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## Bel Canto is: 🕼

Soprano I Valerie Jackson Kate Rogers

Valerie Jackson Kate Rogers Mélanie Vienneau Vivien Zelazny

Soprano II Carolyn MacDonald Rachel Savidge \*Olivia Spahn-Vieira

Lindsay Underhill

Artistic Director

Kathrin Welte

Alto I

Anne Hunt

Sabina Horton

Taylor MacDonald

Ruth Savidge

Beth Snow

Alto II

Accompanist
Thomas Gonder

Bass I John Ball Anthony Brown Michael Francis Connor Grey

Tenor I Matthew Dinan Kyle Rostad

Roger Smith

Michael Frai Connor Gro Kit Hunt

Tenor II J
Leo Macneil

Bass II Jonathan Henkelman Joe Horton \*Luke MacLean

\*Soloist tonight

## Lisa Mitchell Illyana Vermeersch



As always, we are grateful to Christ Church Cathedral for their beautiful, welcoming space.

UNB Centre for Musical Arts New Brunswick Choral Federation Manitoba Choral Association The Hunts

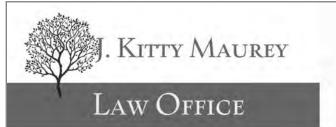
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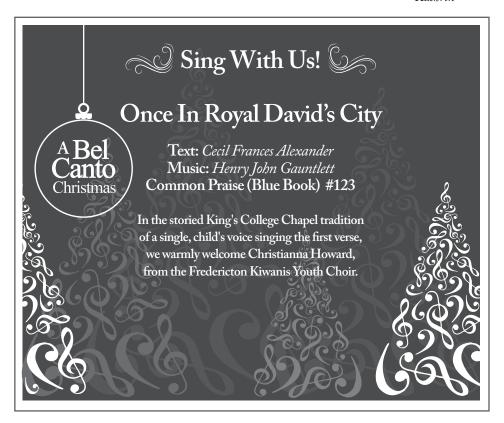
# Welcome! 🦃



On behalf of the Bel Canto Singers of Fredericton, our accompanist J. Thomas D. Gonder and myself, I would like to invite you to lift your voices with us as we celebrate the beginning of the holiday season. I hope you will find what is comforting and familiar in tonight's program as well as discovering new musical jewels that you can take away in your hearts and ears. For me personally, most of the pieces on this evening's program have lived with me for so long that I can't quite remember when I first heard them. All I know is that just like certain smells that can transport you to a specific place or time, music is often the very key to

a treasure trove of memory and emotion. Making music with our voices in particular, as a community, is a truly unique human experience and it's my wish that what you experience tonight becomes one of those moments that you can tuck away in a corner of your heart and cherish for years to come. Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!

- Kathrin





#### Hodie Christus natus est Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck

Listen for: a slowly rising, authoritative bass line decorated with cheery little "salvator apparuits."

An absolute delight from a composer whose sedate, pedagogic lifestyle belied his playful, melifluous style. Sweelink's innovative fugal creations are credited as inspiration for Bach's later mastery of the technique, and they're on full display here.

## In Dulci Jubilo Trad. Arr: Max Reger

Listen for: the altos and tenors jockeying for position, while the baritones romp along, seemingly in their own happy little world.

#### O Magnum Mysterium Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina

Listen for: A jaunty, amuse-bouche triple meter "colaudantes Dominum" to introduce a full course of "alleluias."

Deutsche Grammophon, the world's oldest extant recording company, describes Reger as "The counterpoint of Bach meets the harmonies of Schoenberg." Using an ancient, and immediately recgonizable melody as a thread, this wonderful six-part maze is as beautiful to listen to as it is difficult to navigate.

Palestrina is Michelin-starred comfort food for seasoned choristers. This arrangement of the responsorial chant from the *Matins of Christmas* is a masterful late Renaissance polyphonic word painting, and just straight-up delicious.



#### Venez, mes enfants Trad. Arr: Donald Patriquin

Listen for: la délicieuse françaisité de tout cela.

The first in a set of three *Noël anciens* arranged a cappella, Partiquin calls and answers the Nativity text and simple, playground-like melody, adding merry little "ding dong"s and "cou cou"s.

#### Quelle est cette odeur agreable? Trad. Arr: Healey Willan

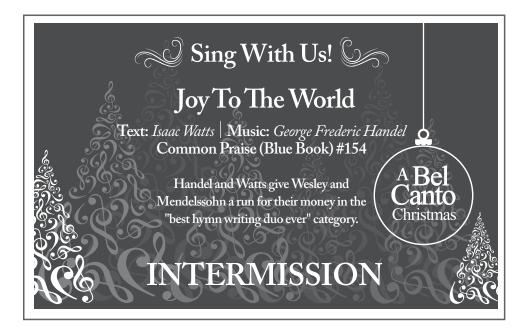
Listen for: Willan's unmistakable choice of colour and texture in the SATB; every line sings like a melody.

#### Tous les bourgeois de Chartres Trad. Arr: Donald Patriquin

Listen for: the anglophones in the choir, and appreciate the amount of work this was for them. What would a Canadian choral concert be without a little Healey Willan? Another *Noël ancien*, this time, curiously, suggesting that the shepherds were following some unidentified yet "pleasant" smell wafting from the manger. Sheep? Babies? Myrhh?

If Norman Rockwell were French, he'd have painted this 16th Century *Noël ancien*'s bucolic narrative: angels of light sing; shepherds trundle across a mountain; people gather for supper, and a parish priest leads schoolboys in song ("Do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, la, la"). Patriquin trips lightly and gaily through the scene.







#### Auf, auf ihr Hirten

Text: Carinthian (pub.1881, Wilhelm Pailler) Music: Wilhelm Kienzl

Listen for: occasionally recgognizable words.

A bouncy, spirited Austrian folk waltz romp through a traditional Silesian carol, sung in a tongue-numbing Alpine dialect, and arranged by the literal president of the Styrian *Wagnerites* fan club.

Schlaf, mein Kindelein Strasbourg Hymnal (1697) Arr: Max Reger

Listen for: gorgeous, complex harmonization in the repeated "Singet und klinget, ihr Engelein rein mit tausend süssen Stimmelein!" Reger was criticised by many of his contemporaries for what they saw as an idiosyncratic blending of romantic expressiveness and neoclassical formalism. This enchanting arrangement of a beloved German lullaby clearly shows us that they were just jealous.

Es ist ein Ros entsprungen Text: Alte Catholische

Text: Alte Catholische Geistliche Kirchengesänge Arr: Michael Praetorius

Listen for: lots and lots of staggered breathing.

If this is your first time hearing Praetorius's famous harmonization of this ancient hymn, we're envious. For those familiar, sit back, and let it light candles in the corridors of your Christmas memory palace.





#### Softly Will Todd

Listen for: a surprising modulation at "And may Your light burn in me; May Your love endless be." Wide, lush harmonies with sparkly bits of jazz-inspired crunchiness make this delightful to sing. The heartfelt text, also by Todd, speaks of expectant comfort and joy at the saviour's birth.

This Christmastide
(Jessye's Carol)

Words: Jane McCulloch Music: Donald Fraser

Listen for: Bel Canto's unsullied upper regsiter.

Packed with just about every Christmasflavored nugget you can think of, this modern carol was composed at a party, as a gift for the hostess, who happened to be - wait for it the celebrated opera singer Jessye Norman.

### In The Bleak Midwinter

Text: Christina Rossetti Music: Paul Mealor

Listen for: Mealor's deft use of dissonance and dynamics to make resolution the softest, and coziest of blankets. An elegant melody floats out over an ironically warm and shimmering landscape in this exquisite setting of Christina Rossetti's timeless poem, capped by a solo baritone, who delivers the final, iconic line "what can I give Him? Give Him my heart" with a whisper of wonderment. Goosebumps.

