



ORIANA CONSORT

— Choral music from seven centuries —

Walter Chapin, Director

SEEING THE STAR

Reflections on the Nativity

BACH *Cantata 40*

LEIGHTON *A Hymn of the Nativity*

BARBER *Twelfth Night*

...and Renaissance motets by

VICTORIA, HASSLER, GABRIELI,

PALESTRINA, SWEELINCK, LASSUS

8pm Friday, Dec 1, 2017

University Lutheran Church, Cambridge

5pm Sunday, Dec 3, 2017

Church of Our Saviour, Brookline

8pm Saturday, Dec 9, 2017

First Lutheran Church of Boston, Boston

Admission \$20

Seniors/Students \$15

www.orianaconsort.org

Seeing the Star

All of the world's great religious traditions, in one way or another, have celebrations to mark the return of light after a time of darkness. In Christianity there is of course Christmas; in Judaism there is Hanukkah; in Islam there is Eid al-Fitr, the end of Ramadan, which often but not necessarily falls in what we in the west call December. In all three traditions these holidays are a time for withdrawing from the day-to-day world, for reflecting, for spending more time with loved ones and friends, for contemplating one's blessings.

Although the music in this program consists of reflections upon the Christian Nativity story, we present it to you with the idea that the Nativity and its music can in a larger sense symbolize much more than just the story itself. It can be a metaphor for the welcoming back of light and warmth after a period of darkness and cold, for the return of love after a time without love, for the return of hope after a time of hopelessness. The world's end-of-year celebrations seem to have more in common than not: ancient pagans of northern Europe, after all, saw symbolism in the evergreen that does not succumb to winter — and do we not willingly welcome the pine wreath at Christmastime, despite its pagan origin?

In the motet by Orlando de Lassus that you will shortly hear, the choir sings: *Videntes stellam, Magi gavisii sunt gaudio magno*. Seeing the star, the wise men were overwhelmed with great joy.

May each of you see your own star in the coming weeks of the year's end, with the hope that our music might hasten the moment that you see it.

***Please join your fellow audience members and Oriana's
singers at the reception that immediately follows this concert !***

***During our performance, please ensure that all sound-emitting devices that
you may have are set so that they will remain silent, and please refrain from
photography. Nothing disturbs a singer's focus so much as an unexpected
sound or flash of light.***

I	The Nativity Story as told in motets of the late 16th and early 17th centuries		
	Tomàs Luis de Victoria		c. 1548-1611
	Ne timeas, Maria	<i>Fear not, Mary</i>	
	Hans Leo Hassler		1564-1612
	Dixit Maria ad angelum	<i>Said Mary to the angel</i>	
	Giovanni Gabrieli		c. 1554-1612
	Hodie Christus natus est	<i>Today Christ is born</i>	
	Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina		1525-1594
	O magnum mysterium	<i>O great mystery</i>	
	Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck		1562-1621
	Angelus ad pastores ait	<i>The angel said to the shepherds</i>	
	Orlande de Lassus		c. 1531-1594
	Videntes stellam	<i>Seeing the star</i>	

intermission

II	Kenneth Leighton		1929-1988
	A Hymn of the Nativity on a poem by Richard Crashaw		
	Soprano solo: Lisa Wooldridge, Dec. 1, Dec. 9		
	Nicole Beauregard, Dec. 3		
III	Samuel Barber		1910-1981
	Twelfth Night		
	on a poem by Laurie Lee (1914-1997)		
IV	Johann Sebastian Bach		1685-1750
	Cantata BWV 40		
	Dazu ist erschienen	<i>For this reason</i>	
	Der Sohn Gottes	<i>the Son of God appeared</i>	



ORIANA CONSORT

— Choral music from seven centuries —

MEMBERS

Olivia Adams • Laura Amweg • Melanie Armstrong
Nicole Beauregard • J. William Budding • Alex Conway
John Crawford • Katheryn Currie • Anand Dharan
Melanie Donnelly • Adrienne Fuller • Gary Gengo
Andrea Hart • Jana Hieber • Frank S. Li
Francesco Logozzo • Ashley Mac • Dennis O'Brien
Christopher Pitt • Margaret Ronna • Irl Smith
Lauren Syer • Valerie Thomforde • Lisa Wooldridge

Walter Chapin, *Director*

The Oriana Consort gradually evolved from several suburban amateur choral groups that Walter Chapin had directed in the 1970s and 1980s on Boston's South Shore. In 1994 the group adopted the name "Oriana Consort", moved its focus from the South Shore to Cambridge, and began to increase its membership — thus 1994 can be regarded as the Oriana Consort's founding year. From about 2002 to 2008 the group further evolved toward its present form: an a cappella chorale of two dozen or so singers, auditioned to very high standards, who rehearse and perform primarily without accompaniment, tuning only to their own voices. The group's size is intimate enough for motets and choral songs for small choir, yet large enough to perform demanding choral works such as Samuel Barber's *Agnus Dei*, J. S. Bach's *Magnificat*, Leonard Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*, Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on Christmas Carols* and *Mass in G Minor*, and Aaron Copland's *In The Beginning* — all of which Oriana has done in recent seasons — and J. S. Bach's *Cantata BWV 40*, to be performed in this program.

The name "Oriana Consort" is actually a misnomer, for the group is not really a consort, but a chorale. In its founding year of 1994 it was an eight-voice ensemble that actually was a consort — in the Renaissance sense of voices and Renaissance-era instruments — and the name stuck.

(The name “Oriana” is taken from The Triumphes of Oriana, a 1601 collection of madrigals by the English composer Thomas Morley and his composer colleagues. Morley specified that every madrigal in the collection was to sing about an idolized woman named “Oriana”. This name may have been a coded reference to Queen Elizabeth I, and Morley may have intended this madrigal collection to be in her honor.)

The Oriana Consort prepares two or three programs each year and presents each program in some subset of Cambridge, Boston, Brookline, Concord, Somerville, and Jamaica Plain. The group’s eclectic repertory is drawn from the 15th through the 21st centuries — the seven centuries during which the tradition of polyphonic choral music spread throughout Europe and, later, the Americas — hence the motto under our logo on the opposite page. Music of the Baroque or the early Classical era, accompanied by instrumentalists from greater Boston’s outstanding early music community, usually forms a part of Oriana’s December programs.

Oriana has also performed on invitation: the group has participated four times in the Candlelight Concert Series of Old Ship Church in Hingham; twice in the “3rd Sundays @ 3” concert series sponsored by the Waltham Philharmonic Orchestra; in the Vanderkay Summer Concert Series of Blue Hill, Maine; in the concert series at The Center for Arts in Natick; in the Vox Humana series of Jamaica Plain; and in the Lux Aeterna multi-chorus concert held in Boston in January of 2005 to benefit survivors of the tsunami in Southeast Asia.

In March of 2007 the Consort was one of four Boston-area chorales to participate in a master class presented by Peter Phillips, director of the world-renowned Tallis Scholars.

Oriana was the opera chorus for “Italian Night at the Opera”, the gala concert presented in May of 2011 by the Waltham Philharmonic. The group has appeared four times in the odd-year Fringe Concert Series of the Boston Early Music Festival; at the most recent appearance the group performed Monteverdi’s *Lagrima d’amante al sepolcro dell’amata*.

In late July and early August of 2013 The Oriana Consort undertook a four-concert tour to Germany, performing in Frankfurt am Main, Dietzenbach, and Leipzig. In the Thomaskirche in Leipzig — where J. S. Bach was Cantor from 1723 to 1750 — the Consort surrounded Bach’s tomb to sing him two of his motets, and was the choir for a Sunday service there, singing music of Bach, Mendelssohn, Barber, and Bernstein.

Oriana has presented the premieres of four significant choral works:

The group did the premiere performance in December 2012 of *Ani Adonai (I, the Lord)*, a setting of words of Isaiah by the Boston-area composer Adam Jacob Simon, which Oriana commissioned.

In the spring of 2014 the group presented the East Coast premiere of *The Waking*, a setting of a Theodore Roethke poem by Abbie Betinis, a noted young composer from the Upper Midwest.

In December of 2015 Oriana presented the Massachusetts premiere of *The Longest Nights*, a setting of seven winter poems (by seven different poets)

by Timothy C. Takach, another composer from the Upper Midwest. Oriana, together with one choir in each of forty-one other states of the USA, had the honor to participate in the joint commissioning of this work.

Also in December 2015, Oriana presented what was very likely the local premiere (and quite possibly the American premiere) of *Welcher Glanz erhellt den Dampf* (What brilliance lights the mist), an Advent cantata written in 1717 by the prolific, gifted, yet little-known German composer Cristoph Graupner, a contemporary of J. S. Bach. We claimed that our performance of this work was “very likely the local premiere”, since a thorough search revealed absolutely no indication that any edition of this cantata had ever been published, either for performance or for scholarly study; nor that any transcription of the composer’s manuscript score had ever been made. Since the facsimile of the composer’s 1717 manuscript of the score and parts of this cantata looked so very interesting, Oriana’s director undertook to transcribe it from that manuscript facsimile so that the group might perform it. We do think it likely that we were the first choral group in a very long time to have brought life to this lively and inventive cantata.

Walter Chapin, the Oriana Consort’s founder and director, has degrees from Harvard and the New England Conservatory, and did graduate study at Boston University. He has directed amateur choral groups in the Boston suburbs, and has taught conducting and directed choruses at Boston University and at the high school level. As a pianist, he accompanies dancers at the José Mateo Ballet Theatre in Cambridge. In his other-than- musical life he is a retired-but-still-active computer information systems designer and programmer, and a husband, father, grandfather, and carpenter.

Caroline Kinney is now Oriana’s Assistant Director Emerita. After seven seasons of fine leadership, both musical and otherwise, she now occupies a high-level position in the administration of Harvard University.

I *The Nativity Story*

as told in motets of the late 16th and early 17th centuries

Tomàs Luis de Victoria		c. 1548-1611
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Orlande de Lassus		c. 1531-1594
Videntes stellam	<i>Seeing the star</i>	

The council of Catholic clerics that was summoned in 1545 by Pope Paul III to convene in the town of Trento, in the mountains of northern Italy, continued to meet there for eighteen years, off and on, to address and correct what were felt to be abuses that had arisen in the Church's liturgy, liturgical music, sacraments, doctrine, and church governance. This Concilium Tridentinum, or Council of Trent, was the first manifestation of the Counter-Reformation, the Catholic Church's reaction to the Protestant movements that had arisen earlier in the 16th century under Martin Luther, John Calvin, and King Henry VII of England.

One aspect of the Counter-Reformation was an endeavor to reform the Church's sacred choral music, by removing what were perceived to be overly-complicated compositional techniques and artifices, and to favor new music that would speak directly to the listener's soul and allow the listener to focus upon the spirituality of the sacred texts. Accordingly, composers of liturgical music began to emphasize clarity of pronunciation of the texts, and to compose music whose very harmonic and melodic structures were devised so as to reinforce the messages contained in the texts. It was felt that with this musical renewal, the communicant would immediately feel and respond to the spirituality of sacred choral music upon hearing it.

These musical reforms of the Counter-Reformation had a great effect on choral music of the late Renaissance and the early Baroque eras, both on the part of composers who were Catholic and those who were not. The reforms' effect is eminently perceptible in these six motets with which Oriana narrates the events of the Nativity story.

Victoria: The annunciation to Mary

Tomàs Luis de Victoria's *Ne timeas, Maria* is one of 72 motets that the composer published in three collections dating to 1572, 1583, and 1585,

as he pursued his career in Rome and later in his native Spain. In this motet, verses from the Gospel of St. Luke relate the angel's annunciation to Mary. Sensing Mary's fear at its appearance, the angel tells her not to be afraid; that she has found favor with God; that she will conceive and bear a son; and that he will be called the son of the most high. In Victoria's motet, each of these four statements is presented to the listener by a separate musical phrase, each of which has its own clearly audible melodic contour and is stated by the four choral voices singing in imitation. The music drives forward without pause until the end of the third statement, when it arrives at a resting point on the word *filium*, after which all four choral voices proclaim — simultaneously this time, for emphasis — the most important thought in this piece, namely *et vocabitur altissimi filius* (and he shall be called the son of the most high). To emphasize most high, each of the choral voices ascends a steep musical interval when singing the word *altissimi*.

Hassler: Mary's reply to the angel

Hans Leo Hassler, one of the first German composers to study music in Italy as a youth, brought Italian musical ideals back to his native land as he pursued a career in Augsburg, Nürnberg, and Dresden as an organist and composer of music primarily for the Lutheran church. His motet *Dixit Maria*, one of the 48 works in the *Cantiones Sacrae* collection that he published when but 27 years of age, continues Mary's conversation with the angel in St. Luke's gospel. After each of the four choral voices presents the words *Dixit Maria ad angelum* (Said Mary to the angel) in imitation, the voices emphasize Mary's reply by coming together for a simultaneous declamation of the main point: *Ecce ancilla Domini* (Behold, I am the handmaiden of the Lord). For emphasis, this music is repeated, with an another *secundum verbum tuum* (according to your word) added at the conclusion.

Gabrieli: The birth

Though Giovanni Gabrieli was older by a decade than Hans Leo Hassler, they both may have studied together in Venice with Giovanni's uncle Andrea Gabrieli, organist and composer at the Basilica Cathedral of San Marco in that city, and by the last decade of the 16th century Giovanni had succeeded his uncle as musical director at San Marco. This building's design, perhaps due to its eastern location, was in the shape of a Greek cross, rather than the Roman-cross shape of cathedrals further to the north and west. Thus it had two choir lofts that faced each other on opposite sides of the nave. This uncommon architectural feature inspired San Marco's composers to write music to be sung simultaneously by two separate choirs, one in each loft, singing in musical opposition to one another. Giovanni Gabrieli's motet *Hodie Christus natus est* (Today Christ is born), from his 1597 *Sacrae Symphoniae* collection, is a motet in this Venetian polychoral style. Its text, which continues the angel's words from the St. Luke gospel in paraphrased form, is an expression of utter joy. Its unbounded emotion and its presentation by the two discrete bodies of singers

are early manifestations of choral music's transition from the Renaissance style to that of the Baroque.

To suggest the opposition of singers in San Marco's two choir lofts, Oriana's singers will divide into two physically separated choirs to present this work.

Palestrina: The holy family in the stable

The serenity of the mother and father, silently at rest with their newborn child in a quiet centering moment as they share the stable with its humble animals, is captured in the tenth-century verse *O magnum mysterium* (O great mystery), whose original chant melody belongs to the vast body of the church's sacred chant liturgy. In this setting of these words by Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, from his collection *Liber Primus Motetorum* that he brought out in 1569 during his career in Rome, we take a step backward, from Gabrieli's early Baroque style back into the pure Renaissance style. This motet is a perfect example of a Counter-Reformation work that is meant to affect the listener immediately: the text is expressed through a unity of verbal and musical accents, and the six independent choral voices combine in harmonies intended to reflect the spirit of the words. The central idea, contained in the words *magnum mysterium* (great mystery), is expressed in the six mysterious chords with which the music begins. (A listener may well wonder: Where is this chord going next?) A shift in meter from two-beat units to three-beat units at *collaudantes Dominum* (praising the Lord together) suggests the praise being sung by the angelic choir. Their voices conclude the music with an extended Alleluia.

Sweelinck: The annunciation to the shepherds

Although Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck — who for his entire career was organist and composer at the Calvinist Oude Kerk in Amsterdam — never studied with Gabrieli nor with any of the German composers whose styles are traceable to Gabrieli's, the manner in which he wrote for choral voices is reminiscent of Gabrieli's.

In words again drawn from the Gospel of St. Luke, an angel approaches shepherds after the birth has taken place, and announces to them an event of great joy: the coming of a savior. In the Venetian manner, the words *Angelus ad pastores ait* (the angel said to the shepherds) are presented contrapuntally by the individual choral voices in imitation, in deliberate contrast with the words that follow, *Annuntio vobis gaudium magnum* (I announce to you a great joy), which are given in block chords and agitated rhythms. With *quia natus est vobis...* (for unto you is born...), the counterpoint returns, which in turn is followed by an Alleluia in block chordal style. To emphasize the feelings of joy, the Alleluia is repeated.

Lassus: The visit of the Magi

The fact that the contemporaries of Orlande de Lassus spelled his name in many different ways — in Flemish, French, Italian, and German — is testimony to this composer's peripatetic career, which led him from his native Belgium to Sicily, Milan, Naples, Rome, and finally to Munich. He was just six years younger than Palestrina, and, like the latter, had departed before the time at which stylistic changes of the Baroque era emerged.

Accordingly, we hear the words of the motet *Videntes stellam* (Seeing the star) presented not with the dramatic effects of a Gabrieli or a Sweelinck, but in a serene musical manner that reflects the meaning that lies behind the text, which is from the Gospel of St. Matthew. The five syllables of the opening words *Videntes stellam* are heard in a phrase that quickly ascends an entire octave, as though to depict the upward gaze of the Magi as they lift their eyes toward the phenomenon they see in the sky. Their *gaudio magno* is quiet and subdued, quite unlike Sweelinck's outburst at the same words. The music comes to audible resting points at *domum*, *matre eius*, et *procidentes*, and finally at *adoraverunt eum*, which concludes the *prima pars*, or first part, of this motet. For here we find a characteristic of late-Renaissance motets: the work is in two distinct parts, each of which contains its own distinct set of actions or ideas. The *secunda pars* is devoted to the mission of the Magi: the presentation of their three gifts. Of these, it is the gold — *aurum* — that receives the most musical attention, for this word is spun out by the individual choral voices in an seemingly endless cascade of musical arches, each of which moves slowly up and back down, as though to say See this most precious substance that we are giving you.

Beyond the sacred motet

The musical reforms of the Counter-Reformation were widespread and long-lasting, and fundamentally changed the world of choral music. The deliberate choosing of choral harmonies so as to set a particular mood, the deliberate devising of sung phrases so as to represent a particular object or idea, and the deliberate use of rhythm and meter to suggest a particular emotional state were inventions that were applied not only to music of the sacred sphere, but to the secular as well. The late-Renaissance madrigal owes its very existence to these innovations. Music of the Baroque era, nascent in these six motets but in full flower in the Bach cantata to be heard later in this program, would not have been possible but for them. Perhaps it is not too much of a stretch to say that neither would choral music of the twentieth century, including the soon-to-be-heard works of Kenneth Leighton and Samuel Barber.

Ne timeas, Maria;
invenisti gratiam apud Dominum:
ecce concipies et paries filium.
Alleluia.

Dixit Maria ad angelum:
Ecce ancilla Domini;
fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum.

Hodie Christus natus est;
hodie Salvator apparuit:
hodie in terra canunt Angeli,
laetantur Archangeli;
hodie exsultant iusti, dicentes:
Gloria in excelsis Deo, Alleluia.

O magnum mysterium,
et admirabile sacramentum,
ut animalia viderent Dominum natum
iacentem in praesepe.

Natum vidimus, et choros angelorum
collaudantes Dominum. Alleluia.

Angelus ad pastores ait:
Annuntio vobis gaudium magnum,
quia natus est vobis hodie
salvator mundi. Alleluia.

Videntes stellam,
Magi gavisi sunt gaudio magno;
et intrantes domum invenerunt puerum
cum Maria matre eius
et procidentem adoraverunt eum.

Et apertis thesauris suis
obtulerunt ei munera:
aurum, thus et myrrham.

*Fear not, Mary;
you have found grace with the Lord:
behold, you shall conceive and bear a son.
Alleluia.*

*Said Mary to the angel:
Behold, [I am] the handmaid of the Lord:
let it be unto me according to your word.*

*Today Christ is born;
today the Savior appeared:
today the Angels sing on earth,
the Archangels rejoice;
today the righteous exult, saying:
Glory to God in the highest, Alleluia.*

*O great mystery,
and wonderful sacrament,
that animals should see the new-born Lord
lying in a manger.*

*We saw the birth, and the chorus of angels
praising God together. Alleluia.*

*The angel said to the shepherds:
I announce to you a great joy,
that today is born for you
the savior of the world. Alleluia.*

*Seeing the star,
the wise men were overwhelmed with great joy;
and entering the house, they found the child,
with Mary his mother,
and they fell down and worshipped him*

*And opening their treasures,
they offered him gifts:
gold, frankincense, and myrrh.*

Please enjoy a fifteen-minute intermission!

can ta ta singers

David Hoose
Music Director

Noël

Dec 9/8 pm

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Dec 10/3 pm

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David Hoose, Music Director

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A Hymn of the Nativity

on a poem by Richard Crashaw (c. 1613-1640)

Soprano solo: Lisa Wooldridge, Dec. 1, Dec. 9

Nicole Beauregard, Dec. 3

Kenneth Leighton was born and grew up in Yorkshire. His parents recognized his musical ability at an early age; by his young teens he was already an accomplished pianist and a composer of songs with piano accompaniment and works for piano, one of which he had published at the age of only seventeen. He entered Oxford, where he composed his Symphony No. 1 in 1949, earned a degree in classics in 1950, and in music in 1951. He was encouraged by the famed English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams and by the eminent conductor Leopold Stokowski, who performed his *Primavera Romana* with the Liverpool Philharmonic. Studies with the Italian composer Goffredo Petrassi followed in 1951 and 1952, during which time his mature compositional style began to take shape. He held successive teaching positions in Leeds, Edinburgh, and Oxford, after which he became a professor of music at the University of Edinburgh for the remainder of his life.

His output as a composer consists of over 100 works, including three symphonies, three piano concertos, miscellaneous works for orchestra, chamber music, many sacred and secular choral works, both a cappella and accompanied, and organ music. He continued to compose until shortly before his untimely death from cancer at age fifty-nine.

A Hymn of the Nativity dates from 1960, when Leighton was thirty-one. The lyrics are the composer's condensation of Richard Crashaw's rather long and very wordy poem, which in its entirety seems much too long to be set to choral music. The composer appears to have chosen the stanzas of the poem that are essential to its substance — a reflection on what the birth of a savior must be like, and what it might mean — and to have discarded the many stanzas felt to be peripheral. The poem is in the form of a dialogue between a group of shepherds (which Leighton represents by the choir) and a single shepherd of the group (whom he represents by a soprano soloist). With that much said about the poem and the way in which Leighton adapts it, perhaps the lyrics will speak for themselves without further comment.

Leighton's musical style in this choral work stands within the long and noble tradition of British choral music that dates back to Handel and Purcell. Leighton's style is always tonal, frequently modal (i.e. it uses tones that lie outside the conventional major scale), never predictable, and full of melodic invention that is always serves to express the lyrics' inner meaning.

Although this tonality-modality is always present, the way in which Leighton moves about within this framework is striking, and is the musical

means by which the abrupt changes in mood are achieved. The introductory section, which is the first three stanzas of Leighton's reduction of Crashaw's poem, opens with an arresting solo by the single shepherd; this begins in the key of D minor but abruptly shifts to B minor just as the choir enters — thus soloist and choir occupy different musical landscapes. From B minor the key moves quickly to C-sharp minor, then to A major. After an interlude by the soloist, the choir returns to begin the third stanza while still in A major, but slides through the keys of G major and F major before settling back to A major and cadencing there. These key relationships are not all that unusual — Franz Schubert changed keys just as whimsically, and within the same kind of range as the above — but the ways in which Leighton subtly moves from one key to another are entirely his own.

The choir, still in A major, takes over at the fourth stanza to declaim the words *Welcome to our wond'ring sight* in exciting counterpoint, eventually arriving at the key of E minor as the soloist re-enters at *summer in winter*. The counterpoint gives way as the choir exclaims *Great little one* in climactic block chords.

In the final stanza, whose lyrics reflect upon the simultaneous majesty and weakness of the new birth, soloist and choir together gradually bring the music down to a quiet intensity (having slid into G major while doing so). Then, after moving through several unexpected areas of its original B minor mode, the music comes to its final resting point on a very unexpected D major chord — the major form of the D minor in which the piece began.

We saw Thee in Thy balmy nest,
Young dawn of our eternal day ;
We saw Thine eyes break from the East,
And chase the trembling shades away:
We saw Thee, and we blest the sight,
We saw Thee by Thine own sweet light.

I saw th' obsequious seraphim
Their rosy fleece of fire bestow,
For well they now can spare their wings,
Since Heaven itself lies here below.
Well done, said I; but are you sure
Your down, so warm, will pass for pure?

No, no, your King's not yet to seek
Where to repose His royal head;
See, see how soon His new-bloom'd cheek
'Twixt mother's breasts is gone to bed.
Sweet choice, said we, no way but so,
Not to lie cold, yet sleep in snow!

Welcome to our wond'ring sight!
Eternity shut in a span!
Summer in winter! Day in night!
Heaven in earth! And God in man!
Great little one, whose all-embracing birth
Lifts earth to Heaven, stoops Heaven to earth!

To Thee, meek Majesty, soft King
Of simple graces and sweet loves!
Each of us his lamb will bring,
Each his pair of silver doves!
At last, in fire of Thy fair eyes,
Ourselves become our own best sacrifice!

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OCTOBER 28, 2017, 8:00 PM

Mother for the World: Songs
of Mary
DECEMBER 16, 2017, *7:00 PM

Double Takes: One Text, Two
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MARCH 24, 2018, *7:00 PM

Music for a May Evening
MAY 12, 2018, 8:00 PM

*NOTE START TIME



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Twelfth Night

on a poem by Laurie Lee (1914-1997)

These comments on Samuel Barber's *Twelfth Night* begin with a comment about another composition of his: *Lives there a music lover who does not know and love Barber's Adagio for Strings?* This work, which began in 1936 as the slow movement of his String Quartet, Opus 11, which he transcribed in 1938 for string orchestra at the suggestion of Arturo Toscanini, and which he transcribed in 1967 for choral voices as *Agnus Dei*, enjoys an unusually extensive popularity with audiences of both classical and popular music. A profoundly evocative work, it has been played at the funerals and memorials of a great number of famous people, and has been used as background music for no less than twenty-nine movies. So one may ask: What is there in Barber's music that gives his "classical" music such wide appeal, given that "classical" music is commonly thought to be attractive only to an effete minority?

Samuel Barber, like Kenneth Leighton, was encouraged by his parents to develop the unusual musical ability that he showed at an early age. At seven he began to write pieces for piano and songs with piano accompaniment. At nine he informed his mother that he wished to become a composer, adding that he found that much more attractive than trying to be athletic. After entering the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia (at age fourteen!) to study composition, piano, and voice, his compositions soon included chamber music and works for orchestra. Barber's output over his lifetimes include hundreds of songs and piano pieces, much chamber music, two symphonies, three operas, three concertos, the *School for Scandal* overture (which earned him wide recognition), and three works each entitled *Essay for Orchestra*. Like Leighton, he continued to compose until shortly before his death.

Twelfth Night is one of a set of two pieces for a cappella choir that he composed in 1968. It is a setting of a poem by the British poet Laurie Lee, 1914-1997 (whose full name was Lawrence Edward Alan Lee). Curiously, given the very large body of works over Barber's lifetime, he wrote only eleven choral works, one of which is this set of two a cappella pieces.

Lee's poem occupies five stanzas, the first two of which set a scene of seemingly irredeemable gloom. "No night could be darker than this night." The poem's title tells us that this would be *Twelfth Night*, on which tradition says the three Magi arrived to visit the newborn child. But the night does not begin well, for a series of stark images, gloomy though powerful, establishes a mood of total hopelessness: "blood snaps like a wire — the year seems defeated — never again, it seems, can green things run — this dark lung of winter."

How does Barber describe all this hopelessness through music? By having the choir sing in a minor key, of course; that's the conventional way to describe gloom in music. But Barber throws in his own not-so-conventional touches: the D minor harmonies are interspersed with the chords of C-sharp

minor and G-sharp minor — chords totally distant from D minor — and these abrupt punctuations draw the listener's attention to key words like "cold" and "year". Nor are the D minor chords themselves all that conventional, for Barber adds extra notes to them (the seventh and ninth notes above the root note D). The key shifts to G minor as the second stanza begins, thereby giving the listener a contrasting sound, though without breaking the mood,. The overall effect of the music in the first two stanzas is to convey and reinforce to the listener the sense of total hopelessness that is given by the poem.

The first two stanzas conclude with the first audible pause in the music, which introduces us to the third stanza and a return to the key of D minor. Here we learn that it is "pilgrim kings" — the first biblical reference we encounter in the poem — who are experiencing this dreadful scene, and that they are journeying their "final mile" that is "still left when all have reached / Their tether's end: that mile / Where the Child lies hid." (All punctuated, again, with chords from distant keys.) But "the Child lies hid?" Here, perhaps, is a gleam of hope!

This gleam slowly grows in the fourth stanza ("For see, beneath the hand..."), where extremely dissonant harmonies built upon tiny intervals of the musical scale lead us to an encouraging major chord on the hopeful word "glows". With the choir now singing in poignant harmonies (though they are still minor chords), the biblical references continue with "men with shepherd's eyes," leading us to promising major chords on "stars" and "the lamb's returning time."

Barber repeats the words "For see..." (which Lee did not) to give an exciting beginning to the final stanza, which quickly builds to the musical climax: "Out of this utter death he's born again, / His birth our saviour". But the theme of gloom is not discarded; it remains, in contrast with the newly-arrived hope: "From terror's equinox he climbs and grows, / Drawing his finger's light across our blood..." To paint this image musically, Barber writes a clash of five musical lines, sung in counterpoint by five choral voices, which converge into fortissimo block chords at "The son of heaven, and the son of God" (still interspersed with those persistent foreign-key chords!).

The poem is now done, but the music is not. Perhaps to reflect Lee's refusal to discard the gloom entirely, Barber has lone voices in the choir repeat the opening words "No night could be darker than this night" — over chords of A minor, made to sound cold and stark by the omission of their central note C. Salvation may have arrived, but all is not yet sweetness and light.

What Lee may be doing in his poem is to use references to the Magi's visit to the Child not in order to relate the story itself, but as metaphors to make the point that no matter how great adversity may seem, there is always hope. Barber's music, as suggested by the above comments, gets into the very soul of the poem, and perhaps into ours as well. Epiphany can indeed come, perhaps when we least expect it, or perhaps when we don't expect it at all.

To hazard a possible answer to the question in the first paragraph: The wide appeal of Samuel Barber's music may well be due to his tendency to stand

always on firm tonal ground (like Leighton, his tonal centers can shift rapidly and unexpectedly, but he always has one), his inspired melodic inventiveness, and, for vocal music, his inclination to choose texts always by intriguing authors, usually American, British, or Irish: Laurie Lee, James Agee, Stephen Spender, Gerald Manley Hopkins, W. B. Yeats, P. B. Shelley, Emily Dickinson, James Joyce, Langston Hughes, and Matthew Arnold are just a few of the dozens of writers whose words Barber set to music.

No night could be darker than this night,
No cold so cold,
As the blood snaps like a wire,
And the heart's sap stills,
And the year seems defeated.

O never again, it seems, can green things run,
Or sky birds fly,
Or the grass exhale its humming breath
Powdered with pimpernels,
From this dark lung of winter.

Yet here are lessons for the final mile
Of pilgrim kings;
The mile still left when all have reached
Their tether's end: that mile
Where the Child lies hid.

For see, beneath the hand, the earth already
Warms and glows;
For men with shepherd's eyes there are
Signs in the dark, the turning stars,
The lamb's returning time.

Out of this utter death he's born again,
His birth our saviour;
From terror's equinox he climbs and grows,
Drawing his finger's light across our blood –
The sun of heaven, and the son of god.

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Johann Sebastian Bach

1685-1750

Cantata BWV 40

Dazu ist erschienen Der Sohn Gottes

For this reason the Son of God appeared

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Take a flight of fancy for a moment.

You are living in the German-speaking region of Thuringia in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. You are a musician by training. You are thirty-eight years old, approaching the peak of your creative life, and you have already held a number of posts as organist and Kapellmeister in five musical communities in the region. You were successful at all these posts (though several people had objected to your organ playing, which they thought was too adventuresome). It is now the fall of 1723. Last summer, when you were working at the court of Köthen, you had heard that Johannes Kuhnau, the learned musician and author, had died, leaving his post of Kantor vacant in the large, prosperous, and bustling city of Leipzig. You had applied for the position, seeking a change from your too-much-restricted post at court, at which it was difficult for you to pursue your long-time goal of establishing a complete repertory of music for worship in the Lutheran Church. You had waited nervously about the response to your application, for the Leipzig authorities had first invited the famous musician Georg Philipp Telemann to become their Kantor. Fortunately for you, he turned the invitation down. (You had heard a rumor that he used the Leipzig invitation only so he could demand a higher stipend from his employers in Hamburg.) But you still had to wait, because the second choice in Leipzig was the highly regarded Christoph Graupner, the Hofkapellmeister at the court of Darmstadt. You had breathed more easily when you learned that the Darmstadt court would not release Graupner from his post. Finally, now that you were the third choice of the Leipzig authorities (some of whom didn't want to invite you at all because you didn't have a university education), you were at last invited there, to oversee music at the churches of St. Thomas and St. Nicolai. Last spring you moved to Leipzig with your family to take up your new duties as Kantor.

Your name is Johann Sebastian Bach.

As it is now fall, there is plenty of music that you must prepare for Advent and Christmas. You composed a great deal of music in your former positions, and much of that you can re-use. But you will need to provide a brand new cantata to be performed on St. Stephen's Day, December 26, the day after Christmas. This will be the first cantata that you will have written for Leipzig, and it should make a good impression. What should this cantata be like?

It should open with a joyful chorus, for this is the Christmas season. Yet the opening should have serious theological overtones, for you want to remind the Leipzig authorities that you mean business. You recall a verse from the First Epistle of St. John: "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." There's your chorus text! Joy is customarily expressed through the sound of brass instruments, so you write an accompaniment for the chorus for two horns, along with the more usual two oboes, strings, and supporting continuo of low strings and organ. You want to drive the point of the text home, so you have the chorus first present the words in block chords, after which you emphasize "destroy the works of the devil" with a vigorous florid passage. But once isn't enough: this point has to be made many times. So now you have the chorus sing the "For this purpose..." words as a fugue, with the voices entering one by one, in case anyone didn't catch the words the first time. You follow the fugue with another florid section that again emphasizes the "destroy" idea. Then, in abbreviated form, you present something similar to the opening section, in which the chorus sings the words in block chords, followed by another florid section, to conclude your opening chorus.

Now the cantata needs something quieter. You find a passage by a Lutheran writer that expands on the idea from the Gospel of St. John that "...the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." Just right for a recitative; a tenor voice is just the right choice to sing this expressively.

Now you need another musical change of pace. A chorale would be good here. About 75 years ago, a pastor over in Dresden by the name of Kaspar Füger wrote a Christmas chorale; its third verse will do just fine! Its implied reference to the devil ("Sin begets suffering") will do nicely to introduce the next number, an aria that will expand on the "devil" words of the opening chorus, to show how the Savior has come to smash the "hellish snake", i.e. the devil. This is an angry text — just right for the bass voice!

That aria had a great thought, you think, and it's worth repeating — but maybe a little more gently this time. Maybe you can now emphasize not the snake, but the power that does away with the snake. Another local writer has fortunately provided verses that say this. The implied power is Jesus, whom it is customary to represent by the upper strings, with little or no supporting bass line. Hmm — an alto voice would go well with that sound, you think.

Time for a chorale again. For contrast, this time the mood can be angry once more. The pastor Paul Gerhardt, who about 75 years ago lived up in Mittenwalde, near Berlin, wrote just the right verse for that: it talks about

snapping the head of the snake. Surely the choir, you suppose, will sing it with just the right amount of anger.

The battle with the snake is over, and now it's time to be joyful again. So you choose 23:37 from the Gospel of St. Matthew, which is one of the readings for St. Stephen's Day, when this cantata will be first performed; it compares Jesus gathering his flock to a hen gathering her chickens. You'd like to bring back the tenor to sing this. You give him the very unusual accompaniment of just horns and oboes — no upper strings. (Nice contrast with the alto recitative, which mostly had only upper strings.)

You close the cantata with a chorale that implores Jesus to look after all his flock. So much for the devil and his sinful work!

You hope that Leipzig will like your cantata, come St. Stephen's Day.

1---Chorus

Dazu ist erschienen der Sohn Gottes,
daß er die Werke des Teufels zerstöre.

*For this the Son of God appeared,
that he might destroy the works of the Devil.*

2--- Tenor Recitative

Das Wort ward Fleisch und wohnt in der Welt,
Das Licht der Welt bestrahlt den Kreis der Erden,
Der große Gottessohn
Verläßt des Himmels Thron,
Und seiner Majestät gefällt,
Ein kleines Menschenkind zu werden.
Bedenkt doch diesen Tausch, wer nur gedenken kann:
Der König wird ein Untertan,
Der Herr erscheint als ein Knecht,
Und wird dem menschlichen Geschlecht
(O süßes Wort in aller Ohren!)
Zu Trost und Heil geboren.

*The word became flesh and lives in the world,
the light of the world illuminates the region of the earth;
the great son of God
leaves the throne of heaven,
and it is pleasing to his majesty
that he becomes a little child in human form.
Yet think about this exchange, whoever can recollect:
the King becomes a subject,
the Lord appears as a vassal,*

*and to human lineage
(O sweet word in the ears of all!)
he is born for comfort and salvation.*

3---Chorale

Die Sünd macht Leid.
Christus bringt Freud,
Weil er zu Trost in diese Welt ist kommen.
Mit uns ist Gott nun in der Not:
Wer ist, der uns als Christen kann verdammen?

*Sin begets suffering.
Christ brings joy,
because he for comfort has come into this world.
God is with us now in our need:
who is it that can condemn us as Christians?*

4--- Bass Aria

Höllische Schlange,
Wird dir nicht bange?
Der dir den Kopf als ein Sieger zerknickt,
Ist nun geboren,
Und die verloren,
Werden mit ewigem Frieden beglückt.

*Hellish snake,
aren't you becoming anxious?
He who snaps your head as a victor
is now born,
and those who are lost
will be favored with eternal peace.*

5--- Alto Recitative

Die Schlange, so im Paradies
Auf alle Adamskinder
Das Gift der Seelen fallen ließ,
Bringt uns nicht mehr Gefahr;
Des Weibes Samen stellt sich dar,
Der Heiland ist ins Fleisch gekommen
Und hat ihr allen Gift benommen.
Dum sei getrost, betrübter Sünder.

*The snake, that in Paradise
let the poison of souls
fall upon all Adam's children,
brings us no more danger;
the offspring of woman appears,
the Savior has come as flesh
and has taken away all poison.
So be comforted, troubled sinner.*

6---Chorale

Schüttle deinen Kopf und sprich:
Fleuch, du alte Schlange!
Was erneurst du deinen Stich,
Machst mir angst und bange?
Ist dir doch der Kopf zerknickt,
Und ich bin durchs Leiden
Meines Heilands dir entrückt
In den Saal der Freuden.

*Shake your head and speak:
flee, you old snake!
Why do you renew your sting,
why do you make me frightened and anxious?
No - your head is snapped,
and through the suffering
of my Savior, I am transported from you
into the hall of joy.*

7---Tenor Aria

Christenkinder, freuet euch!
Wütet schon das Höllenreich,
Will euch Satans Grimm erschrecken,
Jesus, der erretten kann,
Nimmt sich seiner Küchlein an
Und will sie mit Flügeln decken.

*Christian children, rejoice!
Even if the kingdom of Hell rages,
and the fury of Satan wishes to frighten you,
Jesus, who can save,
looks after his chickens
and wishes to cover them with his wings.*

8---Chorale

Jesu, nimm dich deiner Glieder
Ferner in Genaden an;
Schenke, was man bitten kann,
Zu erquickten deine Brüder:
Gib der ganzen Christenschar
Frieden und ein sel'ges Jahr!
Freude, Freude über Freude!
Christus wehret allem Leide.
Wonne, Wonne über Wonne!
Er ist die Genadensonne.

*Jesu, look after your generations
with grace in the future;
grant whatever one can pray for,
to give your brothers rest:
give to all the Christian flock
peace and a blessed year!
Joy, joy over joy!
Christ defends against all sorrow.
Delight, delight over delight!
He is the sun of grace.*



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www.cambridgechorus.org

Cantemus Chamber Chorus, Jane Ring Frank, Dir., 888-246-7871, Dec. 2, 7:30 PM, Dec. 3 & 10, 4:00 PM: Psalmists & Seers: Chichester Psalms, venue TBD. April 28, 2018, 7:30 PM, April 29 & May 6, 4:00 PM: Time & Tide: Songs of the Sea, Venue TBD. www.cantemus.org/

Choral Art Society of the South Shore, Danica A. Buckley, Cond. 508-577-1466. Open rehearsals 9/12&19, 7-9PM. Concert: 12/3, 4 PM: Saint-Saens Christmas Oratorio/Sing along Hallelujah! & Carols. St. Luke's Episcopal, Scituate. Open rehearsals 1/9 & 16, 7-9PM. Concert 5/6, 4 PM: Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Schubert. Location TBD. www.choralartsociety.org

Chorus pro Musica, Jamie Kirsch, Dir., 617-267-7442. Nov. 5, 3 PM: Vores, In Childhood's Thicket, Distler Hall, Tufts, Medford. Dec. 15, 8 PM: Candlelight Christmas at Old South Church, Boston. Mar. 10, 8 PM: Spring Concert, First Baptist Church, Newton. Apr. 20, 8 PM: Elgar, The Dream of Gerontius, with Boston Philharmonic; B. Zander, artistic dir.; Symphony Hall, Boston.
www.choruspromusica.org

CircleSinging Boston Peter McLoughlin, Coordinator circlesingingboston@gmail.com. Once per month in Central Square, participative improvised choral singing - not a performance Sunday 4:30pm - 6:30pm - exact dates and description at www.meetup.com/CircleSinging-Boston/

Commonwealth Chorale, David Carrier, Dir. Nov 11, 8 PM, Amy Beach Grand Mass in E-Flat Major, Church of the Holy Name, W. Roxbury. Mar 11, 3 PM, Arnesen The Wound in the Water, Church of the Holy Name, W. Roxbury. May 12, 8 PM, Works of Brahms, Elder, Paulus, Pahn, and Traver, 2nd Church in Newton, W. Newton. www.commonwealthchorale.com

Concord Chorus, Kevin Leong, Music Director, 978-254-1551. Dec. 9, 2 & 5 PM: Winter Holiday Concerts—Victoria, Monteverdi, Mendelssohn & Brahms, Middlesex School Chapel (1400 Lowell Road, Concord). May 19, 8 PM: Haydn's Lord Nelson Mass with prof. soloists & orch., Church of St. Brigid (1981 Massachusetts Avenue, Lexington). www.concordchorus.org

Greater Boston Choral Consortium
2017 Fall Season; www.bostonsings.org

Call numbers listed for chorus information or 978-595-2293 / gbccinfo@gmail.com

Concord Women's Chorus, Jane Ring Frank, Dir.. Dec.16, 3 PM: Celebremus: A Season of Song, Poulenc's Litanies a la Vierge Noir and works by Charpentier, Rheinberger, Carey and Stroope, Trinity Episcopal, Concord, MA. May 12, 4 PM: Amy Beach and her Contemporaries, works by Beach, Chaminade, Daniels, Howe, more! www.concordwomenschorus.org

Emmanuel Music, Ryan Turner, Artistic Director; 617-536-3356; Sundays, September 24, 2017 - May 20, 2018, 10am Bach Cantata Series, Emmanuel Church, Boston; Dec. 16, 8PM, Bach, Christmas Oratorio, Emmanuel Church, Boston; Feb 23, 8PM: Metamorphoses, Sanders Theatre; www.emmanuelmusic.org

Halalisa Singers, Mary Cunningham, Dir. info@halalisa.org, "Draw the Circle Wide: Songs of Justice and Inclusion" Jan. 20, 8pm Follen Church Lexington, Jan. 21, 3pm UU Church of Reading; "Best of Halalisa's 25 years" April 7, 8pm Follen Church Lexington, April 8, 3pm UU Church of Reading. www.halalisa.org.

Harvard Pro Musica, Carey Shunskis, Dir., 978-456-5039. Dec 9, 2017 at 7:30 PM: Winter Fantasy, Harvard Unitarian Universalist Church, Elm St., Harvard. Fantasia on Christmas Carols, Vaughan Williams; Mid-Winter Songs, Lauridsen; The Snow, Elgar. May 12, 2018 at 7:30 PM: Springtime in Vienna, Harvard Unitarian Universalist Church, Elm St., Harvard. Mirjams Siegesgesang, Schubert; Kleine Orgelmesse, Haydn; Laudate Dominum from Vesperae solennes de confessore, Mozart. www.HarvardProMusica.org

Highland Glee Club, David Tiedman, mus. dir., 508-655-8232 Dec. 3, 3PM, First Baptist Church, 858 Great Plain Ave., Needham. Winter Concert-sacred/secular songs of the season/selections from Cherubini Requiem Apr. 22, 3PM, Newton City Hall, War Memorial Auditorium, 1000 Commonwealth Ave, Newton. Spring Concert Tickets \$20, under 18 free (both concerts) highlandgleeclub.com

The Master Singers (Lexington), Adam Grossman, Dr., 617-729-7975. Oct. 29, 4 PM: Hovland, Hindemith, Grieg, First Parish Church, 7 Harrington Rd. Dec. 10, 4 PM: Susa, Marshall, Follen Church, 755 Mass. Ave. Mar. 3, 8 PM: Pops! First Parish. Mar. 24, 4 PM: Children's Concert, Clarke Middle School, 7 Stedman Rd. May 6, 3 PM: Ginastera, Britten, de Victoria, Scarlatti, M. Weinstein, First Parish. www.themastersingers.org

Meridian Singers, Michael Barrett, Dir. 617-354-0402, Jan 23, 1PM, MIT Chapel, Music of Johannes Brahms, including O Heiland Reiss die Himmel auf, plus pieces from his music library; May 15, 1PM, MIT Chapel, Vocal polyphony in France and in French, from early Renaissance to the 20th century. Both concerts are free. web.mit.edu/meridians/

MIT Women's Chorale, Kevin Galiè, Dir., 617-253-3656, Open Rehearsal, Dec 2, 1PM, MIT Chapel, Concert, Dec. 9, 5PM, Harvard-Epworth United Methodist Church: G. Puccini the Elder, Te Deum, Beethoven, J. Strauss, more, free; May 5, 6PM, St. Mary's Church, Charlestown, May 9, 8PM, St. Cecilia Parish, Boston: Charles-René, Second Mass (1905), Franck, Fauré, more. web.mit.edu/womensleague/womenschorale/

Musica Sacra, Mary Beekman, Dir., 617-349-3400. Oct. 28, 8PM: Shade and Light: Manuel Cardoso & Bach; Dec. 16, 7PM: Christmas Songs of Mary; Mar. 24, 7PM: Double Takes: One Text, Two Perspectives; May 12, 8PM: Music for a May Evening. First Church Congregational, Cambridge, MA. www.musicasacra.org

Greater Boston Choral Consortium
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ig. **Nashoba Valley Chorale**, Anne Watson Born, dir. 978-540-5022. Jan. 27, 8pm: Haydn Paukenmesse, Lauridsen Lux Aeterna. April 21, 8pm Vaughan Williams In Windsor Forest, works by Diorio, Thompson, more. Littleton High School, Littleton, MA. Additional performances April 7 with Worcester Schubertiad and May 20 (Beethoven's 9th) with Worcester Symphony Youth Orchestra. www.nashobachorale.org

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Neponset Choral Society, Christopher Martin, Artistic Dir. Celebrate the Season, Dec. 9, 7:30 PM and Dec. 10, 2017 2:30 PM; Sounds of Hope, April 7, 7:30 PM and April 8, 2018, 2:30 PM, St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Foxborough. MA. www.ncschorus.org.

New England Classical Singers, David Hodgkins, Artistic Dir. 978-384-NECS. Sun. Dec 10, 3PM Christ Church, 25 Central St., Andover. Bach Jauchzet frohlocket & Charpentier Messe Minuit pour Noel. Sun. Mar 4, 3PM Christ Church, Andover, Brahms Liebeslieder. Sun. May 6, 4PM, Corpus Christi Parish, Lawrence, free concert. www.newenglandclassical.org

Oriana Consort, Walter Chapin, Dir., 339-203-5876. Dec. 1, 8 PM; Dec. 3, 5 PM; Dec. 9, 8 PM: Renaiss motets; Leighton, Barber, Bach Cantata 40. Mar. 2, 8 PM; Mar. 4, 5 PM: Wachner, Bray, Betinis, Gjeilo, Ešenvalds, Whitacre; Renaiss madrigals. May 4, 8 PM; May 6, 5 PM; May 12, 8 PM: Martin Mass for Double Chorus et al. Venues: www.orianaconsort.org

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Reading Community Singers, Beth Mosier, Dir., 781-724-9150. Dec. 2, 7:30 PM, Dec. 3, 3:00 PM: Making Spirits Bright - A Holiday Celebration, Old South United Methodist Church, Reading. May 5, 2018, 7:30 PM: Spring Concert, Parker Middle School, Reading. www.readingcommunitysingers.org.

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Seraphim Singers, Jennifer Lester, Dir., 617-026-0126. Nov. 4, 8 PM: The Reformation at 500: From Luther to Duruflé (incl. Requiem), St Ignatius, Chestnut Hill (BC); Feb 9, 8 PM, St Cecilia (Back Bay); Feb 11, 3 PM, First Church Congregational, Cambridge: Commissions old (Gyger, Wachner) and new (Christina Whitten Thomas); German motets; April 22, 3 PM, Eliot Church, Newton; April 29, 3 PM, First Church Cambridge: Past Commissions (Dorman, Clark, Sawyer); Rheinberger Mass in E-flat; English motets. www.seraphimsingers.org

Spectrum Singers, John W Ehrlich, Dir, 617-492-8902. Nov 18 Baroque Christmas: Charpentier, Buxtehude, Hammerschmidt, JM Bach, baroque orch; Mar 17 Haydn "Paukenmesse", Schubert "Magnificat C maj"; May 19 Dvorak "Mass D maj" Heinrich Christensen organ, Martin "Mass Double Choir a cappella." All 8 PM, 1st Cong Camb. \$45/\$30/\$15. spectrumingers.org

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Tremble Clefs choral singing group for people with Parkinson's disease and their family members focusing on improving communication abilities. Changing repertoire and open enrollment throughout the year. No auditions. Contact Nancy Mazonson 781 693 5069.

9, www.jfcsboston.org/parkinsons

Voices of MetroWest voicesofmetrowest@gmail.com will present Totally 90s the weekend of December 1 and 2. Visit www.voicesofmetrowest.com for more details.

Westford Chorus, "Songs for the Season!" Saturday, Dec. 9, United Methodist Church, Westford 7:00pm and Sunday, Dec. 10, Trinity Lutheran Church, Chelmsford, 3:00pm. Classical holiday concert; chorus, brass quartet, and organ, Gabrieli, Britten, Pinkham. www.westfordchorus.org



ORIANA CONSORT
— Choral music from seven centuries —