

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ALEXANDRIA CHORAL SOCIETY

With the encouragement of the Alexandria City Council, the Alexandria Choral Society (ACS) was formed in 1970 as a component of the Performing Arts Association of Alexandria. ACS was independently incorporated in 1978. Beginning with the vision of founding director Francisco de Araujo, ACS has delighted audiences year in and year out, and the baton has passed from one illustrious hand to the next, presently with Brian Gendron, who has led ACS since 2009.

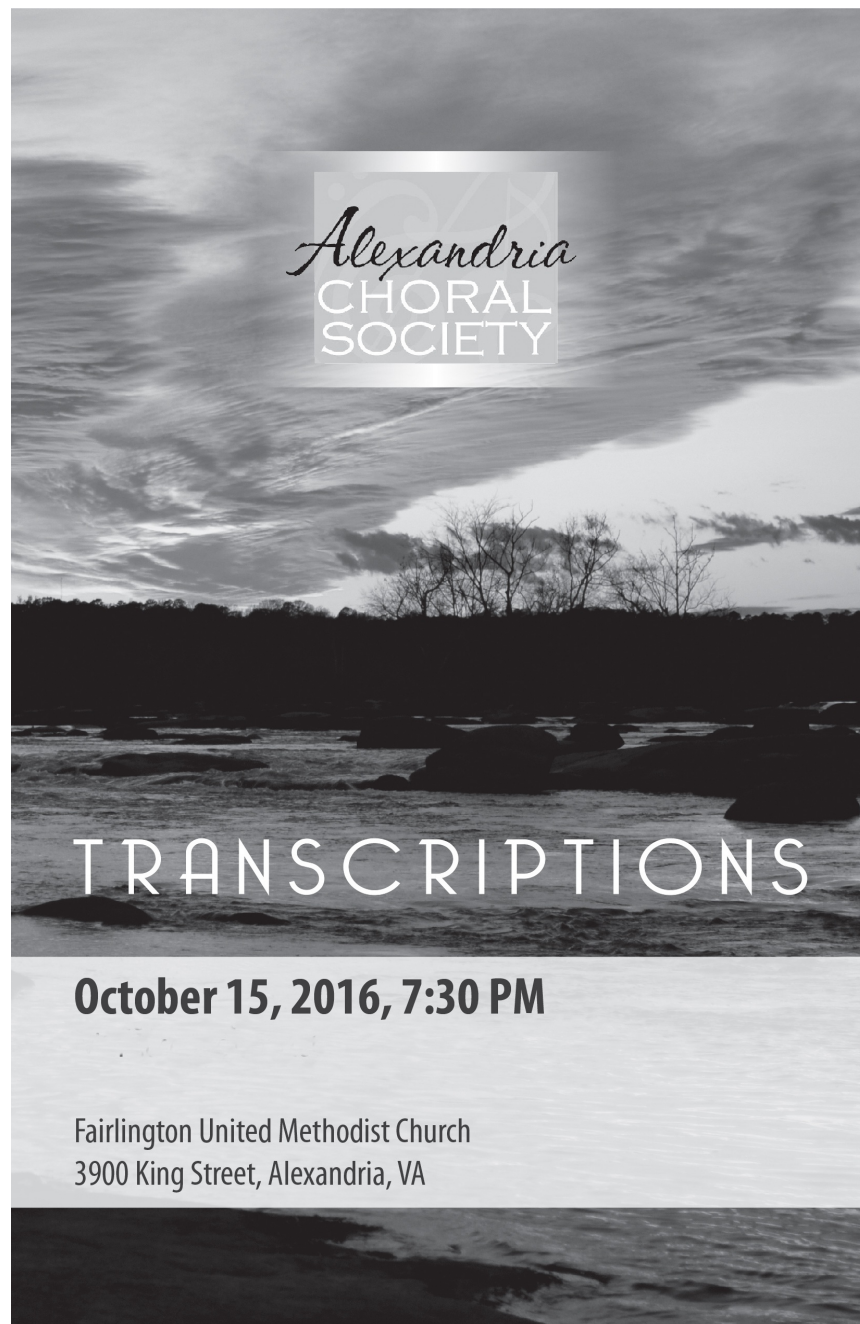
For 46 seasons, ACS performances have enriched the community with a broad spectrum of choral works, from the Renaissance to modern American composers, from small chamber pieces to major works for chorus and orchestra, and from a great variety of musical cultures. For major works, ACS has often collaborated with the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra and other instrumental groups from the Northern Virginia area. Contemporary music performances have included several choral pieces commissioned by ACS, perhaps most notably the "Alexandria Suite," a setting by Virginia composer Russell Woollen of eight poems by Alexandria poet laureate Jean Elliot, celebrating the history and beauty of the city. ACS premiered the "Alexandria Suite" in 1987 and presented it numerous times during the city's 250th anniversary year in 1999.

On two occasions, the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce selected ACS for its ALEX Award, in recognition of excellence in service to the arts in Alexandria. In 1992, ACS and artistic director Kerry Krebill received the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers' first award to a chorus for "Adventuresome Programming." However, ACS is especially proud of a comment many years ago by Joseph McLellan, long-time chief music critic of the *Washington Post*, who wrote about the Alexandria Choral Society: "This chorus is one of the things that makes Alexandria a very special place."

The roster of distinguished music directors includes Francisco de Araujo, Martin Piecuch, Robert Shafer, Douglas Major, Kerry Krebill, Keith Reas, Philip Cave, Neil Weston, and Janet Davis. Since becoming the group's artistic leader in 2009, Brian Gendron has brought about a renaissance for ACS by reinvigorating membership and repertoire, creating collaborations with Virginia Chamber Orchestra, Atlantic Reed Consort and the Rosedale String Quartet, adding cabaret performances, and guiding the ensemble to set our sights on the horizon.

Welcome to our 47th concert season!

47th Concert Season



Alexandria
CHORAL
SOCIETY

TRANSCRIPTIONS

October 15, 2016, 7:30 PM

Fairlington United Methodist Church
3900 King Street, Alexandria, VA

Transcriptions

Alexandria Choral Society
Brian Gendron, conductor
Robin Beckman, keyboards

Largo from *New World Symphony* Antonin Dvořák (1841-1904)
arr. by Jonathan Rathbone

Sleepers Wake from *Cantata No. 140* Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
arr. by Ben Parry

Agnus Dei Samuel Barber (1910-1981)
 transcribed from *Adagio for Strings*, Op. 11
 Chelsea Majors, *soprano*

Alleluia Bradley Nelson (b. 1950)
 adapted from "Prelude on the Hymn Tune Rhosymedre"
 Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1858)

Overture to *The Barber of Seville* Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868)
arr. by Daryl Runswick
 Pro Coro Alexandria

Alleluia Ralph Manuel (b. 1951)


Lux Aurumque Eric Whitacre (b. 1970)
 Kate Campbell Deglans, *soprano*

Cloudburst Whitacre
 Alexandra Tanner, *soprano*
 Scott Snyder, *bass*
 Patricia Burson, *speaker*

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CHORALE**
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Sunday, October 23, 2016 at 4:00 p.m.
at Saint Luke Catholic Church
7001 Georgetown Pike, McLean, VA 22101

Schütz: *Requiem*
Purcell: *Rejoice in the Lord Alway*
Britten: *Rejoice in the Lamb*
Mendelssohn: *Psalms*
Renaissance Motets

Sunday, December 11, 2016 at 4:00 p.m.
at Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall & Arts Center
4915 East Campus Drive, Alexandria, VA 22311

Vivaldi: *Gloria*
Charpentier: *Messe de Minuit pour Noël*
French Noël's arr. Beveridge
J. S. Bach: *Magnificat*

Sunday, April 23, 2017 at 4:00 p.m.
at Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall & Arts Center
4915 East Campus Drive, Alexandria, VA 22311

Opera and Operetta Favorites
including
J. Strauss: *Act II of Die Fledermaus*
and selections from
Gilbert and Sullivan: *Operettas*

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Sleepers Wake

Sleepers wake, the night is flying,
The watchmen on the walls are crying,
Thou city of Jerusalem.
Hear ye now, e'er comes the morning,
The midnight call of solemn warning.
The day is rising in thy heart.
Oh come in splendour bright,
Lord Jesus, Light of Light.
Hallelujah!
We follow Thee, Thy joy to see,
Wherever lasting bliss shall be.

Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona nobis pacem.

*Lamb of God who takes away the sins
of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins
of the world, grant us peace.*

Alleluia (Nelson)

Alleluia, alleluia ...
Laudamus te, Christe, alleluia.
Cantate Deo Domino,
laudate nomen Domini.
Laudamus te, alleluia.
Lauda, laudamus te.
Benedicimus te.
Laudamus te, Christe.
Alleluia, alleluia ...

*Alleluia, alleluia ...
We praise thee, Christ, alleluia.
Sing to God the Lord,
praise the name of God.
We praise thee, alleluia.
Praise, we praise thee.
We bless thee.
We praise thee, Christ.
Alleluia, alleluia ...*

Lux Aurumque

Lux
calida gravisque pura velut aurum
et canunt angeli molliter
modo natum.

Charles Anthony Silvestri

*Light
warm and heavy as pure gold
and the angels sing softly
to the newborn babe.*

Edward Esch

Cloudburst

La lluvia....

Ojos de agua de sombra,
ojos de agua de pozo,
ojos de agua de sueño.

The rain ...

*Eyes of shadow-water,
eyes of well-water,
eyes of dream-water.*

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ACT OF PHOTOGRAPHY ALL
THE PICTURES YOU HAVE SEEN,
THE BOOKS YOU HAVE READ,
THE MUSIC YOU HAVE HEARD,
THE PEOPLE YOU HAVE LOVED.

-ANSEL ADAMS



CAPTURING THE CURRENT
IN ALEXANDRIA SINCE 2007
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Soles azules, verdes remolinos,
picos de luz que abren astros
como granadas.

Dime, tierra quemada, no hay
agua?
hay sólo sangre sólo hay polvo,
sólo pisadas de pies desnudos
sobre la espina?

La lluvia despierta ...

Hay que dormir con los ojos abiertos,
Hay que sonar con las manos
Soñemos sueños activos de río
buscando su cause,
sueños de sol soñando sus mundos,
hay que soñar en voz alta,
hay que cantar hasta que el canto
eche
raíces, tronco, ramas, pájaros, astros,
hay que desenterrar la palabra perdida,
recordar que dicen sangre y la marea,
la tierra y el cuerpo,
volver al punto de partida. ...

Octavio Paz
adapted by Eric Whitacre

*Blue suns, green whirlwinds,
birdbeaks of light pecking open
pomegranate stars.*

*But tell me, burnt earth, is there no
water?
Only blood, only dust,
only naked footsteps on the thorns?*

The rain awakens ...

*We must sleep with open eyes,
we must dream with our hands,
we must dream of a river
seeking its course,
of the sun dreaming its worlds,
we must dream aloud,
we must sing till the song puts forth
roots,
trunk, branches, birds, stars,
we must find the lost word,
and remember what the blood,
the tides, the earth, and the body say,
and return to the point of departure ...*

translation: Lysander Kemp

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in our community. It is only by the generosity of our patrons
that we are able to add our threads to the weave.
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www.alexandriachoralsociety.org

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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 us online at www.alexandriachoralsociety.org.

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PROGRAM NOTES

Can music written for instruments be successfully transformed into choral music? And what about going in the other direction? The first part of our program tonight gives you an opportunity to consider the former; the last three pieces present choral originals, and it is up to you to imagine how the music sung by the chorus might sound with instruments substituting for voices.

The program opens with music familiar to audiences as the Largo from **Antonin Dvořák's** Symphony No. 9 in E minor, Op. 95, "From the New World," popularly known as the *New World Symphony*. Dvořák, who was Czech by birth, lived for a time in the United States and served as director of the National Conservatory of Music from 1892 to 1895. He developed a great interest in the music of Native Americans and African Americans, and it is often said that the *New World Symphony* included melodies from spirituals; however this seems to be more legend than fact. The words to the song "Goin' Home" were actually written by a pupil of Dvořák's nearly thirty years later.

The version of the Largo heard in this concert does not have words; instead the different instrumental lines are presented in nonsense syllables, Swingle Singers-style. (For those of you who are not familiar with the Swingle Singers, they are a jazz vocal group who have existed in various incarnations since the early 1960s, whose signature style grew out of using J.S. Bach's keyboard music as singing exercises.) The arranger, **Jonathan Rathbone**, was a member of the group.

Cantata No. 140 by **Johann Sebastian Bach** is the inspiration for our next work. **Ben Parry**, also of the Swingle Singers, was inspired to write the non-words for the "accompaniment" voices, while the melody of the chorale in this version of the instrumental chorale-prelude is sung with one of the many translations of the actual text.

For something completely different, we turn next to the *Adagio for Strings*, by the American composer **Samuel Barber**. Originally written as the second movement of a string quartet in the mid-1930s, it was transcribed for orchestra, premiered in 1938 and recorded by Toscanini, becoming Barber's most popular and most frequently performed piece.

In the late 1960s, Barber produced a third version, described by Richard Jackson as a "distinct oddity" – a choral work, presenting his signature long, flowing musical lines as a fitting partner to the text of the *Agnus Dei*. The popularity of the orchestral version surely contributes to an appreciation of the choral work, but it is so beautifully done that we could easily imagine that the composer had originally conceived it for voices.

The next work on the program involved more than one transformation. The Welsh hymn tune Rhosymedre, written by J. D. Edwards in the early 19th century, served as the basis for the "Prelude on the Hymn Tune Rhosymedre" by **Ralph Vaughan Williams**, who himself composed many fine hymn tunes for the English church. Originally composed for organ, the Prelude is perhaps better known in an orchestral version by Arnold Foster, though it has been

arranged for many different combinations of instruments. **Bradley Nelson**, an American composer, conductor and music educator who holds a doctorate in composition from the Eastman School of Music, provided the transformation for voices, adapting this prelude as an *Alleluia* for unaccompanied SATB choir.

Pro Coro Alexandria takes us into a more secular mode with a vocal version of the *Overture* to **Gioacchino Rossini's** opera *The Barber of Seville*. Arranged by **Daryl Runswick**, a noted jazz musician and arranger, the lighthearted cadences of Rossini's familiar music take on a new dimension with the nonsense syllables that replace the sounds of the instruments. "Bid-l-id-l up pah pah pah" seems to work very well with the notes Rossini wrote. Runswick says, "Part of the humour comes as a result of the voices trying to perform lines which sound effortless in the hands of an accomplished orchestra player, but are slightly too difficult to sing."

The rest of the program features works originally written for voices, which have also been transformed into instrumental works. **Ralph Manuel's** *Alleluia* uses only that word as its text, so that the focus of the listener is on the music rather than on the words. This may perhaps explain the success of this work in a transcription for symphonic wind ensemble.

According to one source, the piece was originally written to commemorate the Oklahoma City bombing, with each iteration of the word "Alleluia" representing one person who died.

The program ends with two very different works by the young American composer **Eric Whitacre**. *Lux Aurumque*, a short Christmas piece, has been transcribed for wind ensemble by the composer. The piece was commissioned by The Master Chorale of Tampa Bay, and was composed in 1999. For the text, Whitacre was inspired by a poem by Edward Esch which was written in English. Wanting a Latin text, he had the poem translated by the American poet Charles Anthony Silvestri. The haunting harmonies perfectly blend with the mystical imagery of the poem, spare but complete, evoking a vision of the light and the angels' song.

For something completely different, save in the incredible imaginativeness of Whitacre's musical vision, we have *Cloudburst*. It is described as "a ceremony, a celebration of the unleashed kinetic energy in all things." The poem is by the Mexican poet Octavio Paz (1914-1998), who has been described as one of the most influential writers of the 20th century. Whitacre has adapted the poem to fit his vision of what he wished to accomplish musically. The piece was composed when he was only 22, and has become one of his best-known works. It received first prize in the 1993 American Choral Directors Association "Composers of the Future" competition.

Cloudburst is a work that should be experienced for the first time without preconceived ideas of what it may be like, so these notes will not tell you what to expect. It is enough to say that the instructions to the performers say that they must "... take the spiritual journey with total respect for the power of the water and profundity of the rebirth."

~ Mimi Stevens

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Holiday Festival Carols
Torpedo Factory Art Center
105 N. Union Street, Alexandria
December 3, 5:45-6:30 and 7:00-7:45 PM

Holiday Lobbying: Carols
Willard Intercontinental
1401 Pennsylvania Ave NW, Washington, DC
December 7, 5:30-6:15 and 6:45-7:30 PM



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what we have to sing about!



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Pro Coro Alexandria

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Kyle Jennings
Chelsea Majors

Altos

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Alexandria Choral Society

P.O. Box 406

Alexandria, VA 22313

703-951-7849

www.alexandriachoralsociety.org

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.



Brian Gendron serves as Artistic Director of Alexandria Choral Society. Since he joined 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 Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*, Brahms' *Schicksalslied*, Haydn's *The Creation*, Pärt's *Berliner Messe*, and Vivaldi's *Gloria*, 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 as the organization's outreach ensemble, premiered Truman Harris and David Teie's *...again and ever again* with Eclipse Chamber Orchestra. They have also collaborated with Virginia 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 Gudonov* 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.

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
Marf  Ferguson Delano
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Alexandra Tanner
Emily Whiteman

Altos

Angela Ammerman
Jen Andresen
Jennifer Anvari
Trudy Beddow
Anne Buckborough
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Elisabeth Deaton
Emily Goodell
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Anne Simpson
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Erin Sutherland
Jessica Thunes

Tenors

Tom Burton
Will Douthitt
Jim Martin
Ben Melhus
Jim Mignerey
Alan Morris
JJ Norman
Brent Schultheis
Jeff Simmons

Basses

Zach Byers
Peter Carlson
Rocky Ebener
Clifford Gay
Tom Giannetti
Greg Gloor
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Join Alexandria Choral Society for a heavenly season!

TRANSCRIPTIONS October 15, 2016, 7:30pm Fairlington United Methodist Church 3900 King Street, Alexandria	GALA: EIN DEUTSCHES REQUIEM March 18, 2017, 7:30pm with <i>Calla Piano Duo</i> George Washington Masonic Memorial 101 Callahan Drive, Alexandria
'TIS THE SEASON: A BAROQUE CHRISTMAS December 17, 2016, 7:30pm with <i>Rosedale String Quartet</i> George Washington Masonic Memorial 101 Callahan Drive, Alexandria	AMERICA'S MUSICAL KEEPSAKES May 7, 2017, 4:00pm with <i>Virginia Chamber Orchestra</i> Ernst Community Theater 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale

For more info and to purchase tickets, visit www.alexandriachoralsociety.org

Alexandria
CHORAL
SOCIETY