

Special Thanks

Deep appreciation to Congregation Rodeph Shalom, its Clergy, Board, and staff.

Rabbi Jill Maderer, Rabbi Eli Freedman, Cantor Bradley Hyman, Director of Education Jennifer James, Renee B. Carl, Alyssa Geller, Steven Share, Jeffrey Katz, Ellwood Hines.

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Marsha Weiinraub.

Veronica Chapman Smith, Opera Philadelphia

Gwendolyn Bye

Planning and Fundraising: Katherine Huseman, Janet Schreiner, Edward Schechter, Marilyn Rogers, Carol Coren.

Special thanks for in-kind donations:

Carlino's Market * Michael Solomonov * Trader Joe's * WAWA * Whole

Deep gratitude to the individual donors to The Parkinsingers Choir

Richard Berkman & Toni Seidl, Muriel B. Kudera, Carol Coren, Marjorie Samoff, Nell Anders in honor of Jim Williams. Ronald F. Brill, Clinton & Patricia Britt, Audrey V. & George W. Clothier, Jennifer A Clothier, Anthony Day, Mary Anne Ellmer, Elaine Erenhouse, Katherine Huseman, Janice Merendino, James F. McGovern, Anthony Moss, Alice E. & Mark D. Rader, William Rich, Eddie Schechter, Julie Regnier, Marilyn Rogers Richard Rosin in honor of Hop Sears, Randi Kamine & Hop Sears, Jim B. Williams, Ann and Gary Wong, Suanne Wright

Join the Choir: we welcome all with movement disorders, care partners, and friends—anyone who would like to make music in a joyful, relaxed setting. No auditions or prior experience needed. Free to all. Lots of laughter. Contact Marjorie Samoff, masamoff@aol.com . 215-668-0116. www.parkinsingers.org.

Music Matters International

A 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization, sponsor of the Parkinsingers
2120 Green Street, Philadelphia, PA 19130 www.parkinsingers.org



Music Matters International presents

The world premiere of

THE MOTHER TREE CANTATA

By Heath Allen Lyrics by Heath Allen & Arden Kass

Celebrating Tu B'Shevat, the birthday of trees

Featuring John Jarboe

Morris Paul Kennedy Janet Schreiner

Jessie Reagen, Cello

Led by Heath Allen, Justin Yoder,

Cantor Bradley Hyman

The Parkinsingers Choir

Nancy Capizzi, Miriam Cohen, Anthony Day, Michael Eeley, Elaine Erenhouse, David Fenimore, Lydia Graham, Katherine Huseman, Mary Francis Hunter, Morris Paul Kennedy, Sarah Labov, Muriel B. Kudera, Grace Labouchere, David Lange, Jackie McShea, Eve Miller, Deborah Mosely-Duffy, Mollie McLaughlin, Carmen McLeod, Claus Petersen, Rosalie Phipps, Julie Regnier, David Richardson, Marilyn Rogers, Marjorie Samoff, Gillian Sankov, Edward Schechter, Janet Schreiner, Hop Sears, Deborah Stahl, Chrissy Steele, Jim B. Williams, Ann Wong, Gary Wong, Suanne Wright, Bill Labov in Memoriam

Makheilah, Congregation Rodeph Shalom Choir

Lynn Edelman, Muriel B. Kudera, Beth Lashner, Bruce Lockman, Eve Miller, Betsy Ostrow, Robin Palley, Jeffrey Strauss, Stephanie Strauss

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Youth Choir

Georgia Grainger. Idgie Fafarman, Moe Gordon, Viola Lui Ava May
Maeve Stahl

Justin Yoder, Conductor Heath Allen, Music Director, Piano

Josh Machiz, Bass/Tuba Jimmy Coleman, Percussion

Emily Schreiner, Director

Janet Schreiner and Marjorie Samoff, Co-producers

Wednesday, February 12, 2025 6:30 PM
Congregation Rodeph Shalom
615 N. Broad Street Philadelphia, PA 19123

Notes from composer Heath Allen

When Marjorie Samoff asked me to write a piece for Tu B'Shevat, I began by imagining what a tree might think of the holiday. My imagined tree was saying something like "it's all well and good to thank us for all we do for this planet, but maybe you humans could slow down for a minute and let us trees teach you a few things." Look around this room and you'll see a lot of wood that came from once living-trees. The wood you see on the cello is usually spruce—and it is the cello's music that animates a thin piece of board, awakening the spirit of a once-living spruce tree.

The cantata begins by thanking trees, but then the trees themselves soon take over the narration. The middle songs (starting with Life in the Slow Lane) are what I think of as "lesson songs". BTW, much of this information about trees and forests comes from Suzanne Simard's amazing book *Finding the Mother Tree* as well as from the research and writing of other foresters. The last two songs ask us to consider our place on this planet and commit ourselves to a greener future.

I consider *The Mother Tree Cantata*, and its predecessor, *Jonah and the Plankton*, to be "eco-cantatas". Both pieces reflect my desire to free our inherited stories and traditions from their usual human-centeredness. Can contemporary humans find a way to return Mother Nature to her rightful centrality to our lives and culture?

Lastly, one important thing I've learned over the years is to know when I'm running on empty. I asked Arden Kass to come to my rescue midway into the process and she jumped right in, offering some smart, heartfelt lyrics as well as some needed tweaking to what I had written. Thank you. I'd like also extend thanks to our producers Marjorie Samoff and Janet Schreiner; Opera Philadelphia (Veronica Chapman-Smith gave us four fabulous singers—including herself); Rodeph Shalom, and our soloists, chorus-members and musicians for all lending their talents to this project.

Heath Allen

Music Matters International, commissioner of The Mother Tree Cantata and sponsor of The Parkinsingers Choir, is a 501(c)3 non-profit dedicated to programs that build resilience through music and neuroscience. Co-founded in 2015 in a research partnership with Penn Medicine, for 10 years the Parkinsingers Choir has been welcoming people with movement disorders, their carers, friends, and the community to a vibrant choir program with weekly rehearsals and bi-annual performances. Learn more at www.parkinsingers.org

The Mother Tree Cantata

Thank You trees (Children's choir)

The tree spirits enter (All)

The spruce tree's story (John Jarboe)

Life in the Slow Lane (All)

The Crown Shyness Tango (John Jarboe and Janet Schreiner)

Sending up my Timber/Laying Down my Timber (Morris Paul Kennedy)

Song of the Mychorrhiza (Adult choirs)

Can we Find the Threads? (Adult choirs)

Do You Ever Stop? (John Jarboe)

L'dor V'dor. (All)

The Artists

Heath Allen, Composer, librettist, lyricist, arranger, music director, pianist.
Heathallen.com

John Jarboe (she/her) Soloist. Director, producer, writer, performer, and the founding artistic director of *The Bearded Ladies Cabaret*. Johnjarboe.org

Morris Paul Kennedy, Soloist. Gospel singer, guitarist, musical artist.
Musicbymorris.net

Jessie Reagen, Cello. Cellochic.com

Janet Schreiner, Soloist, co-producer. Founder, *The Cat's Pajamas*, Cool Music for Kids.

Justin Yoder, Conductor. Choir director, music director, cellist, actor.

Georgia Grainger, Young Interlocutor

Pria Maderer Lipkin, Group Leader

Josh Machiz, Bass/Tuba, **Jimmy Coleman**, Percussion.

Rebecca Kanach, Costumes

Raymond Stokes, Sound design

Rodney Whittenberg, Videographer

Mark Schreiner, Logo design, graphics, photography

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