



23
24 SEASON

CHRISTMAS CANDLELIGHT CONCERT

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2023

PRESENTED BY MARY PILLSBURY WAINWRIGHT

A. DENNIS SPARGER

MUSIC DIRECTOR & CONDUCTOR



Music Director and Conductor **A. Dennis Sparger** was critically acclaimed as "a conductor equipped with insight as well as craftsmanship" already in his second season. In the past three and a half decades he has received even more praise for his musical leadership with The Bach Society Chorus and Orchestra; by the end of the 2023-24 season, he will have conducted them in more than 200 performances of major works by Bach and other composers.

Under his leadership The Bach Society was presented with the Excellence in the Arts award by the Arts & Education Council of Greater St. Louis, the first chorus to be so honored. Dr. Sparger's leadership was also a driving force in the Christmas Candlelight Concerts being hailed by BBC Music magazine as "one of the top 20 live Christmas events in North America."

In 1989 he introduced a Young Artists scholarship program for singers under the age of thirty to cultivate future soloists. He also established a professional core of paid Principal Singers and designated a position for Composer-in-Residence to promote the creation of new works.

He was awarded a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in choral conducting by the University of Illinois and earned bachelor's and master's degrees from Eastern Illinois University where he was named one of the 50 Outstanding Graduate Alumni of the Graduate School. In 2013, in recognition of his work with The Bach Society, he was presented with the Lifetime Achievement award by the University of Missouri-St. Louis. He has also received awards from St. Louis Cathedral Concerts, the St. Louis chapter of the American Guild of Organists, and the Illinois chapter of the American Choral Directors Association.

Dr. Sparger is a member of the American Bach Society, American Choral Directors Association, Chorus America, the National Society of Arts & Letters, and is a past board member of Artist Presentation Society.



STEPHEN EROS ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR

Stephen Eros graduated from Webster University with faculty bestowed honors in music. While there, he served as Assistant Conductor of the Webster University Choirs and completed a Master of Arts in Choral Conducting and

Bachelor of Music in Organ Performance; studying conducting and choral music with Trent Patterson, organ with William Partridge, and voice with Robert Ayllón.

Stephen has been Assistant Conductor of The Bach Society of St. Louis since 2013 and has worked in the field of sacred music for over a decade, serving in parishes in the Diocese of Belleville, Springfield (IL), and Archdiocese of St. Louis. Since 2015, he has held the position of Director of Liturgy and Music at St. Clare of Assisi Catholic Church in O'Fallon, IL, where he is responsible for the formation and training of over 400 liturgical ministers, and conducts five different choirs. On the diocesan level, he has served as organist and choirmaster for pontifical liturgies at the Cathedral of St. Peter, and currently serves on the music committee of the diocesan liturgical commission.

As a collaborative pianist, Stephen has served as music director for solo cabarets and musicals in the St. Louis area, and has worked for the Muny St. Louis as a rehearsal pianist. He is a member of the St. Louis Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, having served as Sub Dean, Program Committee Chair, and a member of the Executive Committee. He is also a proud union member of the American Federation of Musicians Local 2-197.

His biggest accomplishment to date is being the husband of Jamie Eros, step-father of George and Jon, and father of Samuel and Viola.



SANDRA GEARY, ACCOMPANIST

Sandra Geary is a native of County Cork, Ireland and has received piano performance diplomas from the Royal Schools of Music, Trinity College, London; the Cork School of Music, Ireland and a Bachelor of Music degree from the St. Louis Conservatory of Music. Her teachers have included

John O'Connor, Joseph Kalichstein and Carole Tafoya. On the piano faculty of Washington University, Sandra also accompanies the WU Chamber and Concert choirs.

She has been the Bach Society of Saint Louis accompanist for the past 26 years and also is the accompanist for Webster University Opera studio. She is a vocal coach for the OTSL Artist-in-Training program and Union Avenue Opera's 'Crescendo' Young Artist program. She has collaborated in Voice Masterclasses given by Nathan Gunn, Stanford Olsen, Kevin Short, Erie Mills, Christine Brewer, Mary Ann McCormack and Jennifer Johnson Cano.

Sandra regularly accompanies recitals, auditions and competitions in the St Louis area.

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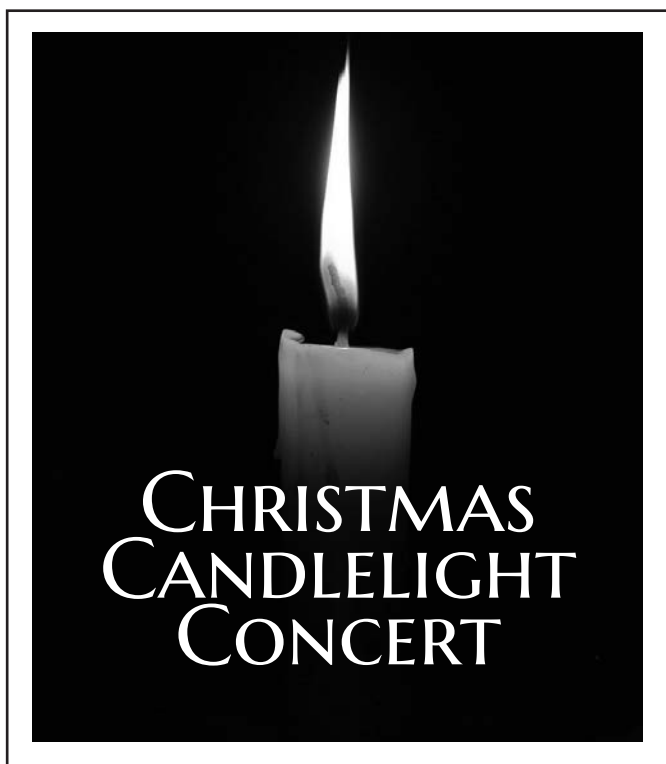
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All of our concerts are professionally recorded, so please do your best to minimize excess noise. You will know it's time to applaud when the conductor lowers their arms after the final chord of a piece. This may not happen after every piece, because sometimes songs are grouped together to create an emotional experience.

Thank you and enjoy the concert.

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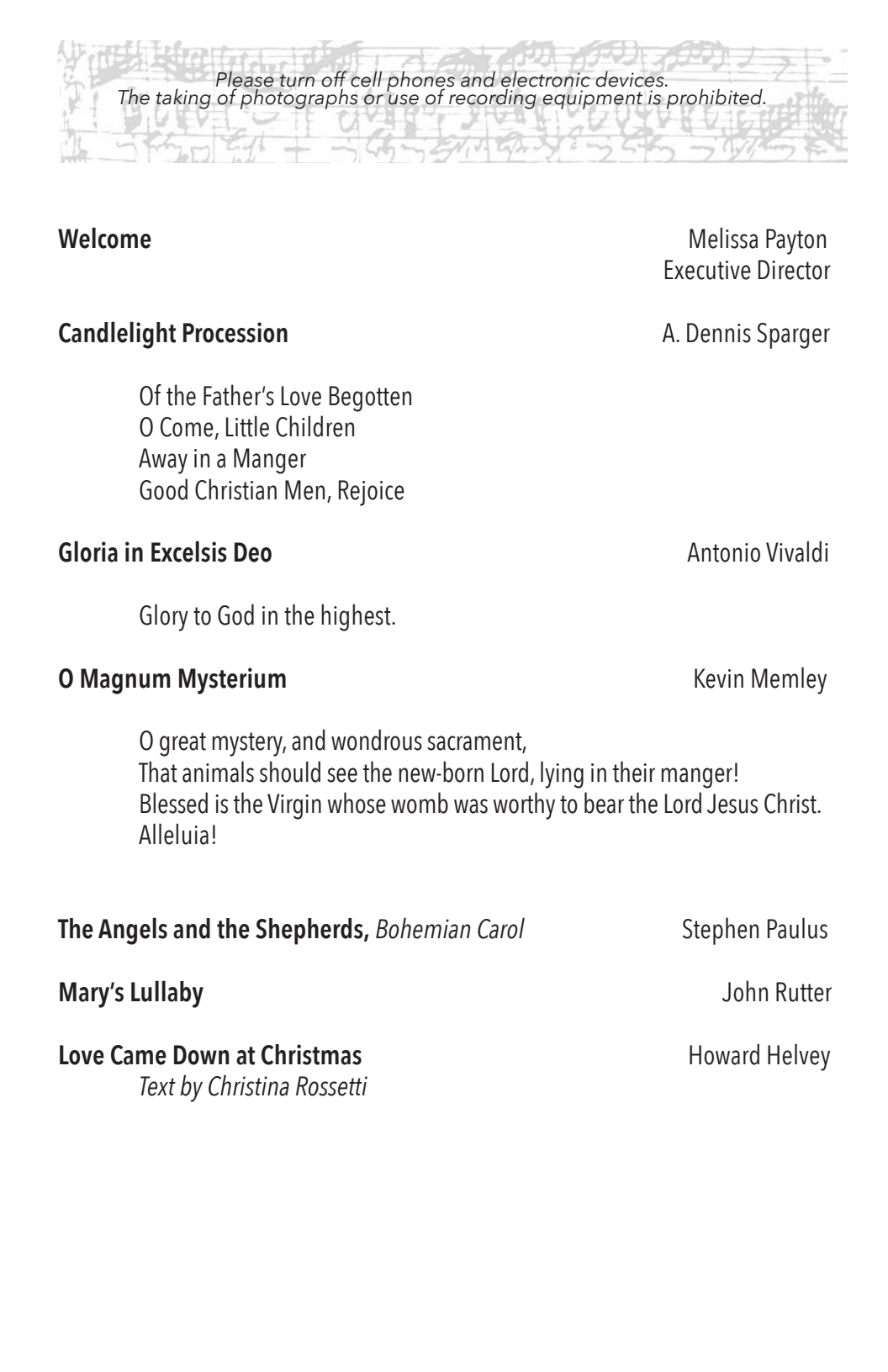


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BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE



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Welcome

Melissa Payton
Executive Director

Candlelight Procession

A. Dennis Sparger

Of the Father's Love Begotten
O Come, Little Children
Away in a Manger
Good Christian Men, Rejoice

Gloria in Excelsis Deo

Antonio Vivaldi

Glory to God in the highest.

O Magnum Mysterium

Kevin Memley

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!

The Angels and the Shepherds, *Bohemian Carol*

Stephen Paulus

Mary's Lullaby

John Rutter

Love Came Down at Christmas

Text by Christina Rossetti

Howard Helvey



Ron Klemm, Conductor

AUDIENCE CAROL

The audience is invited to stand and join in singing

The First Nowell

arr. Sir David Willcocks

The first Nowell the angel did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay, keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep:
 Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
 Born is the King of Israel!

They looked up and saw a star
Shining in the east, beyond them far;
And to the earth, it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night:
 Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
 Born is the King of Israel!

And by the light of that same star,
These wise men came from country far;
To seek for a king was their intent,
And to follow the star wherever it went:
 Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
 Born is the King of Israel!

Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heav'nly Lord,
That hath made heav'n and earth of naught,
And with his blood mankind hath bought:
 Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
 Born is the King of Israel!



Gloria

George Frideric Handel

Josefien Stoppelenburg, Soprano

Written during his stay in Italy in his early 20s, Handel's setting of the Gloria for virtuoso soprano and strings wasn't discovered until 2001. The following year The Bach Society presented the St. Louis premiere of this stunning work. Dr. James Staley, professor emeritus of Webster University, described the opening movement as "full of 'Handelian energy.' The subdued 'Et in terra pax' is simple and very effective with its melodic line spun out over a detached (staccato) accompaniment. The following 'Laudamus te' has a characteristic 'walking' bass line, and the section ends with a flowing violin solo. The 'Gratias agimus tibi' uses rather noticeable and dramatic cadence formulas to make its point. The 'Domine Deus' is like a recitative and leads into the expressive minor-key 'Qui tollis.' The final section consists of the 'Quoniam tu solus sanctus' and a lively 'Cum sancto spiritus.' By this Point, it is unrestrained virtuosity and musical invention."

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Gloria in excelsis Deo. | Glory to God on high. |
| 2. Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis. | And on earth peace to men of good will |
| 3. Laudamus te, benedicimus te,
adoramus te, glorificamus te. Gratias
agimus tibi propter magnum gloriam tuam. | We praise thee, we bless thee,
we adore thee, we glorify thee.
We give thanks to thee for thy great glory. |
| 4. Domine Deus, Rex caelestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens,
Domine Fili unigenite Jesu Christe,
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris, | Lord God, heavenly King,
God the Father omnipotent.
Lord the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father. |
| 5. Qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
suscipe deprecationem nostram.
Qui sedes ad dexteram patris,
miserere nobis. | Thou who takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.
Thou who takest away the sins of the world,
hear our prayer.
Thou who sittest at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us. |
| 6. Quoniam tu solus sanctus, tu solus Dominus,
tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe,
cum Sancto Spiritu in gloria Dei Patris
Amen. | For thou only art holy, thou only art the Lord,
thou only art most high, Jesus Christ, with he
Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father.
Amen. |



Stephen Eros, Assistant Conductor

AUDIENCE CAROL

God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen

arr. Sir David Willcocks

The audience is invited to stand and join in singing

God rest you merry, gentlemen, let nothing you dismay,
For Jesus Christ our Saviour was born upon this day,
To save us all from Satan's pow'r when we were gone astray:
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy.

From God our heav'nly Father a blessed angel came,
And unto certain shepherds brought tidings of the same,
How that in Bethlehem was born the Son of God by Name:
O tidings . . .

Now to the Lord sing praises, all you within this place,
And with true love and brotherhood each other now embrace;
This holy tide of Christmas all others doth deface:
O tidings . . .

Fum, Fum, Fum, *Catalonian Carol*

arr. Mack Wilberg

Jesus, Jesus, Rest Your Head, *Appalachian Carol*

arr. Barlow Bradford

Shepherd's Pipe Carol

John Rutter

Sussex Carol, *English carol*

arr. Elaine Hagenberg

Lullaby for the Christ Child

Ruth Watson Henderson

Josefien Stoppelenburg, Soprano

Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella, *French Carol*

arr. Stephen Mager

I Wonder as I Wander

arr. Barlow Bradford

Pat-a-Pan, *Burgundian carol in a Brazilian style*

arr. Tom Fettke & Thomas Grassi

**May the peace and joy of Christmas be with you this day
and throughout the New Year.**

GUEST ARTIST

JOSEFIEN STOPPELENBURG SOPRANO



Award-winning Dutch soprano Josefien Stoppelenburg is a specialist of Early Music and is best known for her dazzling vocal agility and her passionate and insightful interpretations. Stoppelenburg has performed all over the United States, Europe, Asia, and South America. Josefien has performed most major oratorio works by Handel, Haydn, Bach and Mozart, and many works by Schubert, Mendelssohn, and Monteverdi.

She recently appeared to great acclaim in "Annelies", an oratorio about Anne Frank by composer James Whitbourn. This English composer praised Stoppelenburg's outstanding performance, stating: "I have heard many performances, but few so accomplished and so full of understanding as hers." Her recent appearance on Chicago's classical radio program, "Live from WFMT", was selected as one of the 10 best performances of the year. Stoppelenburg's new album 'Modern Muses, Contemporary Treasures for Voice and Cello' (Navona Records) won a bronze medal in the Global Music Awards. In October she made her debut with Apollo's Fire, unto which critics named her 'the great Dutch soprano', 'remarkable', and having 'a rare sonorous depth of resonance'.

Stoppelenburg has taught vocal masterclasses at Indiana University (Jacobs School of Music), the University of Colorado, Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, and Illinois State University. She has performed for the Dutch Royal family on several occasions. When she is not performing or teaching, she creates vibrant, colorful paintings.

www.josefienstoppelenburg.com
www.josefienstoppelenburg-art.com



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Samantha Arten
Alexandra Billhartz
Rachel L.S. Jones
Karen Lohrman
Debbie Mann
Catherine McLean
Rita Schien*

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Jennifer Dunn
Kay Guebert
Carolyn Howk
Susan Niederer
Melissa Payton
Elaine Seipel

ALTO I

Kelly Beekman*
Mary Kate File
Theresa Flores
Carin Gado
Marissa Gibbons
Christa Hellert-Musick
Maggie Lowe
Stephanie McSwain
Alison Neace
Rosalind Stevens
Shephali Wulff

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Nichole Black
Peggy Cantrell
Danielle Feinstein
Nancy Greene
Julie Ooms
Rachel Tollett

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Will Kinsella
Avi Mazzeo
Scott Meidroth
Darrell Steinbach

TENOR II

Jacob Hinton
Peter Hensel
Alphie Kiu
Duane L. Olson
Carlos Flores Ramirez
Zachary Singer

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Stephen A. Eros
Greg Finch
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Parker Miller*
Dominic Pancella

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* indicates 2023-24 Young Artist
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YOUNG ARTISTS

RITA SCHIEN SOPRANO I



Rita Schien, Soprano, is thrilled to join The Bach Society as a Young Artist. Rita is currently studying Vocal Performance at the University of Missouri- St. Louis under the instruction of Dr. Leslie Allnatt. At UMSL, She sings with University Singers, Vocal Point, and Opera Theater. Rita is the President of the Choir Program at UMSL and has received multiple awards for her outstanding efforts in both the choral and vocal department. Over the past year, Rita has worked for The St. Louis Children's Choir, as an Ensemble Assistant, and has gotten involved with the Barbershop Harmony Society. She has served as the Tenor section leader for The Recruits chorus and for Acappellooza Summer/Fall. In 2023, Rita placed 10th in the International Varsity Barbershop Quartet contest with her quartet Evening Glow. Rita is grateful to have been given the opportunity to grow as a musician with The Bach Society.

SARAH COLLINS SOPRANO II



Sarah Collins is a senior at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, and is working towards her Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance. At SIUE, Sarah is a student of Dr. Marc Schapman. She began studying classical voice as a member of Opera Theatre of St. Louis's Artists in Training Program while she was in high school, and fell in love with the art. Her most recent performances were that of Despina in The Three Little Pigs with Opera Edwardsville and Maurya in Riders to the Sea with SIUE. She was also featured as a young artist at the Southern Illinois Music Festival. She recently won second place in Union Avenue Opera's Crescendo Competition. Sarah would like to thank her friends and family for their unwavering support in her musical endeavors.

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YOUNG ARTISTS

KELLY BEEKMAN ALTO



Kelly Beekman is a St. Louis native and a recent music graduate from Webster University. She is thrilled to be working with The Bach Society of Saint Louis for their 2023-2024 season. Joining her first choir when she was six, she has devoted her life to music ever since, dazzling audiences with her captivating stage presence and astounding voice in many genres, including classical, jazz, musical theater, and contemporary pop and rock. She was a recipient of the Christine Brewer Annual Scholarship in Vocal Music Performance. She also received departmental honors for her tireless dedication to her craft and her outstanding performances in opera and jazz. Other achievements include participating in Union Avenue Opera's crescendo program and earning a role in the chorus of their 2022 production of Eugene Onegin. Upcoming roles include chorus for two Winter Opera St. Louis productions, *Manon Lescaut* and *Naughty Marietta*.

PARKER MILLER BARITONE



Parker Miller (He/They) is Honored to be a Young Artist with The Bach Society in their '23-'24 season. He's currently completing his Bachelor's Degree in Music Theory with a Principle Vocal Study at the University of Missouri-St. Louis (UMSL) with plans to pursue a Master's Degree in Conducting or Music Direction soon thereafter. Parker was raised in music, beginning piano lessons at 5, and quickly developing a love for studying music and singing. He recently traveled to Louisville, Kentucky for the Barbershop Harmony Society's International Convention, singing baritone with the Ambassadors of Harmony (AOH) who took home 1st place in the Chorus championship. Recently, his quartet, *Momento*, ranked 9th in the world in the Next Generation Youth Quartet Contest and also earned the 139th Street award, netting them a prize of \$10,000 due to their "Novice Quartet" status. He also worked on the administrative team for the Acapellooza Summer Camp hosted by UMSL and AOH which brings students together to grow as musicians and people through barbershop singing. When he's not enveloped in music, school, or work, he spends his time writing, playing *Dungeons and Dragons*, and caring for his two beautiful daughters: *Tigress* and *Panther*.

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