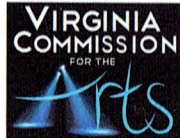




Cara Walton Photography

Celebrating our 51st Season



The Shenandoah Valley Choral Society
Curtis Nolley, Artistic Director

Presents

Benjamin Britten

**Ceremony
of
Carols**

With Carols and Songs for Christmas

Bridgewater Church of the Brethren
Friday, December 17, 7:30 PM
Sunday, December 19, 3:00 PM



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To Our Audience

Welcome to the first concert in our 51st season. We have been away too long and are excited to once again share our music with the Shenandoah Valley. We are very grateful for your presence here and for your continued support.

We begin tonight with the joyful *Fantasia on Adeste Fidelis* by Dr. John Barr and Benjamin Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols*, featuring soloists from the JMU School of Music, Vocal Performance. The second half features a variety of traditional and contemporary carol settings to rekindle your Christmas spirit and also features piano four-hands from our accompanists, Amy Robertson and Debbie McGuire.

Please follow the upcoming events on our website at singshenandoah.org. You may also friend the Choral Society on Facebook -- another way to follow our activities.

In observance of public health protocols in the current situation, we ask that everyone please remain masked during the concert. Now relax with your friends and neighbors as the Choral Society presents music to arouse the expectation of Christmas ...

Ron Matthews, President



The Shenandoah Valley Choral Society
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The Shenandoah Valley Choral Society gratefully acknowledges the wonderful, cooperative spirit of the Park View Mennonite Church for the use of its facilities for rehearsals and board meetings.

Program cover photography courtesy of Cara Zimmerman Walton



Curtis Nolley, Artistic Director In his 21st season as director of the Shenandoah Valley Choral Society, Curtis Nolley leads the distinguished ensemble in its 51st season. In addition to his responsibilities with the SVCS, Curtis serves as church musician and free-lance choral conductor. For 43 years he served as music educator serving students as choral director and music

specialist at every level. For 27 years he taught at the elementary, middle and secondary levels in Augusta County and was named the division Teacher of the Year in 2000. Curtis then served a five-year tenure as choral director at Turner Ashby High School in Rockingham County, eleven years as Music Specialist in Harrisonburg City Public Schools, and a two-year assignment as Visiting Director of Choral Music at Bridgewater College. Curtis continues to serve as choir director at Bridgewater Church of the Brethren. In 2012, Curtis was the recipient of the Virginia Choral Director Association's Sydney Swiggett Award for outstanding service and contribution to choral music education in the Commonwealth, and in 2014, the James Madison University Professional Service Award recognizing outstanding service to the music education profession and James Madison University. A native of the Shenandoah Valley, Curtis holds a BA in Music Education from Bridgewater College and a MM in Choral Conducting from the University of Colorado, Boulder. Curtis is active as an adjudicator and guest conductor for scholastic festival choirs across the state of Virginia. An active leader in music education, Curtis is a past president of the Virginia Elementary Music Educators Association and the Virginia Music Educators Association. He continues to serve on VMEA's executive board.



Amy Robertson, accompanist, has been piano accompanist for the SVCS since 1996. She is also a freelance and staff accompanist at James Madison University and teaches privately. She lives with her family in Port Republic, Virginia. Amy holds a BA in Piano Performance with an emphasis in accompanying and coaching, and a Masters in Piano Performance from James Madison University. She has been a featured soloist with the Prince William Symphony Orchestra

and a finalist in the Hilton Head Island International Competition. In 1997, Amy premiered a piece for cello and piano at the Mid-Atlantic Chapter annual meeting of the College Music Society. In 2000, she auditioned for and attended the American Institute of Music Studies program in Graz, Austria. While there, Amy focused her studies on German Lied and accompanied vocalists in local concerts.



Debbie McGuire, accompanist, serves as assistant accompanist and sings with her fellow altos in the SVCS. She is a professional freelance accompanist who has worked with church, school, and collegiate performance ensembles throughout Virginia. She has taught at Mary Baldwin College and served as piano instructor at Stuart Hall School in Staunton, Virginia. In addition to her service with the SVCS, she has served as guest accompanist for scholastic festival choral ensembles throughout the region. Ms. McGuire is a graduate of the University of Richmond and received her Master's

Degree in Church Music from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. Her private studio and residence is in Rockingham County, Virginia.

Dr. Jaclyn Wappel, Harpist

Jaclyn Wappel is an experienced performer, instructor, and published scholar. She is known throughout the United States, Europe, Hong Kong, Peru, and India where she has presented recitals, masterclasses, workshops, and engaged in other collaborations with international ensembles and composers. Dr. Wappel is passionate about music inspired by South and Southeast Asian cultures and is currently a member of the American Harp Society Journal's editorial board.



In 2016 she earned her Doctor of Arts degree from Ball State University under the instruction of Elizabeth Richter and has recently moved to North Dakota where she actively maintains online and in-person private harp studios. Before her move in the Fall of 2021, Dr. Wappel was Instructor of Harp at James Madison University and Washington and Lee University. An avid traveler, she still continues to

perform in Virginia which has included the Richmond, Williamsburg, Charlottesville, and Waynesboro Symphony Orchestras. Dr. Wappel now teaches virtually for Southern Virginia University, looks forward to teaching harp at Minot State University in January of 2022, and is thrilled to perform Mozart's *Concerto for Flute and Harp* with the Butler Philharmonic Orchestra in Hamilton, Ohio in February of 2022. Outside of harp, Dr. Wappel enjoys spending time with her husband Chris, taking Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and Aerial Yoga classes, and cuddling with her sweet beagle Ruby.

Meghan Willey

Meghan Willey is a native of Fairfax, Virginia. Currently, she is a rising junior pursuing a bachelor's degree in Vocal Performance at James Madison University under the tutelage of Dr. Carrie Stevens. While at JMU, Meghan has sung roles in several JMU opera productions including Phyllis in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Iolanthe*. She also covered for Queen of the Night in JMU's online production of *The Magic Flute* during COVID-19. In addition to performing in opera productions, Meghan has also participated in many national and local vocal competitions. She recently placed third in the 2021 NATS National Student Auditions Classical Division and 2nd in the 2021 Sue Goetz Ross memorial voice competition. This past summer, Meghan performed a solo with a baroque chamber ensemble at the Shenandoah Valley Bach Festival. She also traveled to Roanoke, Virginia as a Young Artist with Roanoke Opera and looks forward to future performances in Roanoke. This winter, she will be singing as a soloist in two oratorio works, Benjamin Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols* as well as Handel's *Messiah*.



Kaylea Manners

Kaylea Manners is a freshman mezzo-soprano at James Madison University, majoring in music performance. Before her time at JMU, she was a student at Smithfield High School, The Governor's School for the Arts, and an active participant in her local community theater performing in shows such as *Legally Blonde*, *Big Fish*, and playing Ruggiero in Handel's *Alcina*. She loves to perform and thrives on the stage. Her on-stage idol is the fabulous mezzo-soprano, Kate Lindsey. She hopes to one day be an



opera singer on the stage of the Metropolitan Opera, just the same as her idol.



Megan Humes

Megan Humes is a senior vocal Music Education major with a minor in Music and Human Services at James Madison University. She sings with the university's top auditioned chamber ensemble, The Madison Singers, and is a member of JMU's chapter of the American Choral Directors Association. Before coming to JMU, she received her Associates of Arts Degree in Music from Northern Virginia

Community College in Fairfax, VA, her home town.

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PROGRAM

Fantasia on Adeste Fideles

John G. Barr

Dr. John G. Barr, organ

(at the conductor's direction, the audience is invited to join in singing)

(introduction-choir only)

(All) O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, o come ye to Bethlehem.
Come and behold him, born the kind of angels.

(refrain-all) O come let, let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ the lord.

(verse-choir)

(All women) Angels we have heard on high.
Singing sweetly through the night,
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their brave delight.
Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
Glory to God, all glory in the highest.

(refrain-all)

(verse-choir)

(refrain-all)

(All men) We three kings of orient are,
Bearing gifts we traverse afar.
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
Following yonder star.
O star of wonder, star of night.
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to that perfect light

(verse-choir)

(refrain-all)

(All) Yea, lord, we greet thee born this happy morning,
Jesus, to thee be all glory giv'n;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing.

(refrain-all)

A Ceremony of Carols

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

A Ceremony of Carols (op. 28) was written by Benjamin Britten in March of 1942, while at sea aboard the M.S. Axel Johnson. Originally written for Treble Choir and harp, the piece in its final form was first performed by the Morriston Boys Chorus, at the direction of the composer. Because of the immense popularity of the piece, this mixed chorus setting was arranged by Julius Harrison at the request of the publishing house of Boosey and Hawkes.

The majority of the text is taken from The English Galaxy of Shorter Poems, and is in old English and Latin. A translation is provided as well as introductory notes for each movement.

1. Procession

Taken from the vespers of the nativity, this unison plain chant antiphon is used as a procession and recession.

Today Christ is born;
Today the Savior has appeared;
Today the angels sing,
The archangels rejoice;
Today the righteous rejoice, saying,
Glory to God in the highest, Alleluia!

2. Wolcum Yole. (Welcome Yule)

This movement is a miniature of the liturgical calendar of the Christmas season. The heavenly child is welcomed as important feast days of the season are referenced. Steven, John and Thomas each have a feast day in this season. December 28 is known as Holy Innocents Day, in remembrance of the Massacre of the Innocents by Herod. The new year and epiphany (twelfth day) are mentioned, as well as saints who have left and were dear to us. Candelmesse refers to Feb. 2, which remembers Mary's purification at the temple, and Jesus' presentation to Simeon. He is remembered for saying "Let thy servant now depart...". In some countries the creche is left out until Candelmesse signifies the end of the season.

Welcome, Welcome,
Welcome to You, our heavenly King.
Welcome, you who was born one morning,
Welcome, for You, shall we sing!

Welcome, to you, Steven and John,
Welcome all innocent children,
Welcome, Thomas, the martyred one,
Welcome, good new year,
Welcome Twelfth Day, both in fear . . .
Welcome Saints left and dear.

Candle Mass, Queen of bliss,
Welcome both to more and less.
Welcome you that are here,
Welcome all and make good cheer.
Welcome all another year.

3. There is no rose

The message here is that Mary was unparalleled. For the first time, heaven and earth were in the same space: within her womb. Because of her, we learn the mystery of the Trinity.

There is no rose of such virtue
As is the rose that bore Jesus.
Alleluia.

For inside the Rose (called Mary)
Were heaven and earth in a single, little space.
Miraculous thing.

By that rose, we now may see,
There be one God in persons three.
In each form equal to the other.

The angels sang to the shepherds,
Glory to God in the highest!
We rejoice.

Leave we all this worldly mirth,
And follow we this joyful birth.
We cross over to Christ's world.

4. That yonge child (That young child)

When the baby Jesus began to cry, Mary sang a lullaby. The nightingale sang also, but Mary's song was superior.

When that young child began to weep
With song, she lulled him to sleep
It was such a sweet melody,
It was so very merry.

The nightingale sang also,
But her song was hoarse, it was not the same:
Whoever listens to the nightingale's song
Instead of Mary's, does wrong.

4b. Balulalow (Lullaby)

Showing great humility, Mary sings a good and proper Lullaby to the young Jesus.

O love of my heart, young Jesus sweet,
Prepare your place in my heart,
And I shall rock thee with great love,
And I shall never leave your side.

I shall praise you forever,
With sweet songs of your glory
The knees of my heart shall I bow
And sing the right Lullaby.

5. As dew in Aprile (As dew in April)

We are reminded of a traditional tale that Mary's labor was painless. The thought is punctuated at the end by saying that this gift to Mary was only fitting for such a blessed lady.

I sing of a maiden that is mateless,
Her son was the King of all Kings.

From his mother he came to us quietly
As dew in April that falls on the grass.

His mother's labor was painless and quiet,
As dew in April that falls on the grass.

As His mother lay there, he came quietly,
As dew in April that falls on the flower branches.

Never has there been such a mother and maiden;
How fitting it is that this be Christ's mother.

6. This little Babe

This spirited piece provides us with a list of metaphors dramatically depicting Christ's battle with Satan.

This little Babe so few days old
Has come to rifle Satan's fold.
All hell quakes at his presence,
Though he himself shivers.
For in this weak, unarmed guise
He will surprise the very gates of Hell!

With tears he fights and wins the field,
His naked breast stands for a shield;
His shots are his cries,
His arrows, the looks of his weeping eyes.
His martial ensigns are cold and need,
And his feeble flesh, his warrior's steed.

His camp is pitched in a stall,
His bulwark is a broken wall;
The crib his trench, hay stalks are his stakes,
Of shepherds, he enlists the troops.
And sure of wounding the foe,
The angels sound the trumpets alarm.

My soul joins Christ in the fight,
Stay by the tents that he has pitched;
Within his crib is sure protection
The little babe will be your guard;
If Christ can foil your foes with joy,
Stay near the heavenly boy.

7. Interlude

This harp solo is among the classic literature for the instrument. The melody of the movement is an elaboration of the triumphal chant "Hodie Christus natus est" that begins and ends *A Ceremony of Carols*.

8. In Freezing Winter Night

This incredibly intense movement depicts the irony of the King being born in such a humble setting. The meter is 5/4 and the harmonic language is daring, making use of blatant dissonances to highlight the juxtaposition of royal court and the meekness of the stable.

Behold, a silly tender babe,
In freezing winter night,
In homely manger trembling lies—
Alas, a piteous sight!

The inns are full; no man will yield
This little pilgrim bed.
But forced he is with silly beasts
In crib to shroud his head.

This stable is a Prince's court,
This crib his chair of State;
The beasts are parcel of his pomp, —
The wooded dish his plate.

The persons in that poor attire
His royal liveries wear;
The Prince himself is come from heaven;
This pomp is prized there.

With joy approach, O Christian wight,
Do homage to thy King,
And highly praise his humble pomp,
Which he from Heav'n doth bring.

9. Spring carol

A duet to thank God after winter. One could interpret that Spring (the birth of Christ) comes after winter (four thousand years of sin since Adam as suggested in Deo Gracias).

It is always a pleasure to hear the birds sing,
To see the deer in the dale, the sheep in the vale,
the corn springing from the earth.
God supplies sustenance
For us all.
Then we should always give him praise
And give him thanks.

11. Deo Gracias (Give Thanks to God)

This medieval text gives thanks for Adam's Fall, because that was the ultimate cause of the coming of Christ. Humanity was bound by sin for four thousand winters (years) until Christ was born. We are also to be glad because without Adam's sin, Mary would have never been Queen of Heaven.

Give thanks to God!

Adam was bound in sin for four thousand years,
although he thought this not too long.

It was all for an apple that he took,
As clerics find written in their books.

Had the apple never been taken,
Then our Lady would have
Never been a heavenly queen.

Blessed be the time the apple was taken.
Therefore we must sing, Thanks be to God!

11. Recession

Today Christ is born;
Today the Savior has appeared;
Today the angels sing,
The archangels rejoice;
Today the righteous rejoice, saying,
Glory to God in the highest, Alleluia!

INTERMISSION

Comfort, Comfort Ye My People

arr. Howard Helvey

Amy Robertson, tambourine

Heavenly Peace

Lee Dengler

On Christmas Night All Christians Sing

arr. Howard Helvey

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

arr. Molly Ijames

Amy Robertson and Debbie McGuire, piano four-hands

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

arr. Joel Raney

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Grant Cochran

Mary Kay Adams, cello

Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow

arr. John Leavitt

Jingle Bells

arr. Mark Hayes

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