PAUL MORAVEC: THE BLIZZARD VOICES
PAUL MORAVEC  b. 1957

THE BLIZZARD VOICES

EMILY PULLEY  soprano
DEBORAH SELIG  soprano
ERICA BROOKHYSER  mezzo-soprano
MATTHEW DIBATTISTA  tenor
DAVID KRAVITZ  baritone
DAVID CUSHING  bass-baritone

NEW ENGLAND CONSERVATORY CONCERT CHOIR AND CHAMBER SINGERS
Erica J. Washburn, Director of Choral Activities

BOSTON MODERN ORCHESTRA PROJECT
Gil Rose, conductor

THE BLIZZARD VOICES  (2008)

[2]  II. There Was a Day  8:00
[3]  III. The Blizzard Bore Down  6:50
[4]  IV. Billy  3:10
[6]  VI. All Night the Wind Moaned  2:03
[7]  VII. Lois Mae Royce  4:18
[8]  VIII. Fare Thee Well, Mother  2:53
[9]  IX. Telegraph  2:20
[10]  X. Minnie Freeman  3:02
[12]  XII. In the Morning — XIII. Light the Fire  5:07
[14]  XV. In Remembrance  3:14
[15]  XVI. Epilogue  7:04

TOTAL  61:21
To Robert Kirzinger’s generous program notes I add the observation that the first two movements take the listener through a long-range temporal acceleration. The Prologue suggests the scale of “deep time”: the virtual timelessness of the Plains before human history. The second movement, “There Was a Day,” unfolds in sacred, mythological time before moving directly to our prosaic, historical time-sense. One might think of this process as a three-stage cinematic “zoom-in” to the single date of Thursday, January 12, 1888. From that point on the narrative’s time-frame is counted in the minutes and hours of that fateful afternoon and night.

My series of American historical oratorios continues. I am currently completing its fourth work, titled *Sanctuary Road*, based on William Still’s *Underground Railroad* compendium of primary source accounts. Like *The Blizzard Voices*, it is a large-scale secular oratorio, to a libretto by Mark Campbell (with whom I composed the 2016 opera *The Shining*), commissioned and scheduled to be premiered by the Oratorio Society of New York at Carnegie Hall in 2018.

While most of the works in my catalog are chamber music, recently I’ve found myself drawn back to my roots, to the world of choirs and choral music. In the past year, I’ve composed a half dozen choral pieces and there are many more in the works. I am deeply grateful to Opera Omaha, the Oratorio Society of New York, and BMOP for their superb performances of this work, so effective in part because of the unparalleled emotional and spiritual power of human voices singing together as one.

*New York City, May 2017*
THE BLIZZARD VOICES, with text by poet Ted Kooser, is an oratorio scored for six vocal soloists, SATB chorus, and orchestra. It was commissioned by Opera Omaha, who gave the premiere under the direction of Stewart Robertson in Omaha, Nebraska, in September 2008.

By Robert Kirzinger

The Schoolhouse Blizzard, or the Children’s Blizzard—the nicknames for the devastating Great Plains snowstorm of January 1888, in which an uncounted number of people died in Nebraska, South Dakota, Minnesota, and other states and territories, hint at some of the stories of tragedy and heroism that emerged from one of the most devastating weather events in U.S. history. These stories were the source for The Blizzard Voices, the Iowa–born poet Ted Kooser’s 1986 collection of poems drawing strongly on first-person accounts from witnesses and survivors. From this collection Paul Moravec drew the texts and inspiration for his oratorio of the same name. The large-scale work for six vocal soloists, chorus, and orchestra was commissioned by Opera Omaha, where it was premiered in September 2008, with a performance the following day in Council Bluffs, Iowa, just across the Missouri River from Omaha. From the journalistic details of first-person and news accounts, both Kooser and Moravec created works of individual, human focus as well as universal meaning, echoing the millennia-spanning traditions of both ballad and the epic.

Paul Moravec is an artist of great expressive and technical range, as this piece attests: an early fascination with the Beatles co-exists with a sophisticated awareness of the Western
musical canon, and both ends of the spectrum have provided grist for the mill. Vernacular song, hymns, and a variety of other styles, though only part of a much more complex and individual overall palette, are heard throughout *The Blizzard Voices*. Composing a large-scale score of this kind requires a fine sense of balance that encompasses the delicate as well as the majestic. It’s this skill with and intuition for narrative, dramatic energy that has made Moravec such a successful composer of opera, which looms large in his later compositional activity. The most ambitious of these projects is *The Shining*, with a libretto by Mark Campbell based on Stephen King’s famous bone-chilling novel of a family isolated and snowed in at a haunted Colorado resort hotel. The opera was commissioned by Minnesota Opera, and it opened to sold-out houses in St. Paul in May 2016. The composer has worked closely with author and drama critic Terry Teachout, who wrote the librettos for several earlier stage works—*The Letter*, based on a W. Somerset Maugham story; the chamber opera *Danse Russe*, a backstage drama about the premiere of *The Rite of Spring*, and *The King’s Man*, a dramatization of Benjamin Franklin’s relationship with his illegitimate son.

Moravec is also a celebrated composer of chamber and orchestral music in which the dramatic or theatrical are often near the surface. The best-known of his instrumental works is his *Tempest Fantasy* for clarinet, violin, cello, and piano, which was awarded the 2004 Pulitzer Prize. An instrumental re-imagining of characters and scenes from Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, this expansive quartet has an implicit connection to the theater. Many of his orchestral works, while lacking moment-to-moment scenic narratives, are based on experiences of phenomenon or place. *Northern Lights Electric* for orchestra is a response to witnessing the aurora borealis from New Hampshire; *Sempre Diritto!* is a kind of orchestral itinerary, making use of shifting patterns to suggest the organized confusion of Venice’s streets and canals. His *Montserrat* for cello and orchestra, one of several concertos in his catalog (including one for shakuhachi), was inspired by a visit to Montserrat in Catalonia, one of Pablo Casals’s favorite places and the site of the famous Santa Maria de Montserrat abbey. Spanish-flavored dances and sacred music are both a part of the concerto’s fabric.

Moravec’s works for voice have a similarly broad range of subjects and texts, from the solo cantata *Useful Knowledge* based on Benjamin Franklin’s writings to a number of sacred choral works, including his Mass in D, composed for the bicentennial of St. Paul’s Cathedral in Buffalo in 2017. (Moravec himself was a boy chorister there.)

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The poet Ted Kooser was born in Ames, Iowa, and has spent much of his life in Nebraska, having moved to Lincoln in the early 1960s to attend graduate school. There is a humanitarian breadth to his poetry, which is often centered on easily pictured imagery from his experience of the Great Plains, where the landscape and weather frequently figure strongly in the drama of human existence. (In fact, one of his books of poems is titled *Weather Central*.) Kooser was the U.S. Poet Laureate from fall 2004 to spring 2006. He was awarded the 2005 Pulitzer Prize in poetry for his book *Delight and Shadows*. Kooser’s *The Blizzard Voices* was published in 1986, just shy of the 100th anniversary of the event it dramatizes in verse. The catastrophe is presented in a series of episodes told from a variety of perspectives and using many different voices. As we begin to make sense of the larger narrative, we also receive thumbnail sketches of the characters in the drama, which includes those who lived it as well as occasional omniscient or journalistic views.

The text for Moravec’s piece draws on Kooser’s poems as well as a few other sources, including, touchingly, traditional children’s rhymes. The blizzard has been called the “Children’s Blizzard” due to the number of school children who died trying to get home in the blinding snow and deadly cold. The work is framed, as the composer has said, in the context of an Old Testament oratorio. Moravec prefaces Kooser’s text with an excerpt from *The Book of Job*, and in the third movement includes a psalm setting in six languages, Latin, German, English, Swedish, Norwegian, and Czech, suggesting the range of heritage among those affected by the blizzard. Moravec suggests we hear *The Blizzard Voices* as a kind of American requiem—a work that acknowledges the presence and inevitability of death but
which is ultimately life-affirming. It’s the voices of the survivors that we’re hearing, after all, and Kooser’s epilogue tells us that, for the dead “…buried at home, in poorly marked graves”…”That wind remembers their names.”

The oratorio The Blizzard Voices is presented as a series of tableaux. Differences in character and mood are clearly delineated in the music, with the personalities being further clarified via the six solo voices. The musically diverse sections work in tandem with a sure sense of large-scale architecture. The many-layered dramatic arc of Kooser’s tragic narrative is distilled but paralleled in the deftly assembled libretto and mirrored strongly in the music. There are sixteen scenes, beginning with the wordless “Prologue: The Plains,” which establishes the wide-open atmosphere, using the wordless chorus in a gradually expanding, increasingly dense contrapuntal texture. A pedal tone throughout creates a sense of foreboding. The movement from chamber to tutti orchestra establishes the composer’s nuanced use of the orchestra throughout the piece, in which thoughtfully chosen, chamber-musical subsets provide fitting complements for his text settings.

Following the Prologue, “There Was a Day,” sets the excerpt from the Book of Job, foreshadowing the trials and tribulations to follow. The prosody, or rhythmic character, of the words is natural and straightforward. In the brief exchange between God and Satan, the former’s choral voice is enhanced by shimmering tremolos in the orchestra. This leads into Kooser’s dry description of activities the day of the blizzard—the day’s unusual warmth leading to complacency, a kind of hubris. Sparkling orchestration reflects the mood of the day, the “bright quilts that flapped and billowed,” the children’s play. An Americana moment with fiddle-like strings sets the children’s delighted announcement of school letting out. The rhythmic ideas here are both naturally dancelike and sophisticated. The last verses steer us back to the impending disaster, which stamps out the unnatural calm in “The Blizzard Bore Down,” a terrifying storm for orchestra and voices rivalling Verdi’s “Dies irae” and the tempest of Britten’s Peter Grimes. The text moves easily from the general to the individual, the abstractly descriptive to the frightened first-person, and the music seamlessly flows from choral to solo voices. The six-language setting of lines from Psalm 142 at the end of the movement brings the communities together in their collective terror.

The following movements offer points of view from particular characters, like the individual voices of a Bach Passion. In the fourth movement, “Billy,” the voice is evidently that of a working farmer whose staid, straightforward reportage is colored by the snow and wind flickering in the orchestra: there is no hint of speculation in the words, only description, but the music shifts at “Billy died during the night,” illustrating latent emotion. “I Never See a Sunflower…” is in the voice of a village schoolteacher. The use of pizzicato strings and sinewy lines for winds draw the unsteady path she follows to safety. “All Night the Wind Moaned” is a hymn of thanks by a family safe at home, ending with the words of Thomas Dekker’s lullaby “Golden Slumbers.”

The solo song “Lois Mae Royce” tells the story, from a third-person perspective, of a teacher who made the fateful decision to try to lead three children to her home from the freezing schoolhouse. The character is that of a death march, darkened by low winds. “Fare Thee Well, Mother,” set for women’s chorus to suggest the voices of children, is the conclusion of this tale, using the words of a traditional rhyme.

“Telegraph” begins with the chorus’s insistent “dit dit dit,” explicit word-painting acting as another section of the orchestra accompanying the tenor’s song. Although the voice is initially flatly prosaic, strong emotion seems to overwhelm the speaker at the close. “Minnie Freeman” splits the text between journalism (baritone) and first-person, Minnie herself, speaking about the attention showered on her in the storm’s aftermath rather than the event itself. This represents a turn toward more positive elements of the narrative. “My Sister Was Born,” set with fluttering winds and lyrical strings, is followed by the straightforward observation of a remarkable phenomenon, “In the Morning,” with percussion creating the glinting snow crystals. The baritone’s tone is full of awe. “Light the
Fire,” which follows without a break, is another setting of a traditional text, set as a hymn that crescendos to a broad, anthemic climax. There is, though, a return to questioning and despair in the closing harmony. “The Searching Parties” [13] uses brass punctuations and a pulsating rhythm in strings to echo the urgency and anguish of the text. Moravec folds in a variety of individual voices, underlining the community involvement in the effort, the shared but individual effects of the calamity.

“In Remembrance,” [14] a distancing, yet poignant, prayer for tenor, accompanied only by strings and flute, sets the well-known Mary Frye poem “Do Not Stand at My Grave,” which has the effect of releasing us from the specific details of the blizzard tragedy. The Epilogue, [15] whose music recalls the Prologue, views these events and people through the lens of memory, the insistent death-march rhythm and pedal point harmony fixing these stories in our consciousness. The power of nature abides, but people and community abide as well.

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Composer and writer Robert Kirzinger has been the primary annotator for the Boston Modern Orchestra Project since 2006. He is on the staff of the Boston Symphony Orchestra as a writer, editor, and lecturer, and has taught writing at Northeastern University. He holds degrees in music composition from Carnegie Mellon University and the New England Conservatory.
II. There Was a Day

The Book of Job (excerpt)

There was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the LORD.

And the LORD said to Satan, “Whence have you come?”

Satan answered the LORD, “From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.”

And the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? …He still holds fast his integrity, although you moved me against him, to destroy him without cause.”

Eighteen eighty-eight, a Thursday, the twelfth of January:

It had been warm all morning, with a soft, southerly breeze melting the snowdrifts back from the roads.

Odd weather for January, too warm, too easy.

Women were airing their bedding on lines near shacks and soddies, bright quilts that flapped and billowed, ticks sodden as thunderheads.

In the muddy schoolyards, children were rolling the wet gray snow into men, into fortresses, laughing and splashing about, in their shirt sleeves. Their teachers stood in the doorways and watched.

Hear the children gaily shout, “After four—then school is out!”

We sang all the songs we knew, “Blow winter winds, as hard as you will, we shall be gay and happy still.”

How the good Lord, in His infinite mercy, let those poor little children die, I’ll never understand.

Not only were there freezings, but fires. One house burned right to the ground when the wind swept the flames up into the chimney.

And one of the boys died when the roof fell on him.

III. The Blizzard Bore Down

The blizzard bore down out of the northwest, roaring and whistling, loud as a train.

There was lightning in front, and it looked like bales of cotton twenty-five feet high, tied up with flashing silver wire.

...The air was suddenly full of snow, weeds, dust and fodder, blowing out of the northwest.

We ran in and pulled the door shut, snapping the bottom hinge in the wind.

A wall of snow hit the house and shook it hard, and it grew dark as night.

I shall never forget that night, as we stood close by the stove in that creaking, drafty schoolhouse, doing our best to comfort the little ones, who were cold and afraid of the darkness.

We sang all the songs we knew, “Blow winter winds, as hard as you will, we shall be gay and happy still.”

When the blizzard came, it felt as if an enormous fist had struck the house.

And the snow came pouring in.

When the wind swept the flames up into the chimney.

And one of the boys died when the roof fell on him.

Psalm 142 (excerpt)

I cry to thee, O Lord, and say, “Thou art my refuge; thou art all I have in the land of the living. Hear me when I cry.”

Latin Clamavi ad te Domine dixi tu spes mea pars mea in terra viventium. Auscula deprecationem meam.


Norwegian Jeg roper til dig, Herre! Jeg sier: “Du er min tilflykt, min del i de levendes land. Gi akt på mitt klagerop.”


Czech K tobě volám, Hospidine, řikaje: “Ty jsi doufání mé a díl můj v zemi živých. Pozoruj volání mého.”
[4] IV. Billy
When the wind and snowstorm struck,
Our teacher dismissed the school
And told us to go home.
My older brother and I
Started out on our horse.
But the snow was so blinding
We soon were lost. We let the horse
Loose, taking the blanket with us.
He walked with the wind, hoping
To find some sort of shelter.
We finally had to dig
Down into a drift, wrapping
the blanket around us.
At dawn, I dug out, finding that we
Were in sight of the home place.

[5] V. I Never See a Sunflower
I was an Ohio girl
Who taught in a country school.
How I remember that day...!

Toward the evening, our fuel was gone,
So we set out walking,
Holding each other’s hands.
It was impossible to see,
But we followed a row
Of dead sunflower stalks
All the way to a nearby farm.
I never see a sunflower now
That I don’t thank my lucky stars.

[6] VI. All Night the Wind Moaned
All night the wind moaned and cried,
But we were safe by the stove,
My Otto, who was seven, my Laurie, who was five,
And my little Susan, just three.

by Thomas Dekker

Golden slumber kiss your eyes,
Smiles awake you when you rise.
Sleep, pretty baby,
Do not cry,
And I will sing a lullaby.

[7] VII. Lois Mae Royce
Lois Mae Royce was teaching
Near Plainview, Nebraska.
Nine pupils were there
In the morning, but six went home
At noon and didn’t return,
Due to the looks of the sky.
After the storm was upon them,
The teacher realized
There was not enough fuel
For the night, so she set out
With the three small children
To walk the two hundred yards
North to her boarding place.
There was Peter Poggensee,
Twelve years old, and Otto Rosberg, nine,
and Hattie Rosberg, just six.
They were soon lost
In the whirling winds and snow

And sank down in the lee
Of a straw stack to rest.
Before dawn the three children
Were dead, huddled beside
Their young teacher, who lived...

[8] VIII. Fare Thee Well, Mother

Bluebells, cockleshells,
Fare thee well, my mother,
Bury me out
In the old church-yard
Beside my younger brother,
My coffin shall be white,
With angels white to guard me;
Two to watch and two to pray,
And two to carry my soul away.

[9] IX. Telegraph
The storm front moved
Southeasterly, sweeping
The blizzard before it.
The mercury plummeted—
Sixty degrees at some stations.
Railroad travel was blocked,
And telegraph clerks
Sitting in boxcars rocked by wind
On the sidetracks tapped out
The news. The tight wires whined
Along the tracks past schoolyards
Where children played, black clouds
Piling over their shoulders.

[10] X. Minnie Freeman
Minnie Mae Freeman was
A girl in her teens who taught school
In a soddy near Ord.
When the wind came up that day,
It blew in the door, then ripped off
A good part of the roof.
Minnie lined up the children
And led them out into the storm
Hand-in-hand, sixteen of them.
They reached a house a half-mile off,
And were saved.

[Minnie’s song]
Of all the children saved,
And there were many, the papers chose
My school to make a story of.
I was embarrassed!
Besides, the papers, looking
For romance, wrote of a man,
Supposed to be my fiancé,
That I hardly knew.
Our paper in Ord,
Sold pictures of the old school
For a dollar apiece,
And people from everywhere
Sent me letters and cards
And told me their troubles.
On the night
The big storm struck, we burned
The floorboards from the side-porch
And some of the furniture
Because we couldn’t reach the barn
For fuel. My sister was born
About two in the morning
With my grandmother tending
My mother. We pinned quilts
And sheets along the walls
And over the bed to keep the snow
Off Mother and the baby.

[12] XII. In the Morning
In the morning we found
The wind had packed the snow so hard
Our horses could walk on it
Without breaking the crust.
The drifts were there till June.

XIII. Light the Fire

traditional
Light the fire. mother
Show a pretty light:
Home come your children
All dressed in white.
Wipe your tears, mother,
Keep the lamp aglow;
Here come your babies,
Home through the snow.

[13] XIV. The Searching Parties
The searching parties started out
Early the following day,
For fear that the prairie wolves
Would get to the bodies first
And disfigure their faces. We found one of
our neighbors
Caught up in a barbwire fence
Only a few yards from his barn.
He’d been too weak from the cold.
To pull free,
And was covered with ice.
We had to cut through the wire
To pull his body loose.
One man who was lost that day
Had been shelling corn, and had gone
To a neighbor’s to borrow
A grain scoop. Halfway home,
He was caught in the storm,
He wandered
Ahead of the wind and was found
That spring when it thawed, twelve miles
Southeast of his home.
They found my Uncle Silas
Frozen standing upright
Between two of his horses.
Early in the morning
Of February the fourth,
A fellow came to the door
To tell us somebody’d found
The body of my cousin.
A pitchfork handle and his cap
Were sticking out of the snow.
It was no small job
Digging him out. The snow
Was packed around him hard.
We did the job of digging
By the light of a lantern,
And got the body home
A little after sunrise.
He was twenty years old.

[14] XV. In Remembrance
by Mary Frye
Do not stand at my grave and weep,
I am not there, I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow:
I am the diamond glints on snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain;
I am the gentle autumn rain.
When you awaken in the morning’s hush,
I am the swift uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft star that shines at night.

[15] XVI. Epilogue
So go the old stories,
Like wind in the grass,
Loose wind singing in fences,
Wind like the white wolf
Moving in over the snow.
Nobody knows now
How many died…
Few records were kept;
The dead were buried at home,
In poorly marked graves
In the corners of fields.
All that was long ago,
But the wind in the hedgerow,
The wind lifting the dust
In the empty schoolyards,
The wind which in the tin fan
Of the windmill catches,
Turning the wheel to the north—
That wind remembers their names.

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Paul Moravec, recipient of the 2004 Pulitzer Prize, is the composer of numerous orchestral, chamber, choral, operatic, and lyric pieces. His music has earned many distinctions, including the Rome Prize Fellowship, a Guggenheim Fellowship, three awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Rockefeller Foundation. A graduate of Harvard College and Columbia University, he has taught at Columbia, Dartmouth, Mannes, and Hunter College and currently holds the special position of University Professor at Adelphi University. He was the 2013 Paul Fromm Composer-in-Residence at the American Academy in Rome, recently served as Artist-in-Residence at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, NJ, and was also recently elected to membership in the American Philosophical Society.

Frequently commissioned by notable ensembles and major music institutions, Mr. Moravec’s most recent success is The Shining, to a libretto by Mark Campbell based on the Stephen King novel, which premiered at Minnesota Opera in May 2016. Other recent premieres include The King’s Man, to a libretto by Terry Teachout for Kentucky Opera, and Amorisms, with the Nashville Ballet. Upcoming premieres include Sanctuary Road, a major oratorio about the Underground Railroad for the Oratorio Society of New York, at Carnegie Hall in May 2018. Recent seasons have included the New York premiere of The Blizzard Voices with the Oratorio Society of New York at Carnegie Hall, as well as the premieres of his Violin Concerto, with Maria Bachmann and Symphony in C, and Shakuhachi Concerto, with James Schlefer and the Orchestra of the Swan (UK). Other recent premieres include Danse Russe, an opera for the Philadelphia International Festival of the Arts; Brandenburg Gate, with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra at Carnegie Hall; Piano Quintet, with Jeremy Denk and the Lark Quartet, and Wind Symphony, with a consortium of American concert bands.

Mr. Moravec’s discography includes Northern Lights Electric, an album of his orchestral music with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project released in 2012 on the BMOP/sound label. He has five albums of chamber music on Naxos American Classics: Tempest Fantasy, performed by Trio Solisti with clarinetist David Krakauer; The Time Gallery, performed by eighth blackbird; Cool Fire, with the Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival; Useful Knowledge, with soprano Amy Burton, baritone Randall Scarlata, Trio Solisti, and la Fenice Quintet, and Violin Concerto, with Maria Bachmann and Rossen Milanov’s Symphony in C. Among his many other recorded works are Double Action, Evermore, and Ariel Fantasy, performed by the Bachmann/Klibonoff Duo (Endeavour Classics); Sonata for Violin and Piano, performed by the Bachmann/Klibonoff Duo (BMG/RCA Red Seal); Atmosfera a Villa Aurelia and Vince & Jan, performed by the Lark Quartet (Endeavour Classics); Morph, performed by the String Orchestra of New York (Albany); Anniversary Dances, with the Ying Quartet (Dorian Records); Cornopean Airs, with American Brass Quintet and organist Colin Fowler, and Andy Warhol Sez, with bassoonist Peter Kolkay and pianist Alexandra Nguyen. Other releases include Blue Fiddle, with Hilary Hahn on Deutsche Grammophon, and Piano Quintet, with Jeremy Denk and the Lark Quartet, on Bridge Records.
Deborah Selig’s voice has been described by the press as “radiant,” “beautifully rich,” “capable of any emotional nuance,” and “impressively nimble.” During recent seasons, Ms. Selig has appeared as Pamina in The Magic Flute with Boston Lyric Opera; Musetta in La Bohème and Zerlina in Don Giovanni with Central City Opera; Pamina in The Magic Flute, Rose in Street Scene, Mary Warren in The Crucible, and Donna Elvira in Don Giovanni with Kentucky Opera, and Bella in Tippett’s A Midsummer Marriage with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project.

A striking and versatile artist on the concert stage, Ms. Selig has sung with orchestras and choruses across the United States. Recent highlights include Mahler’s Symphony No. 4 with Asheville Symphony, Paul Moravec’s The Blizzard Voices with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Rossini’s Petite Messe Solennelle with both Brown University and Harvard-Radcliffe Choruses, Brahms’s Requiem with Dayton Philharmonic, Bach’s Cantatas 37, 92, and 97 with the Handel and Haydn Society, Orff’s Carmina Burana with Greater Bridgeport Symphony and Fairbanks Symphony (AK), Haydn’s The Creation with Harvard University Choirs, Gorecki’s Symphony No. 3 with Kentucky Symphony, Bach’s St. Matthew Passion with Masterworks Chorale, Mendelssohn’s Elijah with Nashoba Valley Chorale, and Handel’s Messiah with Rhode Island Philharmonic.

Ms. Selig earned Artist Diploma and Master of Music degrees from Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and a summa cum laude BM/BA in Voice and English from the University of Michigan. She spent two seasons each as an apprentice artist with Chautauqua Opera, Santa Fe Opera, and Pittsburgh Opera; was a fellow at both the Ravinia Festival Steans Institute for Singers and the Tanglewood Music Center, and studied at the Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Siena and Istituto il Davide in Florence. www.deborahselig.com
Matthew DiBattista, a tenor described as “brilliant” by Opera News, has performed opera and concert works throughout the United States and Europe and is continually in demand on some of the world’s most prestigious stages. He has sung with conductors such as Charles Dutoit, Seiji Ozawa, Keith Lockhart, Sir Andrew Davis, and Robert Shaw. Known for an exceptionally varied repertoire, Mr. DiBattista has performed over 60 different roles to date spanning the entire operatic repertoire. He has been on the roster of the Metropolitan Opera and performed with Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Glimmerglass Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Cincinnati May Festival, Florida Grand Opera, New Orleans Opera, Palm Beach Opera, Opera Omaha, Tulsa Opera, Opera Boston, Virginia Opera, Opera Colorado, Tanglewood Music Center, Long Beach Opera, Chicago Opera Theater, Minnesota Orchestra, Michigan Opera Theatre, Boston Lyric Opera, Dayton Philharmonic, and Milwaukee Chamber Orchestra, and has appeared for eight out of nine straight seasons as principle artist with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. Mr. DiBattista can be heard as soloist in Gerhard Samuel’s Hyacinth from Apollo (Vienna Modern Masters) and as the title role in Kamran Ince’s Judgment of Midas (Albany Records).

David Kravitz has been hailed as “a charismatic baritone” by The New York Times, “magnificently stentorian and resonant” by Opera News, and “a first-rate actor” by Opera (UK). His recent opera engagements include lead roles at Washington National Opera (Davis Miller in the world premiere of Approaching Ali), Chautauqua Opera (Captain Balstrode in Peter Grimes), Skylight Music Theatre (Scarpia in Tosca), Opera Santa Barbara (The Forester in The Cunning Little Vixen), Grand Harmonie (Don Pizarro in Fidelio), Opera Saratoga (Don Magnifico in La Cenerentola), Chicago Lyric Opera, and National Sawdust (Mephisto in The Ninth). He has also performed with orchestras such as the Cleveland Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and has appeared as a soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. His debut with the Metropolitan Opera was as Figaro in Le Nozze di Figaro, and he has returned to the company as a soloist in a variety of roles, including the title role in Don Giovanni and the role of Don Giovanni in the company’s production of Le Nozze di Figaro. He has also performed with the San Francisco Opera, the Los Angeles Opera, and the San Diego Opera.

Erica Brookhyser, American mezzo-soprano, has performed extensively in the United States and Germany. Recent appearances include La Traviata with Los Angeles Philharmonic and a fully-staged performance of John Adams’s El Niño at Spoleto Festival USA, as well as her return to Los Angeles Opera as Meg Page in Falstaff. Brookhyser was the winner of ARTE-TV’s “Open Opera: Who will become Carmen?” – a reality talent-search television show that aired in Germany and France in 2012. The acclaimed Carmen production was broadcast live from the Berlin Seefestspiele. Other screen acting credits include as a featured opera singer in the film Untouchable, starring Nicole Kidman and Bryan Cranston.

During her four-year tenure as principal mezzo at the Staatstheater Darmstadt Ms. Brookhyser’s repertoire included Carmen (Carmen), Didon (Les Troyens), Suzuki (Madama Butterfly), Muse/Nicklausse (Les Contes d’Hoffmann), Cherubino (Le Nozze di Figaro), Orfeo (Orfeo ed Euridice), Fenena (Nabucco), Preziosilla (La Forza del Destino), Lola (Cavalleria Rusticana), Wellgunde/Waltraute/Second Norn (Der Ring des Nibelungen), and Brangäne (Tristan und Isolde). She also sang Wellgunde (Das Rheingold) at Nationaltheater Mannheim for their season premiere Ring Cycle, and Carmen in the holiday performances of Carmen at Theater Erfurt. Her concert appearances include Schoenberg’s Moses und Aron with the Boston Symphony Orchestra under the baton of James Levine, Bach’s St. Matthew Passion and Mozart’s Mass in C Minor with the Cincinnati May Festival conducted by James Conlon, Mahler’s Das Lied von der Erde and Wagner’s Wesendonck Lieder with Orchester Staatstheater Darmstadt under the baton of Elias Grandy, and Mahler’s Rückert Lieder with the Newport Symphony Orchestra conducted by Adam Flatt.

Ms. Brookhyser made her professional debut as Myrtale (Thaïs) with Boston Lyric Opera while still a student at New England Conservatory, and received further training in the Plácido Domingo Young Artist Program at Los Angeles Opera.
cenerentola), Ash Lawn Opera (Tevye in Fiddler on the Roof), Boston Lyric Opera (Abraham in Clemency), Emmanuel Music (Nick Shadow in The Rake’s Progress and Nick Carraway in The Great Gatsby), and the New England Philharmonic (Wozzeck in Wozzeck). He recently created the lead role of De Sade in Nicola Moro’s Love Hurts at the Piccolo Teatro in Milan, Italy, and at Symphony Space in New York City.

Acclaimed as one of “the finest dramatic concert singers active today,” Mr. Kravitz’s concert appearances include the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Baltimore Symphony, the Virginia Symphony, Boston Baroque, the Boston Modem Orchestra Project, Emmanuel Music, and the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, under conductors such as James Levine, Andris Nelsons, Bernard Haitink, and Charles Dutoit. Next season he returns to the Boston Symphony Orchestra for Brander in The Damnation of Faust, and Kurwenal in Act Two of Tristan und Isolde. An exceptionally versatile artist, Mr. Kravitz’s repertoire ranges from Bach to Verdi to Sondheim to contemporary composers such as Matthew Aucoin, Mohammed Fairouz, Paul Moravec, and Elena Ruehr. Mr. Kravitz has recorded for the Naxos, BIS, Koch International Classics, BMOP|sound, Albany Records, and New World labels. His distinguished legal career included clerkships with the Hon. Sandra Day O’Connor and the Hon. Stephen Breyer.

David Cushing effortlessly demonstrates his versatile bass-baritone range in a variety of roles, including recent appearances in the title roles of Don Pasquale and Le nozze di Figaro, Frère Laurent in Roméo et Juliette, and Bottom in A Midsummer Night’s Dream. This season, Mr. Cushing will return to Boston Lyric Opera as Bartolo for their production of Le nozze di Figaro and as Trulove in The Rake’s Progress; he will also perform the roles of Frère Laurent/Duke in Roméo et Juliette with Opera Tampa, Police Officer in Der Rosenkavalier with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Commandatore/Masetto in Don Giovanni, and the title role of Don Pasquale with the Bar Harbor Music Festival, and perform as soloist in Glass’s Symphony No. 5 with the Washington Chorus and Trinity Wall Street.

Recent highlights include Sarastro in Die Zauberflöte, Count Monterone in Rigoletto, Dr. Grenvil in La traviata, Masetto in Don Giovanni, and Frank Martin’s Le vin herbé with Boston Lyric Opera. Mr. Cushing first debuted with Boston Lyric Opera in the role of Count Monterone in Rigoletto, and has returned in performances as Palémon in Thaïs, Truffaldino in Ariando auf Naxos, Osmin in Die Entführung aus dem Serail, Raimondo in Lucia di Lammermoor, Don Basilio in Il barbiere di Siviglia, The Bonze in Madama Butterfly, Angelotti in Tosca, Count Horn/Tom in Un ballo in maschera, Arthur in The Lighthouse, and as Adolfo in John Musto’s The Inspector, among others. He recently debuted in the role of George Wilson in John Harbison’s The Great Gatsby with Emmanuel Music at Jordan Hall in Boston and at the Tanglewood Festival. He has been soloist in Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9, Handel’s Messiah, Dvořák’s Stabat Mater, Brahms’s Requiem, Fauré’s Requiem, Mozart’s Requiem, Haydn’s “Lord Nelson” Mass, Mozart’s “Coronation” Mass, Beethoven’s Mass in C, Bruckner’s Te Deum, and Schubert’s Mass in G.

**The New England Conservatory Concert Choir** is the Conservatory’s resident symphonic choir and offers undergraduate vocal performance, piano performance, guitar performance, and composition students the opportunity to perform music from all styles and periods of choral literature, extending beyond traditional Western masterpieces to the music of non-European cultures. While the choir will perform occasional choral octavos, selected repertoire typically focuses on large choral/orchestral and a cappella works. Recent performances include Brahms’s Ein Deutsches Requiem, Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9, Shostakovich’s Symphony No. 2 (“To October”), Honegger’s King David, Rachmaninoff’s All-Night Vigil, and Saint-Saëns’s Oratorio de Noël.
The New England Conservatory Chamber Singers is a highly selective auditioned ensemble open to all majors at the Conservatory, whose members perform challenging works from all stylistic periods, with a particular emphasis on 19th through 21st century works. Recent performance highlights include premieres of several new a cappella choral octavos, Michael Weinstein’s Gott Hämmert with the NEC Wind Ensemble, a holiday pops live broadcast from Mechanics Hall (Worcester, MA), and a memorized performance of Handel’s Messiah, Part the First in Jordan Hall with the NEC Chamber Orchestra sans conductor.

Erica J. Washburn, conductor and mezzo-soprano, has served as Director of Choral Activities at the New England Conservatory since 2009. At NEC she currently conducts the 24- to 28-voice auditioned Chamber Singers, and oversees the NEC Concert Choir and graduate Choral Conducting degree program. She teaches Basic Choral Conducting, Advanced Choral Conducting, and Sacred and Secular Choral Literature. As a conductor, Washburn has worked with the East Carolina University Women’s Chorale and Eastman Women’s Chorus, been a guest conductor for several New York State School Music Association and North Carolina Music Educators Association state festivals, spent five summers as a conductor and voice faculty member for the New York State Summer School of the Arts School of Choral Studies, and is a sought-after guest clinician and recipient of several outstanding alumni and excellence in teaching awards.

Gil Rose is a conductor helping to shape the future of classical music. His dynamic performances and many recordings have garnered international critical praise.

In 1996, Mr. Rose founded the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP), the foremost professional orchestra dedicated exclusively to performing and recording symphonic music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Under his leadership, BMOP’s unique programming and high performance standards have attracted critical acclaim and earned the orchestra fifteen ASCAP awards for adventurous programming as well as the John S. Edwards Award for Strongest Commitment to New American Music.

Mr. Rose maintains a busy schedule as a guest conductor on both the opera and symphonic platforms. He made his Tanglewood debut in 2002 and in 2003 debuted with the Netherlands Radio Symphony at the Holland Festival. He has led the American Composers Orchestra, Warsaw Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra of the Ukraine, Cleveland Chamber Symphony, Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana, and the National Orchestra of Porto. In 2015, he made his Japanese debut substituting for Seiji Ozawa at the Matsumoto Festival conducting Berlioz’s Béatrice et Bénédict, and in March 2016 made his debut with New York City Opera at the Appel Room at Jazz at Lincoln Center.

Over the past decade, Mr. Rose has also built a reputation as one of the country’s most inventive and versatile opera conductors. He founded Odyssey Opera, a company dedicated to presenting eclectic operatic repertoire in a variety of formats, in September 2013. Prior to Odyssey Opera, Mr. Rose led Opera Boston as its Music Director starting in 2003, and in 2010 was appointed the company’s first Artistic Director. He led Opera Boston in several
premieres including the world premiere of Zhou Long’s *Madame White Snake*, which won the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 2011. With Opera Unlimited, a contemporary opera festival associated with Opera Boston, he led the world premiere of Elena Ruehr’s *Toussaint Before the Spirits*, the New England premiere of Thomas Adès’s *Powder Her Face*, as well as the revival of John Harbison’s *Full Moon in March* and the North American premiere of Peter Eötvös’s *Angels in America*.

Mr. Rose and BMOP partnered with the American Repertory Theater, Chicago Opera Theater, and the MIT Media Lab to create the world premiere of composer Tod Machover’s *Death and the Powers* (a runner-up for the 2012 Pulitzer Prize in Music). He conducted this seminal multimedia work at its world premiere at the Opera Garnier in Monte Carlo, Monaco, in September 2010.

An active recording artist, Gil Rose serves as the executive producer of the BMOP/sound recording label. His extensive discography includes world premiere recordings of music by John Cage, Lukas Foss, Charles Fussell, Michael Gandolfi, Tod Machover, Steven Mackey, Evan Ziporyn, and many others on such labels as Albany, Arsis, Chandos, ECM, Naxos, New World, and BMOP/sound.

Mr. Rose has led the longstanding Monadnock Music Festival in historic Peterborough, NH, since his appointment as Artistic Director in 2012, conducting several premieres and making his opera stage directing debut in two revivals of operas by Dominick Argento.

Mr. Rose has curated the Fromm Concerts at Harvard three times and served as the first curator of the Ditson Festival of Contemporary Music at Boston’s Institute of Contemporary Art. As an educator, he served five years as Director of Orchestral Activities at Tufts University and in 2012 joined the faculty of Northeastern University as Artist-in-Residence and Professor of Practice. In 2007, Mr. Rose was awarded Columbia University’s prestigious Ditson Award as well as an ASCAP Concert Music Award for his exemplary commitment to new American music. He is a four-time Grammy Award nominee.
winner of the ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming, the orchestra has been featured at festivals including Opera Unlimited, the Ditson Festival of Contemporary Music with the ICA/Boston, Tanglewood, the Boston Cyberarts Festival, the Festival of New American Music (Sacramento, CA), Music on the Edge (Pittsburgh, PA), and the MATA Festival in New York. During its 20th anniversary season, BMOP was named Musical America’s 2016 Ensemble of the Year, the first symphony orchestra in the organization’s history to receive this distinction.

BMOP has actively pursued a role in music education through composer residencies, collaborations with colleges, and an ongoing relationship with the New England Conservatory, where it is Affiliate Orchestra for New Music. The musicians of BMOP are equally at home in Symphony Hall, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, and in Cambridge’s Club Oberon and Boston’s Club Café, where they pursued a popular, composer-led Club Concert series from 2004 to 2012.

BMOPsound, BMOP’s independent record label, was created in 2008 to provide a platform for BMOP’s extensive archive of music, as well as to provide widespread, top-quality, permanent access to both classics of the 20th century and the music of today’s most innovative composers. BMOPsound has garnered praise from the national and international press; it is the recipient of five Grammy Award nominations and its releases have appeared on the year-end “Best of” lists of The New York Times, The Boston Globe, National Public Radio, Time Out New York, American Record Guide, Downbeat Magazine, WBUR, NewMusicBox, and others.

BMOP expands the horizon of a typical “night at the symphony.” Admired, praised, and sought after by artists, presenters, critics, and audiophiles, BMOP and BMOPsound are uniquely positioned to redefine the new music concert and recording experience.

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Rachel Braude* (piccolo)
Jessica Lizak (alto flute)

**OBOE**
Laura Pardee Schaefer
(English horn)
Jennifer Slowik*

**CLARINET**
Amy Advocat (bass clarinet)
Michael Norsworthy*

**BASSOON**
Michael Mechanic*
Susannah Telsey

**HORN**
Dana Christensen
Alyssa Daly
Neil Godwin
Clark Matthews*

**TRUMPET**
Eric Berlin
Terry Everson*

**TROMBONE**
Hans Bohn

**VIOLIN I**
Colleen Brannen*
Lilit Hartunian
Oana Lacatus
Sean Larkin
Nicole Parks
Micah Ringham
Nivedita Sarnath
Zoya Tsvetkova

**VIOLIN II**
Deborah Boykan

**NEW ENGLAND CONSERVATORY CONCERT CHOIR AND CHAMBER SINGERS**
Erica J. Washburn, Director of Choral Activities

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Evan Anderson
Timothy Ayres-Kerr

Nicole Baschinsky
Kyle Bejnerowicz
Vivian Buchanan

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**BASS**
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Scot Fitzsimmons
Bebi Shiu

*Principals
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Elizabeth Clutts
Jonathon Comfort
Katherine Crabill
Zachary Crowle
Elizabeth Dickerson
Yi Ding
Brooke Dircks
SarahAnn Duffy
Dylan Evans
Chelsea Fingal
Jingze Gao
Corey Gaudreau
Alexandra Gilliam
Rachel Goldberg
Lina Marcela González
Michael Alexander González
Yunzhi Guan
Nina Guo
Xu Guo
Andrew Haig
Grace Han
Anneke Harger
Ping Wei Ho
Yishan Hong
Bree Horton
Andrew Howard
Anne Marie Hruskoci
Steven Keen Hyland
Karen Jeong
Zachary Johnson
Meghan Jolliffe
Deirdre Kellerman
Cooper Kendall
Maria Kerlee
Eric Korsnes
Hee Hyun Kwon
Baichao Lan
Sara Law
Janet Lee
Amanda Levy
Aoshuang Li
Lihao Li
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Sally Millar
Jenna Nee
Karen Notovitz
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Katherine Pan
Bo Peng
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Sam Talmadge
Eric Viñas
Riley Vogel
Linxi Wang
Zizhao Wang
Kevin Ward
Elizabeth Wendt
Trever Williams
Matthew Xiong
Richarrita You
Haqi Zhang
Ying Zhang

Paul Moravec

The Blizzard Voices
Producer: Gil Rose
Recording and postproduction: Joel Gordon
SACD authoring: Brad Michel

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—Paul Moravec


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