

# THAT'S Christmas TO ME

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# THAT'S Christmas TO ME

## **"Sussex Carol" arr. Elaine Hagenberg**

"The Sussex Carol" is a traditional English carol and is sometimes referred to by its first line, "On Christmas night all Christians sing." Its words were first published by Luke Wadding, a 17th century Irish bishop, in a work called "Small Garland of Pious and Godly Songs" (1684). Both the text and the tune to which it is now sung were discovered and written down by Cecil Sharp in Buckland, Gloucestershire. Composer Ralph Vaughan Williams first heard it being sung by a Harriet Verall of Monk's Gate near Horsham, Sussex. It is this tune which is generally sung today and is the one Vaughan Williams took down and published in 1919. This arrangement of the Sussex Carol is by American composer Elaine Hagenberg (b 1979). Her version is high in joyful energy from start to finish and is a welcome addition to any Christmas concert program.

## **"Nowell, Sing We" arr. Michael John Trotta**

"Nowell We Sing" written by American composer Michael John Trotta (b. 1978), is based on a text from the 14th century Trinity Carol Roll from Cambridge, Trinity College. This majestic and triumphant new work for Christmas heralds the coming of the King of Peace into a troubled world. Trotta is an exciting composer who is fueled by a passion to share new music that engages conductors, ensembles and audiences alike. He is fast becoming one of the most exciting and prominent new composers of choral music. When he is not traveling for guest conducting, he resides in Bay Head, New Jersey.

## **"How Great Our Joy" arr. Craig Courtney**

"How Great Our Joy," arranged by Craig Courtney, is based on a traditional German carol. What this piece accomplishes so beautifully is the expression of a gorgeous arc of joy. Courtney accomplishes this through the use of a steady duple rhythm in the choral parts, rhapsodic triplets in the piano accompaniment, colorful key changes, and creative use of dynamics. The piece truly redefines "joy" and inspires everyone to a new level of worship.

## **"Verbum Caro Factum Est" arr. Z. Randall Stroope**

*Soloist: Victoria Beatrice*

American composer Z. Randall Stroope's arrangement of "Verbum Caro Factum Est" (The Word Was Made Flesh) is a challenging setting of John 1:14 and Isaiah 9:2. The piece combines Latin and English texts and creates a mysterious and moving experience for the listener. It is part of the Luther College Series. Luther College in Decorah, Iowa is a liberal arts school affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Its music program is nationally recognized as one of the premiere music schools in the country. Z. Randall Stroope (1945-2015) is a composer, conductor, and lecturer who has published more than 125 pieces. He has received numerous awards and has guest conducted at thirty-eight all state choirs as well as music festivals in forty-five states.

## **"All on a Starry Night" arr. Joseph Graham**

"All On A Starry Night," words by J. Paul Williams and music by Joseph Graham, is a beautiful unaccompanied piece which paints a gentle nativity portrait. Richly harmonic and expressive, each chord seems to shimmer like the stars themselves. A quote of "Silent Night" floats like a memory at the conclusion of the piece.

## **"What Sweeter Music" arr. John Rutter**

"What Sweeter Music", with its beautiful melody and lush harmonies, has become one of John Rutter's most cherished Christmas anthems. Rutter is widely regarded as the most prolific writer of choral/vocal music in the United Kingdom, if not the world. Rutter lives near Cambridge and spends his time composing, conducting and lecturing all over the world. Robert Herrick (1591-1633), who wrote the text of the piece, was an English lyric poet and cleric, best known for his book of poems "Hesperides." Rutter's tender setting suits Herrick's text perfectly resulting in an unforgettable and moving holiday piece.

## **"That's Christmas to Me" arr. Mark Bryner**

*Soloists: Marian Henry, Emma Lewis, & Terry Hughley*

"That's Christmas To Me" is the title of the third studio album and second holiday release by the a cappella group "Pentatonix" and is also the name of the only original piece on the album. It was released in 2014 and, as of December, 2016, had sold 2,200,000 copies in the United States alone. Arranged by composer Mark Bryner, the lyrics promote the goal of keeping the joy of family and Christmas in your heart year round.

## **"The Work of Christmas" arr. Dan Forrest**

"The Work of Christmas" is composer Dan Forrest's setting of a poem by Howard Thurman. It is presented as an ethereal benediction for a cappella choir, and is a truly captivating moment in song. Forrest (b. 1978) is an American composer, pianist and educator whose published works have sold millions of copies worldwide. He is equally at home in both concert and church music and has composed for ensembles across the spectrum of chorale music. Howard Thurman (1899-1981) was an American author, philosopher, theologian, mystic, educator, and civil rights leader. He played a role in many social justice movements and organizations of the 20th century. Forrest states, in regard to the Thurman poem, "Its beautiful lines call us not to merely take in the sights and sounds of the Christmas celebration, but to respond by doing our part in working toward the 'peace on earth' that we so often sing about."

## **"The Shepherds Sing" arr. Bob Chilcott**

*Soloists: Christopher Lutz-Long & Angela Vaughn*

"The Shepherds Sing," music by written by British composer Bob Chilcott (b. 1955), is a sweet and tranquil setting of a Christmas text written by George Herbert (1593-1633). An atmospheric accompaniment and gentle choral harmonies heighten the mood. Chilcott is a choral composer and singer based in Oxfordshire, England. He was a member of the King's Singers from 1985 to 1997. George Herbert was an English poet, orator, and priest of the church of England. He is recognized as "one of the foremost British devotional lyricists."

## "Keep Your Lamps!" arr. Andre J. Thomas

"Keep Your Lamps" is a spiritual arranged by American composer and conductor Andre Thomas (b. 1952). As with many slave songs, this song's impetus came from a sermon based upon the parable found in the book of Matthew. In this story, Jesus tells his disciples that they will not know the day nor the hour of his return, and that they must be ready at all time. This message would appeal to the slave as it was a song of hope in the possibility of deliverance. Andre Thomas is in demand as a clinician, adjudicator, and choral & orchestral conductor throughout the United States and the world.

## "African Noel" arr. Andre J. Thomas

"African Noel" is another Andre Thomas arrangement in the concert today. Thomas, a master of the spiritual form, uses layers of sound and constant rhythmic patterns to add vitality and intensity to the piece. The addition of a percussion accompaniment only increases the excitement of this wonderful spiritual.

## "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" arr. John Rutter

John Rutter's unique arrangement of the holiday favorite "We Wish You A Merry Christmas" will also be performed during this concert. Rutter is a master of taking well known music and breathing new life and freshness into it. His brilliant setting of this Christmas piece is a treat for the audience to hear and for the chorus to perform.



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## **Andrew Lutz-Long** *Artistic Director*

# **Music Team**

Andrew Lutz-Long is Associate Director of Music & Networking at Christ Lutheran Church, Allentown, PA since July 2022. Previously, Drew served as Director of Music Ministries at Trinity Lutheran Church, Perkasio, PA for 15 years.. He arrived at Trinity after graduating from Lebanon Valley College, Annville, PA with a Bachelor of Arts degree in music with a concentration in church music and administration.

At Christ Allentown, Drew oversees the choir programs including Chancel Choir and all-female Immanuel Singers as well as oversees the outreach efforts of the church both within the local community and via its digital footprint.

In 2009, Drew was invited to join the staff of the Valley Choral Society, Pennsburg, PA, as Assistant Director and serve as an accompanist. He served this role working with Patricia Conrad as Artistic Director until the summer of 2018 when Drew was offered the directorship.

Since fall of 2015, Drew serves as Chapel Organist at Muhlenberg College in Egner Chapel. In this role, he helps plan worship for the Christian community gathering weekly on Sundays, and assists at other special campus events especially concerts involving organ accompaniment. Recently, Drew has expanded his role on campus as an adjunct professor of organ studies and performance.

## **Mary Beth Penjoke** *Assistant Director*

Mary Beth Penjoke is a resident of Bucks County and an elementary music teacher for Penridge Area School District, recognized as one of the Best Communities for Music Education by the NAMM Foundation. She holds a Bachelor's degree from Lebanon Valley College and a Master's degree from Cabrini University. Additionally, she holds a level one Orff Certificate and a First Steps in Music certification from the University of the Arts. She was awarded a 2021 ACEMM Spark Grant and a 2018 PCEF Grant which procured musical instruments for her classroom teaching. She has served as a cooperating teacher for both West Chester University and Kutztown University.

## **Sue Ellen Echard** *Accompanist*

Sue Ellen Echard, MM, BS, BMus, is Choir Master and Organist at Church of the Holy Spirit, Episcopal, Harleysville, PA serving there for 20 years. Over her career she has worked as choral director, workshop leader, Kindermusik® teacher, recitalist and teacher of organ and piano. She has been a member of the Philadelphia AGO for over 30 years and was recently elected to the executive committee of the Philadelphia Chapter. She specializes in choir and community building and was recruited early in the founding of Church of Holy Spirit to build music, arts and youth programs. The intention of growing this new parish was focused on well done music and liturgy through use of the Royal School of Church Music resources. Under her leadership, the choirs have grown to over 60 youth and adult participants in singing, instrumental and handbell choirs. The church continues to grow and thrive. In recent years, Sue Ellen led choral residencies at Bristol Winchester and Lincoln Cathedrals in England and is currently preparing for a residency at Exeter in 2022. Sue Ellen has served on the music staff of Bel Canto Children's Chorus and the Royal School of Church Music at the King's College Course in Wilkes-Barre.

Sue Ellen's career has been broad and comprehensive serving churches in the Episcopal, Catholic, Presbyterian, Reformed and Evangelical traditions. She holds a Bachelor of Science in theology and Bachelor of Music in Church Music from Cairn University and a Master of Sacred Music Degree from Westminster Choir College where she studied organ with Eugene Roan and choral conducting with Allen Crowell and Andrew Megill. She completed further studies in choral conducting at the Choral Institute at Oxford in 2017 and 2019.



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## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Valley Choral Society is to produce outstanding music both in rehearsal and performance. In order to achieve our mission, we will:

- Challenge and educate
- Entertain and inspire
- Foster discipline and respect
- Develop growth in musicianship
- Encourage diversity and unity
- Share in the joy of music

### Officers

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Darcy McConahy

## ABOUT THE CHOIR

Originally known as the Choral Arts Society of the Upper Perkiomen Valley, Valley Choral Society (VCS) was founded in 1983 by Richard F. Lampe. It was formed as a community choir composed of singers from the Upper Perkiomen Valley however, as the enthusiasm grew for a community music program, membership continued to expand to its now multi-county composition including Montgomery, Bucks, Lehigh and Berks Counties.

Presenting major concerts in the late fall and spring, VCS performs a wide variety of music – from John Rutter's Requiem to Broadway show tunes, from classical sacred music to well-loved music from the 1940s, from classic Christmas carols to the Beatles, from composers from past centuries to contemporary composers – all to the delight of appreciative audiences.

In addition to its major concerts, VCS has always had a rich history of community outreach that continues to expand with performances at community day events such as Quakertown Alive or Relay for Life, retirement communities throughout the area, and the annual "Make Music Upper Perk" event. Outside of the area, Valley Choral Society has most recently toured to Washington DC (2014) and New York City (2012); in keeping with our mission statement, other opportunities to perform are welcome as scheduling allows.



## SAVE THE DATE

**Tuesday, January 17:** Sing with us! Valley Choral Society rehearsals resume for the second half of our 39th season. New singers are always welcome! Stay up-to-date via email, Facebook, or Instagram for more information!



# CHOIR MEMBERS

## Soprano I

Victoria Beatrice  
 LuJean Bernstein  
 Linda Camana  
 Alexis Cuff  
 Toni Janiec  
 Darcy McConahy  
 Zenaida Ramos Rivera  
 Virginia Servas  
 Patti Spanier  
 Monica Strawbridge  
 Donna Taggart  
 Nicole Whalen  
 Barbara Zucker

## Soprano II

Becky Eells  
 Molly Faust  
 Joan Freiwald  
 Beth Ann Krall  
 Annette Raynes  
 Kathleen Siddall  
 Julie Swan  
 Angela Vaughn

## Alto I

Yvonne Caputo  
 Lindee Fitting  
 Marian Henry  
 Terry Hughley  
 Amanda Keightly  
 Ann Kolb  
 Cheryl Kulp  
 Laura Loewen  
 Vickie Long  
 Patricia McCully  
 Linda Wood  
 Betty Ruth Yerger

## Alto II

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 Vera Ewing  
 Barbara Lampe  
 Patti Landis  
 Selena Lavonier  
 Emma Lewis  
 Denise Long  
 Donna Snyder

## Tenor I

Debra Ferretti  
 Christopher Lutz-Long  
 Paul McColgan  
 Kirk Walters

## Tenor II

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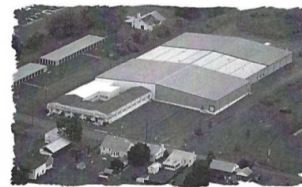


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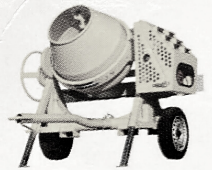
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You can make a difference! All donations are tax-deductible and support the general operating fund of the choir.



This performance was supported in part by the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

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