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Every Season is Joyful When You Sing



# A Bel Canto Christmas

**Concert Program**

Saturday, December 7th • 7:30pm  
Christ Church Cathedral



**Fact-Checked &  
100% AI Free!**

# Bel Canto is:

<p><b>Soprano I</b>  <i>Valerie Jackson</i>  <i>Kate Rogers</i>  <i>Mélanie Vienneau</i>  <i>Vivien Zelazny</i></p> <p><b>Soprano II</b>  <i>Carolyn MacDonald</i>  <i>Rachel Savidge</i>  <i>*Olivia Spahn-Vieira</i>  <i>Lindsay Underhill</i></p>	<p><b>Artistic Director</b>  <i>Kathrin Welte</i></p>	<p><b>Accompanist</b>  <i>Thomas Gonder</i></p>	<p><b>Bass I</b>  <i>John Ball</i>  <i>Anthony Brown</i>  <i>Michael Francis</i>  <i>Connor Grey</i>  <i>Kit Hunt</i></p> <p><b>Bass II</b>  <i>Jonathan Henkelman</i>  <i>Joe Horton</i>  <i>*Luke MacLean</i></p> <p><i>*Soloist tonight</i></p>
<p><b>Alto I</b>  <i>Anne Hunt</i>  <i>Sabina Horton</i>  <i>Taylor MacDonald</i></p> <p><b>Alto II</b>  <i>Lisa Mitchell</i>  <i>Illyana Vermeersch</i></p>	<p><b>Tenor I</b>  <i>Matthew Dinan</i>  <i>Kyle Rostad</i></p> <p><b>Tenor II</b>  <i>Leo Macneil</i>  <i>Roger Smith</i></p>		

## Acknowledgments

*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

*Bel Canto would also like to thank  
 our many anonymous sponsors  
 who make it possible for us to share our  
 love of choral music with people.*

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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

## Sing With Us!

### Once In Royal David's City

A Bel  
 Canto  
 Christmas

Text: Cecil Frances Alexander  
 Music: Henry John Gauntlett  
 Common Praise (Blue Book) #123

In the storied King's College Chapel tradition of a single, child's voice singing the first verse, we warmly welcome Christianna Howard, from the Fredericton Kiwanis Youth Choir.



J. KITTY MAUREY

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**Hodie Christus natus est**  
*Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck*

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

An absolute delight from a composer whose sedate, pedagogic lifestyle belied his playful, melifluous style. Sweelinck'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.*

*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 recognizable melody as a thread, this wonderful six-part maze is as beautiful to listen to as it is difficult to navigate.

**O Magnum Mysterium**  
*Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina*

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

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, Patriquin 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.*

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?

**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.*

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.

**Sing With Us!**

**Hark! The Herald Angels Sing**

Text: Charles Wesley | Music: Felix Mendelssohn  
Common Praise (Blue Book) #138

A Bel Canto Christmas

One of history's greatest hymn writers meets one of its greatest tunesmiths. Don't hold back!

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**Joy To The World**

Text: Isaac Watts | Music: George Frederic Handel  
Common Praise (Blue Book) #154

A Bel Canto Christmas

Handel and Watts give Wesley and Mendelssohn a run for their money in the "best hymn writing duo ever" category.

**INTERMISSION**

### III

#### Auf, auf ihr Hirten

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

*Listen for: occasionally recognizable 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*

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.

*Listen for: gorgeous, complex harmonization in the repeated "Singet und klinget, ihr Engelein rein mit tausend süßen Stimmein!"*

#### Es ist ein Ros entsprungen

*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.

### IV

#### 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 register.*

Packed with just about every Christmas-flavored 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.

Sing With Us!

## Silent Night

*Text: Joseph Mohr | tr. John Freeman Young  
Music: Franz Xaver Gruber | har. Carl H. Reinecke  
Common Praise (Blue Book) #119*

A Bel Canto Christmas

Sing With Us!

## White Christmas

*Music & Words: Irving Berlin  
Arranged by: Mac Huff*

Thank you for being  
the best part of this evening!

From all of us: may you always find a time  
and place to sing, in every season.

A Bel Canto Christmas