. He has received many commissions for liturgical music from a variety of religious institutions, and his works have been featured on several programs of SHE, a New York City women’s a cappella ensemble. As a jazz pianist, Mr. Applebaum has also recorded three albums. The composer writes:

“This is the world premiere of ‘A Jelly-Fish,’ which was composed in 2016. Marianne Moore’s 1909 poem deals with the impossibility of possessing what is elusive and mysterious, but she never actually uses the word “jelly-fish” in the text. I felt it would be only fair to the listener of the piece to have that term expressed in my rendering of the text. And I have done that a lot! I have attempted to be unpredictable (and playful) in my inclusion of the title by repeating the word “jelly” without “fish,” by bouncing those words from one vocal part to another, and by having measures with irregular metric pulses (3/4, 4/4, 5/4). The elusiveness is further reinforced by the changing tonality, which shifts several times during the piece. And I bounced phrases from one vocal part to another, even splitting the word “fluctuating” between vocal parts. But the end of the piece is different. Unlike the first three-quarters of the poem, in which you are tantalized by the prospect of catching the jelly-fish, the end of the poem describes the jelly-fish permanently floating away from your grasp. The music there is much fuzzier in character with dissonant chords describing the elusive quest fading away, probably forever.

## A Jelly-Fish

Visible, invisible,  
A fluctuating charm,  
An amber-colored amethyst  
Inhabits it; your arm  
Approaches, and  
It opens and  
It closes;  
You have meant  
To catch it,  
And it shrivels;

You abandon  
Your intent—  
It opens, and it  
Closes and you  
Reach for it—  
The blue  
Surrounding it  
Grows cloudy, and  
It floats away  
From you.

## Langston Hughes (1901–1967)

### Robert Applebaum, *Democracy*

“In 2006, I composed three short pieces, using the texts of Langston Hughes poems for a Chicago *a cappella* program entitled ‘The American Dream.’ Chicago *a cappella* performed ‘I Too,’ the first movement of that set. This is a world premiere of ‘Democracy,’ the set’s second movement. The work is mainly a lamentation, quite regular in pulse, with a drone on the words ‘free’ and ‘freedom.’ In a few places, the choir sings somewhat jazzier harmonies, but for the most part, the music is simple and unsophisticated, reflecting the very direct and unsentimental poetry. My thanks to the estate of Langston Hughes for providing me with permission to use his writing.”—*Robert Applebaum*

## Democracy

Democracy will not come  
Today, this year  
Nor ever  
Through compromise and fear.  
  
I have as much right  
As the other fellow has  
To stand  
On my two feet  
And own the land.

I do not need my freedom when I’m dead.  
I cannot live on tomorrow’s bread.  
  
Freedom  
Is a strong seed  
Planted  
In a great need.  
  
I live here, too.  
I want freedom  
Just as you.

I tire so of hearing people say,  
Let things take their course.  
Tomorrow is another day.

## Genevieve Taggard

### Aaron Copland, *Lark*

Aaron Copland was born in Brooklyn to a family of Jewish immigrants. His father, a local merchant, had concerns about Copland’s musical ambitions. It may have been a rabbi from the local synagogue who convinced Copland’s father to permit his son to pursue music, which led to one of the most formative experiences of his life: the young composer went to Paris for three years (1921–1924) to study with Nadia Boulanger, perhaps the most renowned musical pedagogue of the twentieth century.

One of the first fruits of his study with Boulanger was a set of *Four Motets* based on biblical texts. Boulanger described these early works as “stunning,” but they bear virtually no trace of the triadic harmonies and folk-inspired idioms later associated with Copland’s unmistakable personal style. After returning from Paris, Copland abandoned *a cappella* choral writing until *Lark* (1938), and the transformation of his individual voice within this fourteen-year timespan—into what many people now associate with a quintessential “American” sound—is palpable.

Written while Copland was in residence at the MacDowell Colony, this six-minute work is a setting of Genevieve Taggard’s “The Lark.” The poem comes from a collection entitled *Calling Western Union* (1936), which according to Taggard attempted to translate “the strong anti-fascist convictions of our times into living realities, with emphasis on the struggles of labor, the sufferings of the city and country poor, and the part of the humane middle class person in the intelligent movement against reaction.” “The Lark” is not conspicuously political, however; the bird, arising “from great dark” to announce “the great day rise” hints at the poet’s wish for America to “achieve economic democracy and by this means lay a foundation for a great culture.”

Taggard’s aesthetic meshed easily with Copland’s artistic outlook at the time, now dubbed his “populist phase” of the 1930s and 1940s. Though this short piece does not make use of folk music per se, the influence of popular music can be felt in its melodic lines and harmonies (which often outline major and minor triads), as well as in the complex syncopated rhythms derived from jazz. Copland biographer Howard Pollack has commented on its “incantatory quality—sometimes sweetly prayerful, sometimes almost fervently celebratory,” and its use of the “timeworn device of contrasting minor and major modes in order to help distinguish images of dark and light.”

—James John

## Lark

O, Lark, from great dark, arise!  
O, lark of light,  
O, lightness like a spark,  
Shock ears and stun our eyes  
Singing the day-rise, the day-rise, the great day-rise.

O Believer, Rejoicer, say  
Before Evidence of Day  
*The Sun is Risen.*

Where  
No sun is, come loudly in the air;  
Let ear and eye prepare  
To see and hear, truly to see and hear;  
To hear thy three-fold welcome in the air,  
To see all dazzle after long despair,  
To see what none may see now, singer, singer fair, so fair.

O, lark alert, O, lark alive,  
O lovely, lovely chanting arrow-lark,  
Sprung like an arrow from the bow of dark,  
O, lark arise  
Sing the day-rise,  
The great day-rise.

## Walt Whitman

### William Schuman, *Carols of Death*

William Schuman's career path was anything but straightforward. He played violin and banjo as a young boy growing up in Manhattan, and formed his own dance band as a teenager—but later said that baseball was the greatest passion of his formative years. Though he performed and wrote a great deal of popular music (including over forty songs with his neighbor, the lyricist Frank Loesser, who was just starting out at the time), he enrolled at New York University to pursue a business degree. After his first experience of hearing the New York Philharmonic under Arturo Toscanini, however, Schuman was transformed, and he decided to withdraw to study composition. He subsequently finished a B.S. in Music Education at Columbia Teachers College, and in 1943 he received the first Pulitzer Prize ever given for music. Schuman taught for ten years at Sarah Lawrence College, where he also directed the choir, and he went on not only to become the President of the Juilliard School of Music and Lincoln Center, but also to earn a place among the most important American composers of the 20th century.

Schuman completed *Carols of Death*—a group of three Walt Whitman settings—in 1958, as a commission for the Laurentian Singers of St. Lawrence University (Canton, NY). He later described his admiration for Whitman's texts:

The words of *Carols of Death* haunted me for years, because I think they are absolutely beautiful words, and I could never find the music that I felt was right to go with them. The “Carols” of course is my own title... I don't mean it in an ironical sense at all... I think they are songs about death. I am not and have never been morbid about death. I always think that death is one branch of life, just to make up a thought no one's ever mentioned or said before. There's nothing very special about it. But I thought the Whitman texts were absolutely special.

Schuman chose the poems very carefully (the third is an excerpt from Whitman's famous elegy on the death of Abraham Lincoln, *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*). He indicated in the score that they are “to be sung as a group”; and indeed, when taken together they confront the process of dying with unparalleled beauty and sensitivity. In “The Last Invocation,” phrases frequently start in unison, gradually expanding through varying degrees of consonance and dissonance into arresting four-part harmony—as if portraying the soul's struggle to be released from the body. This concept continues in “The Unknown Region,” but now in a quick tempo and with powerful urgency, followed by a concluding section of extraordinary stasis, as if one has been hurtled over the threshold into the unknown. Finally, “To All, To Each” begins with an imitation of church bells, heralding completion of the dying process. Undulating lines weave exquisitely around a repeated E-natural sustained in the inner voices, bearing uncanny musical resemblance to an EKG flatline.

—James John

### The Last Invocation

At the last, tenderly,  
From the walls of the powerful fortress'd house,  
From the clasp of the knitted locks, from the keep of the well-  
closed doors,  
Let me be wafted.

Let me glide noiselessly forth;  
With the key of softness unlock the locks—with a whisper,  
Set ope the doors O soul.

Tenderly—be not impatient,  
(Strong is your hold O mortal flesh,  
Strong is your hold O love.)

### **Darest Thou Now O Soul**

DAREST thou now O soul,  
Walk out with me toward the unknown region,  
Where neither ground is for the feet nor any path to follow?

No map there, nor guide,  
Nor voice sounding, nor touch of human hand,  
Nor face with blooming flesh, nor lips, nor eyes, are in that land.

I know it not O soul,  
Nor dost thou, all is a blank before us,  
All waits undream'd of in that region, that inaccessible land.

### **To All, To Each (from Section 14 of *When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd*)**

Come lovely and soothing death,  
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,  
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,  
Sooner or later delicate death.

*e.e. cummings*

### **Eric Whitacre—[i carry your heart with me(i carry it in)]**

Grammy-winning composer and conductor Eric Whitacre is one of the most popular musicians of our time. His concert music has been performed throughout the world by amateur and professional musicians alike, while his ground-breaking Virtual Choirs have united singers from more than 110 different countries. A graduate of the prestigious Juilliard School of Music, Eric was recently appointed Artist in Residence with the Los Angeles Master Chorale, having completed a five-year term as Composer in Residence at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge University, UK.

“Nine years ago, one of my best friends in the world, Omar Crook, got married to another one of my best friends in the world, Amy Arms. Omar asked me before the wedding if I would set e.e. cummings’ iconic pome *i carry your heart* for the ceremony. I tried and tried to find the music in the poetry but came up empty, so instead I did the next best thing: I gave a terrible best man’s speech.

Five-and-one-half years later, I was sitting at the piano, working on another piece, and I stumbled on a single music gesture that unlocked the poem for me. That musical gesture is heard first in the opening lines of the poem:

i carry your heart with me. (i carry it in  
my heart). I am never without it.

The idea that ‘I am never without it’ was the core of the piece’s construction. And so, I finally wrote the piece and surprised them with it. I was giving a concert with the Los Angeles Master Chorale and I invited them to come without giving them any idea what we would perform. We made it through the entire concert and then, as an encore, I announced, “this is for my dear friends Omar Crook and Amy Arms, a gift for their wedding day—a little late.” Now every time I hear it, I think of this very intimate love and, very specifically, Omar and Amy.”—*Eric Whitacre*

### **[i carry your heart with me(i carry it in)]**

i carry your heart with me(i carry it in  
my heart)i am never without it(anywhere  
i go you go,my dear;and whatever is done  
by only me is your doing,my darling)

i fear  
no fate(for you are my fate,my sweet)i want  
no world(for beautiful you are my world,my true)  
and it’s you are whatever a moon has always meant  
and whatever a sun will always sing is you

here is the deepest secret nobody knows  
(here is the root of the root and the bud of the bud  
and the sky of the sky of a tree called life;which grows  
higher than soul can hope or mind can hide)  
and this is the wonder that's keeping the stars apart

i carry your heart(i carry it in my heart)

### **Elliot Z. Levine—i thank You God**

Elliot Z. Levine has long been a friend of Cerddorion, from encouraging the group at the time of its founding to occasionally stepping in to cover a last-minute illness in the bass section! He was the baritone for the Western Wind Vocal Ensemble from 1969–2016 and wrote and arranged many pieces for that ensemble. Mr. Levine received degrees from the Manhattan School and Queens College and pursued further studies at the Orff School in Salzburg, at the Alfred Deller Academy in Avignon, and with Robert Hickock and Robert Starer at Brooklyn College.

A recipient of five Meet-the-Composer grants, Mr. Levine has been commissioned by many groups besides Cerddorion, including the Harmonium Choral Society, the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, the Church of St. Luke in the Fields, Temple Israel Center, and the Western Wind Vocal Ensemble. Mr. Levine's most recent publication is *Eilu D'varim* by Transcontinental Music, and he is currently working on a commission based on Hmong poetry for the Augsburg University Choir, directed by former Cerddorion conductor Kristina Boerger.

“I wrote *i thank you god* in 1991 for a Meet the Composer commission as part of a residency of the Western Wind Vocal Ensemble at the Mark Twain Junior High School in Coney Island, New York. The original version was for double chorus, but I also created the six-voice version performed here, as well as one for four-part chorus and keyboard. The inspiration, of course, was the beautiful and joyous poem of e.e. cummings. I was aiming for a more popular song style. The piece has proved popular in the United States, Japan, Taiwan, and Australia. It has been performed at numerous American Choral Directors Association conferences and by the 300-voice New Jersey All-State Chorus. I knew I'd had some success as a composer when a Japanese singer had programmed the opening ten-note theme as her phone ringer. Palestrina never had it so good!”—*Elliot Z. Levine*

### **i thank You God**

i thank You God for most this amazing  
day:for the leaping greenly spirits of trees  
and a blue true dream of sky;and for everything  
which is natural which is infinite which is yes

(i who have died am alive again today,  
and this is the sun's birthday; this is the birth  
day of life and love and wings and of the gay  
great happening illimitably earth)

how should tasting touching hearing seeing  
breathing any-lifted from the no  
of all nothing-human merely being  
doubt unimaginaire You?

(now the ears of my ears awake and  
Now the eyes of my eyes are opened)

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Charlotte Ford	Gladys Ross
Gingerbread Manor	Frances Rutherford
Mark Hewitt	Daniel Walker
Emily John	Jonathan Weil
Lorraine Marxer	Talya Westbrook
	Vocal Area Network



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# CERDDORION

## **Sopranos**

Anna Harmon  
Molly Masterton  
Jennifer Oates  
Jeanette Rodriguez  
Ellen Schorr  
Talya Westbrook

## **Altos**

Jamie Carrillo  
Susan Glass  
Linnea Johnson  
Allegra Kuney  
Cathy Markoff  
Myrna Nachman  
Katie Wilkes

## **Tenors**

Ralph Bonheim  
Mark Hewitt  
Michael Klitsch  
David Letzler  
Ken Short

## **Basses**

Stephen Iger  
Jonathan Miller  
Dean Rainey  
Tom Reingold  
Oliver Van Oekelen



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For further information about Cerddorion Vocal Ensemble, please visit our website: [www.cerddorion.org](http://www.cerddorion.org). To join our mailing list, visit our website! You can also follow us on Twitter: [@cerddorionnyc](https://twitter.com/cerddorionnyc), or like us on Facebook: Cerddorion Vocal Ensemble.