

TO THE ROAD



JUNE 14, 2025 | 7 PM

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH

PROGRAM

TO THE ROAD

ALEXANDRIA CHORAL SOCIETY

KATHRYN HARSHA

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

JUSTIN STRELETZ

COLLABORATIVE PIANIST

Hark, I Hear the Harps Eternal

Lucy Bachmeyer, soloist

Cantique de Jean Racine

If Ye Love Me

arr. Alice Parker

Gabriel Faure

Thomas Tallis

Lift Thine Eyes (*from Elijah*)

Sea Fever

Shenandoah (*American Folk Song*)

Megan Yingst, soloist

Take Me to the Water

Mendelssohn

Daniel Brinsmead

arr. James Erb

Rollo Dilworth

Freedom (*from Washington Women*)

Meet Me Here (*from Considering
Matthew Shepard*)

Kristi Meacham, soloist

Let the Life I've Lived Speak for Me

Judith Clurman & David Chase

Craig Hella Johnson

Gwyneth Walker

Hope Is the Thing with Feathers

The Road Home

Erika May, soloist

Let the River Run

Christopher Tin

Stephen Paulus

Carly Simon, arr. Craig Hella
Johnson

The Parting Glass

Red is the Rose (that in yonder
garden grows)

Irish Blessing

Wild Mountain Thyme

arr. Sarah Quartel

trad.Irish

Bob Chilcott

Jacob Narverud

Unclouded Day

Shawn Kirchner

SINGERS

SOPRANO

Lucy Bachmeyer
Betsy Ballard
Halina Banas-Jones
Katie Batterberry
Cienna Breen
Amy Clemens
Sharon Collins
Liz Everson
Ankur Garg
Dr. Doreen Hamilton
Shannon Maloney
Erika May
Megan Murchie-Beyma
Jennifer Nightingale
Laurie Taylor
Nicole Thompson

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Lisl Brunner
Anne Buckborough
Patricia Burson
Emily Goodell
Rebecca Grisso
Peggy Heiser
Heather Hurley
Allison Jones
Marion Lange
Kerry McGowan
Kristina Meacham
Sue Purvis
Anne Simpson
Akosua Tuffuor
Allison Wickens
Megan Yingst

TENOR

Adam Comfort
Caroline Hale
Jonathan Hung
Alan Morris
Kevin Seiger-Cottoms
Jacob Yeston

BASS

Michael Bianco
Harrison Clark
Rocky Ebener
Clifford Gay
Terry Langendoen
David Pritzker
Vell Rives
Richard Simpson
David Smith



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PROGRAM NOTES

The Alexandria Choral Society joyfully embarks on a musical journey across the Celtic nations, celebrating our 55th anniversary season with performances in Ireland and Scotland, including our sister city of Dundee, Scotland.

Our program weaves together sacred and secular traditions, bridging American and Celtic musical heritage.

The concert opens with timeless spiritual selections, from the ethereal "Hark, I Hear the Harps Eternal" to Fauré's beloved "Cantique de Jean Racine," and Mendelssohn's "Lift Thine Eyes" from Elijah. Contemporary spiritual works like "Let the Life I've Lived Speak for Me" and "Hope is the Thing with Feathers" reflect our modern American sacred music traditions.

The program celebrates maritime connections between our nations through Masefield's "Sea Fever" and the haunting American folk song "Shenandoah," acknowledging the ocean voyages that connected these cultures. Craig Hella Johnson's "Meet Me Here" from Considering Matthew Shepard demonstrates our commitment to meaningful contemporary repertoire addressing social justice issues.

American spirituals and freedom songs form the program's emotional core, including "Freedom" from Washington Women, and "Take Me to the Water," representing the African American musical tradition that profoundly influenced American choral music. These selections honor the struggle for civil rights while celebrating the transformative power of community singing.

The Celtic portion embraces traditional Scottish and Irish melodies: "Wild Mountain Thyme," "Red is the Rose," and "Parting Glass" offer warm recognition of local musical heritage. Stephen Paulus's "The Road Home" and Shawn Kirchner's "The Unclouded Day" provide contemplative moments, while Carly Simon's "Let the River Run" and "Sing, Sing, Sing" energize the program with contemporary American optimism.

This diverse repertoire reflects ACS's mission to build bridges through music, celebrating shared humanity while honoring distinct cultural traditions across the Atlantic. In our challenging political times, when division seems to dominate discourse, we believe music offers a powerful antidote—a universal language that transcends borders and reminds us of our common hopes and dreams. Through this Celtic journey, we seek to strengthen the bonds between our communities, demonstrating that cultural exchange and mutual understanding remain essential pathways to unity and peace.

-Kathryn

TEXTS

CANTIQUE DE JEAN RACINE

Verbe égal au Très-Haut,
notre unique espérance,
Jour éternel de la terre et des cieux;
De la paisible nuit nous rompons le silence,
Divin Sauveur, jette sur nous les yeux!

Word, (equal to) one with the Highest,
Our only Hope,
Eternal day of the earth and heavens,
We break the silence of the peaceful night;
Divine Savior, cast your eyes upon us!

Répands sur nous le feu de ta grâce puissante
Que tout l'enfer fuie au son de ta voix;
Dissipe le sommeil d'une âme languissante,
Qui la conduit à l'oubli de tes lois!

Spread over us the fire of your powerful grace,
That all hell may flee at the sound of your voice;
Dispel the slumber of a languishing soul,
That drives us to forget your laws.

Ô Christ, sois favorable à ce peuple fidèle
Pour te bénir maintenant rassemblé.
Reçois les chants qu'il offre
à ta gloire immortelle,
Et de tes dons qu'il retourne comblé!

O Christ, show favor to this faithful people now assembled
In order to bless (thank) you now.
Accept the songs they offer
to your immortal glory;
And may they go forth filled (overjoyed) with your gifts.



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Linda MaGuire, mezzo-soprano
and Orchestra

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The Alexandria Choral Society wishes to express its appreciation to the following people & organizations:

Allison Wickens, whose generous donation helped make our international tour possible!

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church for providing our rehearsal space throughout the year and for hosting tonight's concert

Program funding is provided by our donors, and in part by the Virginia Commission for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the City of Alexandria.



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AUDIENCE SURVEY

We kindly ask that you complete our brief audience survey for a chance to win a 2025-2026 season ticket!

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ABOUT ACS

For over half a century, the Alexandria Choral Society has presented a broad spectrum of choral works, delighting audiences and fostering an inclusive environment of belonging and collaboration in the City of Alexandria and beyond. Since its founding in 1970, ACS has captivated audiences year in and year out. Most recently, ACS commissioned and presented the world premiere of "You Birth the Seeds," a work by acclaimed composer Melissa Dunphy, with text by Alexandria Poet Laureate Zeina Azzam. Under the direction of Artistic Director Kathryn Harsha, ACS is committed to enhancing the cultural life of the City of Alexandria by presenting diverse and engaging vocal music programs at the highest artistic level.

SING WITH US

Auditions for our 2025-2026 season will be held in August. The audition process involves vocalization, aural acuity drills, and sight-singing. Singers should also be prepared to perform (a cappella) a simple tune that showcases their vocal beauty and range (such as The Star-Spangled Banner or Amazing Grace). We can also schedule a time for you to observe a rehearsal prior to auditioning.

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS



KATHRYN HARSHA, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Kathryn Harsha holds a Master of Music in Conducting from the Cleveland Institute of Music and a Bachelor of Arts in Piano Performance from Bluffton University. While studying at the Sorbonne in Paris, she served as Assistant Conductor of the Chorale des Étudiants

Etrangères and studied conducting at the Conservatoire Messiaen in Saint-Maurice, France.

An active conductor in choral, opera, and orchestral music, Ms. Harsha has worked with ensembles across the country, conducting most recently in Severance Hall and the Kennedy Center, and in France, Italy, Austria, and Germany. Kathryn served for many years as Music Director and Conductor of the Lakeland Civic Orchestra in Cleveland, Ohio, and as the Music Director of Opera per Tutti, now the Cleveland Opera Theater. For more than 20 years, she was the Music Director of the Sing Out! for Cleveland Rape Crisis Center benefit concert, where the Visionary Voice Award was named in her honor in 2018.

Ms. Harsha enjoys working with musicians of all ages, including young people at the Peabody Children's Chorus and Opus Community Music School, and mature singers at Encore Creativity for Older Adults, where she is currently the Interim Artistic Director and conducts multiple ensembles across the Washington metropolitan area.

Kathryn is honored to serve as the Artistic Director of Pro Coro Alexandria and the Alexandria Choral Society for its 55th season.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



JUSTIN STRELETZ, COLLABORATIVE PIANIST

Justin Streletz is excited to be returning to Alexandria Choral Society for the 2024-2025 Season! He is a local collaborative pianist who has worked with many school divisions in Northern Virginia for concerts and festivals. Justin is also a music director, including a pit conductor and vocal director. During the day he is an elementary music teacher, entering his 10th year of teaching. Justin studied piano at West Chester University with Dr. Patricia Powell. In his free time, he enjoys reading, traveling, working out at OrangeTheory, and all things LEGO.

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