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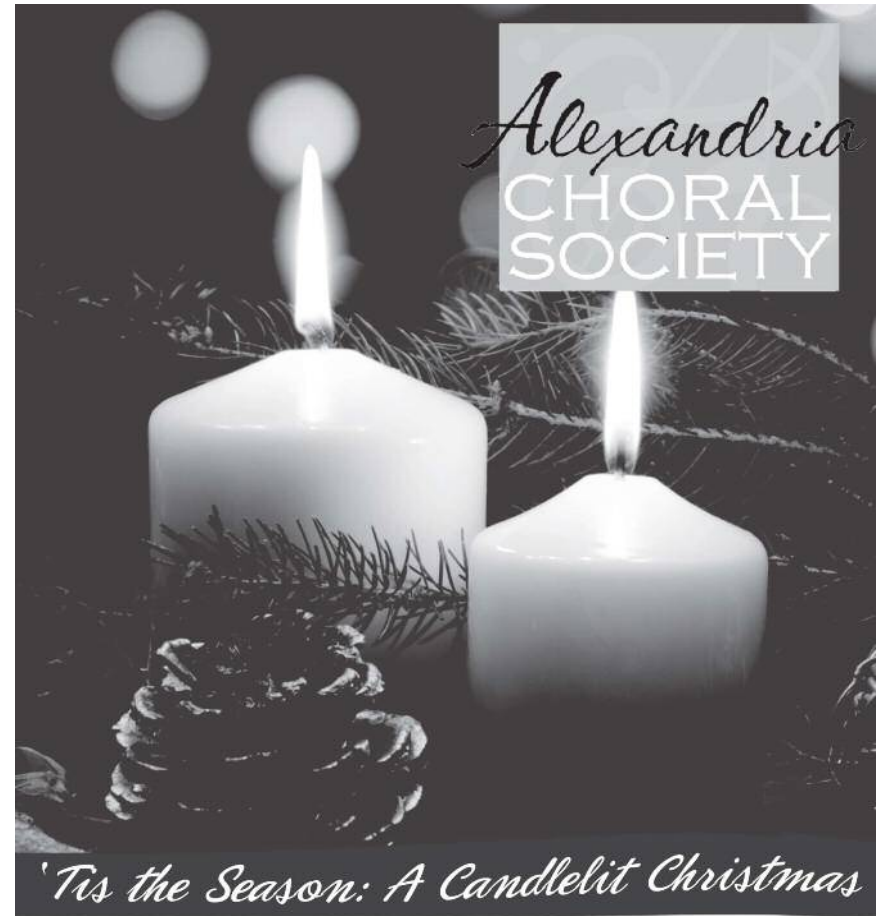
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Alexandria
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'Tis the Season: A Candlelit Christmas

December 12, 2015, 7:30 PM

featuring ACS's Songs of the Season Sing-Off ensembles

Trinity United Methodist Church

2911 Cameron Mills Road, Alexandria, VA

***'Tis the Season:
A Candlelit Christmas***

**Alexandria Choral Society
Pro Coro Alexandria**

Brian Gendron, *conductor*
Robin Beckman, *keyboard*

Saturday, December 12, 2015, 7:30 p.m.

Alexandria Choral Society

O Come, All Ye Faithful J. F. Wade (c. 1711-1786)
The audience is invited to join in singing verses 2,3,and 4.

2. God of God, Light of Light,
Lo! He comes forth from the Virgin's womb.
Our very God, begotten not created,
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

3. Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation.
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest;
O come, let us adore him, ...

4. Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning.
Jesus, to thee be all glory giv'n.
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:
O come, let us adore him, ...

Cradle Song Flemish traditional carol, arr. John Rutter (b. 1945)

O Magnum Mysterium Morten Lauridsen (b. 1943)

A Maiden Most Gentle French traditional melody, arr. Andrew Carter (b. 1939)

I Saw Three Ships English traditional carol, arr. David Willcocks (1919-2015)

Pro Coro Alexandria

Quaeramus cum Pastoribus Jean Mouton (1459-1522)

Here is the Little Door Herbert Howells (1892-1983)

Alexandria Choral Society

Wexford Carol Irish traditional carol, arr. John Rutter
featured singers:

Kevin Sapp, Brent Schultheis, Scott Snyder
Jennifer Anvari, Cienna Breen, Monique Doussard

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Proud to serve as Artistic Director of the
Alexandria Choral Society

Let me direct *you* to the home of your dreams!



Silent Night Franz Gruber (1787-1863)

The audience is invited to join in singing all verses.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. Silent night, holy night,
 All is calm, all is bright;
 Round yon Virgin Mother and Child,
 Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
 Sleep in heavenly peace,
 Sleep in heavenly peace.</p> | <p>2. Silent night, holy night,
 Shepherds quake at the sight;
 Glories stream from heaven afar,
 Heav'nly hosts sing alleluia;
 Christ, the Savior, is born!
 Christ, the Savior, is born!</p> |
| <p>3. Silent night, holy night,
 Son of God, love's pure light
 Radiant beams from thy holy face,
 With the dawn of redeeming grace,
 Jesus, Lord, at thy birth,
 Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.</p> | |

Intermission

ACS 2015 Songs of the Season Sing-Off! Grant Award Winners

- | | | |
|------------------------------|---|--------------------|
| Peaceful Night | Saratoga Elementary School's Saratoga Chorus | Theresa Jennings |
| Angels We Have Heard on High | Westminster School's Gryphon Chorale | French Traditional |

Alexandria Choral Society

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Of the Father's Heart Begotten | Melody from <i>Piae Cantiones</i> (1582)
arr. David Willcocks |
| Alleluia, a New Work is Come on Hand | Peter Wishart (1921-1984) |
| The Infant King | Basque Noel, arr. David Willcocks |
| Still, Still, Still | German carol, arr. Philip Ledger (1937-2012) |
| Wassail Song | English traditional carol, arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams
(1872-1958) |
| Hark! The Herald Angels Sing | Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) |
- The audience is invited to join in singing all verses.*
 Words are on the next page.

Please silence all cell phones, pagers, and other audio devices.

1. Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to the new-born King:
Peace on earth, and mercy mild
God and sinners reconciled!”
Joyful, all you nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With th’angelic host proclaim,
Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to the new-born king!”

2. Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ the everlasting Lord:
Late in time be-hold him come,
Offspring of the Virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see:
Hail th’ incarnate Deity,
Pleased as man with us to dwell,
Jesus, our Emanuel.
Hark! The herald angels sing
“Glory to the new-born king!”

3. Hail the heav’n born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that we no more may die,
Born to raise us from the earth,
Born to give us second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to the new-born King!”

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Cradle Song

John Rutter (b. 1945)

1. In Bethlehem, all in a stable,
Lies a newborn infant mild.
By his side a virgin mother
Watches o’er the holy child.
Jesus, lying in the manger,
Comes to us on earth a stranger:
*Lullaby! O little one, sleep;
Angels round you watch will keep.*

2. Saint Joseph stands beside the cradle
Fill’d with wonder, awe, and love.
See, the infant King lies sleeping,
Sent from God in heav’n above.
Ox and ass before him kneeling,
Mary’s love his sorrows healing:
*Lullaby, O little one sleep;
Angels round you watch will keep.*

3. ‘Hosanna in the highest heaven;
Peace, good-will to men on earth.’
Seraphim on high in chorus
Greet the Saviour’s joyful birth.
Mary’s voice, in descant blending,
Joins the heav’nly song, unending:
*Lullaby, O little one sleep;
Angels round you watch will keep.*

O Magnum Mysterium

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 animals should see the new-
born Lord, lying in their manger!
Blessed is the Virgin whose womb
was worthy to bear the
Lord Jesus Christ. Alleluia!*

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Thomas Beveridge, Artistic Director

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Sunday, October 25, 2015, at 4:00 p.m.

Rossini: *Petite Messe Solennelle*

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Leah Schenck-Crowne, Soprano
Melissa Kornacki, Mezzo-soprano
Joshua Baumgardner, Tenor
Bob McDonald, Bass
Thomas Pandolfi, Piano
Jeffrey Chappell, Piano
Todd Fickley, Organ

Sunday, December 6, 2015, at 4:00 p.m.

Handel: *Messiah*

with orchestra

and

Esther Heideman, Soprano
Laura Zuiderveen, Alto
Issachah Savage, Tenor
Kevin Thompson, Bass

Sunday, May 1, 2016, at 4:00 p.m.

Orff: *Carmina Burana*

Brahms: *Liebeslieder (selections)*

Beveridge:

**General William Booth Enters
Into Heaven**

with

Danielle Talamantes, Soprano
Kathy Hankins, Soprano
Luke Frels, Tenor—Neil Ewachiw, Baritone
Thomas Pandolfi, Piano
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Gabriel Fauré, Requiem

October 17, 2015, 7:30 PM
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March 12, 2016, 7:30 PM
Convergence
1801 N. Quaker Lane, Alexandria, VA

'Tis the Season:

A Candlelit Christmas

December 12, 2015, 7:30 PM
featuring ACS's Songs of the Season Sing-Off
Trinity United Methodist Church
2911 Cameron Mills Road, Alexandria, VA

Do You Hear the People Sing?

Opera and Musical Theater Choruses

May 14, 2016, 7:30 PM
Convergence
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A Maiden Most Gentle

Andrew Carter (b. 1939)

1. A maiden most gentle and tender we sing:
of Mary the mother of Jesus our King.

Ave, ave, ave Maria, Ave, ave, ave Maria.

2. How bless'd is the birth of her heavenly child,
Who came to redeem us in Mary so mild.

Ave, ave, ave Maria, Ave, ave, ave Maria.

3. The Archangel Gabriel foretold by his call
The Lord of creation, and Saviour of all.

Ave, ave, ave Maria, Ave, ave, ave Maria.

4. Three kings came to worship with gifts rich and rare,
And marvelled in awe at the babe in her care.

Ave, ave, ave Maria, Ave, ave, ave Maria.

5. Rejoice and be glad at this Christmas we pray;
Sing praise to the Saviour, sing endless 'Ave'.

Ave, ave, ave Maria, Ave, ave, ave Maria.

I Saw Three Ships

Traditional

1. I saw three ships come sailing in
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day,
I saw three ships come sailing in
On Christmas Day in the morning.

2. And what was in those ships all three? 3. Our Saviour Christ and his lady,

4. Pray whither sailed those ships all three? 5. O, they sailed into Bethlehem

6. And all the bells on earth shall ring 7. And all the angels in heav'n shall sing . . .

8. Then let us all rejoice a-main!
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day,
Then let us all rejoice a-main!
On Christmas Day in the morning.

Quaeramus cum pastoribus

Anonymous

Prima pars:
Quaeramus cum pastoribus
Verbum incarnatum;
cantemus cum hominibus
regem saeculorum. Noe.
Quod tu vides in stabulo?
Jesum natum de Virgine.
Quid audis in praesepio?
Angelos cum carmine
et pastores dicentes: Noe.

Secunda pars:
Ubi pascas, ubi cubes?
Dic, si ploras, aut si redes:
Te rogamus, Rex Christe. Noe.

First part:
Let us seek with the shepherds
the Word incarnate;
let us sing with all mankind
for the King of the ages. Noël.
What do you see in the stable?
Jesus, born of the Virgin.
What do you hear in the manger?
Angels with a song
and shepherds saying: Noël.
Second part:
Where do you eat, where do you lie?
Say, whether you weep or laugh:
we ask you, Christ the King. Noël.

Cibus et lac virgineum,
lectus durum praeseptum,
carmina sunt lacrimae. Noe.

*My food is the milk of the Virgin,
my bed a hard manger,
my songs are tears. Noël.*

Here is the Little Door

Frances Chesterton (1875-1938)

Here is the little door, lift up the latch, oh lift!
We need not wander more but enter with our gift;
Our gift of finest gold,
Gold that was never bought nor sold;
Myrrh to be strewn about his bed;
Incense in clouds about his head;
All for the Child who stirs not in his sleep.
But holy slumber holds with ass and sheep.

Bend low about his bed, for each he has a gift;
See how his eyes awake, lift up your hands, O lift!
For gold, he gives a keen-edged sword
(Defend with it Thy little Lord!),
For incense, smoke of battle red.
Myrrh for the honoured happy dead;
Gifts for his children terrible and sweet,
Touched by such tiny hands and
Oh such tiny feet.

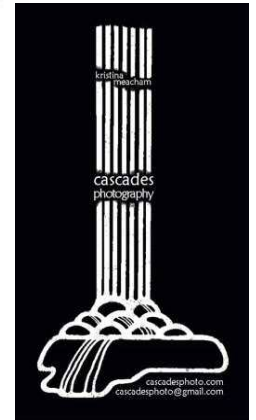
Wexford Carol

Irish traditional carol

1. Good people all, this Christmas time,
Consider well and bear in mind
What our good God for us has done
In sending his beloved son.
With Mary holy we should pray,
To God with love this Christmas Day;
In Bethlehem upon that morn,
There was a blessed Messiah born.

2. The night before that happy tide,
The noble Virgin and her guide
Were long time seeking up and down
To find a lodging in the town.
But mark how all things came to pass:
From every door repell'd, alas!
As long foretold, their refuge all
Was but an humble oxen stall.

3. Near Bethlehem did shepherds keep
Their flocks of lambs and feeding sheep
To whom God's angels did appear
Which put the shepherds in great fear.
'Prepare and go', the angels said
'To Bethlehem, be not afraid
For there you'll find, this happy morn
A princely babe, sweet Jesus, born.'



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Thank you for your contributions.

Alexandria Choral Society
would like to extend a special thanks
to the artists, businesses and individuals
who helped us kick off the holiday season
by donating items for our online
Black Friday Silent Auction.

We wish you all a happy holiday season!

4. With thankful heart and joyful mind
The shepherds went the babe to find
And as God's angel had foretold
They did our Saviour Christ behold
Within a manger he was laid
And by his side the virgin maid
Attending on the Lord of life
Who came on earth to end all strife.

Good people all, this Christmas time
Consider well and bear in mind
What our good God for us has done
In sending his beloved son.

Of the Father's Heart Begotten

1. Of the Father's heart begotten,
Ere the world from chaos rose,
He is Alpha: from that Fountain
All that is and hath been flows;
He is Omega, of all things
Yet to come the mystic Close,
Evermore and evermore.

3. He assumed this mortal body
Frail and feeble, doomed to die,
That the race from dust created
Might not perish utterly,
Which the dreadful Law had sentenced
In the depths of hell to lie,
Evermore and evermore.

5. Sing, ye heights of heav'n, his praises;
Angels and archangels, sing!
Wheresoe'er ye be, ye faithful,
Let your joyous anthems ring,
Ev'ry tongue his name confessing,
Countless voices answering,
Evermore and evermore.

Prudentius (c. 348-413) tr. R. F. Davis

2. By his word was all created;
He commanded and 'twas done;
Earth and sky and boundless ocean,
Universe of three in one,
All that sees the moon's soft radiance,
All that breathes beneath the sun.
Evermore and evermore.

4. O how blest that wondrous birthday,
When the Maid the curse retrieved,
Brought to birth mankind's salvation,
By the Holy Ghost conceived;
And the Babe, the world's Redeemer,
In her loving arms received,
Evermore and evermore.

Alleluya, a New Work Is Come on Hand

15th century

Alleluya, alleluya, alleluya, alleluya, alleluya, alleluya.

1. A new work is come on hand
Through might and grace of God's son
To save the lost of ev'ry land
Alleluya, alleluya.
For now is free that erst was bound;
We may well sing
Alleluya, alleluya, alleluya, alleluya, alleluya.

2. Now is fulfilled the prophecy
Of David and of Jeremy
And also of Isaiah;
Alleluya, alleluya.

Sing we therefore both loud and high,
 both loud and high
 Alleluya, alleluya, alleluya, alleluya.
 3. Alleluya, this sweetè song
 Out of a green branch it sprung
 God send us the life that lasteth long!
 Alleluya, alleluya.
 Now joy and bliss be him among
 That thus can sing
 Alleluya, alleluya, alleluya, alleluya.

The Infant King

Sabine Baring-Gould (1834-1924)

1. *Sing lullaby!*
 Lullaby baby, now reclining, *Sing lullaby!*
 Hush, do not wake the Infant King.
 Angels are watching, stars are shining
 Over the place where he is lying; *Sing lullaby!*
 2. *Sing lullaby!* Lullaby baby, now a-sleeping, *Sing lullaby!*
 Hush, do not wake the Infant King.
 Soon will come sorrow with the morning,
 Soon will come bitter grief and weeping: *Sing lullaby!*
 3. *Sing lullaby!*
 Lullaby baby, now a-doing, *Sing lullaby!*
 Hush, do not wake the Infant King.
 Soon comes the cross, the nails, ther piercing,
 Then in the grave at last reposing: *Sing lullaby!*
 4. *Sing lullaby!*
 Lullaby! Is the babe a-waking? *Sing lullaby!*
 Hush, do not stir the Infant King.
 Dreaming of Easter, gladsome morning,
 Conquering Death, its bondage breaking: *Sing lullaby!*

Still, Still, Still

German carol, tr. Meg Peacocke

1. Still, still, still,
 Let all the world be still,
 For Mary lays her son to rest,
 Sings to him softly at her breast,
 Still, still, still,
 Let all the world be still.
 2. Sleep, sleep, sleep,
 My dearest baby, sleep,
 The angels all rejoice and sing,
 Heav'n for your delight shall ring,
 Sleep, sleep, sleep,
 My dearest baby, sleep.
 3. Joy, joy, joy,
 My heart is filled with joy!
 The God of love has left his throne,
 Made this humble world his own,
 Joy, joy, joy,
 My heart is filled with joy!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

The Alexandria Choral Society appreciates the support that makes this concert season possible. As always, the financial resources needed for concert productions go far beyond the amount raised by the prices of tickets. We encourage you to consider making a contribution to the Alexandria Choral Society. Your gift will help to ensure that the splendid works of traditional and contemporary composers continue to come to life in our community. Your contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Contributors will be listed in our program (unless you specify otherwise). Write to P.O. Box 406, Alexandria, VA 22313, call 703-951-7849, or visit www.alexandriachoralsociety.org.

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Songs of the Season Sing-Off!

ACS welcomes the ensembles chosen for our 2015 Songs of the Season Sing-Off!, ACS's annual choral grant program held among Alexandria and surrounding area youth singing groups. Our main goal for the Sing-Off is to share our love of choral singing with the youth of Alexandria and surrounding communities and to raise awareness about choral singing opportunities in our community. ACS singers hail from all walks of life and all kinds of professional backgrounds outside of music. There IS singing after graduation!

In addition to singing at ACS's holiday concert, each chosen ensemble's vocal music program is awarded a \$500 grant! If you know a talented group of young singers looking for a performance opportunity, this could be for them! For more information, and to see previous winners, please visit our website at <http://www.alexandriachoralsociety.org/singoff>.

Saratoga Elementary School Saratoga Chorus

Rod Tompkins and Erin Barnett, *Directors*
Joshua Trainer, *Violin*

Ishwa Baig	Jackson Gleason	Nina Michael
Anaia Brown	Taylor Gomes	Diana Perez
Victoria Dang	Aanya Gupta	Miguel Portillo
Urael Debas	Yerlys Hernandez Ortega	Ana Ribeiro
Negest Fisseha	Fiona Kuper	Maryanne Rucker-Agyei
Gianna Ftouni	Fatima Mahmood	Rebejah Skalski
Nathan Germain	Roni Mengstab	Tatiana Tsanganelias
Bailey Gleason	Tyler Meyer	

Westminster School's Gryphon Chorale

Chelsea Majors, *Director*

Maryam Abbasi	Jonathan Breen	Nicole Hisey
Sara Abbasi	Ella Rose Friedman	Rebecca Popp
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Alexandria Choral Society wishes to express its appreciation to the following persons and organizations:

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
Greenstreet Gardens Alexandria
Mimi Stevens

Wassail Song

English traditional

Wassail, wassail all over the town,
Our bread it is white and our ale it is brown;
Our bowl it is made of the green maple tree;
In the Wassail bowl we'll drink unto thee.

Here's a health to the ox and to his right eye,
Pray God send our master a good Christmas pie,
A good Christmas pie as e'er I did see.
In the Wassail bowl we'll drink unto thee.

Here's a health to the ox and to his right horn,
Pray God send our master a good crop of corn,
A good crop of corn as e'er I did see.
In the Wassail bowl we'll drink unto thee.

Here's a health to the ox and to his long tail,
Pray God send our master a good cask of ale,
A good cask of ale as e'er I did see.
In the Wassail bowl we'll drink unto thee.

Come butler, come fill us a bowl of the best;
Then I pray that your soul in heav'n may rest;
But if you do bring us a bowl of the small,
May the Devil take butler, bowl and all!

Then here's to the maid in the lily-white smock,
Who tripp'd to the door and slipp'd back the lock,
Who tripp'd to the door and pull'd back the pin,
For to let these jolly Wassailers walk in.

Wassail all over the town; Wassail.

PROGRAM NOTES

The Alexandria Choral Society's annual Christmas concert opens this year with the first of three sing-along carols, all of which should be familiar to anyone who has spent time in public places during the Christmas season. The words we are asking you to sing with us are printed in the program as they occur.

Many of the carols presented in tonight's concert are traditional melodies from various European countries, arranged for choir by British composers including **Ralph Vaughan Williams**, **David Willcocks**, **Philip Ledger**, and **John Rutter**, and published in *100 Carols for Choirs*, edited by Willcocks and Rutter. *Cradle Song* is a Flemish carol for which Rutter wrote the English words, describing the scene in the stable to the tune of a lilting lullaby.

Morton Lauridsen is an American composer whose choral music has been performed throughout the world. *O Magnum Mysterium* was premiered in 1994 by the Los Angeles Master Chorale, and has become a favorite Christmas motet. The Latin text is of ancient origin, and is the Responsory following the 4th Lesson of the II. Nocturn of Matins for Christmas Day. The composer has described his work as "... a quiet song of profound inner joy."

In writing the English text for his arrangement of the French carol *A Maiden Most Gentle*, **Andrew Carter** has paraphrased words by The Venerable Bede, an Anglo-Saxon monk and scholar who lived and wrote around the turn of the eighth century, and was notable for his vernacular poetry as well as his translations of Latin and Greek. This carol has often been featured in the BBC broadcast of The Nine Lessons and Carols service by the Choir of King's College, Cambridge.

Each of the editors of *100 Carols for Choirs* is represented by his own arrangement of the English traditional carol, *I Saw Three Ships*. In this concert we hear **David Wilcocks'** version, in which women's and men's voices alternate on the melody. In verses 2 through 5, the men ask a question and the women answer. In verse 6, we have a bit of audible illustration from the accompanying choir, and in the final verse the whole choir finally joins together, singing, "Let us now rejoice!"

For something completely different, Pro Coro Alexandria next favors us with a visit to the long-ago past, as they sing a work by the Renaissance French composer known as **Jean Mouton**. Sung in Latin, the first part asks us to follow the shepherds and, like the preceding carol, asks and answers questions about the experience. The second part addresses the Christ Child directly, asking questions of him and giving his replies. The music is characteristic of Mouton's style, polyphonic and canonic, and because it is a Christmas song, the word "Noe," which in English becomes "Noel," is repeatedly heard.

Pro Coro Alexandria's second offering returns us to the twentieth century with a carol by **Herbert Howells**, setting a poem by Frances Chesterton, and dedicated to "G. K. Chesterton, Esq." Gilbert Keith Chesterton was a very well-known writer, and his wife Frances was a shy Victorian lady who "...valued her privacy and kept herself hidden from the world." She is remembered best today as the author of the poem "How Far is it to Bethlehem?"

Howells is known in this country for having been commissioned to compose a work for the funeral of President John F. Kennedy, and many of his works are part of the standard repertoire for choirs the world over. Though he was not an orthodox Christian, his choral music is mainly based on religious texts. Chesterton was a devout Catholic, and her poem describes in first person narrative the visit of the Magi, bringing gifts, and the gifts the Christ Child presents in return to each of them, and to us.

After these two works by historically notable composers, we return again to the traditional. *The Wexford Carol* (in Irish, *Carúl Loch Garman*, or *Carúl Inis Córthaidh* after the Irish name of its place of origin) dates from the twelfth century, and is one of the oldest European carols surviving today. The words are strophic; that is, a series of verses all sung to the same tune. The modal tune is lovely and, like many Irish melodies, quickly becomes unforgettable, although it has been suggested that the tune is not as old as the words, probably not originating until the eighteenth or even the nineteenth century. **John Rutter** has made use of the somewhat unexpected harmonic shifts of the original and given them his own variations to create a through-composed effect that gives even more interest to the melody. A repeat of the first solo melody line at the end brings the work full circle.

The first half of the concert ends with a sing-along of one of the most familiar carols of all, *Silent Night*. The story of how it came to be written has become a beloved Christmas legend.

The second half of the concert opens with performances by the two youth choirs who received this year's grants from the Alexandria Choral Society's *Songs of the Season Sing-Off!*

Theresa Jennings' *Peaceful Night*, performed by the **Saratoga Chorus** from Saratoga Elementary School, has been described as "a sort of marriage of folk and Celtic," with a triplet-based undercurrent which gives the feeling of a waltz.

Pro Coro Alexandria

Sopranos

Erin Barnett
Cienna Breen
Mary Gaskins
Katie Grainey
Kyle Jennings
Chelsea Majors

Altos

Jennifer Anvari
Sarah Coster
Kate Campbell Deglans
Emily Goodell
Kristi Meacham

Tenors

Cameron Farley
Michael Gale
Ben Regnier
Kevin Sapp
Jeff Simmons

Basses

Zach Byers
Rocky Ebener
Cliff Gay
David Pritzker
Richard Simpson

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Brian Gendron	Artistic Director



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Alexandria Choral Society

Brian Gendron, *Artistic Director*

Robin Beckman, *Accompanist*

Sopranos

Sara Alipanah
Vida Antolin-Jenkins
Erin Barnett
Cienna Breen
Samantha Calkins
Sharon Collins
Kate Campbell Deglans
Marfé Ferguson Delano
Monique Kerber Doussard
Diane Erbland
Mary Gaskins
Katie Grainey
Rasneek Gujral
Ginger Hannums
Kyle Jennings
Olivia Prevost Karr
Chelsea Majors
Margaret McLaughlin
Catherine Miller
Karen Minatelli
Jennifer Pachon
Heather Philips
Sara Ratcliffe
Mary Grace Sheets
Andrea Steinacker
Marianne Stonefield
Teal Thompson

Altos

Jennifer Anvari
Trudy Beddow
Anne Buckborough
Patricia Burson
Katie Campbell
Sarah Coster
Heather Cruz
Alison Fitzgerald
Emily Goodell
Lynn Hithe
Natalie Keffalas
Kristina Meacham
Kelly Miskowski
Carol Proudfit
Amanda Ridlington
Megan Rogers
Sunrita Sarkar
Anne Simpson
Clarice Snyder
Mimi Stevens
Cathy Walker

Tenors

Cameron Farley
Michael Gale
Seth Hudson
Howard Jaffe
Jason Kezmarsky
James Martin
Alan Morris
Ben Reigner
Kevin Sapp
Brent Schultheis
Jeff Simmons

Basses

Zach Byers
Rocky Ebener
Clifford Gay
Thomas Giannetti
Greg Gloor
Joshua Heit
Donald Pape
David Pritzker
Vell Rives
Richard Simpson
Scott Snyder

The **Gryphon Chorus** from Westminster School has chosen the delightful French traditional carol, *Angels We Have Heard on High*, as their contribution to this evening's musical festivities.

The Alexandria Choral Society returns with a carol whose melody was first printed in the *Piae Cantiones*, a Finnish collection of "pious songs" for church and students, published in what was then Sweden in 1582. The plainsong melody for *Of the Father's Heart Begotten* is "Divinum Mysterium," and the Latin words were a poem by Prudentius, who lived in the fourth century. In 1851, the tune was published in an English hymnal with text translated by J. M. Neale; the words we hear tonight were written by Roby Furley Davis, a Cambridge scholar, and first published in 1906. The arrangement is again by **David Willcocks**, who directed the choir of Kings College, Cambridge from 1957 to 1974.

Peter Wishart was an English composer and educator who studied with Nadia Boulanger, taught music at a number of colleges and universities, and wrote several operas as well as orchestral works and church music. His best-known work is the carol *Alleluia, a New Work is Come on Hand*, a setting of an anonymous fifteenth-century text. The spirited cascading Alleluyas in four-part women's voices dance above the slower cadences of tenor and bass, while the verses they surround are declaimed by the men in unison, with the women adding an obligato as if commenting and agreeing. The combination of ancient text and modern musical idiom is one that a number of twentieth-century composers have used effectively, the best-known example being Benjamin Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols*.

The tune of *The Infant King* is a Basque Noël but the words are comparatively modern. They were written by Sabine Baring-Gould, an Anglican cleric and writer known to generations of church-goers as the author of the hymn "Onward, Christian Soldiers." He was also a collector of folk songs, as well as a prolific author of novels and non-fiction.

Baring-Gould's lyric, like the familiar carol "We Three Kings," includes a foreshadowing of what life will bring to the sleeping child: sorrow, bitter grief, and death. Not what we usually think of as suitable for a lullaby! But the final stanza reminds us of Easter and its joy. It has been published as a hymn in a number of hymnals. **David Willcocks** has chosen to use the same choral structure for all four verses of the carol, as if it were a hymn, though his *a cappella* arrangement is definitely for choir.

Philip Ledger was educated at Kings College, Cambridge, and returned there as director of music in 1974, succeeding David Willcocks as director of the Choir. Like Willcocks, he wrote a number of descants and new arrangements of traditional Christmas carols, including the German carol *Still, Still, Still*. (The opening words – and title – are the same in both languages.) The English translation of the text is by British poet Meg Peacocke.

Like Baring-Gould, **Ralph Vaughan Williams** was a collector and arranger of folk songs as well as a master of original composition. His arrangement of the traditional *Wassail Song* captures the spirit of the Wassail custom. Wassail is defined as "an early English toast to someone's health," or "a hot drink that is made with wine, beer, or cider, spices, sugar, and usually baked apples and is traditionally served in a large bowl especially at Christmastime." Vaughan Williams' *Wassail Song* is based on the Gloucestershire Wassail, which dates back to the Middle Ages.

Typically, a group of revelers, or Wassailers, would go from house to house and give their blessing to the inhabitants in exchange for a cup of the drink described above, originally made from mead and definitely alcoholic. After a "bowl of the best" at house after house, the use of the term "wassailing" to describe drunken revelry is not

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surprising. In this song, healths are drunk to various parts of the anatomy of the ox (whose health was important to the prosperity of the household), the butler, and the maid.

On a personal note, I first sang this arrangement with Sir David himself, at a Choral Symposium where during the course of a week we sang our way through *100 Carols for Choirs*. I made notes of Sir David's comments in my (autographed!) copy, and at the end of Wassail Song I have written, "Altos are the last to leave the drinking." As an alto, I thought that was worth noting!

To close the concert, you are invited to join us in singing *Hark, the Herald Angels Sing*.

~ Mimi Stevens

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Founded in 1970, the **Alexandria Choral Society** aspires to enhance the cultural life of the city of Alexandria and surrounding communities by presenting engaging musical programs at the highest artistic level. ACS ensembles consistently offer meaningful and exciting musical experiences to both singers and audiences through diverse repertoire, education, community outreach, and performance excellence.

Founded in 2012, **Pro Coro Alexandria** is a chamber choir of singers selected from the Alexandria Choral Society. While they sing music from all time periods, this ensemble specializes in the performance of Renaissance and Baroque repertoire. Pro Coro Alexandria often represents ACS at community events or in performance situations for which a small ensemble is more appropriate.



Brian Gendron serves as Artistic Director of the Alexandria Choral Society (ACS.) Since joining the organization in 2009, the choir has shared the stage with the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra for Mozart's *Requiem*, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Verdi's *Messa da Requiem*, Holst's *The Planets*, and the world premiere of Kim Allen Kluge's *River Poem*. They have presented Bach's *Komm, Jesu, komm*, Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*, Brahms'

Schicksalslied, and Pärt's *Berliner Messe*, and have led Handel's *Messiah* at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Pro Coro Alexandria, a chamber choir founded in 2012 and selected from the ACS roster, premiered Truman Harris and David Teie's *...again and ever again* with Eclipse Chamber Orchestra and performed at the National Gallery of Art.

With a great passion for choral-orchestral repertoire, Gendron was on the podium for Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem*, Beethoven's *Mass in C*, Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass*, and Mozart's *Coronation Mass*. He prepared Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms* for the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra and Vaughan Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem* for the New River Valley Symphony. Gendron conducted the Kansas City Baroque Consortium in a performance of Handel's *Dixit Dominus*, and led a series of concerts featuring the cantatas of J.S. Bach, as well as his *Mass in B minor*.

Previously, Gendron served as Artistic Director of the Grammy Award winning

Maryland Boy Choir, who appeared at the Music Center at Strathmore and Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center, as well as in concert performances of Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov* with Mariinsky Opera and Puccini's *La Bohème* with Baltimore Concert Opera. His previous teaching appointments include Conductor-in-Residence at Hollins University and Director of Choral Activities at Virginia Tech. His university ensembles appeared in Carnegie Hall, Brooklyn Academy of Music's Howard Gilman Opera Theater, and the Washington National Cathedral.

Gendron served as Chorus Master for Opera Roanoke productions of Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, Britten's *Noye's Fludde*, Verdi's *Macbeth* and *Otello*, and Beethoven's *Fidelio*. He also joined the American Opera Theater team for Charpentier's *David et Jonathas*, Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, Blow's *Venus and Adonis*, and a staged production of Handel's *Messiah*. Gendron conducted the world premiere of Sean Pflueger's *Children in the Mist* for Riverbend Opera and was Music Director for Michael Gordon's *Lightning at Our Feet*, which was co-produced by Virginia Tech Theater Arts and New York City's Ridge Theater.

Gendron earned degrees from Central Michigan University and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He has presented interest sessions and conducted invitational performances for the American Choral Directors Association, Virginia Music Educators Association, and Virginia Music Teachers Association. Gendron currently leads the choirs at St. James Catholic Church in Falls Church, Virginia.

Robin Beckman enjoys a versatile career as a pianist and singer working as a soloist, chamber ensemble singer, piano teacher and accompanist. With a voice that "gently glides into heaven" (*Washington Examiner*), she has performed with the Bach Consort, the Boston Early Music Fringe Festival, Washington Master Chorale, at the National Cathedral, and in the quartet Third Practice, which got rave reviews in both the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* for its performance of Andriessen's *La Commedia* with the Great Noise Ensemble. You can also hear her on the Dorian Sono Luminus label singing the Bach Motets and Carissimi's *Jephte*, in which she is a soloist. As a pianist, she also accompanies Six Degree Singers, a choir based in Silver Spring, MD. She studied at Shenandoah University where she accompanied several ensembles, master classes and recitals.



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