



# SAINT MARK'S CHURCH PHILADELPHIA

presents

## A Musical Nativity Scene



with the

## Saint Mark's Singers

December 18, 2022 at 4 p.m.

# A MUSICAL NATIVITY SCENE

WITH THE

## SAINT MARK'S SINGERS

Thomas Gaynor, conductor

Robert McCormick, organist

Isza Wu, organist

### PROGRAM

The truth from above

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

This is the truth sent from above,  
the truth of God, the God of love;  
therefore don't turn me from your door,  
but hearken all, both rich and poor.

The first thing, which I do relate,  
is that God did man create.  
The next thing which to you I tell,  
woman was made with man to dwell.

Thus we were heirs to endless woes,  
till God the Lord did interpose.  
For so a promise soon did run  
that he would redeem us by his Son.

And at this season of the year  
our blest Redeemer did appear.  
He here did live, and here did preach,  
and many thousands he did teach.

Thus he in love to us behaved,  
to show us how we must be saved.  
And if you want to know the way,  
be pleased to hear what he did say.

(Traditional English Carol)

O thou, the central orb of righteous love,  
pure beam of the most high, eternal light  
of this our wintry world; thy radiance bright  
awakes new joy in faith, hope soars above.

Come, quickly come, and let thy glory shine,  
gilding our darksome heaven with rays divine;  
thy saints with holy lustre round thee move,  
as stars about thy throne, set in the height  
of God's ordaining counsel, as thy sight  
gives measured grace to each, thy power to prove.

Let thy bright beams disperse the gloom of sin:  
our nature all shall feel eternal day  
in fellowship with thee; transforming day  
to souls erewhile unclean, now pure within. Amen.

(Henry Ramsden Bramley, 1833-1917)

*Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme*, BWV 645  
Robert McCormick, organist

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Hymn 61

*Wachet auf*

*Please join in the singing of the hymn Sleepers, wake! a voice astounds us, found in the blue hymnal at number 61.*

Gabriel's Message

Traditional Basque carol, arr. Edgar Pettman (1866-1943)

The angel Gabriel from heaven came,  
his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;  
"All hail" said he, "thou lowly maiden Mary,  
Most highly favored lady," Gloria!

"For known a blessed mother thou shalt be,  
all generations laud and honor thee,  
thy Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold.  
Most highly favored lady," Gloria!

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head:  
"To me be as it pleaseth God," she said,  
"My soul shall laud and magnify his holy name."  
Most highly favored lady. Gloria!

Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ was born  
in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,  
and Christian folk throughout the world will ever say  
"Most highly favored lady," Gloria!

(Basque carol, paraphrased by Sabine Baring-Gould, 1834-1924)

Now the holly bears a berry as white as the milk,  
and Mary bore Jesus, who was wrapped up in silk:  
and Mary bore Jesus Christ our Savior for to be,  
and the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly!

Now the holly bears a berry as green as the grass,  
and Mary bore Jesus, who died on the cross:  
and Mary bore Jesus Christ our Savior for to be,  
and the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly!

Now the holly bears a berry as black as the coal,  
and Mary bore Jesus, who died for us all:  
and Mary bore Jesus Christ our Savior for to be,  
and the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly!

Now the holly bears a berry as blood it is red,  
then trust we our Savior, who rose from the dead:  
and Mary bore Jesus Christ our Savior for to be,  
and the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly!

(Traditional Cornish carol)

The Linden Tree Carol

arr. Reginald Jacques (1894-1969)

There stood in heaven a linden tree;  
but, though 'twas honey laden,  
all angels cried, "no bloom shall be  
Like that of one fair maiden."

Sped Gabriel on winged feet,  
and passed through bolted portals  
in Nazareth, a maid to greet,  
blest o'er all other mortals.

"Hail Mary!" quoth the angel mild,  
"Of woman-kind the fairest:  
the Virgin ay shalt thou be styled,  
A babe although thou bearest."

"So be it!" God's handmaiden cried,  
"According to thy telling."  
Whereon the Angel smartly hied  
up homeward to his dwelling.

This tidings filled his mates with glee:  
'twas passed from one to other,  
that 'twas Mary, and none but she,  
And God would call her Mother.

(15<sup>th</sup> century German carol, trans. G. R. Woodward, 1848-1934)

The holly and the ivy

Arr. H. Walford Davies (1869-1941)

The holly and the ivy, when they are both full grown,  
of all the trees that are in the wood, the holly bears the crown.  
*The rising of the sun and the running of the deer,  
the playing of the merry organ, sweet singing in the choir.*

The holly bears a blossom, as white as any flower,  
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ, to be our sweet Savior.  
*The rising of the sun...*

The holly bears a berry, as red as any blood,  
and Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ to do poor sinners good.  
*The rising of the sun...*

The holly bears a prickle, as sharp as any thorn,  
and Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ on Christmas Day in the morn.  
*The rising of the sun...*

The holly bears a bark, as bitter as any gall,  
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ for to redeem us all.  
*The rising of the sun...*

(Traditional English carol)

Good King Wenceslas

arr. Jacques

Good King Wenceslas looked out, on the feast of Stephen;  
when the snow lay round about, deep, and crisp, and even:  
brightly shone the moon that night, though the frost was cruel,  
when a poor man came in sight, gathering winter fuel.

“Hither page and stand by me, if thou knowest it, telling,  
yonder peasant, who is he? Where and what his dwelling?”  
“Sire, he lives a good league hence, underneath the mountain;  
right against the forest fence, by Saint Agnes’ fountain.”

“Bring me flesh, and bring me wine, bring me pine-logs hither:  
thou and I will see him dine, when we bear them thither.”  
Page and monarch forth they went, forth they went together;  
through the rude wind’s wild lament, and the bitter weather.

“Sire, the night is darker now, and the wind blows stronger;  
fails my heart, I know now how, I can go no longer.”  
“Mark my footsteps, my good page; tread thou in them boldly;  
thou shalt find the winter’s rage freeze thy blood less coldly.”

In his master's steps he trod, where the snow lay dinted;  
heat was in the very sod which the Saint had printed.  
Therefore, Christian men, be sure, wealth or rank possessing,  
ye who now will bless the poor, shall yourselves find blessing.

(John Mason Neale, 1818-1866)

*Marche des trois rois mages*

Thomas Gaynor, organist

Théodore Dubois (1837-1924)

In the bleak midwinter

Harold Darke (1888-1976)

In the bleak mid-winter, frosty wind made moan,  
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;  
snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,  
in the bleak mid-winter, long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;  
heaven and earth shall flee away, when he comes to reign:  
in the bleak mid-winter a stable sufficed  
the Lord God incarnate, Jesus Christ.

Enough for him, whom cherubim, worship night and day,  
a breast full of milk, and a manger full of hay;  
Enough for him, whom angels, fall down before,  
the ox and ass and camel, which adore.

What can I give him, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;  
if I were a wise man, I would do my part;  
yet what I can I give him—give my heart.

(Christina Georgina Rossetti, 1830–1894)

Hymn 59

*Merton*

*Please join in the singing of the hymn Hark! a thrilling voice is sounding, found in the blue hymnal at number 59.*

And the glory of the Lord

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759), from *Messiah*, HWV 56

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together:  
for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

(Isaiah 40:5)

PLEASE JOIN US IN THE PARISH HALL FOR A RECEPTION WITH FESTIVE DESSERT AND DRINKS.

**Thomas Gaynor** recently moved to Philadelphia to take up the position of Assistant Organist & Choirmaster at Saint Mark's. In this role he directs the Saint Mark's Singers and works with Robert McCormick, Organist & Choirmaster, to assist in direction of the Parish Choir and the Boy & Girl Choristers, and in leading all aspects of the busy music program. Since moving to Philadelphia, he has also started as an assistant organist at the Wanamaker Grand Court Organ in Macy's, and regularly performs at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City, homes of the two largest pipe organs in the world.

A native of Wellington, New Zealand, Thomas earned his undergraduate degree from the New Zealand School of Music while holding organ scholarships at the Wellington Anglican Cathedral of St. Paul and St. Mary of the Angels Roman Catholic Church. In 2012 he moved to Rochester, New York, to study with David Higgs at the Eastman School of Music. He recently graduated with a DMA and Eastman's highest honor, the Artist's Certificate.

In 2017 Thomas was presented with the Gold Medal and Audience Prize at the St. Albans International Organ Competition. This followed first prizes at the Bach-Liszt *Internationaler Orgelwettbewerb* Erfurt/Weimar, the Sydney International Organ Competition, and the Fort Wayne National Organ Playing Competition. He has concertized extensively across North America, Europe, Oceania, and in Japan and Colombia. In 2018, Thomas gave the North American premiere of Jean-Baptiste Robin's organ concerto *Fantaisie mécanique*. Thomas is a member of *The Diapason* magazine's (an international journal focused on the pipe organ) "20 Under 30" Class of 2016.

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Described by *Choir & Organ* as "indomitable and immensely gifted" and by *The Macon Telegraph* as "an artist of rare sensitivity and passion", **Robert McCormick**, Organist & Choirmaster of Saint Mark's Church, is widely heralded by his colleagues as one of the finest concert and church musicians of this era. Known for his creative and unique abilities in organ improvisation, Mr. McCormick was a semi-finalist in the 2005 St. Albans International Organ Festival Improvisation Competition, the only American to merit that distinction. Concert appearances across the United States include Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, the Summer Organ Festival at the Riverside Church (New York), the Pittsburgh Organ Artists Series, the East Texas Organ Festival, Basically Bach Festival at St. Peter's Lutheran (New York), the Great Organists series at St. John's Cathedral in Albuquerque (New Mexico), the Atlanta Summer Organ Festival, concerto performances of works by Barber, Saint-Saëns, and Jongen, and recitals and workshops for numerous American Guild of Organists chapters. He has been a featured artist and clinician at numerous conventions and conferences of the AGO, the Association of Anglican Musicians, and the Royal School of Church Music in America, playing recitals and services, and presenting workshops on church music and choral training.

His recording from St. Paul's, K Street, *We Sing of God*, was released on the Pro Organo label. *Choir & Organ's* review of the disc describes the choir as "one of the most responsive and adaptable choirs on the Eastern seaboard" and that "[McCormick] also shines at the organ."

Previously, Mr. McCormick served for eight years as Director of Music at St. Paul's Parish, K Street, Washington, D.C. and seven years as Organist and Music Director at the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, New York. He holds the Bachelor of Music degree in organ performance from Westminster Choir College. During his time at Westminster he was also Assistant Organist at Trinity Church, Princeton. His teachers include McNeil Robinson and Robert Carwithen.

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**Isabella Isza** (pronounced EYE-sa) **Wu** is the Organ Scholar under the direction of Robert McCormick and Thomas Gaynor at Saint Mark's. An organist and pianist from Madison, Wisconsin, Isza recently completed her Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance at Northwestern University, and is currently pursuing her Master's degree in Organ Performance at the Curtis Institute of Music. As a pianist, Isza made her orchestral debut at the age of 11 with the Madison Symphony Orchestra, and has since then won several awards and honors, including at the Bolz Young Artists' "Final Forte" Competition and Midwest Young Artists National Concerto Competition. Isza began organ studies during her undergrad with Margaret Kemper, and has since then studied with Paul Jacobs at the Oregon Bach Festival and Christa Rakich at the Oberlin Summer Organ Institute. She has also performed in masterclasses led by Wolfgang Rubsam, Katelyn Emerson, and Vincent Dubois, among others. During her time at Northwestern, Isza performed in numerous recitals at Alice Millar Chapel and St. Luke's Episcopal (Evanston), and sang in the Alice Millar Chapel Choir under the direction of Stephen Alltop.

Passionate about forming connections through music, Isza is a frequent keyboard collaborator and music educator. She has held internships at several award-winning music education programs, including The People's Music School, Madison Symphony Orchestra, and Northwestern's Academy of Music and Special Education. Her teaching experience includes private studio lessons in piano, violin, percussion, and working with persons with special needs. Isza currently studies organ with Alan Morrison and holds the Charles and Judith Freyer Fellowship at Curtis.

# THE SAINT MARK'S SINGERS

Thomas Gaynor, Conductor

## SOPRANO

Carol Casey  
Lucy Ann Dure  
Laurel Garver  
Nancy Hazle  
Anne Kaier  
Grace Lewallen\*  
Rachel McCarty  
Indiah Porter\*  
Juli Reddy  
Amelia Schmertz\*

## TENOR

Phil Cary  
Davis Dure  
Michael Drnach\*  
Brian Felty  
David Pott  
Eddie Rubeiz\*  
David Sydlik

## ALTO

Mary Alcaro  
Leslie Delauter\*  
Sharon Gray  
Frany Lantoine\*  
Messapotamia Lefae  
Charlotte Lopacki  
Annie Thomas  
Sam Wallace\*  
Ellen Wright

## BASS

Jay Blossom  
Michael Dolan  
Richard Donnell  
Jim Flagler  
Hyacinth Iversen  
C. Scott Meyer  
Aaron Pisacane  
Michael Quann

\* denotes soloist

**The Saint Mark's Singers** is an all-volunteer choir that gathers each week to share in the joy of singing. Sunday evening rehearsals leave members feeling inspired and motivated, and offer a supportive, friendly community. If you are looking for a high-caliber musical experience with a manageable time commitment, this is the ensemble for you! Rehearsals and performances are limited to Sunday afternoons only, leaving the rest of the week free for your other activities. Anyone who can carry a tune is welcome to join; visit [www.saintmarksphiladelphia.org/saintmarkssingers](http://www.saintmarksphiladelphia.org/saintmarkssingers) for more information. Join us for friendship and song!

## SAINT MARK'S CHURCH

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The Reverend Sean. E. Mullen, Rector