

the
Annex
singers



RADIANT DAWN

Saturday, December 13, 2025
7:30 PM

Grace Church on-the-Hill
300 Lonsdale Road

the
Annex
singers



Director's Note

The Sun is risen! In its vast dazzle

Every lamp is drowned.

~ Rumi



Last December's programme made stargazers of us all, our eyes turned upwards to the mysteries of the night sky. A year later, and we are sunseekers, looking towards the first rays of dawn and longing for the warmth and brilliance that cheer us at the darkest time of the year.

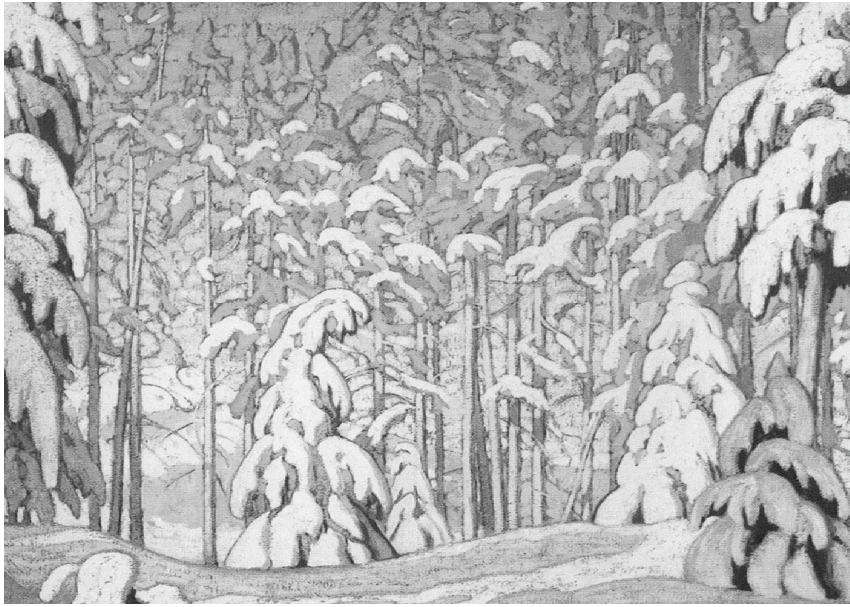
While it may seem natural to dread this part of the yearly round, if you have a mind of winter, then the growing darkness is a canvas, waiting to welcome winter's peculiar light. Made precious by scarcity and visceral through contrast, the "wild sun of winter" allows hope and joy to emerge with greater depth and clarity, like figures in a Renaissance painting.

But this is also a reflective season, and the binaries of darkness and light do not allow for more subtly gleaming lights. While some of our repertoire this evening is truly radiant, other pieces live on the threshold of night and day, and emanate a softer, liminal aura. For these, we need to extend the metaphor from the crisp lines of chiaroscuro to include the more diffused glow of dawn and dusk which filmmakers and photographers refer to as the "golden hour" or "magic hour."

It is in the interstitial spaces and fleeting transits, where darkness and light mingle, that our longings come into greatest focus.

It has been noted many times that the festival of Christmas rests firmly on the shoulders of the Winter Solstice, but there are many other faith traditions that celebrate the return of light in winter; indeed, they invoke it. And in every case, they do so with an open flame.

— Maria Case, Artistic Director



Radiant Dawn

Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern Philipp Nicolai
with Melanie Conly, Meghan Symon,
Joshua Clemenger, Lutzen Reidstra

Gloria Francis Poulenc

- I. Gloria
- II. Laudamus te
- III. Domine Deus
- IV. Domine fili unigenite
- V. Domine Deus, Agnus Dei
- VI. Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris

Melanie Conly, soprano
Stephen Boda, organ



"Venus, Bringer of Peace," Pt. 1 Gustav Holst, arr. J. Scott
Stephen Boda

Salve Regina Francis Poulenc

A Hymn to the Virgin Benjamin Britten
Annex Chamber Ensemble



O Radiant Dawn James MacMillan

O Oriens Cecilia MacDowall

Winter Sun Don McDonald



The Waiting Sky Oliver Tarney
Maria Case, Melanie Conly, Victoria Fisher, Anna Golubic,
Evelyn Hawes, Anne Lee, Madeline Sikes, Meghan Symon

"Venus, Bringer of Peace," Pt. 2 Gustav Holst, arr. J. Scott
Stephen Boda



While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks Craig Courtney

All This Night Gerald Finzi

Phos Hilaron Owain Park
Joshua Clemenger, tenor

Brich an, o schönes Morgenlicht Johann Sebastian Bach



Programme Notes

As befits a programme called Radiant Dawn, we begin with a musical sun salutation, the chorale “Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern,” composed by Philipp Nicolai (1556–1608) and employed by Bach in his cantata of the same name (BWV 1). Known in English as the hymn “How Brightly Shines the Morning Star,” this is one of two luminous chorales that bookend tonight’s concert.

The centerpiece, however, comes quickly, with Francis Poulenc’s magnificent *Gloria*. Most choral Glorias are movements within masses, but many exist as stand-alone concert pieces, those by Vivaldi, Jenkins, and Rutter being among the most frequently performed. The text is a hymn of praise based on Luke 2:14, the angel’s announcement of Christ’s birth to the shepherds (who were abiding in their fields and were sore afraid!). Although rooted in the Christmas story, a Gloria is an all-occasion choral chameleon that may be effectively programmed in any season, but when placed on a December programme suggests a certain narrative context.

Francis Poulenc (1899–1963) composed his setting in 1959, the result of a commission from the Koussevitsky Music Foundation. At the start of his career, Poulenc was a member of “Les Six,” a notorious group of young French composers who aimed to break from the German-dominated formalist tradition. Poulenc forged a distinctive style which encompasses austere textures, rich, sensuous harmonies, and abrupt changes in mood that range from playful to solemn. All these elements are fully realized in *Gloria*.

One of the great choral masterpieces of the twentieth century, its brevity (around 25 minutes) contrasts with its large orchestral forces. For a piece so reliant on contrasts in orchestral colour and weight, it adapts remarkably well to the organ, provided that the organist is an adept orchestrator. We are delighted to be working with Stephen Boda, whose translation of Poulenc’s intent is masterful. The soprano soloist is our own Melanie Conly, who is always a luminous presence.

The opening movement, “Gloria in excelsis Deo,” is marked “*maestoso*” (“majestic”), beginning with a striking double-dotted figure reminiscent of French Overture, always a signal of great import. The choir enters at a slightly more moving tempo, but retains the dotted rhythm in a harmonically austere landscape. The second movement, “Laudamus te,” shows Poulenc at his most playful, with sharp musical repartee between the pairings of higher and lower voices. The third movement, “Domine Deus,” introduces the soprano soloist with an

expressive descending melody painted against the harmonic support of the choral canvas. This is followed by a brief romp on “Domine fili unigenite” in the fourth movement — a little over one minute of unabashed joy. The soprano solo of the fifth movement inverts the melodic arc presented in the third movement, with an exquisite rising line, full of harmonic tension and release. The choir is more active here, engaging in lyrical exchanges with the soloist. The sixth movement, “Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,” recalls the first, with its *maestoso* opening and stark harmony, and indeed the opening theme of the piece returns in the organ. This gives way to a more animated section before moving into the final section, with its luminous orchestration and lush harmonies, ending with “Amen” stated twice, first with great pomp and vigour, and finally with great tenderness.

Stephen Boda presents “Venus, Bringer of Peace,” from English composer Gustav Holst’s famous orchestral suite *The Planets*, composed between 1914 and 1917. “Venus,” the second movement of the suite, and a tone study in sweetness and serenity, offers a response to the aggressive opening movement, “Mars, Bringer of War.” Venus, known as both the Morning Star and the Evening Star because of its visibility at these threshold times of day, offers a subtle luminosity to our skywatching efforts.

Next, the Annex Chamber Ensemble performs two works in praise of Mary, Poulenc’s motet “Salve Regina” (the premise being that the only thing better than Poulenc, is more Poulenc!) and Benjamin Britten’s “A Hymn to the Virgin.” Britten uses an anonymous medieval poem and sets it antiphonally for double choir, with Choir I singing the main text in English and Choir II singing the Latin interjections. This beloved anthem is one of Britten’s earliest works, composed in 1930 when he was still a teenager.

The next two pieces employ the same ancient text, “O Oriens,” the fifth of the seven Great ‘O’ Antiphons dating from the sixth century and traditionally used in the office of Vespers or Evensong during the last seven days of Advent. The first setting, “O Radiant Dawn” (2007) by Scottish composer James MacMillan, is in English and depicts Christ bringing light to darkness. Homorhythmic texture, clear harmonic progressions, and ascending lines underscore the confidence of this rising sun. “O Oriens” (2012) by English composer Cecilia McDowall similarly hails Christ as the morning star, but the harmonic language here is more ambiguous and veiled. McDowall paints shadows on her canvas and suggests a dramatic struggle between darkness and light, with the vibrant and grounding chord of E-major harmony threatened at various points (spoiler alert: it triumphs in the end, if rather quietly).

“Winter Sun” (2014), by award-winning Canadian composer Don MacDonald, celebrates the beauty of the natural world, and in particular the “the wild sun of winter.” The text is taken from poet Malca Litovitz’s larger work *To Light, To Water* (1998).

“The Waiting Sky” (2018) by British composer and choral specialist Oliver Tarney brings us back to the more suffused light of a winter day. Originally composed for a mixed (SATB) choir, Tarney recast it for treble voices at the request of the a cappella vocal ensemble Papagena. The rural scene painted by poet Lucia Quinault is reminiscent of some of Thomas Hardy’s winter poetry, with the natural world expressing the sense of longing and expectation that is the essence of the Advent season.

Our next three pieces foreground radiant light on the field of darkness and night. The American choral composer Craig Courtney has provided a new setting for divisi choir and piano of Nahum Tate’s familiar carol “While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks.” Gerald Finzi’s “All This Night” is an exuberant setting of the poem “Sun of Righteousness” by William Austin (1587–1634). This work was commissioned by the University of London Musical Society for its 400-voice chorus, and Finzi responded to the challenge in grand style with a brisk, chordal setting that is an homage to the chord of C major and its ability (after all this time) to still make the heart race!

With “Phos Hilaron” by the young British composer Owain Park, “we are come to the sun’s hour of rest,” the threshold of evening. The text, an anonymous Greek hymn written in the late third or early fourth century, is often translated as “Hail, Gladdening Light” in the west. Also known as the “Lamp Lighting Hymn,” it is sung as part of the Compline service in the west and of Vespers in the Eastern Orthodox Church. Park’s setting employs John Keble’s translation and features a chant-like solo, sung by tenor Joshua Clemenger, over sustained hummed chords in the choir.

We end our programme at the threshold of dawn, with “Brich an, o schönes Morgenlicht.” This chorale was used by Bach in the second cantata of the *Weihnachtsoratorium* (Christmas Oratorio), and it ushers in the morning sun. And so, we end in full radiant light, with joy, with peace, and with Bach!

— Maria Case, Artistic Director

Texts and Translations

Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern (Philipp Nicolai, 1597)

Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern	<i>How lovely shines the morning star,</i>
Voll Gnad und Wahrheit	<i>Full of grace and truth</i>
von dem Herrn,	<i>from the Lord,</i>
Die süße Wurzel Jesse!	<i>The sweet root of Jesse!</i>
Du Sohn David aus Jakobs Stamm,	<i>Thou David’s son of Jacob’s stem,</i>
Mein König und mein Bräutigam,	<i>My King and my bridegroom,</i>
Hast mir mein Herz besessen,	<i>Thou hast my heart possessed,</i>
Lieulich, freundlich,	<i>Sweetly, friendly,</i>
Schön und herrlich, groß und ehrlich,	<i>Handsome and magnificent, great</i>
Reich von Gaben,	<i>and genuine, rich in gifts,</i>
Hoch und sehr prächtig erhaben!	<i>Highly and magnificently exalted!</i>

Zwingt die Saiten in Cythara	<i>Strum the strings on the harp and lute,</i>
Und laßt die süße Musika	<i>And let the sweeter music’s sound</i>
Ganz freudenreich erschallen,	<i>Carry through the joyful land.</i>
Daß ich möge mit Jesulein,	<i>Therefore I may with my Jesus,</i>
Dem wunderschönen Bräut’ gam mein,	<i>My most beautiful companion,</i>
In steter Liebe wallen!	<i>Daily live in constant love!</i>
Singet, springet,	<i>Singing, leaping,</i>
Jubilieret, triumphieret,	<i>Victoriously, triumphantly,</i>
Dankt dem Herren!	<i>Thanks to the Lord!</i>
Groß ist der König der Ehren!	<i>Give honour unto the great King!</i>

Gloria (from the Mass Ordinary, based on Luke 2:14)

I. Gloria in excelsis Deo	<i>Glory be to God in the highest</i>
et in terra pax	<i>and on earth peace</i>
hominibus bonæ voluntatis.	<i>to people of goodwill.</i>
II. Laudamus te; benedicimus te;	<i>We praise you; we bless you;</i>
adoramus te; glorificamus te.	<i>we worship you; we glorify you.</i>
Gratias agimus tibi	<i>We give thanks to you</i>
propter magnam gloriam tuam.	<i>for your great glory.</i>
III. Domine Deus, Rex coelestis,	<i>Lord God, heavenly King,</i>
Deus Pater omnipotens.	<i>God the Father Almighty.</i>

Gloria (cont'd)

IV. Domine Fili unigenite Jesu Christe.	<i>Lord, the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ.</i>
V. Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris, Rex Celestis, Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram.	<i>Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, King in Heaven, You who take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. You who take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer.</i>
VI. Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis. Quoniam tu solus Sanctus, tu solus Dominus, tu solus Altissimus. Jesu Christe, Cum Sancto Spiritu in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.	<i>You who sit at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For only you are holy, only you are Lord, only you are most high. Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father. Amen.</i>



Salve Regina (13th-century Marian antiphon)

Salve, Regina, mater misericordiæ, vita, dulcedo et spes nostra, salve. Ad te clamamus, exsules filii Hevæ; Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes in hac lacrimarum valle.	<i>Hail, holy Queen, mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope, hail. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears.</i>
Eia, ergo, advocata nostra, illos tuos misericordes oculos ad nos converte; Et Iesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui, nobis post hoc exsiliium ostende. O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria.	<i>Turn then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us; And after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.</i>

A Hymn to the Virgin (Anonymous, 13th-century)

Of one that is so fair and bright
Velut maris stella, [like a star of the sea]
Brighter than the day is light,
Parens et puella: [both mother and maiden]
I cry to thee, thou see to me,
Lady pray thy Son for me,
Tam pia, [so pure]
That I may come to thee.
Maria!

All this world was forlorn
Eva peccatrice, [because of Eve, a sinner]
Till our Lord was yborn
De te genetrice. [through you, his mother]
With "Ave"* it went away
Darkest night, and comes the day
Salutis; [of salvation]
The well springeth out of thee
Virtutis. [of virtue]

Lady, flower of everything,
Rosa sine spina, [rose without thorn]
Thou bare Jesu, Heaven's King,
Gratia divina: [by divine grace]
Of all thou bear'st the prize,
Lady, queen of paradise
Electa: [chosen]
Maid mild, mother
Es effecta. [you are made]

* Gabriel's greeting to Mary, "Ave" ("Hail"), is a reversal of Eve's name in Latin ("Eva"): in bearing the savior of humankind, Mary symbolically reverses Eve's original sin.

O Radiant Dawn ("O Oriens," 6th-century antiphon for December 21)

O Radiant Dawn,
Splendour of eternal Light,
Sun of Justice:
come, shine on those who dwell in darkness
and the shadow of death.
Isaiah had prophesied:
"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
Upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone."

O Oriens (*6th-century antiphon for December 21*)

O Oriens,
splendor lucis aeternae,
et sol justitiae:
veni, et illumina sedentes
in tenebris,
et umbra mortis.

*O Radiant Dawn,
Splendour of eternal Light,
Sun of Justice:
come, shine on those who dwell
in darkness
and the shadow of death.*

Winter Sun (*Malca Litovitz, 1998*)

To light,
to water,
and the flow of birds
through ancient stars.
To the wild sun of winter
startling the dark green
trees: giants
of majestic silence.
To snow on roofs
and the peace of Sunday.
To quiet and certitude,
to breathing, to air.
To acceptance, to dreams.
To disclosures of the sleeping heart,
for air, for light.



The Waiting Sky (*Lucia Quinault, 2018*)

The trees are bare,
green fields where puddles hold the waiting sky.
The cows move slowly, their breathing clouds the air as they walk by.
What if the clouds smother the shining star?
We'll know it's there.

Warm light will fill the puddles,
And the cows will stop and stare.
The trees are bare,
Green fields where puddles hold the waiting sky.



While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night

(*Nahum Tate, 1700*)

While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
all seated on the ground,
the angel of the Lord came down,
and glory shone around.

“Fear not,” said he, for mighty dread
had seized their troubled mind,
“Glad tidings of great joy I bring
to all of humankind.

“To you in David’s town this day
is born of David’s line,
the Saviour, who is Christ the Lord,
and this shall be the sign:

“The heav’nly babe you there shall find
to human view displayed,
all meanly wrapped in swaddling bands
and in a manger laid.

“All glory be to God on high,
and to the earth be peace;
good will henceforth from heav’n to earth
begin and never cease.”

All This Night (*William Austin, publ. 1635*)

All this night shrill chanticleer,
Day’s proclaiming trumpeter,
Claps his wings and loudly cries,
“Mortals, mortals, wake and rise!
See a wonder
Heav’n is under,
From the earth is risen a Sun
Shines all night, though day be done.

“Wake, O earth, wake everything,
Wake and hear the joy I bring,
Wake and joy, for all this night
Heaven and every twinkling light,

All This Night (*cont'd*)

All amazing,
Still stand gazing,
Angels, powers and all that be,
Wake, and joy this Sun to see.

“Hail, O Sun! O blessed Light
Sent into the world by night!
Let thy rays and heavenly powers
Shine in this dark soul of ours;
For most duly
Thou art truly
God and man, we do confess.
Hail, O Sun of Righteousness!”

Phos Hilaron (*“The Song of Light,” Christian hymn, ca. AD 370*)

Hail, gladdening light, of His pure glory poured,
who is th’ immortal Father, heavenly, blest,
holiest of holies, Jesu Christ, our Lord.

Now we are come to the sun’s hour of rest,
the lights of evening round us shine,
we hymn the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit divine.

Worthiest art thou at all times to be sung
with undefiled tongue,
Son of our God, giver of life alone;
therefore in all the world thy glories, Lord, they own.

Brich an, o schönes Morgenlicht (*Johann Rist, 1641*)

Brich an, o schönes Morgenlicht, Und laß den Himmel tagen! Du Hirtenvolk, erschrecke nicht Weil dir die Engel sagen, Daß dieses schwache Knäbelein Soll unser Trost und Freude sein, Dazu den Satan zwingen Und letztlich Frieden bringen.	<i>Break forth, O beautiful heavenly light, and usher in the morning; Ye shepherds, shrink not with afright, But hear the angel’s warning. This child, now weak in infancy, Our confidence and joy shall be, The power of Satan breaking, Our peace eternal making.</i>
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Biographies



Artistic Director **Maria Case** is a highly regarded artist and educator in Toronto’s music community, working as a pianist, singer, choral conductor, and composer. Maria maintains a busy private studio and is active as an examiner, adjudicator, and lecturer on piano and theory pedagogy and musicianship for the Royal Conservatory, where she served as Chief Examiner of Theoretical Subjects from 2006 to 2013. She is the co-author of the nine-volume *Celebrate Theory* series, and has designed curriculum for theory, piano, and musicianship. Maria has been the Artistic Director of The Annex Singers since 2005, leading the choir with dynamic and imaginative programming. She is also the Music Director of Glebe Road United Church in Toronto.

Maria is an award-winning composer, with the majority of her compositions celebrating the voice and inspired by texts from a wide range of texts and traditions. Recent works include choral pieces “Storm Birds,” “In Winter,” “First Sparrow of Spring” and “Everyone Sang,” and song cycles *Nightsongs*, *Into Flight*, *Songs of the Seasons* and *The Slow Hand of Time*. Maria holds ARCT Performance Diplomas in Piano and Voice, as well as a Bachelor of Music in Composition from the University of Toronto. Other studies include English literature, conducting, and jazz at the Berklee College of Music.



Anne Lee, collaborative pianist with The Annex Singers since 2011, began piano studies at a young age in Vancouver after an exhaustive search for a teacher willing to take on a pint-sized aspiring pianist with too-small hands. Her musical roots flourished through her school years as she explored a diverse portfolio of instruments, including clarinet, bassoon and saxophone. She studied English literature and Music Performance at Queen’s University and, along with her academic studies, participated in various musical ensembles as a chorister, accompanist and instrumentalist. She has studied with notable music educators such as Edward Parker, Gordon Craig and Dr. Christopher Foley. Anne is valued for her sensitive artistry and profound understanding of choral collaboration. Her intuitive and supportive musicality has been an asset in her accompanying and creative collaborations with students, soloists, and various organizations and ensembles.



Lauded for her “passion and charm” (*Now Magazine*) and “sweet voice delivery” (*Toronto Star*), soprano section lead **Melanie Conly** is acclaimed for her distinctive voice and musical understanding. She trained in musical theatre and, later, classically, cultivating a diverse skill set that serves her wide range of work. An experienced chamber musician and

recitalist, she often solos with choirs and orchestras and is frequently sought out for her compelling performances of new music. She has performed in many series and festivals across Canada and creates and performs unique themed concerts in a wide range of musical styles.

Alongside performing, Melanie maintains a voice and piano studio in Toronto. She was the singer for the Frederick Harris Music recordings for the Royal Conservatory Vocal Series 2012 and 2019 editions. In 2019, she was a presenter and adjudicator at the Royal Conservatory of Music Summit in Toronto, and in 2020 became a member of the Royal Conservatory College of Examiners. She is a choral clinician and certified yoga instructor, and is currently cultivating workshops that explore tools for performance, creativity and life — a synthesis of her passions as a teacher, performer, yogi, and meditation practitioner.



Alto section lead **Meghan Symon** is praised for her “consistent beauty of singing and stage presence” and is noted for her “warm, velvety mezzo-soprano” (*Stage Door*). Recent and upcoming winter engagements include the roles of Madame Mathurin in Gertry’s *Richard Coeur de Lion* with Voicebox: Opera in Concert, The Duchess in *The Gondoliers* and Anhilte

in *The Czardas Princess* with Toronto Operetta Theatre, The Page in Strauss’s *Salome* with Opera by Request and Beethoven’s *Symphony 9* with Mandle Philharmonic.

Meghan holds a Master of Music degree from the University of Toronto, where she studied under Canadian soprano Mary Morrison. She has sung with a number of companies including Manitoba Opera, Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, Cathedral Bluffs Orchestra, Manitoba Underground Opera, The Theatre of Early Music, Toronto Operetta Theatre and Voicebox: Opera in Concert. Notable roles include the title role in Handel’s *Rinaldo*, Le Prince in *Cendrillon*, Annio in *La Clemenza di Tito*, Third Lady in *Die Zauberflöte*, Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*.



Tenor section lead **Joshua Clemenger** began his training in the Theatre Aquarius Performing Arts Programme in Hamilton, Ontario, where he studied with Tom Oliver. He then earned a bachelor’s degree in Vocal Performance with Torin Chiles at the University of Western Ontario. After a few years teaching abroad, he returned to earn a master’s degree in Opera at the University of Toronto, studying with Lorna Macdonald.

Joshua’s recent opera credits include Koloman Zupan in Toronto Operetta Theatre’s *Countess Maritza*, L’Abete in *Adriana* and Fatty in *Rise and Fall of the City Of Mahagonny* with Opera in Concert, Count Belfiore in *La Finta Giardiniera* with UofT Opera, Ferrando in *Così Fan Tutte* at La Musica Lirica, and Ralph in TrypTych’s production of *H.M.S. Parliament* in Kenora. He can’t wait to join The Annex Singers in another fantastic collaboration!



Bass section lead **Lutzen Riedstra** was one of the Stratford Six in the closing concert of Stratford Summer Music’s 15th season and has also taken part in Stratford Summer Music’s Vocal Academy, where he received lessons with Michael Schade, Philip Addis, Nathalie Paulin, Krisztina Szabo, and Emily Hamper. He has appeared as the bass soloist in several oratorios, including Mozart’s *Requiem*, Fauré’s *Requiem*, Handel’s *Messiah* and Maunder’s *Olivet to Calvary*. His opera credentials include Masetto in *Don Giovanni*, Figaro in *The Marriage of Figaro*, and Giove in Cavalli’s *La Calisto*, as well as chorus work. A highlight of his career so far was singing in a concert with renowned mezzo-soprano Stephanie Blythe.

Lutzen can be heard singing every Sunday with the choir at Yorkminster Park Baptist Church in Toronto, and he has also served as the bass section lead/soloist at Kingsway-Lambton United Church and Trinity-St. Paul’s United Church. His choral work includes four years with the Orpheus Choir of Toronto as a Sidgwick Scholar and, most recently, joining the Oakville Choral Society and The Annex Singers. He holds a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from the University of Toronto and is completing a Master of Divinity degree at Wycliffe College, conjoint with the Toronto School of Theology and the University of Toronto.



Stephen Boda is a professional organist, pianist and composer based in Hamilton, Ontario. He holds a Master of Music degree from Yale University, a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Toronto and an Artist Diploma from McGill University. Stephen studied piano privately with Valerie Tryon and continues to perform as a soloist

and musical collaborator throughout North America. He is the accompanist of the Bach Elgar Choir and has collaborated with numerous choirs and ensembles in the Greater Toronto Area and as a performer with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra.

He is the winner of several competitions, including first prizes in the Royal Canadian College of Organists' National Competition, the Howard Fairclough Competition and the Osborne Competition. He is also the recipient of a number of awards, including the Godfrey Hewitt Memorial Scholarship, the Robert Baker Scholarship through Yale University, the Schulich Scholarship through McGill University and the Arthur Redsell Scholarship through the University of Toronto.

Stephen is the Principal Organist at Timothy Eaton Memorial Church and has held organist positions in Toronto at Grace Church on-the-Hill and St. Paul's Bloor Street, St. John the Evangelist in Hamilton, Ontario, and Noroton Presbyterian Church in Darien, Connecticut.



Dimana Kolarova, creator of The Annex Singers' concert graphics, is a Toronto-based designer, photographer, and architect in training, currently working at an architectural firm in Saint John, New Brunswick. She holds a degree in Creative Advertising from Humber College as well as a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Architecture degree from the John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design at the University of Toronto.

An avid long-distance hiker and nature enthusiast, Dimana has completed the Tour de Mont Blanc, the Laugavegur Trail in Iceland, the West Highland Way in Scotland, and the Salkantay trek in Peru. She finds her greatest source of inspiration and creative energy in the natural world.

The Annex Singers

Soprano

Rachel Ariss
Tessa Cernik*
◆ Melanie Conly*
Claire Durette*
Joanne Eidingen
Laura Farrugia
Angelica Fenner
Victoria Fisher*

Anna Golobic*
Zena Gopal
Evelyn Hawes*
Carol Hensley
Claire Jensen
Zoe Kelsey
Elizabeth Koester*
Gloria Lipski*

Carolyn Sealfon
Madeline Sikes*
Julia Weinland*
Emma Whyte
Azalea Wong
Kathleen Wooder

Alto

Jenna Abrams
Julie Brill
Elizabeth Brubaker
Hélène Crowley*
Jane Dalziel
Diane Faught
Erin Guerette

Christina Hough
Leah Jackson
Anne Lee*
Barbara Leonard
Yuliya Nastiuskhina
Katerina Petrovski*
Patricia Rios*

Maggie Rogow
Ann Rosenfield
Andrea Slane*
Lucija Stankovic
◆ Meghan Symon*
Luba Tichonova*
Ruth Wahl

Tenor

Elizabeth Block
◆ Joshua Clemenger*
Brian Gottheil

Don Hanna*
Dawn Keenan
Gerald Martindale*

Daniel Nicolucci*

Bass

Michael Bunce
Rizwan Dar
Mark Dodici*
Billy Graydon

Cory Hill*
Peter Kamphuis*
◆ Lutzen Riedstra*
Samuel Victor*

Darryl Wadsworth*
John Warden

◆ Section lead

* Annex Chamber Ensemble

2025-2026 Donors

The Annex Singers gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the following donors this season.

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Become a donor and add your name to the list!



Our donors play a vital role in the success of the choir, enabling us to expand our reach artistically, to promote and premiere works by Canadian composers, and to support young singers as they launch their careers. To donate or to learn more, please scan the code and visit our "Support Us" page at annexsingers.com/support-us/.

Sing with us! Auditions coming up!



If you love to sing and have strong musicianship skills and vocal/choral experience, we invite you to join The Annex Singers. We are especially seeking tenors and basses at the present time and will hold our next auditions in mid-December and early January.

About the Annex Singers

The Annex Singers of Toronto is a spirited, auditioned 60-voice community choir with an eclectic repertoire that spans a thousand years

and showcases a wide range of styles, from plainchant to jazz. This year we are celebrating our 46th season and our 20th year under the dynamic leadership of Artistic Director Maria Case. The choir is known for inventive, relevant programming and for collaboration with a wide array of guest artists and composers.

We rehearse on Monday evenings at St. Thomas's Anglican Church and perform three concerts each season, featuring guest soloists and instrumentalists, as well as our own Annex Chamber Ensemble and smaller ensembles. As a benefit of membership, we provide ongoing professional development to all choir members and encourage young singers with a sponsorship program.

I had an amazing time with your lovely choir. I am so impressed by the openness, enthusiasm, and sense of community in The Annex Singers. Very few groups have achieved the sort of connection and social capital that you have fostered. It was so inspiring to be in their presence.

— Dr. Gerard Yun,
Choral Improvisation Workshop

To learn more about us, please visit us at www.annexsingers.com

If you love to sing, we would love to meet you.

Schedule your audition now!

Thank You!

For their invaluable assistance with tonight's concert, we wish to thank:

Steve Vargo, stage manager
Sandy Miranda, front-of-house manager
Alex Sadowski, livestream production
Dimana Kolarova, graphic designer
Grace Church on-the-Hill

&

Our wonderful team of concert volunteers:

<i>Padmira Pour Abdi</i>	<i>Naomi Payandeh</i>
<i>Tessa Charko</i>	<i>Juan Jose Murcia Sanchez</i>
<i>Emily Chen</i>	<i>Charlie Turco</i>
<i>Andres Prieto Grajales</i>	<i>Vickey Yu</i>
<i>Benjamin Lacerda Muarre</i>	



Our home in the heart of Toronto has for thousands of years been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Haudenosaunee, and, most recently, the Mississauga people of the New Credit First Nation. We are thankful for the opportunity to live, to work, and to sing on this land.

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the
Annex
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1979-2025

Celebrating
46 years
of singing!

the
Annex
singers



**LOST &
FOUND**

Saturday, March 21, 2026
7:30 PM

Grace Church on-the-Hill
300 Lonsdale Road



BUY TICKETS AT
annexsingers.com

On life's journey, we experience many kinds of loss but also encounter unexpected gifts and discoveries along the way. This reflective programme explores these themes through works by Hovhanness, Miškinis, Runestad, Shaw, Martin and others.