



TENEBRAE

The Passion of Dietrich Bonhoeffer

March 29, 2024

7:30 p.m.

Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church

WWW.TENEBRAELIVE.COM

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SCENES

Vocatus – Erasmus (Girl Soprano)

Agnus Dei (Choir)

This Little Light of Mine (Choir)

Vocatus Atque Non Vocatus (Choir)

Tenebrae Factae Sunt (Choir)

O Sacred Head Now Wounded – Paul Gerhardt (Bonhoeffer, Maria and Choir)

The Shadows of Gethsemane (Mary Magdalene)

The Death of Moses – Dietrich Bonhoeffer, poem (Bonhoeffer)

Barabbas (Choir)

Sacrificium (Bonhoeffer, Mary Magdalene, Choir)

Sorrow – Li Po, 8th century Chinese poet (Mary Magdalene, Alto flute, Cello)

Benedictus – J.S. Bach, “Am Abend” from St. Matthew Passion (Bonhoeffer, Choir)

Vocatus (Girl Soprano)

*We request that there be no applause at the end of the performance.
Due to the solemn nature of the ending, we encourage introspective thought as
your personal “Bonhoeffer moment.”*

Composer Hugh M. McElyea
Music Director Jeffrey Brillhart
Assistant Music Director Edward Landin Senn

Music: The score includes well-known sacred music loved by Pastor Bonhoeffer

COMPOSER'S NOTE

In the early church, monks gathered on the eve of Good Friday to remember the last days of Jesus. This became a traditional 4th century monastic service called “Tenebrae” meaning “darkness.”

The passion of Jesus became the foundation of the Christian faith. History is filled with those who, following his example, died defending their faith.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German Lutheran pastor, cried out against the rise of Hitler and made the ultimate sacrifice. His story remains a source of inspiration and warning in our own time.

Hugh M. McElyea, Composer

CAST



Nicholas Provenzale
DIETRICH BONHOEFFER



Rachelle Fleming
MARIA VON WEDEMEYER / MARY
MAGDALENE



Michael Bolton
NARRATOR

GUARDS / ACOLYTES
Paul McConnell | Peter McConnell

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What is TENEBRAE?

“Tenebrae” means “Darkness.” The ritual setting of this drama is patterned after the fourth century monastic service held each Thursday before Good Friday. During the service, thirteen candles are extinguished one by one as the gospel account of the Passion of Jesus is accompanied by Gregorian Chants. The church is left in total darkness as the service ends.

Who was Dietrich Bonhoeffer?

Remembered as the Lutheran pastor who spoke out against the Nazi regime on the day Adolf Hitler came to power, Dietrich Bonhoeffer also left an extraordinary legacy of theological and moral thought. He was eventually arrested by the Gestapo and spent two years in Berlin’s infamous Tegel Prison.

Who was Maria von Wedemeyer?

A few days before his arrest, Dietrich was engaged to Maria von Wedemeyer, a young woman he had taught as a student. He befriended several prison guards who smuggled letters to his family and fiancée, even arranging brief face to face meetings. Through his poems and letters, we gain a deeply personal glimpse into the life of the man. In this presentation, the mezzo-soprano also portrays Mary Magdalene.

While setting the ancient service of Tenebrae in wartime Berlin, the music reflects the tragedy of war and the sacrifice of one man who stood up and spoke truth to power. Having made the ultimate sacrifice, Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s martyrdom remains a source of inspiration, and a warning in our own time.

As the Allied bombing of Berlin neared, Bonhoeffer realized that he may not survive and opened his Bible to read the Passion of Jesus for the last time. He was taken from Tegel Prison to the Buchenwald concentration camp and later transferred to the Flossenburg prison where he was tried for treason and hanged on April 9th, 1945, just days before the end of World War II. At the end, his final words to a fellow prisoner were, *“For me this is the end, but also the beginning. It is certain that our joy is hidden in our suffering, and our life in death.”*

Biographies

Nicholas Provenzale, baritone

From the Kennedy Center to Hong Kong City Hall, baritone Nicholas Provenzale's international appearances have delighted audiences and critics alike. A versatile performer, educator and director, he enjoys an active career in opera, oratorio, art song, and musical theatre.

His operatic engagements include performances with Musica Viva Hong Kong, Indianapolis Opera, Kentucky Opera, San Diego Opera, Dicapo Opera Theatre, and Bronx Opera. As a soloist, he has appeared with the Sioux City Symphony, the South Dakota Symphony, the China National Symphony Orchestra, the San Diego Symphony Orchestra, and the Thailand Philharmonic. As part of an Abraham Lincoln bicentennial concert in 2009, Nicholas portrayed a young Lincoln in scenes from a new opera at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

Nicholas' many opera roles include Silvio in *Pagliacci*, Danilo in *The Merry Widow*, Dandini in *La Cenerentola*, Marcello and Schaunard in *La Bohème*, Belcore in *L'elisir d'amore*, the Father in *Hansel and Gretel*, Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus*. He most recently appeared as Aeneas in Wilmington Concert Opera's virtual production of *Dido and Aeneas*.

A recording artist with Albany Records, he can be heard as Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus*, and Beau Braxton in the world premiere of Pasatieri's *God Bless Us, Every One*. His latest album featuring songs of Ernest Charles, *When I Have Sung My Songs* was released in the spring of 2022. It is described by Fanfare Magazine as "sung with loving care and considerable skill. His voice is handsome... he gives these songs their due and then some."

Other recordings include the studio cast album of a new musical about the formative years of the American labor unions, *Mother Jones* (2022); and the title role in an opera about the life of American folk singer Woody Guthrie, *Woody: For the People* (2011).

Nicholas is an active recitalist, most recently performing at the InterHarmony International Music Festival in Acqui Terme, Italy; West Chester University; the Sam Houston State University Art Song Festival (virtual); Austin, Texas (Twilight Concert Series); and Columbus, Ohio (Ohio Song Project). He has also appeared at the University of South Dakota; Idyllwild Arts Academy in California; Payap University in Chiang Mai, Thailand; Eastern Illinois University; the Bangkok Art and Culture Centre; and Sala Sudasiri Sobha in Bangkok, Thailand.

Nicholas was recently named a National Finalist in two categories of The American Prize (2023). His album, *When I Have Sung My Songs* was selected as a finalist for the Ernst Bacon Memorial Award for the Performance of American Music. His recording of Poulenc's *Le travail du peintre* was selected as a finalist for the American Prize in Virtual Performance. Nicholas won Third Place in the Art Song division of The American Prize in 2016 and won the Hawaii Public Radio Art Song Competition in 2013.

As a choral artist he has performed with Opera Philadelphia, Grant Park Music Festival Chorus, the South Dakota Chorale, Boston Lyric Opera, and the New York Philharmonic. As a member of the Pro Arte Singers, led by Paul Hillier, he is heard on *William Byrd: The Three Masses*, on the Harmonia Mundi label.

Nicholas has directed productions of *Alcina*, Viardot's *Cinderella*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Robin Hood* by Ben Moore and Kelley Rourke (collegiate premiere), *L'elisir d'amore* (a live drive-in opera), *L'isola disabitata* (Haydn), *Hansel and Gretel*, *Many Moons* (Dougherty), and more. In the summers of 2022 and 2023, he directed opera scenes at the InterHarmony International Music Festival in Acqui Terme, Italy. He served as music director and conductor for Eastern Illinois University's 2016 production of the musical *Dogfight*.

An enthusiastic educator, Nicholas joined the faculty of West Chester University of Pennsylvania in 2020 as Director of Opera

and Assistant Professor of Voice and Opera. He previously served on the faculty of the University of South Dakota, Eastern Illinois University, and Mahidol University in Thailand, where he was Chair of the Classical Voice Department. He has been a guest teacher and performer at Idyllwild Arts Academy, Payap University in Thailand, Burapha University in Thailand, the Myanmar Institute of Theology, and the Asho Chin Theological Seminary, in Myanmar.

Nicholas received both his bachelor's and master's degrees from the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University, studying with Giorgio Tozzi. In 2012, He completed a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Kentucky, where he studied with Dr. Everett McCorvey. He is a staff singer at Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church.

Rachelle Fleming, mezzo-soprano

Rachelle Fleming, Associate Professor at Temple University, is nationally recognized in the training and vocal health of the contemporary vocal artist. Additional coursework includes a voice science Vocology course with Dr. Ingo Titze, and pedagogical coursework in two of the leading commercial vocal music training programs. Before coming to Temple, Fleming was Assistant Professor at The Catholic University of America in the Musical Theatre Division. She has taught for The Eastman School of Music, The Actors Studio MFA program at The New School, The Eastman School of Music Community Division, and the University of Miami. Dr. Fleming's students perform on Broadway, in National Tours, at Madison Square Garden, the Metropolitan Opera, Signature Theater, regional theaters and in film. Fleming is proud to be working with wounded warriors through MusiCorps at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. She is in demand internationally for master classes and as an artist-in-residence. Guest teaching and master classes include The Aspen Music Festival, the Contemporary Vocal Workshop at NYU-Steinhardt, and Polyphony Conservatory in Nazareth, Israel, and the national tour of *Billy Elliot*.

Fleming acted as Production Adviser for *American Voices*, a three-day festival on American singing hosted by Renée Fleming at The Kennedy Center, and as a panelist for the symposium session "Voice Training Today." An edited taping of this event later aired on PBS as part of their *Great Performances* series. Fleming is co-author of research and articles published in the *Journal of Singing*, the *Journal of Voice*, and has presented research at conferences held by the Pan American Vocology Association, National Association of Teachers of Singing, and The Voice Foundation. Her work in teaching and research is also supported by professional experience in personal artist administration, stage direction, performance, television and recording.

A versatile performer, Fleming has performed in concert, televised performances and recordings with Cuban ensemble Tiempo Libre (Sony release); multiple Grammy- winning opera star Renée Fleming (Decca/Mercury release); and international jazz pianist and composer Fred Hersch. Her voice has been praised by *Jazz Weekly* for being "as agonizingly penetrating as a Dear John letter." Theater appearances include the role of Rose in *Enchanted April*, Joanne in *Company*, a musical review of *Pretty Baby* for Festival of the Arts BOCA, the New York premiere of Bill Smith's jazz opera, *Space in the Heart*, at Symphony Space in NYC, and the role of Lynn in the play *Training Wisteria* at the NYC Fringe Festival.

Michael J. Bolton, narrator

Michael J. Bolton is a nationally respected opera and classical music lecturer and advocate, well-known for his pre-performance lectures, podcasts, and private seminars, geared to help audiences find themselves within the classics.

While some may know him as a popular on-air classical music host on WRTI 90.1 FM in Philadelphia, he is an educator at heart. Over 65,000 people have attended his lectures with the Metropolitan Opera Guild, The Philadelphia Orchestra, Opera Philadelphia, Cincinnati Opera, the Curtis Institute of Music, and the University of Pennsylvania, among many other institutions nationally. He recently made his Italian debut lecturing in Milan and Venice in conjunction with opera productions at the legendary Teatro alla Scala and La Fenice theaters.

Transitioning from a dynamic two-decade tenure at Opera Philadelphia, where he spearheaded groundbreaking community initiatives, Michael now thrives in the freelance realm. Recent projects have included work with Santa Fe Opera, Arizona PBS,

and co-producing and hosting a nationally syndicated program celebrating Maria Callas' centenary for NPR. He's also a burgeoning voiceover artist who recently made his national television acting debut on A&E's reality television program "Undercover: Caught on Tape."

A Delco boy at heart, Michael resides in the Philadelphia suburbs with his spouse, Peter, and Larry, an intellectually and physically disabled gentleman who has become a beloved member of their family through the Lifesharing program. The busy family has two dogs, Oliver and Finny, who prove that dogs really do eat homework... and shoes and socks as well. Learn more about Michael at michaeljbolton.com.

Bryn Mawr Chamber Singers

Bill Adelhelm	Mike Hogue
Paula Adelhelm	Chris Libson
Jim Beitmann	Doug McCone
Tony Brown	Lauren Meyer
Paul Burgmayer	Brian Middleton
Sharon Burgmayer	Sid Misra
M.J. Dee	Rob Mygatt
Linda Gamble	Lawana Scales
Carolyn Gerrish	Laura Vanderkam
Misoon Ghim	Klaus Volpert
Kara Goodrich	Elizabeth Weigle
Valerie Haber	Jeff Wilber

Girl Soprano

Sidney Nicholas

Chamber Orchestra

Violin 1: Tess Varley	Trumpet: Steve Heitzer
Violin 2: Gared Crawford	French horn: Todd Williams
Viola: Mary Yong	Trombone: Jason Stein
Cello: Alex Cox	Percussion: Barry Dove
Bass: Sam Harris	Piano: Susan Ricci Rogel
Flute: Brendan Dooley	Organ: Edward Landin Senn
Oboe: Erin Banholzer	

Production Team

Craig Meyer and Tim Starn

Acknowledgements

- Special thank you to the Mike Hogue and Arden Theater, for the loan of stage props.
- The composer would like to acknowledge those who recently died who were central to the development of "Tenebrae": In remembrance of The Rev. Douglas Williams, Mr. Daniel Bergman, and Mrs. Joan Anderson.
- Thanks to Benlin Alexander and Karen Rodriguez for their involvement in the graphic design and text overlays in the projected artwork.

**If you wish to make a financial gift to help meet the expenses
for this evening's performance, please scan this QR code:**



Upcoming Events

Easter Sunday, March 31

6:30 a.m. Sunrise Service, Front Lawn.

The Rev. Rachel Pedersen preaching.

7:00 a.m. Continental Breakfast in the Education Building

9:00 & 11:00 a.m. Worship with Choir and Easter Brass, Sanctuary. The Rev. Dr. Agnes W. Norfleet preaching. 9:00 Service Livestreamed.

Sunday, April 28, 4 p.m.

Johannes Brahms' "Ein Deutsche Requiem," in Brahms' two-piano version. Sanctuary Choir with Nicholas Provenzale, baritone and Kara Goodrich, soprano. Susan Ricci Rogel and Laura Ward, piano. Offering taken to support the Homeless Advocacy Project, an organization that provides the homeless with resources and legal assistance. Learn more their work here: www.haplegal.org.

Natural Mothers – Photos by Lisa Hancock.

March 3 through April 28, 2024, the BMPC Gallery. Inspired by her early experiences as a caseworker, Lisa's photographs explore the foster care system through the stories of three biological mothers and reconnects the photographer with the Cruz siblings, foster children from her caseload, who are now grown with children of their own.

Are you an experienced soprano or tenor? Consider joining the Sanctuary Choir.

For vocal interview, contact Jeffrey Brillhart: jbrillhart@bmpc.org.

Please scan this QR code for more information:



"We must be ready to allow ourselves to be interrupted by God."

— Dietrich Bonhoeffer