



UNIVERSITY OF
ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Oratorio de Noël : Camille Saint-Saëns

Monday, December 9, 7:30 PM, St. Basil's Church



PROGRAM

Peace on Earth (Christmas Anthem), op. 38 (1897)

Amy Beach (1867-1944), text by E. H. Sears (1810-1876)

Jereny Shen, soprano

Thea Nappert, alto

Oratorio de Noël, op. 12 (1858)

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)

I. Prélude (dans le style de Seb. Bach)

II. Récit et chœur : *Et pastores erant* (Luke 2:8-14)

And there were in the same region shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And behold, the angel of the Lord stood among them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were greatly afraid.

And the angel said to them:

“Fear not! For behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign unto you: you shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger.”

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying:

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will!”

Luca McCauley, tenor

Thea Nappert and Asha Mayadunne, mezzo sopranos

Jereny Shen, soprano

Giovanni Rabbitto, baritone

III. Air : *Expectans expectavi* (Psalm 40:1)

I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me.

Arushi Das and Sofia Bolonna, mezzo sopranos

IV. Air et chœur : *Domine, ego credidi* (John 11:27)

Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God, who has come into the world.

Luca McCauley, tenor

V. Duo : *Benedictus* (Psalm 118:26-28)

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

The Lord is God, and he has given us light.

You are my God, and I will praise you:

You are my God, and I will extol you.

Megan O'Donnell and Ana Castro Barrios, sopranos

Giovanni Rabbitto and Owen Phillipson, baritones

VI. Chœur : *Quare fremuerunt gentes* (Psalm 2:1)

Why do the nations so furiously rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

VII. Trio : *Tecum Principium* (Psalm 110:3)

With you is sovereignty in the day of your strength, in the splendour of holiness.

Luca McCauley, tenor

Victoria Chan and May Sadan, sopranos

Owen Phillipson and Giovanni Rabbitto, baritones

VIII. Quatuor : *Alleluia* (Isaiah 49:13)

Alleluia. Sing, O heavens, and exult, O earth, for the Lord has comforted his people, and will have mercy on his poor afflicted ones.

Arushi Das, alto

Isabella Medina Milano and Ana Castro Barrios, sopranos

Sofia Bolonna and Aimee Harness, mezzo sopranos

Owen Phillipson, baritone

IX. Quintette et chœur : *Consurge, Filia Sion* (Lamentations 2:19;

Isaiah 62:1)

Arise, daughter of Zion. Alleluia. Praise God in the night, in the beginning of the night watches. Alleluia.

Until Zion's righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her Saviour as a burning lamp.

Luca McCauley, tenor

Elizabeth Gilerovitch, Giuliana Barrow Lattanzia, and Victoria Chan, sopranos

Aimee Harness and Asha Mayadunne, mezzo sopranos

Sofia Bolonna and Arushi Das, altos

Owen Phillipson and Giovanni Rabbitto, baritones

X. Chœur : *Tollite hostias* (Psalm 96:8-13)

Bring forth an offering and adore the Lord in his holy courts. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth exult before the Lord, for he comes. Alleluia.

A NOTE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Our Advent concert opens with the lush choral anthem, “Peace on Earth,” by American composer Amy Beach (1867-1944), celebrated for her compositional prowess, prodigious talent as a pianist, and mentorship of young (especially female) musicians and composers. Beach chooses to set the well-known first, and lesser-known fourth and fifth verses of Edmund Hamilton Sears’s poem, familiar to many as the beloved carol, “It Came Upon the Midnight Clear.” The ambitious, Romantic work, expressing confidence, consolation, and joy as it echoes the angelic song of peace and goodwill to all at Christ’s birth, exemplifies Beach’s use of rich and colourful harmonic language, adept and smooth part writing, and dramatic expressiveness.

The great Parisian pianist, organist, and composer Camille Saint-Saëns composed the cantata-like *Oratorio de Noël* at 23 years of age, completing it in a matter of 10 days, just before its premiere in Christmas 1858 in the Church of La Madeleine. The work shines with youthful sincerity and depth of religious feeling. While Bach was certainly an influence (the opening prelude is a nod to the opening *Sinfonia* of his Christmas Oratorio), Saint-Saëns's 19th century Romantic musical language is decidedly his own, as is the sensitive and creative selection and setting of proper texts drawn from the Catholic Christmas liturgies. After the initial dramatic evocation of the nativity scene, Saint-Saëns moves into an introspective space through reflective prophetic texts from the Psalms, Prophets, and Gospel of John which consider the significance and meaning of the Incarnation. Apart from the frenetic opening of the sixth movement ("Why do the nations rage?"), Saint-Saëns maintains a heartfelt, pastoral mood through lyrical writing expressive of quiet joy and devotion. Moments of longing, tenderness, and grandeur combine in this contemplative musical meditation on the coming of the Messiah, in the manner of Mary's intimate pondering in the heart.

On a personal note, as a former student of Ms. Bach, it is a special joy to be bringing this exciting collaborative project to life through her generous collaboration and that of the stellar emerging artists of her Third Year Oratorio class. It is no small thrill as well to have the opportunity to present this concert with my colleague at St. Basil's, the remarkable Dr. Farahat, on organ. The Schola and I are deeply grateful and inspired not only by the superb musicianship of our collaborators but also by their magnanimity, so in keeping with this season. In that spirit, we offer this performance as a gift to you and invite you into the contemplative space of joyful gratitude this music (and this musicmaking) embodies. — *Dr. Christina Labriola*

ST. MICHAEL'S SCHOLA CANTORUM AND THIRD YEAR ORATORIO CLASS ENSEMBLE

DIRECTOR: CHRISTINA LABRIOLA

ORGAN: JOHN PAUL FARAHAT

Soprano

Ana Castro Barrios*
Irene Chan
Victoria Chan*
Deepthi Claude
Sarah Gangl
Elizabeth Gilerovitch*
Giuliana Barrow Lattanzia*
Susan McElcheran
Jane McKinney
Isabella Medina Milano*

Megan O'Donnell*
May Sadan*
Jereney Shen*
Sylvie Tremblay

Alto

Sofia Bolonna*
Amelia Burke
Kathryn Zaleski Cox
Arushi Das*
Lydia Dillenbeck

Aimee Harness*

Susan Hudson
Ana Iorgulescu De Luca
Asha Mayadunne*
Thea Nappert*
Magda Nusink
Annika Rempel
Susan Wood

Tenor

Justus Croskery

Tommy Gillespie
Luca McCauley*
Elvin Puesta
Mathieu Vezina

Bass

Eric Charron
Tim McElcheran
Michael O'Connor
Owen Phillipson*
Giovanni Rabbitto*

* = soloists

Founded by Professor Michael O'Connor in 2014, the **St. Michael's Schola Cantorum** is an auditioned ensemble of staff, faculty, alumni/ae, students, and friends of the University of St. Michael's College. Drawing from the rich treasure trove of the Church's song, the ensemble performs three concerts a year for significant feasts and seasons in the liturgical calendar, in the acoustically rich space of St. Basil's Church. Directed by **Dr. Christina Labriola**, the Schola is dedicated to the aim of spiritual enrichment of our university community through the transformative beauty of sacred music. <https://stmikes.utoronto.ca/community/spiritual-life-campus-ministry/st-michaels-schola-cantorum>

This year's **Third Year Oratorio Class at the University of Toronto Faculty of Music** is a dedicated, highly skilled and multi-talented group of young emerging artists. In the course of a single day, these young singers may be asked to sing in several languages; interpret multiple styles; work with a coach; have a voice lesson; sing in an ensemble; work out a staging; attend a class or two; write an essay; memorize some repertoire and work at a part time job! As 3rd year performance students, one of their year-long goals includes the preparation of their first full-length required degree recital, which must feature creative programming, and quality content. Since September, Friday morning oratorio explorations with class instructor **Mia Bach** and class pianist Dakota Scott-Digout have already covered solo arias spanning over 200 years; prepared a daring ornamentation project; and presented a solemn noon hour recital in Walter Hall. The Fall term culminates in tonight's joyous collaboration with St Michael's Schola Cantorum for the annual Advent concert. Associated with the Faculty of Music for over 30 years, Ms. Bach has had the privilege of working with talented young singers in the Oratorio classes initially as collaborative class pianist under the mentorship of Douglas Bodle, and subsequently, as the instructor, since 2005.

Canadian organist **Dr. John Paul Farahat** leads a dual career as performer and pedagogue, committed to music interpretation and improvisation in all forms. Notable past solo engagements include the Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris, La Madeleine, Westminster Abbey, the Berliner Dom, Trinity College Cambridge, the University of Saint Andrews, and Saint Patrick's Cathedral in New York. Dr. Farahat is Director of Music and Principal Organist of Saint Basil's Catholic Parish at the University of Saint Michael's College and is a cross-listed adjunct organ faculty member at Emmanuel College of Victoria University. He further serves as Instructor of Organ and Piano at Saint Michael's Choir School, as well as on the team of organists for Saint Michael's Cathedral Basilica. Dr. Farahat holds the Doctor of Musical Arts in Performance degree from the University of Toronto, where he studied with Dr. Kevin Komisaruk.

Thank you to:

Mia Bach for her generous musical support.
David James for providing a helpful translation of the Latin libretto for the Oratorio class.
Fr. Morgan Rice CSB for the use of St. Basil's.

Donations collected this evening will support
Campus Ministry's outreach to the
disadvantaged through St. Basil's
Out of the Cold program.

Scan QR code
with phone
camera to
donate online

