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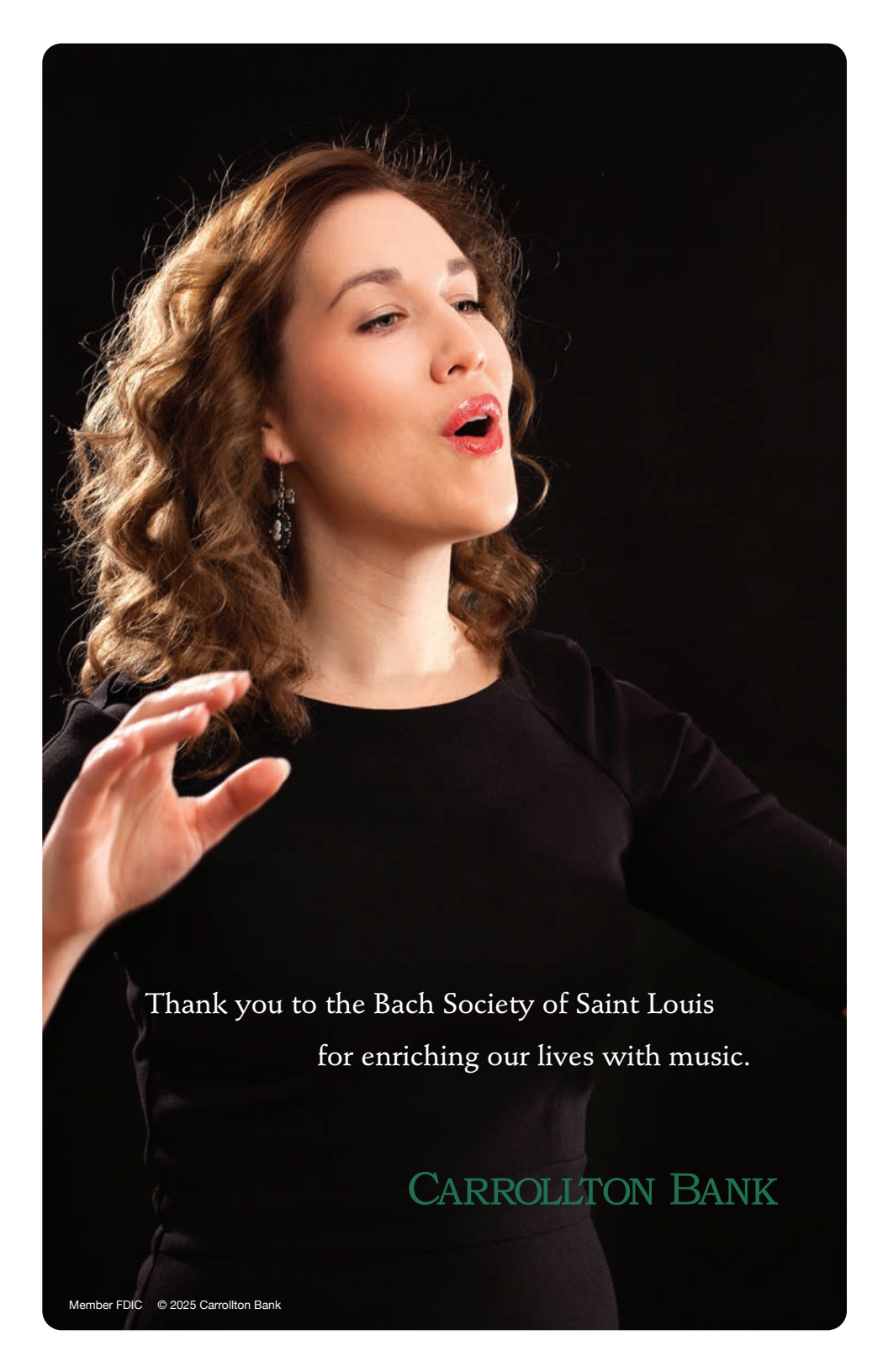
# BACH'S MAGNIFICAT

SUNDAY, MAY 17, 2026 | 3 PM

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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OF SAINT LOUIS

Music Director and Conductor, A. Dennis Sparger



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## A. DENNIS SPARGER, MUSIC DIRECTOR & CONDUCTOR

**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 four 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.



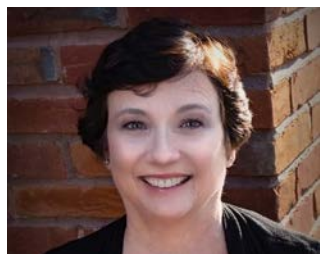
## STEPHEN EROS, ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR

**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.



## GAIL HINTZ, PIANIST

**Gail Hintz** holds a Bachelor of Music degree in piano performance from Webster College, a Master of Music degree in vocal accompaniment and coaching from the University of Illinois, and spent a year in Paris studying piano at L'Ecole Normale de Musique. She worked as a vocal coach/accompanist in New York City for several years, coaching singers, accompanying in voice teachers' studios and serving as music director/pianist for various regional opera and musical theatre companies and tours. Gail co-founded the Ozark Actors Theatre in her hometown of Rolla, MO, in 1987, and moved back to St. Louis in 1989. She coaches singers privately, accompanies recitals and auditions, manages and accompanies rehearsals for the St. Louis Symphony Chorus, and enjoys freelance work with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, St. Joseph Academy and other schools and arts organizations in St. Louis. Gail is honored to serve as interim accompanist for The Bach Society of Saint Louis this season.

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A. DENNIS SPARGER, MUSIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR

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GUEST ARTISTS

NOLA RICHARDSON, SOPRANO  
VERONICA ROAN, MEZZO SOPRANO

STEVEN SOPH, TENOR  
TYLER DUNCAN, BARITONE

3:00 P.M.  
SUNDAY, MAY 17, 2026

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH  
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

# PROGRAM

*The aim and final end of all music should be none other than the glory of God and the refreshment of the soul. – Johann Sebastian Bach*

## Johann Sebastian Bach

1685-1750

### Magnificat in D, BWV 243

Nola Richardson, Soprano

Steven Soph, Tenor

Veronica Roan, Mezzo soprano

Tyler Duncan, Baritone

#### Chorus

Magnificat anima mea Dominum

My soul magnifies the Lord

#### Soprano aria

Et exultavit spiritus meus

And my spirit has rejoiced

#### Soprano aria with oboe d'amore

Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae

He has regarded the low estate of His handmaiden

#### Chorus

Omnes generations

By all generations

#### Bass aria

Quia fecit mihi magna

For He who is mighty

#### Mezzo soprano and Tenor duet

Et misericordia ejus a progenie

And His mercy is on them who fear Him

#### Chorus

Fecit potentiam in brachio suo

He has shown strength with his arm

#### Tenor aria

Deposuit potentes de sede

He has deposed the mighty from their seats

#### Mezzo soprano aria

Esurientes implevit bonis

The hungry He has filled with good things

**Chorus**

Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros

As it was spoken to our fathers

Nola Richardson, Soprano

Calista Goldwasser, Mezzo soprano

Veronica Roan, Mezzo soprano

**Chorus**

Gloria Patri

Glory be to the Father

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**INTERMISSION**

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**Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach**  
1714-1788**Magnificat in D, Wq 215****Chorus**

Magnificat anima mea Dominum

My soul magnifies the Lord

**Soprano aria**

Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae

For He has regarded the low estate of His handmaiden

**Tenor aria**

Quia fecit mihi magna

He who is mighty

**Chorus**

Et misericordia ejus a progenie

And His mercy is on them who fear Him

**Bass aria**

Fecit potentiam in brachio suo

He has shown strength with his arm

**Mezzo soprano and Tenor duet**

Deposuit potentes de sede

He has deposed the mighty from their seats

**Mezzo soprano aria**

Suscepit Israel puerum suum

He has helped His servant Israel

**Chorus**

Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros

As it was spoken to our fathers

**Chorus**

Gloria Patri

Glory be to the Father

# PROGRAM NOTES

## JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH'S MAGNIFICAT

When Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) was officially inaugurated in his new position in Leipzig on May 5, 1723, he began his work with much enthusiasm, composing a new cantata every week. Biographer Klaus Eidam relates that, already in this first year, "the Christmas present he gave them was a *Magnificat* that is among his most superb musical creations." This Latin *Magnificat*, a setting in E flat major, included four carols or hymns particularly appropriate for Christmas that were interspersed between the movements drawn from the Gospel of St. Luke. A decade later, Bach re-worked the *Magnificat*, transposing it down to D major, omitting the four extra pieces, and making other minor changes. This is the version most often heard today.

The festive nature of the *Magnificat in D* is apparent from the opening measures. Here Bach uses the largest orchestra available to him at the time—three trumpets, timpani, pairs of flutes and oboes, bassoon, strings and continuo. The chorus is also expanded to include five voice parts, with divided sopranos. Choral movements are alternated with solo movements to create an overall arch form, and the final movement—as it was in the beginning—is a return to the musical theme that began it all. In between, Bach clearly expresses the joy of Mary, the mightiness and power of God, the tenderness of His mercy, and God's wrath in dealing with the proud of heart.

Today's performance marks the 17th time The Bach Society has performed Bach's *Magnificat*: 1950, 53, 57, 62, 65, 69, 73, 76, 80, 83, 87, 92, 96, 2002, 12 and 19.

## C.P.E. BACH'S MAGNIFICAT

Carl Philipp Emanuel (1714-1788), the fifth child of Johann Sebastian and Maria Barbara, was born in Weimar. He studied music under his father and, in 1738, graduated from Leipzig University with a degree in law. He then moved to Potsdam where he was harpsichordist at the court of Frederick the Great. It was there, in 1749, that he composed his setting of the *Magnificat*, his first large-scale work. It was likely presented to Princess Amalie of Prussia, the sister of Frederick the Great, as an application for the position of Court Musical Director. Research by Christine Blanken, however, suggests that "he probably composed the *Magnificat* to support his unsuccessful application for the post of Thomaskantor in Leipzig," the position held by his ailing father. The work was again performed when C.P.E. moved to Hamburg in 1768, where he succeeded his godfather Georg Philipp Telemann. It was performed again in Berlin in April, 1787, after he made several revisions to the score, including the addition of trumpets and timpani. Even in his later years, C.P.E. considered his *Magnificat* to be among his finest works.

His setting of the *Magnificat* text, like his father's, is festive in nature. And the instrumentation is quite similar: pairs of flutes and oboes, bassoon, three trumpets and timpani, continuo and strings; but it also contains two horns, and the chorus is in four parts rather than five. The work includes "brilliant coloratura arias and a duet...contrasted by a lyrical, songlike aria [in the *Suscepit Israel*]." Blanken continues, these arias "bear witness equally to a great gift for melodic invention and the highest compositional ability, and they demand extreme skill in performance." All the musicians on stage today would agree the work also demands extreme stamina!

Today's performance marks the 3rd time the Bach Society has performed C.P.E. Bach's *Magnificat*: previous performances were in 1989 and 1995.

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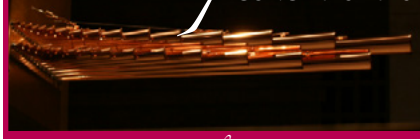


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# GUEST ARTIST

## NOLA RICHARDSON

### SOPRANO



Recognized as an “especially impressive” soprano (*The New York Times*), Australian-American Nola Richardson has been particularly noted for her performances of Bach, Handel and Mozart and has won First Prize in all three major American competitions focused on the music of J.S. Bach. Recent highlights include Handel's *Samson* with the Oratorio Society of New York at Carnegie Hall, Bach's *B Minor Mass* with American Classical Orchestra at Lincoln Center, a performance for Leipzig BachFest with the Bach Choir of Bethlehem, and her Kennedy Center debut in Handel's *Radamisto* with Opera Lafayette. In the 2025-2026 season, she made

her debut with LA Opera and Beth Morrison Projects, creating the title role in the new opera *Hildegard* by Sarah Kirkland Snider. She will perform Handel's *Messiah* with the Tucson and Kansas City Symphonies, Mozart's *Exsultate Jubilate* with Helena Symphony, and make solo appearances with Philharmonia Baroque, Ars Lyrica Houston and American Classical Orchestra, among others. Nola has performed *Messiah* with the Colorado, Kansas City, Pittsburgh, Helena, Pacific and Seattle Symphonies and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra; and works of Bach with the Atlanta, Baltimore, and Seattle Symphonies and at the Cincinnati May Festival. She frequently appears with major baroque orchestras and opera companies such as the Boston Early Music Festival, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, American Bach Soloists, Voices of Music, Ars Lyrica, Colorado Bach Ensemble, Twelfth Night and Musica Angelica. Her recent operatic appearances include *Hansel and Gretel* (Gretel) with Helena Symphony, *Amadigi di Gaula* (Oriana) with Ars Lyrica Houston and Hasse's *Marc' Antonio e Cleopatra* (Cleopatra) with Baroque Chamber Orchestra of Colorado. Nola's discography includes recordings with the Cantata Collective (Bach's *St. John Passion*, *Easter Oratorio* and *Magnificat*) and Baltimore Choral Arts (Mozart *Requiem*). She is the first and only soprano to receive the prestigious DMA degree in Early Music Voice from Yale.

# GUEST ARTIST

VERONICA ROAN

MEZZO SOPRANO



Veronica Roan is a New York based mezzo-soprano comfortable in a wide variety of concert and chamber music. She was most recently a finalist in the New York Oratorio Society Lyndon Woodside Competition and a 2025 Virginia Best Adams Fellow at Carmel Bach Festival. Other recent work includes J.S. Bach's *Köthener Trauermusik* under the direction of Masaaki Suzuki, songs of Charles Ives in Generations of Music at Yale in Weill Hall, and Haydn's *Stabat Mater* under the direction of Stefan Parkman. In the spring of 2024, she toured with Juilliard415 and Yale Schola Cantorum as the alto soloist in Bach's *Mass in B Minor*, under the direction of David Hill, after she

placed second in the Colorado Bach Ensemble's national Bach Competition for Young Artists. Veronica's solo work in 2023 included Handel's *L'allegro* with Juilliard415 under the direction of Masaaki Suzuki, *Déesse Flore* and *Hyacinth* in *La couronne de fleurs* with The Sebastians (New York, NY) and Mozart's *Requiem* with Music at Trinity (Vero Beach, FL). Her immersion in concert music at Yale has allowed her to collaborate with young composers, and she enjoyed premiering Brittny Benton's *Only in Dreams* with New Music New Haven.

Veronica's career has also encompassed choral ensemble performance and sacred music. She was a member of the 2022-2023 VOCES8 US Scholars program, with whom she recorded works by composers such as Reena Esmail, Shruthi Rajasekar, and Paul Smith with YourClassical at American Public Radio. She was also delighted to collaborate with VOCES8 in the U.S. premiere concert of Christopher Tin's Grammy-nominated work *The Lost Birds*. She performed regularly with chamber groups in Dallas, including Orpheus Chamber Singers, Incarnatus, Dallas Chamber Choir and others.

In addition to her performance work, Veronica was privileged to teach undergraduate and secondary voice to Yale University students. Upon her graduation from Yale, she received the Director's Award from the Yale Institute of Sacred Music for her research presentation on grave goods in modern America. She holds degrees from Yale University and the University of North Texas.

# GUEST ARTIST

STEVEN SOPH

TENOR



Praised as a “superb vocal soloist” (*The Washington Post*) and noted for his “impressive clarity and color” (*The New York Times*), tenor Steven Soph has built a career defined by stylistic fluency, narrative clarity, and a deep commitment to the concert repertoire. Performing music that spans the Renaissance to the present day, he has appeared in many of the nation’s most distinguished venues, including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Boston’s Symphony Hall, and the Kennedy Center. He has been featured as a soloist with ensembles such as The Cleveland Orchestra, Seattle Symphony, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, the American

Classical Orchestra, and the Handel + Haydn Society of Boston, with notable performances including Stravinsky’s *Threni* under Franz Welser-Möst, Handel programs with Ton Koopman, and Mozart’s *Requiem* at Carnegie Hall and beyond.

Central to his artistic identity is his work as the Evangelist in the Passion settings of J.S. Bach, a role he has performed with ensembles and festivals across the United States. His broader repertoire encompasses Bach’s major works, including the *Mass in B minor* and *Magnificat*, as well as cornerstone pieces such as Handel’s *Messiah*, Haydn’s *Creation*, Beethoven’s *Missa Solemnis*, Berlioz’s *Requiem*, Britten’s *War Requiem*, and contemporary works by composers including Steve Reich, Judith Weir and Stacy Garrop. In addition to his solo career, he is a sought-after ensemble artist, collaborating regularly with GRAMMY-nominated True Concord Voices & Orchestra, GRAMMY Award-winning Conspirare, Yale Choral Artists, Santa Fe Desert Chorale, and Ensemble Altera, with international festival appearances in Utrecht, Regensburg, Maastricht, and Antwerp. A graduate of the University of North Texas and the Yale School of Music, he trained at Yale’s Institute of Sacred Music with tenor James Taylor.

# GUEST ARTIST

## TYLER DUNCAN

BARITONE



With a voice described as “honey-coloured and warm, yet robust and commanding” (*The Globe and Mail*), baritone Tyler Duncan has performed worldwide to great acclaim in both opera and concert repertoire. Throughout his varied career, he has performed with several of the world’s leading orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Tafelmusik, Minnesota Orchestra and the Kansas City Symphony.

Also an accomplished opera performer, Duncan has appeared often at the Metropolitan Opera, featured in roles such as Prince Yamadori in Puccini’s *Madama*

*Butterfly*, The Journalist in *Lulu* or Fiorello in *The Barber of Seville*. He also returned to the roster of The Metropolitan Opera for their new production of Terence Blanchard’s *Champion*. Other recent roles include Count Almaviva in *The Marriage of Figaro* with Pacific Opera Victoria and Amarillo Opera, and Morales in Bizet’s *Carmen* under Seiji Ozawa. Duncan is also passionate about new opera; recent roles include Raymond in Nic Gotham’s *Nigredo Hotel* with City Opera Vancouver, and in the world premiere of Jonathan Berger’s *Leonardo* at New York’s 92nd Street Y.

In the realm of Baroque music, Duncan’s versatility and skill have him in high demand, especially performing the works of Bach. He has been regularly seen with Les violons du Roy, in Quebec City, Tafelmusik (Toronto), Early Music Vancouver, Music of the Baroque (Chicago), Handel and Haydn, Boston Early Music Festival, and the Oregon Bach Festival.

Frequently paired with pianist Erika Switzer, Duncan has given acclaimed recitals in New York, Boston, Chicago, Paris, and throughout Canada, Germany, Sweden, France and South Africa. Together, they have premiered many new works written for them by composers. Alongside their debut album *English Songs à la française* for Bridge Records, they have released *A Left Coast* on the same label, featuring songs from Canada’s west coast. His singing has been recognized internationally with numerous awards, including Grammy and Juno nominations and prizes from the Naumburg, London’s Wigmore Hall, and Munich’s ARD competitions.

As a faculty member of the prestigious Vocal Arts Program at Bard College, Duncan finds joy in helping the next generation of singers find their true voice. Originally from British Columbia, Canada, he resides in New York’s beautiful Hudson Valley, where you might find him exploring roadside farmstands in search of the perfect, freshly picked heirloom apple.

# THE BACH SOCIETY OF SAINT LOUIS CHORUS

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## **SOPRANO II**

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**Pianist: Gail Hintz**

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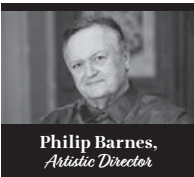
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**Transformation:** The Birth of Jesus Christ  
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**Justice:** From Abraham Lincoln to MLK  
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April 19, 2026 | 3pm

**Commonwealth:** Queen Elizabeth II  
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Christ Church Cathedral

May 31, 2026 | 3pm

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# YOUNG ARTISTS

## KELLY N. BEEKMAN MEZZO SOPRANO



**Kelly N. Beekman**, mezzo-soprano, is honored to have been chosen by The Bach Society of Saint Louis to represent their Young Artist program for her third consecutive season. She is a classically trained local artist who specializes in multiple genres. She graduated from Webster University with a Bachelor of Arts in Music, focusing on training her voice in both operatic and contemporary singing styles. While at Webster, she was a recipient of the Christine Brewer Annual Scholarship in Vocal Music Performance, and she received departmental honors for her tireless dedication to her craft and her outstanding performances. She has had the privilege to represent

other local music organizations such as Union Avenue Opera (*Eugene Onegin*, 2022 and *Carmen*, 2024; Chorus) and Winter Opera St. Louis (*Manon Lescaut*, *Naughty Marietta*, 2024 and *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *Anna Bolena*, 2025; Chorus). She is a founding member of Magpie Opera Collective, a local arts organization dedicated to providing opportunities and performance experience to early-career classical vocalists. Outside of the classical realm, Kelly is a backup singer for the local funk-rock band Eldraco and Free Nation, and she writes and records her own contemporary music.

## CALISTA GOLDWASSER MEZZO SOPRANO



**Calista Goldwasser**, mezzo-soprano, returns to The Bach Society of Saint Louis as a Young Artist for a second season. She holds a Master of Music from Webster University and a Bachelor of Music from DePauw University. Calista regularly sings in the opera chorus of Winter Opera St. Louis and Union Avenue Opera. This year, you can find her in the chorus of *The Sorcerer* and *Roméo et Juliette* with Winter Opera. In addition to working with these organizations, Calista also founded the Magpie Opera Collective along with her operatic colleagues to create more opportunities for early-career operatic voices in the St. Louis area. In addition to performing, Calista

teaches voice lessons with Patterson Performing Arts and is the primary instructor for The Bach Society's own "Finding Your Voice" outreach program. Calista looks forward to strengthening her relationship with The Bach Society both as a Young Artist and educator.

## KEVIN NEACE TENOR



**Kevin Neace**, tenor, is thrilled to return to The Bach Society of Saint Louis as a Young Artist. He holds a Bachelor of Music from Wheaton College and a Master of Music from the University of Memphis. While pursuing his degrees, he performed with numerous professional ensembles, including the Rhodes Mastersingers and the Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh and served as a cantor for St. John Lutheran and St. Louis Catholic churches. Kevin made his professional debut in Union Avenue Opera's *Aida* and has previously performed in the University of Memphis productions of *Don Giovanni*, *The Cousin From Nowhere* and *Trouble In Tahiti*, where he received praise for

his navigation of operatic and jazz vocal stylings as well as his impeccable comedic timing. An Alton native and a lifelong Bach Society fan, Kevin presently performs with the Magpie Opera Collective and The Cathedral Basilica's Schola Cantorum and looks forward to growing as a musician with The Bach Society.

## RITA SCHIEN SOPRANO



**Rita Schien**, soprano, is thrilled to return for another season as a Young Artist with The Bach Society of Saint Louis. She earned her Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from the University of Missouri-St. Louis, where she studied with Dr. Leslie Allnatt and was awarded the Presser Scholarship in 2024. Her performance credits include Winter Opera St. Louis (*The Magic Flute*, *The Sorcerer*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*), Magpie Opera Collective, Union Avenue Opera, the St. Louis Women's Chorale and The Recruits Chorus. In addition to her performing career, she serves as the Enrollment & Production Manager for The St. Louis Children's Choirs. She is thankful for the

opportunities The Bach Society has provided to further her musical growth.

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—❧—❧—❧—❧—❧—

October 5	Solemn Choral Evensong*
October 19	Choral Evensong
November 2	Solemn Choral Evensong for The Solemnity of All Saints*
November 6   6:30 PM	Solemn Choral Evensong (The Living Church Conference)*
November 16	Choral Evensong
December 7	Candlelight Advent Lessons and Carols
December 21	A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols (Prelude music begins at 4:40 PM)
January 4	Choral Evensong for The Epiphany
January 18	Choral Evensong
February 1	Choral Evensong
February 15	Choral Evensong
March 1	Lenten Choral Evensong at Saint Louis Abbey
March 15	Solemn Lenten Choral Evensong*
March 29	Solemn Choral Evensong for Palm Sunday*
April 19	Choral Evensong for Eastertide
May 3	Eastertide Vespers sung by the monks of Saint Louis Abbey
May 17	Choral Evensong for Eastertide
June 7	Solemn Choral Evensong for Corpus Christi*

\*Hypo-allergenic incense will be used.

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—❧—❧—❧—❧—❧—

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