

ONLINE BROADCAST PROGRAM

THE Elora SINGERS
MARK VUORINEN, CONDUCTOR

BACH & HANDEL

MUSIC FOR ADVENT & CHRISTMAS



**SPONSORED BY
PETER BARR AND WENDY DONOHUE**

THE Elora SINGERS

MARK VUORINEN, CONDUCTOR



The Elora Singers acknowledges and honours the land upon which we gather, rehearse and perform as the historic and traditional territory of the First Nations peoples, and in particular that of the Neutral, Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee peoples. Elora is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes ten kilometres on each side of the Grand River.

The Elora Singers

Mark Vuorinen Artistic Director

Soprano

Lesley Bouza
Katy Clark
Rebecca Genge
Jennifer Krabbe
Teresa Mahon
Lindsay McIntyre
Kate Wright

Alto

Julia Barber
Rebecca Claborn
Simon Honeyman
Christina Stelmacovich
Jessica Wright

Tenor

Chris Fischer
Nicholas Nicolaidis
Bryan Rankine
William Reid
Andrew Walker

Bass

Michael Cressman
Paul Grambo
Richard Hrytzak
Alan MacDonald
Graham Robinson
Jordan Scholl

Violin: Rona Goldensher, Mikela Witjes
Viola: Rory McLeod, Carolyn Blackwell
Cello: Ben Bolt-Martin
Bass: George Greer

Oboe: Clare Scholtz, Sarah Cardwell
Trumpet: Daniel Warren, Shawn Spicer
Tympani: Andy Morris
Organ: Christopher Dawes

The Elora Singers, an all-professional Grammy- and JUNO-nominated chamber choir, was founded in 1980 and is the ensemble-in-residence of the Elora Festival for three weeks each summer. Through a regular concert series, recordings, and touring, The Elora Singers has established a reputation as one of the finest chamber choirs in Canada. With twelve releases on the NAXOS label, The Elora Singers is known for its rich, warm sound and clarity of texture. The choir is renowned for its diverse styles, for its commitment to Canadian repertoire, and for collaborations with Canadian and international artists. Recent and upcoming collaborations include VOCES8, the State Choir LATVIJA, Canadian composers Stephanie Martin and Peter-Anthony Togni and the TorQ Percussion Ensemble. A new Christmas recording, *Radiant Dawn*, will be released on November 21.

Mark Vuorinen is Artistic Director and Conductor of The Elora Singers and the Elora Festival and Waterloo Region's Grand Philharmonic Choir. He is also Associate Professor and Chair of Music at Conrad Grebel University College at the University of Waterloo and is the President of Choirs Ontario. A recipient of many awards, Mark was the 2016 Laureate of the Ontario Arts Council's Leslie Bell Prize, and received a 2016 National Choral Award from Choral Canada (Association of Canadian Choral Communities) for his research on Estonian composer Arvo Pärt. Mark holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Toronto and Master of Music degree from Yale University's School of Music and Institute of Sacred Music.

Heartfelt thanks to St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Kitchener for the use of their beautiful space.

Bach & Handel: Music for Advent and Christmas

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4 | 7:30 PM

Cantata BWV 61

J.S. Bach (1685 - 1750)

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland

1. Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland Chorus
2. Der Heiland ist gekommen Andrew Walker, tenor
3. Komm, Jesu, komm zu deiner Kirche Andrew Walker, tenor
4. Siehe, ich stehe vor der Tür und klopfe an Paul Grambo, bass
5. Öffne dich, mein ganzes Herze Rebecca Genge, soprano
6. Amen, amen! Chorale

Cantata BWV 62

J.S. Bach (1685 - 1750)

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland (II)

1. Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland Chorus
2. Bewundert, o Menschen, dies große Geheimnis
Nicholas Nicolaidis, tenor
3. So geht aus Gottes Herrlichkeit und Thron
Michael Cressman, bass
4. Streite, siege, starker Held!
Michael Cressman, bass
5. Wir ehren diese Herrlichkeit
Jennifer Krabbe, soprano
Julia Barber, alto
6. Lob sei Gott, dem Vater, g'ton Chorale

Messiah Part I

G. F. Handel (1685 - 1759)

1. Sinfony Instrumental
2. Comfort ye my people Andrew Walker, tenor
3. Ev'ry valley shall be exalted Andrew Walker, tenor
4. And the glory of the Lord Chorus
5. Thus saith the Lord of host Richard Hrytzak, bass
6. But who may abide the day of His coming Jessica Wright, alto
7. And he shall purify the sons of Levi Chorus
8. Behold, a virgin shall conceive Christina Stelmacovich, alto
9. O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion
Alto and Chorus
Christina Stelmacovich
10. For unto us a child is born Chorus
11. Pifa "Pastoral Symphony" Instrumental
- 12a. There were shepherds abiding in the fields
Teresa Mahon, soprano
- 12b. And lo, the angel of the Lord
13. And the angel said unto them
14. And suddenly there was with the angel
15. Glory to God in the highest Chorus
16. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion Katy Clark, soprano
17. Hallelujah Chorus

Program Notes

Nun komm der Heiden Heiland, BWV 61

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland, BWV 61 is the first of two Advent cantatas of the same name by Bach; both are based upon the well-known chorale by Martin Luther from 1524.

This early cantata was written in 1714, while Bach was twenty-nine years old and working for the court in Weimar.

The opening movement is a chorus written in the musical form of a majestic French Overture. Stately dotted-rhythms open the movement with the first phrase of the chorale tune being heard four times, once by each voice of the choir in descending order, symbolizing the earth-bound Saviour's near arrival. The second phrase is heard once, in four parts, before the third phrase becomes the lively, dance-like imitative middle section of the French Overture. The dotted-rhythms and slow tempo return to close the chorale.

The next two movements are for a tenor soloist. The recitative tells of the birth of Christ, while the da capo aria calls for Christ to bless the new year. The accompanied recitative that follows, for the bass, sets the text, "Behold, I stand before the door and knock..." In an ingenious orchestration Bach uses the string ensemble, plucking their strings, to create the sound of the knock on the door. The simple and optimistic soprano aria *Öffne dich, mein ganzes Herze* follows, before the surprise ending; Bach concludes the cantata with a brief but explosive chorus using the closing phrase of the chorale *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern*.

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland, BWV 62

Ten years later, and now into his second year of his new post as Cantor of the Thomaskirche in Leipzig, Bach returned to the hymn *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland* for a new cantata.

The opening chorus of the new work, begins with decorated oboe and string parts before introducing the chorale-tune heard in long notes in the basso continuo (cello/bass parts). The extended introduction gives rise to an imitative choral phrase as the sopranos sing the chorale tune as a cantus firmus in long notes. In the tenor aria that follows, the listener encounters an extended setting that considers the mystery surrounding the arrival of the world's Saviour.

Bach makes use of the entire orchestral forces to great effect in having the oboes join the strings for the instrumental interludes, giving the whole movement a graceful quality. In the pair of movements that follow, the listener encounters something quite different. The bass is introduced in a short recitative, before a striking Handelian rage aria sets the words "Struggle conquer, powerful hero! Be mighty for us in the flesh!" The string orchestra plays in unison, without harmony throughout, inter-connected with the virtuosic coloratura of the bass voice. A gentle accompanied recitative contrasts with the vim of the bass aria and draws together the soprano and alto soloists in a duet praising Christ in the manger. The cantata concludes with the final verse of Martin Luther's chorale, *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland*.

Program Notes

Messiah Part I

Italian opera had been introduced to London in 1705, and it was to opera that Handel would dedicate most of his energy upon his arrival in 1710. Until this point there had been no new Italian opera composed especially for London's theatres; London audiences had heard only remounts of earlier works. The task of writing something completely new fell to Handel. In 1711, his opera *Rinaldo* opened to great success.

For the next thirty years Handel was primarily a man of the theater. He composed the music, rehearsed the orchestra and singers and ran the production, controlling as much of the business end as the musical. But, in the 1730s opera in London, began to fall on hard times. It was expensive to produce; there were sets and costumes to create and pay for, and the fees for the most sought-after Italian singers were high. And perhaps more problematically, there was a waning of public interest for the Italian genre. Box office revenues diminished. Rising production costs and professional fees for the top Italian singers made opera unfeasible.

Seeing an opportunity, Handel turned immediately to the composition of English oratorio. This new genre, in the vernacular, appealed to a larger middle-class audience. In oratorio, Handel could write in the same musical language as Italian opera, including dramatic recitatives and virtuosic arias. But he could avoid all of the heavy expenses of lavish

productions and expensive singers. New concerts could be easily arranged and rehearsed, since the music was neither staged nor memorized. And the added element of the chorus, practically unused in Italian opera, gave Handel's oratorio a renewed musical interest and dramatic ingredient.

Saul had been Handel's first collaboration with the English librettist Charles Jennens, but it would not be his last. In a letter written to Edward Holdsworth in July of 1741, Jennens hoped for another collaboration with the more senior composer for whom he had obvious admiration:

Handel says he will do nothing next Winter, but I hope I shall persuade him to set out another Scripture collection I have made for him, and perform it for his own Benefit in Passion week. I hope he will lay out his whole Genius and Skill upon it, that the Composition may excell every other Subject. The Subject is Messiah...

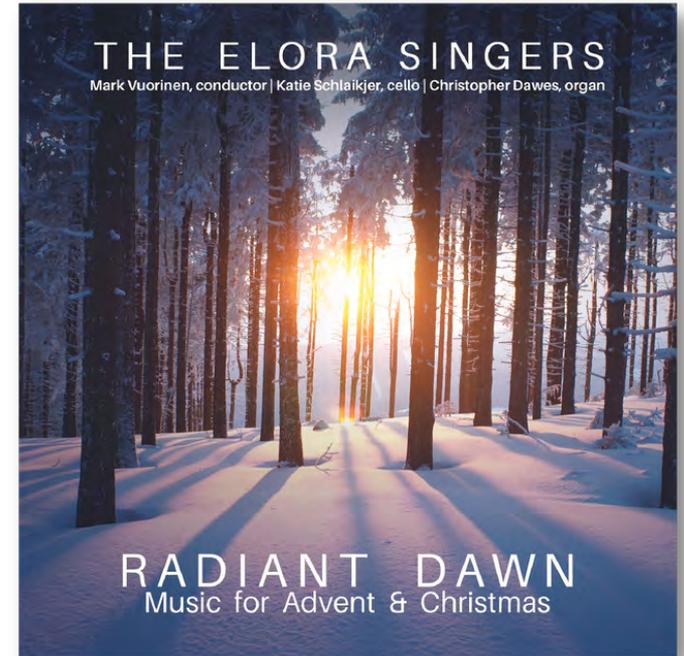
Handel did not wait until the winter to set Jennens compilation of Biblical scripture. In fact, he turned his attention to the writing of *Messiah* on August 22, 1741 and had finished it just 24 days later. Although the texts deal with deeply religious convictions, it is operatically conceived by both Jennens and Handel with drama at the forefront. Stirring choruses, creating a succession of 'scenes' employ the traditional opera forms of recitative and aria.

Program Notes

The first performance of *Messiah*, in April 1742, was an enormous success. An open rehearsal, days before the concert, caused such a stir that the capacity of the music hall was increased from 600 to 700 to accommodate the crowds. It is thought that an equal number of people, hoping for a ticket, gathered outside the hall.

This year, 279 years after its first successful performance, The Elora Singers is proud to bring Part I of this enduring work of profound peace, hope and beauty, as beloved today as in 1742.

Notes by Mark Vuorinen



A new recording from The Elora Singers featuring traditional and contemporary arrangements by:

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Bob Chilcott
Jonathan Dove
Jeff Enns

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Texts & Translations

Cantata BWV 61 *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland*

1. Chorus

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland,
Der Jungfrauen Kind erkannt,
Des sich wundert alle Welt,
Gott solch Geburt ihm bestellt.

*Now come, Savior of the heathens,
known as the Virgin's child,
over whom the whole world marvels,
that God had ordained such a birth
for Him.*

2. Recitative

Der Heiland ist gekommen,
Hat unser armes Fleisch und Blut
An sich genommen
Und nimmet uns zu
Blutsverwandten an.
O allerhöchstes Gut,
Was hast du nicht an uns getan?
Was tust du nicht
Noch täglich an den Deinen?
Du kömmt und läßt dein Licht
Mit vollem Segen scheinen..

*The Savior has come,
has taken our poor flesh and blood
upon Himself
and claims us
as blood-brothers.
O Highest Good,
what have You not done for us?
What do You not do
still daily for Your own?
You come and allow Your light
to shine full of blessing.*

3. Aria

Komm, Jesu, komm zu deiner
Kirche
Und gib ein selig neues Jahr!
Befördre deines Namens Ehre,
Erhalte die gesunde Lehre
Und segne Kanzel und Altar!

*Come, Jesus, come to Your church
and grant a blessed new year!
Support the honor of Your name,
uphold the sound teachings
and bless the chancel and altar!*

4. Recitative

Siehe, ich stehe vor der Tür und
klopfe an. So jemand meine Stimme
hören wird und die Tür aufturn, zu
dem werde ich eingehen und das
Abendmahl mit ihm halten und er
mit mir. (*Revelation 3:20*)

*Behold, I stand at the door and knock.
Anyone that hears My voice and
opens the door, to him I will enter and
keep the evening meal with him and
he with Me.*

5. Aria

Öffne dich, mein ganzes Herze,
Jesus kömmt und ziehet ein.
Bin ich gleich nur Staub und Erde,
Will er mich doch nicht
verschmähn,
Seine Lust an mir zu sehn,
Daß ich seine Wohnung werde.
O wie selig werd ich sein!

*Open yourself, my whole heart,
Jesus comes and enters in.
Even though I am only dust and earth,
yet He does not scorn
to reveal His joy to me,
so that I may be His dwelling.
O how happy will I be!*

6. Chorale

Amen, amen!
Komm, du schöne Freudenkrone,
bleib nicht lange!
Deiner wart ich mit Verlangen.

*Amen! Amen!
Come, you lovely crown of joy,
do not delay,
I await you with longing.*

English Translation by Pamela Dellal

Texts & Translations

Cantata BWV 62 *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland [II]*

1. Chorus

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland,
Der Jungfrauen Kind erkannt,
Des sich wundert alle Welt,
Gott solch Geburt ihm bestellt.

*Now come, Savior of the heathens,
known as the Virgin's child,
over whom the whole world marvels,
that God had ordained such a birth
for Him.*

2. Aria

Bewundert, o Menschen, dies
große Geheimnis:
Der höchste Beherrscher
erscheinet der Welt.
Hier werden die Schätze des
Himmels entdeckt,
Hier wird uns ein göttliches
Manna bestellt,
O Wunder! die Keuschheit wird
gar nicht beflecket.

*Marvel, o humanity, at this great
mystery:
the Supreme Ruler appears to the
world.
Here the treasures of heaven are
uncovered,
here a divine manna is presented to
us,
O miracle! The purity will be entirely
unblemished.*

3. Recitative

So geht aus Gottes Herrlichkeit
und Thron
Sein eingeborner Sohn.
Der Held aus Juda bricht herein,
Den Weg mit Freudigkeit zu
laufen
Und uns Gefallne zu erkaufen.
O heller Glanz, o wunderbarer
Segensschein!

*Thus from God's glory and throne
goes forth His only-begotten Son.
The hero out of Judah breaks forth
to run His course with joy
and to purchase us fallen ones.
O brilliant radiance, o wonderful
light of blessing!*

4. Aria

Streite, siege, starker Held!
Sei vor uns im Fleische kräftig!
Sei geschäftig,
Das Vermögen in uns Schwachen
Stark zu machen!

*Struggle, conquer, powerful hero!
Be mighty for us in the flesh!
Be effective,
to strengthen the potential in us, the
weak!*

5. Recitative

Wir ehren diese Herrlichkeit
Und nahen nun zu deiner Krippen
Und preisen mit erfreuten Lippen,
Was du uns zubereit';
Die Dunkelheit verstört' uns nicht
Und sahen dein unendlich Licht.

*We honor this glory
and approach Your manger now
and praise with joyful lips
what You have prepared for us;
the darkness does not confuse us
and we see Your eternal light.*

6. Chorale

Lob sei Gott, dem Vater, g'ton,
Lob sei Gott, sein'm eingen Sohn,
Lob sei Gott, dem Heilgen Geist,
Immer und in Ewigkeit!

*Praise be to God the Father,
praise be to God, His only Son,
Praise be to God, the Holy Spirit,
for ever and in eternity!*

English Translation by Pamela Dellal

Texts & Translations

Messiah Part I G.F. Handel

1. Sinfony

2. Comfort ye my people

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned.

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness; prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. (*Isaiah 40: 1-3*)

3. Ev'ry valley shall be exalted

Ev'ry valley shall be exalted, and ev'ry moutain and hill made low; the crooked straight and the rough places plain. (*Isaiah 40: 4*)

4. And the glory of the Lord

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*)

5. Thus saith the Lord of hosts

Thus saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts: Yet once a little while and I will shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land.

And I will shake all nations; and the desire of all nations shall come. (*Haggai 2: 6-7*)

6. But who may abide the day of His coming

But who may abide the day of His coming, and who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire. (*Malachi 3: 2*)

7. And he shall purify the sons of Levi

And He shall purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. (*Malachi 3: 3*)

8. Behold, a virgin shall conceive

Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Emmanuel, God with us. (*Isaiah 7: 14; Matthew 1: 23*)

9. O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain. O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, behold your god! (*Isaiah 40: 9*)

Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. (*Isaiah 60: 1*)

10. For unto us a child is born

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. (*Isaiah 9: 6*)

11. Pifa "Pastoral Symphony"

12a. There were shepherds abiding in the fields

There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. (*Luke 2: 8*)

Texts & Translations

12b. And lo, the angel of the Lord

And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. *(Luke 2: 9)*

13. And the angel said unto them

And the angel said unto 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 in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." *(Luke 2: 10-11)*

14. And suddenly there was with the angel

And suddenly there was with the angel, a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying: *(Luke 2: 13)*

15. Glory to God in the highest

"Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good will towards men." *(Luke 2: 14)*

16. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, thy King cometh unto thee; He is the righteous Saviour, and He shall speak peace unto the heathen. *(Zechariah 9: 9-10)*

17. Hallelujah

Hallelujah: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. *(Revelation 19: 6)*
The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever. *(Revelation 11: 15)*
King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. *(Revelation 19: 16)*
Hallelujah!

A Gift of Music

In December 2020, The Elora Singers shared the gift of music with our broader Canadian community. Through the generous support of our government funders, sponsors and donors, we were able to record our "Hope and Refuge" and three Nativity Festival online concerts which we offered for free to residents, patients and medical staff at retirement and long-term care homes, hospitals and social service support centres across Ontario and Canada over the holiday season. We estimate the potential reach was over 100,000 people.

This Christmas, we are offering The Elora Singers' "Radiant Dawn: A Festival of Carols" for free to public health workers in our communities to thank them for their tremendous dedication to running successful vaccination clinics, for helping those most vulnerable, and for keeping us all safe.

On behalf of everyone at The Elora Singers, thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

The Board of Directors and Staff
The Elora Singers

The Elora Singers



Lesley Bouza is proud to have appeared as a soloist with a diverse group of musical ensembles including The Toronto Symphony, Les Violon du Roy, The Elora Singers, The Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, The Winnipeg Symphony and the Calgary Philharmonic. Some of Lesley's most memorable career highlights include Lesley Sings Joni, a Joni Mitchell tribute concert at the 2018 Elora Festival, Steve Reich at 80 with Soundstreams, Dido and Aeneas at Carnegie Hall with Les Violons du Roy and a tour of Taiwan as a member of the Swingle Singers. In addition to being a busy performer Lesley is an accredited music therapist.



Katy Clark is working on her DMA in Voice Performance at the University of Toronto, where she studies with Nathalie Paulin. Katy was a recipient of the 2017-2018 Rebanks Family Fellowship and International Performance Residency at the Royal Conservatory, and has sung with the Amici Chamber Ensemble, the Canadian Opera Company Chorus, Shoestring Opera, and Opus 8. As the founder and producer of London's Village Opera, Katy recently developed and sang in their production of The Great Lakes Suite...and Other Canadian Adventures. She has also sung with the Stratford Symphony Orchestra on their Fairytale program and with the Windsor Symphony Orchestra in The Messiah.

Soprano

Soprano

The Elora Singers



Rebecca Genge performs frequently with ensembles such as Theatre of Early Music, University of Toronto's Schola Cantorum, The Elora Singers, the Pacific Baroque Orchestra and the Victoria Baroque Players. In 2017, she made her operatic debut as Papagena in the Magic Flute with Pacific Opera Victoria and returned to the company as Jano in Janacek's Jenufa. As an avid choral singer, she has been a part of several recordings including Trinity Choir's Four Thousand Winter for SONY, on which she is a featured soloist. Rebecca is currently pursuing a Doctorate in Historical Performance at the University of Toronto. She is excited to return for her fourth season with The Elora Singers.

Soprano



Winner of the 2014 Jim and Charlotte Norcop Prize in song, soprano **Jennifer Krabbe** has found success on both the operatic, and concert stage. Recent performances include Paquette in Bernstein's Candide with the Grand Philharmonic Choir and **Elora Festival Singers**, Mozart's Mass in C Minor with the Mississauga Choral Society and Toronto Beach Chorale, Handel's Messiah with the TSO and Toronto Beach Chorale, and Bach's B Minor Mass with both Chorus Niagara and the Orpheus Choir of Toronto. Jennifer is a founding member of Collectif, a collective of musicians dedicated to exploring and expanding the world of art song performance by presenting innovative, song-based theatre.

Soprano

The Elora Singers



Teresa Mahon sings regularly with professional ensembles such as The Elora Singers, Aspirare Vocal Collective, the Toronto Oratory Choir, the Song Shul's Toronto Festival Choir, the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir and the Tallis Choir. She has appeared with the Toronto Consort, Theatre of Early Music, Choir 21, and the Toronto Masque Theatre. Recent highlights have included performing as one of the soloists in the Praetorius Vespers with the Toronto Consort, as the soprano soloist in Gangway! Theatre Co's "Nutcracker-Messiah", Allegri's Miserere (Tallis Choir, St. James Cathedral Choir), and Vaughan Williams' Mass in G Minor (St. James Cathedral Choir). She can be heard as a featured soloist on the recording The Wonder of Christmas (The Elora Singers).

Soprano



Lindsay McIntyre has appeared as a soloist with The Elora Singers, the Grand Philharmonic Chamber Choir & University of Waterloo Chamber Choir, the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, the Theater of Early Music, MYOpera, and Abridged Opera Windsor. Equally in demand as a chorister, Lindsay is a member of The Elora Singers and the professional core of the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir. Lindsay is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Historical Performance at the University of Toronto under Mary Morrison and Daniel Taylor, where her research focuses on negative self-talk in undergraduate voice majors.

Soprano

The Elora Singers



Kate Wright is delighted to be returning for her 7th season with The Elora Singers. Kate holds a Bachelor of Music Education from Western University, and a Bachelor of Education from Queen's University, where she specialized in Arts in the Community. An experienced choral soprano, she has sung with many professional groups in London, Guelph, Elora, Kingston, and Toronto. As an educator, she has taught vocal, ukulele, guitar, and band. A passionate Early Childhood Music Specialist, she conducts 3 training choirs in the Oakville Choir for Children & Youth with children aged 4-9, and teaches Parent & Child music classes for children from birth-5 years in Toronto.

Soprano



Julia Barber is currently pursuing a Doctorate of Musical Arts at the University of Toronto under Professor Lorna MacDonald. On the opera stage, she has performed Zerlina (Don Giovanni), Hänsel (Hänsel und Gretel), Stéphanie (Roméo et Juliette), Paquette (Candide), and Jo (Little Women). As a soloist, she has been featured with The Elora Singers, Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, and Mississauga Symphony Orchestra; art song with the Aldeburgh Discovery Series and Bayfield Festival; and music theatre and popular classics with Jewish Music Week and the Toronto Festival Singers. As a choral singer, she performs with The Elora Singers, Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, Toronto Festival Singers, Incontra Vocal Ensemble, St. James Cathedral Choir, and Hedgerow Singers.

Mezzo-soprano

The Elora Singers



Rebecca Claborn performs with some of Canada's finest ensembles and has a particular passion for early music.

Rebecca's solo highlights include appearances with the Ottawa Bach Choir, the Victoria Baroque Players, the Pacific Baroque Orchestra, and the Theatre of Early Music. This season's performances include the role of Mary in Ottorino Respighi's *Lauda per la Natività del Signore* with the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir.

Rebecca is a member of vocal octet Opus 8, the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir's professional core, and the Toronto Chamber Choir's Consort program. As a recording artist, Rebecca appears on Opus 8's latest recording, *Firsts* (2019), two releases with the Theatre of Early Music: *The Heart's Refuge* (2014, Juno-nominated), and *The Vale of Tears* (2015), both on Analekta, and appears on the Toronto Chamber Choir's 2019 release *A Voice of her Own*.

Mezzo-soprano



Simon Honeyman is delighted to join The Elora Singers this season. He has been working steadily as a choral countertenor for the last decade, performing with ensembles such as Tafelmusik, Studio de musique ancienne de Montréal, Theatre of Early Music, La Chapelle de Québec, Toronto Masque Theatre, Against the Grain Theatre, and others. He is a founding member of One Equall Musick, Opus 8, and most recently Aspirare Vocal Collective. Simon also occasionally finds time to perform and record with award-winning songwriters including Gabrielle Papillon, The Daguerreotypes, and Eric Farr.

Countertenor

The Elora Singers



Christina Stelmacovich's singing has been described as "...stylistically spot-on and vocally splendid." (Dave Richards, Toronto Concert Reviews). Her career has included performances in Canada, the United States, Austria, Italy, England and Mexico. She has appeared as a soloist with the City of Birmingham Choir and the Renaissance Singers of England, The Elora Singers, the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, Tafelmusik, Early Music Vancouver, Early Music Voices of Calgary and the New World Orchestra of Mexico City. When not performing, Christina works as the Manager of The Elora Singers, as an adjudicator with the Kiwanis Music Festival and as a Mom.



Jessica Wright has been featured as a soloist with Tafelmusik, The Toronto Consort, Theatre of Early Music, Toronto Masque Theatre, Toronto Bach Festival and The Elora Festival. Jessica is the General Manager of Aspirare Vocal Collective, a Toronto-based vocal ensemble focused on choral chamber music of the 20th and 21st centuries. Recent highlights include performances of the Monteverdi Vespers with the Toronto Consort, the Sorceress in Purcell's Dido and Aeneas with the Theatre of Early Music, as well as the Canadian premiere of Sir James MacMillan's Seven Last Words from the Cross under the composer's direction.

Mezzo-soprano

Mezzo-soprano

The Elora Singers



Tenor **Chris Fischer** has earned a reputation as an intelligent, flexible and sensitive performer on the concert stage. Recent highlights have included two Canadian premieres (Andrew Miller's Birth of Christ and Craig Hella Johnson's Considering Matthew Shephard), as well as being featured as a soloist with The Elora Singers on a new recording of Reena Esmail's This Love Between Us. Now in their eighth season as a member of The Elora Singers, Chris leads choral outreach programs at the Wellington Terrace Long-Term Care Home in Fergus and at the Elora Centre for the Arts.



Nicholas Nicolaidis is a versatile and accomplished singer, conductor and vocal pedagogue. He emigrated to Toronto from Johannesburg, South Africa in the spring of 2019. Nicholas began his vocal studies at the world famous Drakensberg Boy's Choir School and completed a Bachelor of Music Degree from the University of the Witwatersrand, with post graduate singing studies with professors from the Royal College of Music in London, England. He has a wide solo repertoire, but specializes in oratorio, lieder, and the jazz standards. His international engagements have taken him to England, Wales, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Mauritius, Seychelles, Norway, Greece and Germany. **This is Nicholas' first happy outing with The Elora Singers.** A fun fact: Nicholas is a keen ornithologist and an avid tennis player!

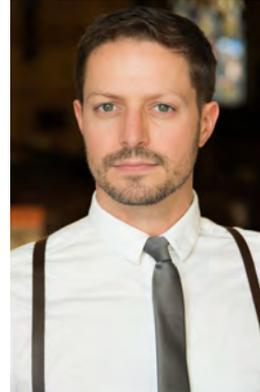
Tenor

Tenor

The Elora Singers



Bryan Rankine has been a member of The Elora Singers since 1999. Growing up in Elora, just around the corner from St. John's Church, he has had a connection with the Singers and Festival since his teenage years. Bryan is currently a Vice-Principal in the Waterloo Region District School Board.



Will Reid is a Hamilton-based musician, conductor and educator. He sings with the Elmer Iseler Singers, the Amadeus Choir, the Aspirare Vocal Collective **and is excited to make his Elora Singers debut.** When not singing fantastic choral repertoire, Will can be heard leading the funk and soul band, Yasgurs Farm as well as the 50s group, The Redeemers. He is also a middle school music teacher and holds the assistant choir director position at the Church of the Redeemer, Toronto.

Tenor

Tenor

The Elora Singers



Andrew Walker has been praised for his "well-crafted high notes that filled the hall." Andrew pursued his musical training at St. Michael's Choir School, and served as Choral Scholar at Truro Cathedral in the United Kingdom in 2013-2014. In addition to his over five years with The Elora Singers, he has performed in both the chorus and as a soloist with such groups as Orchestra Toronto, the Choir of the Cathedral Church of St. James, the Toronto Consort, the Toronto Chamber Choir, the Theatre of Early Music, and the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir. He made his Toronto Symphony Orchestra debut as the Governor in Bernstein's *Candide* in April 2018. Andrew serves as President-Elect of Choirs Ontario, and recently received his Master's degree in Canadian Studies. Andrew lives in Ottawa where he works in cultural policy and government relations.

Tenor



Michael Cressman studied Vocal performance at Wilfrid Laurier University under the direction of David Falk. Credits include *Les Miserables* (US third National Tour), *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story* (Stage West) *Music Man* (Drayton Entertainment), *Magic of Love* (Lighthouse Festival Theatre, original cast recording) *The Chocolate Soldier*, *Titanic* (Shaw Festival) *Hey! Mr. Producer!*, *Runnin' Wild* (Cameron MacIntosh/Jean Anne Ryan). With Jean Anne Ryan Productions, Michael's performing has taken him to Alaska, Hawaii, South America, the Caribbean and both Eastern and Western seaboards. Michael is enjoying his 11th year with The Elora Singers.

Bass

The Elora Singers



Originally from Brandon, Manitoba, baritone **Paul Grambo** is currently based out of London, Ontario. This will be his tenth season with the Elora Festival and Singers. Some of his other credits include community theatre and opera with AlvegoRoot Theatre and Village Opera, plus opera and comedy with UWOpera, Pacific Opera Victoria, and Edmonton Opera. Paul maintains a vibrant and growing private voice studio, is Music Director and Conductor of The Broadway Singers, Assistant Music Director at St. James' Westminster Anglican Church and Assistant Conductor with the Canadian Celtic Choir. Paul holds a Bachelor of Music degree from Brandon University and a Masters of Music degree in Performance and Literature from the University of Western Ontario.

Bass



Richard Hrytzak regularly sings with The Elora Singers, Opera Atelier and Spiritus Ensemble, and occasionally with Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, Choir 21, and Nota Bene Baroque Players. He also conducts the choir at Grand River Unitarian Congregation. Outside of singing and conducting, Richard co-owns and brews at Counterpoint Brewing Company, a craft brewery in Kitchener.

Bass

The Elora Singers



Alan Macdonald has been praised by Opera Canada for his “wonderful timbre, diction and sonority.” A recent graduate of Vancouver Opera’s Yulanda M. Faris Young Artist Program, Alan was recently heard in Chorus Niagara’s staged Matthäus-Passion and Opera 5’s double bill of Ethel Smyth operas, Suffragette. Other recent performances include the roles of Prince Yamadori and the Imperial Commissioner in Madama Butterfly with Vancouver Opera, Vox Christus with the Vancouver Bach Choir in Bach’s Matthäus-Passion, Elvis Costello’s The Juliet Letters with the Koerner Quartet, Beethoven’s Symphony no 9 with the Vancouver Metropolitan Orchestra and the creation of four roles in the world premiere of Shane Koyczan and Neil Weisensel’s Stickboy with Vancouver Opera.

Bass



Bass-baritone **Graham Robinson** has contributed to Canada’s cultural hub for over a decade. With a background in theatre and film as well as decades immersed in Baroque and contemporary music, Graham is widely known for his “character-sensitive” approach to performance and an unyielding pursuit of “concise artistic communication”. He is regularly featured with Tafelmusik, Soundstreams and The Elmer Iseler Singers among many other ensembles across Canada and is excited to be a part of this new chapter for The Elora Singers.

Bass

The Elora Singers



As a soloist, **Jordan Scholl** has been hailed for his "rich full-throated baritone" voice. He has been working with choirs and ensembles as a chorister and soloist for the past 20 years. Today, he continues to apply his passion for music and science as a speech-language pathologist and voice therapist in Toronto. In 2017, Jordan opened Toronto Adult Speech Clinic - a speech and voice therapy clinic to serve the growing communication needs of adults in Toronto, where he works with singers, actors, people who are transgender, and any other adults looking to express themselves in the healthiest and most authentic way. This is Jordan's twelfth season at the Elora Festival.

Bass

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The Elora Singers have taken great care to follow Ontario's COVID-19 health and safety regulations so that we may all enjoy live performances once again.

All of our musicians, staff and crew are fully vaccinated, are required to respond to a set of screening questions, and have tested negative to a rapid covid test before each rehearsal and performance.

In accordance with Ontario regulations a COVID safety plan is available upon request.

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MUSIC FOR ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

ONLINE BROADCAST
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A FESTIVAL OF CAROLS

TUE DEC 21 & WED DEC 22
5:00 PM | 7:30 PM
MELVILLE UNITED CHURCH
300 ST. ANDREW STREET W, FERGUS, ON

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