



John W. Ehrlich, *Music Director*

The Spectrum Singers present

A Christmas Prelude

Saturday, November 18, 2023 at 7:30pm

First Church Congregational
11 Garden Street, Harvard Square, Cambridge

FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

For some in our audience and some in our chorus, this will be their first year in The Spectrum Singers community. For others, including our Music Director, it will be their 44th year in this family. Family? Sociologists may define family as a “socially recognized group...that forms an emotional connection among its members and that serves as an economic unit of society.” That’s what we singers have with you, our audience: an emotional connection around sharing music together, as well as your financial support to give our singing additional purpose and direction. There is no question: we make our best music with you enjoying our concerts in the hall or online.

Together, we are a family, and on behalf of The Spectrum Singers I welcome you to this, our 44th season of music making. It is also the final one under the baton and musical leadership of our founder, John W. Ehrlich. Tonight’s program continues a long tradition of festive concerts to launch the holiday season and is filled with many of John’s favorites over the years.

Whether this is your first time in our audience or your 100th (could be, if you’ve come to 2/3 of our concerts!), you honor us with your presence. Thank you and enjoy.

~ Dan Epstein, *Board Chair*

Please join The Spectrum Singers at a post-concert reception in Margaret Jewett Hall, located through the right-hand door at the front of the sanctuary.

Kindly silence all cell phones and other electronic devices.



The Spectrum Singers

John W. Ehrlich, *Music Director*

James R. Barkovic, *Assistant Conductor and Accompanist*

A Christmas Prelude

Saturday, November 18, 2023

First Church Congregational, Cambridge

♪ Applause welcomed where noted ♪

Alleluja, freuet euch, ihr Christen alle Andreas Hammerschmidt
(1612–1675)



Joseph, lieber Joseph mein Erhard Bodenschatz
(1576–1636)

Ave Maria Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548–1611)



And the Glory of the Lord (from *Messiah*) George Frideric Handel
(1685–1759)

Alles was Odem hat, lobet den Herrn Johann Sebastian Bach
(from *Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied*, BWV 230) (1685–1750)



Ave Maria Anton Bruckner (1824–1896)

Hodie, Christus natus est Healey Willan (1880–1968)

♪ Intermission ♪

On Christmas Night (Sussex Carol) Traditional
arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

Lullay my Liking Gustav Holst (1874–1934)

Kaitlyn Hess, *soprano*; Mara Goldberg, *alto*; David Potts, *tenor*



A Spotless Rose Herbert Howells (1892–1983)

Mark Andrew Cleveland, *baritone*



There is no Rose Benjamin Britten (1913–1976)
(from *A Ceremony of Carols*)

Torches Trad., arr. John Joubert (1927–2019)



O Magnum Mysterium Morten Lauridsen (b. 1943)



The Angels and the Shepherds Bohemian Trad., arr. Stephen Paulus
(1949–2014)

Ron Armstrong, Jill Fekete, Isabella Ricciardi, *handbells*
Jacqueline DeVoe, *flute*



Sir Christèmas William Mathias (1934–1992)

 *Brief Pause* 

Lauda per la Natività del Signore Ottorino Respighi (1879–1936)

Sarah Yanovitch Vitale, *Angel*
Katherine Maysek, *Mary*
Charles Blandy, *Shepherd*

THE SPECTRUM SINGERS

Soprano

Luellen Best
Jill Fekete
Valerie Gibson
Kaitlyn Hess
Leslie Horst
Tricia Wells Kennedy
Maki Koto
Isabella Ricciardi
Sandra Shepard
Anna Andrews Smith
Christine Sullivan
Kathi Tighe*
Reeven Wang Dai

Alto

Christine Bishop
Diane Droste
Sara Glidden*
Mara Goldberg
Linda Ingram
Penny Outlaw
Jane Willard White

Tenor

Thomas A. Best*†
Paul Dredge
Ian Fox†
J. Stephen Groff†
Keith Ohmart
David Potts
John Schumacher†
Frank Villa
Maurice Wong

Bass

Ron Armstrong
John Bradshaw
Mark Andrew Cleveland†
Dan Epstein
Ian Hutchinson
Douglas Latham
Henry Magno
David Meharry*†
Richard Scott
Steve Solomon

* Section Leader

† Hammerschmidt “Favoriti”
chamber chorus

This organization is funded in part by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency which also receives support from the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Spectrum Singers is a member of the Greater Boston Choral Consortium, a cooperative association of diverse choral groups in Boston and the surrounding area.

ORCHESTRA

Flute

Jacqueline DeVoe

Peggy Friedland (also Piccolo)

Oboe

Jennifer Slowik

English Horn

Catherine Weinfield-Zell

Bassoon

Adrian Jojatu

Jensen Ling

Triangle

Paul Perfetti

Piano

Karen Harvey

James Barkovic

Personnel Manager

Paul Perfetti

THANK YOU!

The Spectrum Singers would like to thank Jim Barkovic, our rehearsal accompanist; Rozann Kraus, house manager; and the rest of our front-of-house team for house management and ticketing assistance.

Many thanks to Kirsten Manville, Parish Administrator, and Peter Sykes for their assistance at First Church Congregational; and Paul Perfetti for contracting our instrumentalists.

Additional thanks to Jim Barkovic and West Concord Union Church for the loan of their handbells.

Special thanks to the Cambridge Massachusetts Stake, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, for their generosity in hosting our rehearsals in their Kendall Square Chapel.

Thanks also to our volunteers for their contributions as ushers and stage assistants.

Instrumentalists playing this program appear through the courtesy of the Boston Musicians' Association Local 9-535 of the American Federation of Musicians.

Alleluja, freuet euch, ihr Christen alle

Hammerschmidt

Alleluja!

Alleluia!

Freuet euch, ihr Christen alle,
 freue sich, wer immer kann:
 Gott hat viel an uns getan.
 Freuet euch mit großem Schalle,
 daß er uns so hoch geacht:
 sich mit uns befreundt gemacht.

Freude, Freude über Freude,
 Christus wehret allem Leide.
 Wonne, Wonne über Wonne,
 er ist die Genadensonne.

Come ye, Christians, and rejoice,
 rejoice, all ye who can:
 God has done great things for us.
 Raise your voices and rejoice
 that he has honour'd us and deigned
 to make of us his friends.

Joy, joy upon joy,
 Christ defends against all woe,
 Bliss, bliss upon bliss,
 He is the sun of mercy.

Siehe, siehe meine Seele,
 wie dein Heiland kommt zu dir,
 brennt in Liebe für und für,
 daß er in der Krippen Höhle
 harte lieget dir zugut,
 dich zu lösen durch sein Blut.

Freude, Freude über Freude, *etc.*

Look, my soul, look well and see
 how thy Saviour comes to thee,
 how his constant burning love
 brings him, for thy sake, to lie
 in the manger-cave forlorn,
 to redeem thee with his blood.

Joy, joy upon joy, *etc.*

Jesu, wie soll ich Dir danken?
 Ich bekenne, daß von Dir
 meine Seligkeit herrührt.
 So laß mich von Dir nicht wanken,
 nimm mich Dir zu eigen hin,
 so empfindet Herz und Sinn

Freude, Freude über Freude, *etc.*

How shall I thank Thee, Jesus Lord?
 I acknowledge that my weal
 is Thy doing, so let me not
 ever waver from Thy side:
 take me as Thine own, that I
 with heart and soul may ever know

Joy, joy upon joy, *etc.*

Jesu, nimm Dich Deiner Glieder
 ferner in Genanden an,
 schenke, was man bitten kann,
 zu erquicken Deine Brüder;
 gib der ganzen Christenschar,
 Frieden und ein seligs Jahr.

Freude, Freude über Freude, *etc.*

Jesus, take Thy fellow-man
 deeper still into Thy grace.
 Grant what Thou alone can give:
 to Thy brethren comfort and cheer;
 unto every Christian here bestow
 peace and blessings all the year.

Joy, joy upon joy, *etc.*

Alleluja!

Alleluia!

Joseph, lieber Joseph mein

Bodenschatz

Joseph, lieber Joseph mein,
hilf mir wiegen mein Kindelein,
Gott der will dein Lohner sein
im Himmelreich, der Jungfrau
Kind Maria.

Joseph, my dear Joseph,
help me rock my little child,
God who wants to reward you
in Heaven, Child of the
Virgin Mary.

Eia, eia,
Sause, liebes Kindelein.
Virgo deum genuit,
quem divina voluit clementia.

Eia, eia,
Hush, dear little child.
A virgin has given birth to God,
which divine mercy has ordained.

Singet frisch und wohlgenut,
lobet Gott das höchste Gut,
der so große Wunder tut,
und schicket seinem lieben Sohn
auf Erden.

Sing briskly and cheerfully,
Praise God the highest Good,
Who does such great marvels,
and sends His dear Son
to earth.

Ave Maria

Victoria

Ave Maria, gratia plena,
Dominus tecum.
Benedicta tu in mulieribus
et benedictus fructus
ventris tui, Jesus Christus.
Sancta Maria, mater Dei,
ora pro nobis peccatoribus,
nunc et in hora mortis nostrae.
Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with you.
You are blessed among women
and blessed is the fruit of
your womb, Jesus Christ.
Holy Mary, mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.

And the Glory of the Lord (from *Messiah*)

Handel

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together:
for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

~ *Isaiah XL:5*

Alles was Odem hat, lobet den Herrn

Bach

(from *Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied*)

Alles was Odem hat,
lobe den Herrn,
Halleluja!

All that have breath,
praise the Lord,
Hallelujah!

~ *Psalm 150:6*

Ave Maria

Bruckner

Ave Maria, gratia plena,
Dominus tecum.
Benedicta tu in mulieribus
et benedictus fructus
ventris tui, Jesus.
Sancta Maria, mater Dei,
ora pro nobis peccatoribus,
nunc et in hora mortis nostrae.
Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with you.
You are blessed among women
and blessed is the fruit of
your womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.

Hodie, Christus natus est

Willan

Hodie Christus natus est:
Hodie Salvator apparuit:
Hodie in terra canunt angeli:
laetantur archangeli:
Hodie exultant justi, dicentes:
Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Alleluia.

Christ is born today:
Today the Saviour has appeared:
Today on Earth the angels sing:
archangels rejoice:
Today the righteous exult, saying:
Glory to God in the highest.
Alleluia.

On Christmas Night (Sussex Carol)

Vaughan Williams

On Christmas night all Christians sing
To hear the news the angels bring.
News of great joy, news of great mirth,
News of our merciful King's birth.

When sin departs before Thy grace,
Then life and health comes in its place.
Angels and men with joy may sing,
All for to see the new-born King.

All out of darkness we have light,
Which made the angels sing this night:
"Glory to God and peace to men,
Now and for ever more. Amen."

Lullay my Liking

Holst

*Lullay my liking,
my dear Son, my Sweeting;
Lullay my dear Heart,
mine own dear Darling.*

I saw a fair maiden
sitten and sing:
She lulled a little child,
A sweeté Lording
Lullay my liking . . .

That Eternal Lord is He
That made allé thing;
Of allé Lordés He is Lord,
Of every King He's King.
Lullay my liking . . .

There was mickle [much] melody
At that childés birth:
Though the songsters were heavenly
They madé mickle mirth.
Lullay my liking . . .

Angels bright they sang that night
And saiden to that Child:
“Blessed be Thou, and so be she
That is so meek and mild.”
Lullay my liking . . .

Pray we now to that child,
As to His Mother dear,
God grant them all His blessing
That now maken cheer.
Lullay my liking . . .

A Spotless Rose

Howells

A Spotless Rose is blowing,
Sprung from a tender root,
Of ancient seers' foreshowing,
Of Jesse promised fruit;
Its fairest bud unfolds to light
Amid the cold, cold winter,
And in the dark midnight.
The Rose which I am singing,
Whereof Isaiah said,
Is from its sweet root springing
In Mary, purest Maid;
For through our God's great love and might,
The Blessed Babe she bare us
In a cold, cold winter's night.

~ 14th century origin

There is no Rose

Britten

(from *A Ceremony of Carols*)

There is no rose of such vertu
As is the rose that bare Jesu.
Alleluia.

For in this rose containèd was
Heaven and earth in litel space,
Res miranda. [Marvelous thing.]

By that rose we may well see
There be one God in persons three,
Pares forma. [Equal in nature.]

The aungels sungen the shepherds to:
Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Gaudeamus. [Let us rejoice.]

Leave we all this werldly mirth,
And follow we this joyful birth.
Transeamus. [Let us pass over.]

*Alleluia, res miranda,
Pares forma, gaudeamus,
Transeamus.*

~ *Anonymous*

Torches

Joubert

Torches, torches, run with torches
All the way to Bethlehem!
Christ is born and now lies sleeping;
Come and sing your song to him!

Ah, Roro, Roro, my baby,
Ah, Roro, my love, Roro;
Sleep you well, my heart's own darling
While we sing you our Roro.

Sing, my friends, and make you merry
Joy and mirth and joy again;
Lo, He lives, the King of heaven
Now and evermore. Amen.

O Magnum Mysterium

Lauridsen

O magnum mysterium,
et admirabile sacramentum,
ut animalia viderent
Dominum natum,
jacentem in praesepe!
Beata Virgo,
cujus viscera meruerunt
portare Dominum Christum.
Alleluia!

O great mystery,
and wondrous sacrament,
that the animals should see
the newborn Lord,
lying in the manger!
Blessed Virgin,
whose womb was worthy
to carry the Lord Christ,
Alleluia!

The Angels and the Shepherds

Paulus

Shepherds, O hark ye, glad tidings we bring.
Peace and goodwill to the world now we sing.
See in a manger Christ the Anointed,
Whom for your Savior God hath appointed.
Alleluia.

In yonder manger behold now he lies,
Whom angel voices foretold from the skies.
Seeking Thy mercy, we kneel before Thee,
Singing Thy praises, humbly adore Thee.
Alleluia.

Still through the ages the song doth resound,
Peace and goodwill on the earth shall abound,
Bear we the tidings of ev'ry nation,
Born is the Christ Child for man's salvation.

Alleluia.

~ adapted from poetry by Helen A. Dickenson

Sir Christèmas

Mathias

Nowell!

Who is there that singeth so *Nowell*?

I am here, Sir Christèmas.

Welcome, my lord Sir Christèmas!

Welcome to all, both more and less,

Come near. *Nowell, nowell.*

Dieu vous garde, beaux sieurs,

[God keep you, good lords,]

tidings I you bring:

A maid hath borne a child full young,

which causeth you to sing *Nowell!*

Christ is now born of a pure maid;

In an ox-stall he is laid,

Wherefore sing we all at a brayde: *Nowell!*

Buvez bien par toute la compagnie.

[Drink well, by all the company.]

Make good cheer and be right merry

And sing with us now joyfully: *Nowell!*

Lauda per la Natività del Signore

Respighi

(vertical lines indicate text sung concurrently)

L'Angelo (ad Pastores)

Pastor, voie che veggiate

sovra la greggia en quista regione;

I vostr'occhi levate,

Ch'io son l'Agnol

de l'eternal magione.

Ambasciaria ve fone

Ed a voie vangelizzo gaudio fino,

Ch'è nato el Gesuino

figliuol de Dio, per voie

salvar mandato.

The Angel (to the Shepherds)

Shepherds, you who watch

your flocks as they graze here;

Lift up your eyes,

For I am the Angel

of the eternal domain.

I bring you a message,

The joyful news

That little Jesus has been born,

the son of God, sent for your

salvation.

Coro (Angeli)

E de ciò vedò en segno
 Ch'en vile stalla
 è nato el poverello,
 E non se fa desdegno
 Giacere en mezzo al buove e l'asenello.
 La mamma en vil pancello
 L'ha rinchinato sovra el mangiatoio.
 De fieno è'l covertoio,
 Ed è descieso così humiliato.

L'Angelo

Pastor, voie che vegghiate, *etc.*

Coro (Angeli)

E de ciò vedo en segno, *etc.*

Pastore

Signor, tu sei desceso
 De cielo en terra
 sico l'Agnol parla,
 E haine el cuore acceso
 A retrovarte in così
 vile stalla;
 Lasciane ritrovalla
 Che te vediam vestito
 en carne humana.

Pastores ante Praesepio

Ecco quilla stallecta,
 vedemce lo fantino povero stare.
 La Vergin benedecta
 non ha paceglie nè fascia
 per fasciare.
 Joseppe non la po' 'itare
 Ch'è desvenuto per la gran vecchiezza.
 A povertà s'avvezza,
 Quel ch'è Signor senza niun
 par trovato.

Chorus (Angels)

As a sign of this,
 In a humble stable
 the poor baby was born,
 And he does not mind
 Lying between the ox and the ass.
 His mother, very poorly clad,
 Has laid him in the manger.
 Of hay is all his coverlet,
 So humbly came he down.

The Angel

Shepherds, you who watch, *etc.*

Chorus (Angels)

As a sign of this, *etc.*

Shepherd

Lord, you have descended
 From heaven to earth,
 as the Angel says,
 And our hearts burn
 To find you in such a
 lowly cattle-shed;
 Guide us to the place,
 So that we may see you clothed
 in human flesh.

The Shepherds at the Manger

Lo, here is the little stable,
 and we see in it the poor baby.
 The blessed Virgin
 has neither food nor clothes in
 which to swaddle him,
 Joseph cannot help her,
 For he is old and feeble.
 He accustoms himself to poverty,
 He who, though Lord,
 seems to have nothing.

Pastore

Signor, tu sei desceso, *etc.*

Maria

O car dolce mio figlio,
Da me se'nato s'è poverello!
Joseppe el vecchiarello,
Quil ch'è tuo bailo,
 qui s'è adormentato.
Figliuol, gaudio perfecto,
ched i sentie a la tua nativitate!
Strengendomet' al pecto,
Non me curava de nulla povertade,
tanta suavitate
Tu si me daie de quil gaudio eterno,
O figliuol tenerello!

Coro

O fonte d'aolimento,
Co'tanta povertà te se'inchinato.

Maria

Figliuol, t'ho partorito!
En tanta povertà te veggio nato!

Coro

Toglie nostre manteglie...

Maria

Tu se' l'Edio enfino,
che per l'humana gente s'èncarnato.
Non ho dua sie fasciato:
Te vo io fasciare con quisto
 mio pancello.
O figliuolo poverello,
Co l'ha promesso il pate tuo biato.

Coro

...O Madre santa,
E non te fare schifa, O Madre santa,
vestir di povereglie

Shepherd

Lord, you have descended, *etc.*

Mary

O sweet and darling son of mine,
You were born of me so poor!
Joseph the old man,
Who is your guardian,
 has fallen asleep here.
My son, perfect joy
I felt at your birth!
As I hugged you,
I did not care about poverty,
for you gave me so much sweetness
with your eternal joy.
O tender little son!

Chorus

O fountain of all bounty,
To such poverty you have stooped.

Mary

My son, I gave birth to you!
In such poverty I see you born!

Chorus

Take our cloaks...

Mary

You are the infinite God,
who for humans have become flesh:
As I have no swaddling clothes
I will wrap you in
 my own dress,
O poor little son of mine,
The promise of your blessed father.

Chorus

O holy Mother,
Do not be repelled, O holy Mother,
by these poor garments,

Che stanno in
selva colla greggia tanta.
El figliuol ammanta,
che non alita el fieno,
sua carne pura.

Coro (Angeli)

Gloria, laude e onore a te,
Sire del cielo onnepotente.

Pastores

Segnor, puoie ch'hai degnato
di nascere oggi sì poveramente
Dà lume a tutta gente
Che null'omo sia de
tal dono engrato.
(ad Mariam)
Contenti n'andremo
se un poco noie lo podessemo toccare;
E però te ne pregamo
Quanto noie siam pastori
de poco affare.

Maria

Voglioie consolare
perchè torniate lieti a
vostra gregge.
Quel ch'è fatto legge
acciò che il servo sia ricompensato.

Coro

Laude, gloria e onore a te.
Gloria a te,
O Sire del ciel onnepotente
Ah, Gloria! Gloria! Gloria!
Gloria in excelsis Deo
e in terra pace a chi ha el
buon volere.
Al mondo tanto reo
tu se' donato
non per tuo dovere,

Worn in our work with
the flocks in the fields.
Wrap your son in them,
so that his pure flesh
will not smell of hay.

Chorus (Angels)

Glory praise and honor to you,
Omnipotent Lord of heaven.

Shepherds

Lord, since you have deigned
to be born today in such poverty,
Give light to all people,
And none will be ungrateful for
such a gift.

(to Mary)

Joyful will we leave
if we can touch him for a moment;
This favor we ask of you,
We who are only shepherds,
shepherds, men of humble calling.

Mary

I want to comfort you,
so you may return joyful to
your flocks.
For it is now determined
that the servant will be rewarded.

Chorus

Glory, praise and honor to you.
Glory to you,
O omnipotent Lord of heaven.
Ah, Glory! Glory! Glory!
Glory to God in heaven
and on earth peace to those of
good will,
To a guilty world
you have given yourself
not out of duty,

Ma sol per tuo piacere.
Noi te laudiam, Signore,
Glorificando la tua maestade...

L'Angelo

Gloria in excelsis Deo. Ah!

Coro

...glorificando la tua maestade.
Gloria in excelsis Deo
E in terra pace a chi ha el
buon volere.

Maria

Tenuta so a Dio patre
Rendere onore e gloria
in sempiterno,
Pensando ch'io son matre
del suo figliuolo, el quale è
Dio eterno.
E tanto è il gaudio superno
Basciando ed abbracciando sì
caro figlio,
Bello sovr'onne giglio
che a me el cuore è sì destemperato.
Io sento un gaudio nuovo,
E tutta renovata
io so en fervore!

Coro

Amen, amen, amen.

L'Angelo

Or ecco ch'è nato il Salvatore!

Coro

Amen, amen.

~ Text attributed to
Jacopone da Todi (13th century)

But because such was your pleasure.
We praise you, Lord,
And glorify your majesty...

The Angel

Glory to God in heaven. Ah!

Chorus

...and glorify your majesty.
Glory to God in heaven
And on earth peace to those of
good will.

Mary

To God the Father I am bound
To give honor and glory
for ever,
As I am the mother
of his son, who is the
eternal God.
And such is the sublime joy
Of kissing and hugging so
dear a son,
More beautiful than any lily,
that I cannot control my heart.
I feel a new joy,
And seemingly reborn
I thrill with fervor!

Chorus

Amen, amen, amen.

The Angel

Hail, now, the birth of our Savior!

Chorus

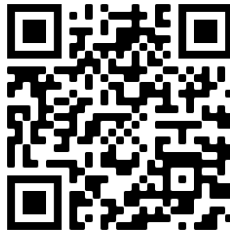
Amen, amen.

~ English translation by
Marcello Maestro,
edited by John W. Ehrlich

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PROGRAM NOTES

Some thoughts about my last “A Christmas Prelude” concert with The Spectrum Singers

The very first concert of The Spectrum Singers was performed in Weston, Massachusetts at St. Peter’s Episcopal Church, courtesy of their then organist/church musician Curtis Pierce. I had been rehearsing the former members of the James Johnson Chorale, and that ensemble, now newly named, had been searching for a venue for its premiere concert. The date was December 14, 1980.

Recognizing that choral concerts at December holiday time were very popular, The Spectrum Singers scheduled several more Christmas-themed concerts in the ensuing years, but soon learned that the days and evenings immediately preceding Christmas were veritable logjams of holiday-themed choral concerts, all of which drew upon the same finite number of Christmas choral music concert attendees.

Beginning in November 2002, the chorus established its ongoing holiday tradition—that of “A Christmas Prelude”—sung on the Saturday evening immediately prior to Thanksgiving week, thus launching the holiday season before the oncoming rush of holiday-themed concerts by the many other local musical organizations. And that tradition has been in place, with only one or two exceptions, since then.

Looking into that first concert’s program book, I note that tonight’s concert includes two pieces that were performed that long-ago December—Erhard Bodenschatz: *Joseph, lieber Joseph mein*, and Herbert Howells: *A Spotless Rose*. There were also works of Bach, Sweelinck, Schütz, Billings, and Victoria. What that may say about my programming I leave to you. But, I will admit to having some favorites, and those are what comprise this evening’s offerings.

But...how to organize a program of relatively short works of disparate style? What finally seemed to make sense was to follow a timeline of composition, from the Renaissance and pre-Baroque right up to the present day—“A Chronological Choral Christmas” as a friend has put it. I do admit to bending the rules of that timeline a bit in order to help form a reasonable dramatic arc of music from beginning to end.

We open with **Andreas Hammerschmidt**'s unalloyed shout of joy *Alleluja, freuet euch, ihr Christen alle*. Scored for a chorus of SSATB with an added small TTB ensemble, dubbed "Favoriti" by the composer, the music abounds with irrepressible good cheer and enthusiasm as it bids all to rejoice in the arrival of Christ, the world's "Sun of Mercy" (*Gendadensonne*).

Erhard Bodenschatz first published *Joseph, lieber Joseph mein* in his 1608 publication *Harmoniae Angelicae Cantionum Ecclesiasticarum*. Its gentle, rocking triplum-meter opening, contrasted with the center section's more emphatic duplum wherein Mary attempts to calm her baby's discomfort, charm us as much now as was likely the case when this music was first heard.

The great Spanish Renaissance master **Tomás Luis de Victoria** remains pillar of that country's sacred music, and his superb *Ave Maria* shows why. Sopranos begin by intoning a fragment of the Gregorian *Ave Maria* chant, and thereafter unfolds an extraordinarily beautiful framing of the familiar text. Note the musical expansion of "...in mulieribus..." describing Mary's blessedness among all womanhood, and, most tellingly, the glowingly reverential closing *Amen*, the crowning glory of this brief but moving masterwork.

Following our short excursion to Iberia, we return to Germany for two superb compositions, **G.F. Handel**'s *And the Glory of the Lord* (from *Messiah*), and **J.S. Bach**'s jubilant finale to his motet *Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied*, and thence to neighboring Austria for **Anton Bruckner**'s rich and reverent 7-part *a cappella* setting of the *Ave Maria* text.

Though composer, admired church musician, and virtuoso organist **Healy Willan** and Anton Bruckner briefly overlap in their years of life, only this admittedly brief contemporaneousness justifies our leap from the Continent to Canada for Willan's superb Christmas motet *Hodie, Christus natus est*. While there are many choral settings of this familiar text, few say so much, so skillfully, so joyfully, and in so short a span.

Willan was "Anglo-Canadian," having been born in London in 1880, and having emigrated to Canada in 1913. He thus spent the great majority of his life in Toronto where, as Precentor of the Anglo-Catholic Church of St. Mary Magdalene, he wrote and performed many of his 800-some compositions.

We begin the second part of our concert having arrived in Great Britain. There we find **Ralph Vaughan Williams** and **Gustav Holst**—close and mutually admiring friends. Vaughan William’s deceptively simple and abundantly charming setting of the *Sussex Carol* “On Christmas Night” forms a concise crescendo and diminuendo celebration of the season, and Gustav Holst glances back to earlier times with his medieval/Renaissance-sounding setting of *Lullay my Liking*, its text drawn from “A Mediaeval Anthology” edited by Mary Segar. The music’s five-verse structure is built upon a recurring choral *ritornello* that spellbindingly weaves the disparate verses together.

Both Holst and Vaughan Williams knew and admired **Herbert Howells**, a composer of a large and superb body of choral music for the Anglican Church. His long tenure at the Royal College of Music from 1920 until 1979 is even now fondly remembered. His gentle and embracing carol-anthem *A Spotless Rose* stems from 1919, and it too sets an ancient text from the fourteenth century. The baritone solo at the music’s heart is especially poignant and reverent.

The rose as a symbol of the Virgin Mary has its origin in medieval and Renaissance times, and has long been an inspiration for painters and musicians. **Benjamin Britten** was moved to invoke Mary in several of his earlier choral compositions, and tonight’s offering is from his well-beloved *A Ceremony of Carols*, music written in 1942 as he and companion Peter Pears were ship-board on a somewhat perilous war-time journey, returning to Britain from a visit to the United States. The *Ceremony* was originally scored for 3-part treble (boys) voices with harp accompaniment. In 1943 the work was recast for four-part chorus *divisi* by the British composer and conductor Julius Harrison. It is this richer and less ascetic-sounding version that we sing for you tonight, with piano acting as our “*in hoc citherae*.” The anonymous verse is drawn from *The English Galaxy of Shorter Poems*, edited by Gerald Bullett. The somewhat surprising language you hear is Middle English.

John Joubert, born in South Africa, was educated there in the tradition of the British Anglican Church. He came to the Royal Academy of Music in London in 1946, and thereafter, beginning in 1951, his fame was established by the appearance of his carol *Torches*, which since then has been considered a classic of its type. Concerning *Torches*,

Joubert has recalled, “I’ve even had carol-singers come to the door and singing it, without knowing the composer lives inside.”

Morten Lauridsen’s web site states the following:

Morten Johannes Lauridsen (born February 27, 1943) is an American composer. A National Medal of Arts recipient (2007), he was composer-in-residence of the Los Angeles Master Chorale (1994–2001) and has been a professor of composition at the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music for more than 40 years.

A native of the Pacific Northwest, Lauridsen worked as a Forest Service firefighter and lookout... and attended Whitman College before traveling south to study composition at the University of Southern California with Ingolf Dahl, Halsey Stevens, Robert Linn, and Harold Owen. He began teaching at USC in 1967 and has been on their faculty ever since.

In 2006, Lauridsen was named an ‘American Choral Master’ by the National Endowment for the Arts. In 2007 he received the National Medal of Arts from the President in a White House ceremony, “for his composition of radiant choral works combining musical beauty, power and spiritual depth that have thrilled audiences worldwide.”

So popular have Lauridsen’s compositions become that his publisher states that over one million of his scores have been sold. His initial worldwide fame came as a result of his 1994 composition *O Magnum Mysterium*. Of this work, Byron Adams has written:

The composer has disclosed that this motet is an “...affirmation of God’s grace to the meek...a quiet song of profound inner joy.” With a text from Christmas Matins...Lauridsen’s *O Magnum Mysterium* expresses mystical awe of the mystery of the Incarnation as well as the very human tenderness of the Virgin Mary for her Newborn child.

Highly regarded Minnesota composer **Stephen Paulus** died unexpectedly in 2014. This was a serious loss of a major talent far too early. *The Angels and the Shepherds* was commissioned by the

Dale Warland Singers and first published in 1981. Based on a traditional Bohemian melody with lyrics adapted from poetry by Helen A. Dickenson, it is colorfully scored for chorus, seven handbells, and flute. Typical of this composer, it is concise, energetic, elegant, and memorable.

The music of Welshman **William Mathias** ranges far and wide, though he is best known here for his singularly adept writing for chorus. *Sir Christèmas*, published in 1970, might well be described as follows. Revelers march along the street in what might be a slightly inebriated state, and boisterously welcome fellow reveler “Sir Christèmas” to their ranks. Remembering why they are reveling, they then sing “...a maid hath borne a child full young...” But the secular side of their rejoicing ultimately wins out and they sing, in French: “drink you well, my companions.” And, lustily singing, the celebrants continue their boozy stroll until their shouted-out final good wish to their listeners: “NOWELL!”

Ottorino Respighi’s reputation as a first-class composer has often been held suspect by certain self-styled high-minded observers due, in no small part, to the composer’s two most popular and often-heard works, *The Fountains of Rome* (1914–1916) and *The Pines of Rome* (1923–1924). These admittedly “Technicolor” tone poems are extremely well crafted, gorgeously orchestrated, and deftly planned for full dramatic and atmospheric impact. These attributes are often admired and applauded in other composers, yet in the case of Respighi, they are occasionally cited pejoratively, as if his music were somehow not worthy of serious consideration. Why might this be?

Blame it, to a certain degree, on Hollywood. Much of the film music from the cinema’s “golden age” of the 30s and 40s is rife with over-the-top romantic excess—skillfully crafted, it’s true—to mirror and enhance equally melodramatic performances played out in front of the camera. There is nothing innately “wrong” with this music. Hollywood has indeed given us some first-class musical talent. But what then had evolved into over-familiar and clichéd film music had, perhaps retroactively and unfairly, affected the “reception” of Respighi, who, truthfully, first created many of these so-called “cinematic” musical effects BEFORE many of these traits were adopted by Hollywood. What irony, then, if this thesis is accurate. Respighi’s

music is heard as clichéd because certain ears hear it as “too Hollywood.” Yet it was Respighi’s music which served as a model for Hollywood—not the other way around! Whether or not the foregoing is plausible, early on Respighi attracted no less a champion of his scores than Arturo Toscanini, who regularly programmed the composer’s music, recorded it brilliantly, and performed it with a passionate zeal equal to the attention to detail he lavished on Cherubini, Boito, Verdi, and Puccini.

So here, perhaps, is the true root of Respighi’s inspiration: Italian opera, with all its attendant color, characterizations, atmosphere, and abundant drama. *Lauda per la Natività del Signore* exhibits all of these “operatic” traits, and yet Respighi achieves this with modest musical forces. The instrumentation is as unusual as it is ingenious: flutes, English horn, oboe and bassoons contribute plangent pastoral color, piano four-hands lends sonorous weight for the finale, and triangle during that finale adds joyful brilliance. Soprano, tenor and alto solo voices sing *The Angel*, *A Shepherd*, and *The Virgin Mary*, respectively, the three roles perfectly matched to their vocal *fachs*. The chorus, acting as “narrator” and shepherds, completes the cast. Reflecting Respighi’s fascination and respect for early musical forms, the music comfortably oscillates between 20th-century and Renaissance style with, as *The New Grove* notes, allusions to 16th-century madrigals and Monteverdian *arioso*. The result is as charming, touching, and quietly joyful a depiction of the Nativity as one might imagine, enriched with a particularly personal degree of intimacy that remains in memory long after the final measures of this delicate music spin into silence.

With this concert, The Spectrum Singers and I wish you the very happiest of holiday seasons!

~ Program Notes © 2023 by John W. Ehrlich

THE SPECTRUM SINGERS

The Spectrum Singers is an acclaimed Boston-area chorus performing repertoire from the Renaissance to the present day. John W. Ehrlich formed the ensemble in 1980 and continues to lead the chorus in concerts at First Church Congregational, Cambridge. The chorus is frequently joined by professional vocal soloists and orchestral musicians, and has been invited to collaborate with Emmanuel Music, the Cantata Singers, Boston Landmarks Orchestra, Indian Hill Symphony, and several other musical organizations. The chorus has also been invited to perform on many concert series throughout New England.

In recent seasons, The Spectrum Singers has continued its commitment to contemporary music, offering the New England premiere of a new work by Mohammed Fairouz and the world premiere of *Novum Decus Oritur*, by our composition contest winner, Joshua Hummel. It has offered rich programs ranging from more familiar, large-scale masterpieces to lesser known but deserving works of all eras. The chorus has also performed a broad exploration of requiems, from the familiar (Mozart, Fauré, Duruflé) to the lesser known (Alfred Desenclos and John Rutter).

The Boston Globe has praised John W. Ehrlich and The Spectrum Singers for “unfailing dramatic performances that grappled with real issues in the music and real issues the music is about.” Now in its 44th season, the chorus honors Maestro Ehrlich in his final season as Music Director, while continuing its mission of performing both familiar and lesser-known works in programs of compelling depth and professional execution for an audience of appreciative listeners.



JOHN W. EHRLICH



John W. Ehrlich, founder and Music Director of The Spectrum Singers, has been active as a singer and conductor in the Boston and Cambridge areas for more than forty-five years. He is widely admired for his intriguing and adventuresome programming. “From the beginning, it’s been my goal to seek out and perform worthy, important music that is rarely heard,” he says. “As our name suggests, we draw on the whole ‘spectrum’ of masterworks from the Renaissance to the present day.”

Mr. Ehrlich studied music and conducting while attending the Hartt School of Music, Trinity College, and both Harvard and Boston Universities. His teachers were Robert Shaw, Gregg Smith, G. Wallace Woodworth, and Vytautas Marijousius. Also a singer, Mr. Ehrlich has sung with the Hartford Chamber Choir, Tanglewood Festival Chorus, Cambridge Society for Early Music, John Oliver Chorale, Boston Baroque, and the Emmanuel Church Choir. For eight seasons he was music director of The Master Singers of Worcester.

This is Mr. Ehrlich’s 44th and final season as Music Director of The Spectrum Singers.

JAMES R. BARKOVIC



James R. Barkovic has been active in the Boston area as a conductor, pianist, organist, violist and accompanist for more than thirty years. In addition to serving as the Assistant Conductor and Accompanist for The Spectrum Singers, he is the Music Director of the Westford Chorus. He serves as Music Director at Holy Family Parish and West Concord Union Church, both of Concord, Mass. Mr. Barkovic is the Chapel Organist and Instructor of Organ at Middlesex School, also of Concord. He

is also the Choir Director at Congregation B'nai Shalom of Westborough, Mass.

Mr. Barkovic received his Master of Music in Piano Performance from the New England Conservatory of Music, where he studied with Stephen Drury, performed in master classes for Leonard Shure and Veronica Jochum, and studied organ improvisation with William Porter. A native of Minnesota, he received his undergraduate diploma from St. Olaf College, with concentrations in music theory and history.

This is Mr. Barkovic's 32nd season as Assistant Conductor and Accompanist of The Spectrum Singers.

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GUEST ARTISTS



Consistently recognized for her rich sound and musical sensitivity, *soprano* **Sarah Yanovitch Vitale** is in demand as a concert soloist and ensemble musician. She is a frequent soloist with Handel and Haydn Society, singing in the role of Belinda in Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas*, and in Bach’s *B Minor* and *G Major* masses. She made her solo debut at Tanglewood in the summer of 2017 with H+H in Purcell’s *Fairy Queen*.

Ms. Yanovitch has also appeared as soloist with the Henry Purcell Society, Boston University’s Marsh Chapel, Arcadia Players, the Eastern Connecticut Symphony, and the Yale Glee Club. She has also sung with Bach Collegium San Diego, The Thirteen, Yale Choral Artists, and Seraphic Fire.

Ms. Yanovitch is a graduate of the Yale School of Music and holds a master’s degree in Early Music Voice through the Yale Institute of Sacred Music.



Known for her vivid and touching vocal performances, Boston native *mezzo-soprano* **Katherine Maysek** is an artist equally at home on the stage and in the concert hall. She was a “standout” (*The Wall Street Journal*) as Cherubino in John Corigliano’s *The Ghosts of Versailles* at The Glimmerglass Festival. She reprised the role in her European debut at the Château de Versailles Spectacles. She made her Carnegie Hall debut with the American Symphony Orchestra in a rare production of Max von Shillings’ *Mona Lisa*.

Last season she joined Emmanuel Music, making her solo cantata debut in March 2023. She has also appeared with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Boston Lyric Opera, Odyssey Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, Opera Saratoga and the Berkshire Opera Festival.

Ms. Maysek received her bachelor’s degree from McGill University and her master’s degree from Bard College Conservatory’s Graduate Vocal Arts Program.



Tenor **Charles Blandy** has been praised as “a versatile tenor with agility, endless breath, and vigorous high notes” (*Goldberg Early Music Magazine*), and “unfailingly, tirelessly lyrical” by the *Boston Globe*. In recent performances, he sang the Evangelist in Bach’s *St. John* and *St. Matthew Passions* with Emmanuel Music.

He regularly appears in Emmanuel Music’s ongoing Bach Cantata series, and has also appeared with Music of the Baroque (Chicago), the Apollo Chorus of Chicago, Orchestra Iowa, the American Classical Orchestra, Rhode Island Philharmonic, Bach Choir of Bethlehem, Handel and Haydn Society, Boston Baroque, and Exsultemus.

Mr. Blandy is a member of Beyond Artists, a coalition that supports good causes through their work; he supports 350.org, the Union of Concerned Scientists, and Boston Cyclists Union. He studied at Oberlin College, Indiana University, and Tanglewood Music Center. He is the product of a strong public school arts program in Troy NY.

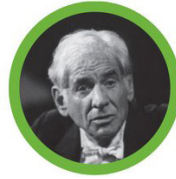


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Walk with Spectrum 2023

We had a wonderful time last spring learning about some of Cambridge's musical luminaries. In our third annual Walk with Spectrum we visited several sites around Harvard Square, each linked to a well-known composer: Nadia Boulanger, John Knowles Paine, Leonard Bernstein, and Randall Thompson. Jameson Marvin, emeritus choral conductor at Harvard, spoke about choral music at the university. We finished our morning with Jim and others leading us in singing a few choral works by each of the featured composers.

Many thanks to the following generous sponsors, along with all the walk participants, who helped to make it a fun **and** educational event and a successful fundraiser!

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Stay tuned for information on next spring's Walk with Spectrum 2024!

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For years our average spending has been slightly less than our income; we aim to continue carefully to base our expenditures on our income. Donations have averaged 53% of income. Ticket sales and dues from members are most of the rest.

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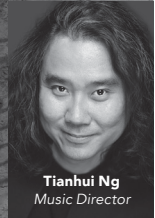
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December 3, 3:00 pm
in Cambridge



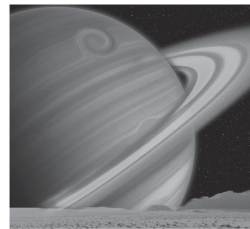
INSPIRED TO JOY

SATURDAY

March 2, 8:00 pm
in West Roxbury

SUNDAY

March 3, 3:00 pm
in Cambridge



STARS AND PLANETS

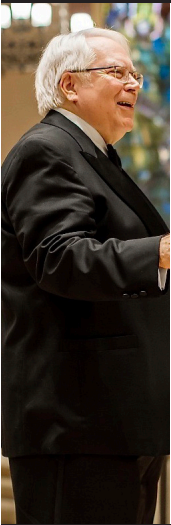
FRIDAY

April 26, 8:00 pm
in Chestnut Hill

In collaboration with the Boston Chapter
of the American Guild of Organists

For details and in person and virtual tickets, visit www.seraphimsingers.org

Music Director John W. Ehrlich's Farewell Season
Celebrating his 44 years at the helm of The Spectrum Singers



NOVEMBER 18, 2023 | 7:30PM

A Christmas Prelude

Respighi's *Laud to the Nativity*, with soloists Sarah Yanovitch Vitale, Katherine Maysek and Marcio de Oliveira, plus other favorite seasonal choral works



MARCH 16, 2024 | 7:30PM

A Great SPECTRUM of Repertoire!

A concert reprising several of John Ehrlich's favorites from the chorus's 44-year history, including Brahms's *Liebeslieder Waltzes*, Schubert, Fauré, and other works from the Renaissance to the present day

MAY 18, 2024 | 8PM

Time, Space, Peace, Music, God

Vaughan Williams: *Toward the Unknown Region* and *Serenade to Music*, Schoenberg: *Friede auf Erden* and Ives: *Psalm 90*

**Programs subject to change*

All concerts Saturday evenings
First Church Congregational, 11 Garden St., Cambridge
Tickets and more information: www.spectrumsingers.org



John W. Ehrlich, *Music Director*

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For further information or to order tickets, visit us online
at www.spectrumsingers.org or call (617) 492-8902.

The Spectrum Singers
P.O. Box 382325
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02238-2325

