



CHORUS AMERICA OPENING PERFORMANCE

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 4 & THURSDAY, JUNE 5, 2025
ST. STANISLAUS POLISH CATHOLIC CHURCH

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Photography and video recording during the performance is prohibited.

Our concerts are professionally recorded, 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. Some songs are grouped together to create an emotional experience.

Thank you and enjoy the concert.



A. Dennis Sparger, Music Director and Conductor, 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. To date, he has 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 30 to cultivate future soloists. To date, over 70 young singers have been assisted by this program. He also established a professional core of paid Principal Singers, providing employment opportunities for singers with additional vocal training.

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. Dr. Sparger 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 is a conductor, organist, pianist and teacher who has built a career in the St. Louis area encompassing the traditions of Western classical, American musical theatre and jazz music. Stephen completed a Master of Arts in Choral

Conducting and Bachelor of Music in Organ Performance at Webster University. In addition to his primary studies with William Partridge and Trent Patterson, he studied voice with Robert Ayllón, jazz piano with Carolbeth True and collaborative piano with Joe Neske.

Stephen has been the Assistant Conductor of The Bach Society of Saint Louis since 2013, and he has worked in the field of sacred music for nearly two decades. He is the Director of Liturgy and Music at St. Clare of Assisi Catholic Church in O'Fallon, IL. There, he is responsible for the formation and training of over 400 volunteers, and he leads nearly 100 volunteer singers in the parish choir and two children's choirs in a robust, diverse repertoire. On the diocesan level, he has served as organist and choirmaster for pontifical liturgies at the Cathedral of St. Peter in Belleville and regularly assists the Chancery and Office of Worship with liturgies throughout the diocese.

As a collaborative pianist, he has worked with some of the finest companies in St. Louis, including The Muny, The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis and Union Avenue Opera and serves on the collaborative piano faculty at Webster University.

Stephen is a lifelong resident of Belleville, IL. He resides with his wife and children in his grandparents' former home, next door to his favorite neighbors, his parents.



SANDRA GEARY, PIANIST

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 since 1993 and 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.

LENORA-MARYA ANOP

CONCERTMASTER



Violinist Lenora-Marya Anop is "ravishing...with [her] lean yet intense...violin particularly capturing the spirit of [the] music" (San Francisco Chronicle); "a highly skilled and invested violinist, who brought a lovely singing tone to her playing...top-notch performance(s)...meltily sensitive" (St. Louis Post-Dispatch). She "played with balance and sympathy...[and] achieved a fine, lyric intensity" (Cleveland Plain Dealer).

Dr. Anop enjoys a busy career as a pedagogue, soloist, chamber musician, concertmaster and orchestra leader. In April 2025, she celebrates her 25th year as the Concertmaster of The Bach Society of Saint Louis Orchestra! She is also the Concertmaster of the Salem Chamber Orchestra and the Orchestra of the Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis.

Noteworthy projects include her recording entitled "Bach Unlocked" following her assembly of a scholarly violin edition of J.S. Bach's *Cello Suites Nos. 1 and 2*. An avid scholarly and historically appropriate artist, she performs equally comfortably on Baroque, Classical and modern instruments. Truthful to Bach's intentions, she performs *Brandenburg Concerto No. 1* in rare fashion: on a period-appropriate *violino piccolo*.

2024-25 performance highlights include multiple solo and chamber music performances in Carnegie Recital Hall (New York) as well as premieres and concerts in Italy as faculty at the InterHarmony International Music Festival.

Previously First Violin of the professionally managed Rackham String Quartet (RSQ), she performed throughout the United States, Europe and Australia winning five national and international chamber music competitions. "The Strad" magazine labeled the RSQ "a force to be reckoned with".

Dr. Anop began her violin studies at age three in Denver, Colorado. She was one of the first Suzuki violin students in the United States under the tutelage of a violinist trained by the legendary Suzuki pioneer John Kendall who, at that time, was the violin professor at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE). Lenora's musical life came full circle in 1997 when she was appointed to SIUE's music faculty, where she is Professor of Violin and Director of Strings. A passionate, dedicated and accomplished pedagogue, Lenora's talented and capable students have been appointed to teaching and orchestral positions worldwide. Dr. Anop teaches many students, grand-students and great grand-students, as her former students send her the next generation, knowing that they will have an exceptionally dedicated mentor.

Dr. Anop earned her Bachelor of Music with honors in performance from the New England Conservatory, Master of Music from Yale University and Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Michigan.

PROGRAM

The Bach Society Chorus
A. Dennis Sparger, Music Director and Conductor
Stephen Eros, Assistant Conductor
Sandra Geary, Accompanist
Lenora-Marya Anop, Concertmaster

Laudate Dominum, Psalm 150 Paweł Łukaszewski (b. 1968, Poland)
Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne SA PWM 11 549

O Salutaris Hostia, St Thomas Aquinas Ēriks Ešenvalds (b. 1977, Latvia)
Musica Baltica MB 0993

Dum medium silentium, Wisdom 18: 14-15 Vytautas Miškinis (b. 1954, Lithuania)
Stephen Eros, Conductor
Carus 7.363

God Be in My Head, French c. 1490 Howard Helvey (b. 1968, Missouri)
Beckenhorst Press BP 2352

O Taste and See, Psalm 34 Stephen Mager (Missouri)
Manuscript, stephenmager.com

All-Night Vigil, Opus 37 Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943, Russia)
7. Glory to God in the Highest, The Lesser Doxology
8. Praise the Name of the Lord
Musica Russica

Who Shall Separate Us, Romans 8:35, 38-39 James MacMillan (b.1959, Scotland)
Boosey & Hawkes 19333

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Allen Schwamb
Gary Voelker

Pianist: Sandra Geary

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