



ORLANDO SINGS
presents

*A Solaria
Solstice*

December 21, 2022
6:30 & 8:15 PM
Timucua Arts Foundation

featuring

SOLARIA SINGERS
Dr. Andrew Minear, conductor

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Matthew Astone
Hillary Brown
Andrew Campbell
Samuel Carlton
Dorea Cook
Erick Crow
Billy Daniel
Samantha Barnes Daniel
Anna Eschbach
Maggie Gifford
Alex Glover
Irene Kaplan
Lauren Langa
Zerrin Agabigum Martin
Zachary Pecore
Ezra Prather
Eric Petersen
Samantha W. Petersen
Alex Pollard
Sarah Purser
Peter Rodrigues
Shannon Romba
Kristopher Schave
Sandra Shafer
Kathryn Supina

*To learn more about our vocal artists, visit
orlandosings.org/solstice22*

PROGRAM

SING A WORLD OF LOVE AND LIGHT

Sing Christmas! Philip Lasser (b. 1963)

WELCOME YULE!

A Toast! (audience responds with "Wassail!")

Wassail Song Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

BLESSING: How the Light Comes

CHRISTMASTIDE

Hodie, Christus natus est Healey Willan (1880-1968)

Estampie Natalis Václav Nelhýbel (1919-1996)

Solosists: Anna Eschbach, Zerrin Agabigum Martin,
Kristopher Schave, Alex Glover

Brightest and Best Southern Harmony 1835/
arr. Shawn Kirchner (b. 1970)

BLESSING: Rough Translations

PRINCIPLES OF KWANZAA

Kwanzaa Songs Zanaida Robles (b. 1979)

Umoja (Unity)

Soloist: Sarah Purser

Ujima (Collective Work & Responsibility)

Imani (Faith)

BLESSING: What the Light Shines Through

CHANUKKAH: MIRACLE OF LIGHT

Mi Zeh Y'maleil Traditional/ arr. Joshua R. Jacobson (b. 1948)

Soloist: Zachary Pecore

Y'mei Chanukkah Traditional/ arr. Steven Barnett (b. 1948)

S'Vivon Traditional/ arr. Steven Barnett (b. 1948)

BLESSING: Blessing of Hope

All Blessings written by Jan Richardson

SOLSTICE NIGHT: LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

Water Night Eric Whitacre (b. 1970)
Epitaph for Moonlight R. Murray Schafer (1933-2021)
Soloists: Shannon Romba, Zerrin Agabigum Martin

BLESSING: Blessing for the Longest Night

When Pain or Sorrow Is Adam M. L. Tice (b. 1979)
Too Much to Bear
Soloist: Andrew Minear

BLESSING: The Wisdom of the Moon

Wisdom of the Moon Susan LaBarr (b. 1981)
Soloist: Samantha Barnes Daniel

BLESSING: Where the Light Begins

Rise, Shine! Traditional Spiritual/
arr. Marques L. A. Garrett (b. 1984)
and Tom Trenney (b. 1977)

BLESSING: In the Leaving

True Colors Billy Steinberg and Tom Kelly/
arr. Matthew Brown (b. 1978)
Soloist: Alex Pollard

SOLARIA PLAYERS

VIOLIN

Pepina Dell' Olio

CELLO

David Bjella

PICCOLO

Tammara K. Phillips

PIANO

Samuel Carlton

PERCUSSION

Brian Radock
Leonard Woods

PROGRAM NOTES

The Blessings spoken this evening are all written by Jan Richardson (www.janrichardson.com). Blessings are an ancient literary form steeped in Jewish and Christian traditions. They infuse a mystic quality to the rhythms of everyday life. They shine light on the presence of the sacred that resides in the ordinary. They meet us wherever we are in hopefulness and in suffering, and seek for us a wholeness and grace even when— especially when— life circumstances remain difficult. It is no wonder so many blessings point us towards the light in the darkness; holding grief and joy together (as both can be true).

This juxtaposition of light and dark is rarely more present than the season around the winter solstice, for millennia a time of celebration and lights during the darkest days of the year. Whether it be ancient Rome's Saturnalia; Hanukkah's amazing miracle of light in a war-torn nation; the Christmas story of a savior (the "light of the world") outcast and born among animals in a barn; or the communitarian holiday of Kwanzaa that celebrates values and principles of African American and Pan African people, recognizing their struggle and ultimately the hope that is born from their struggle; it seems hope and struggle, joy and suffering, ancient traditions and contemporary ideals, high and low, light and dark, are all natural partners; inextricably intertwined in the human condition.

And so we begin by singing of love and light (**Sing Christmas!**), a brilliant text setting by distinguished Juilliard professor Philip Lasser who blends together the colorful harmonies of French Impressionist sonorities and the dynamic rhythms and characteristics of American music. We then joyfully raise a glass to life in Vaughan Williams' **Wassail Song**, a traditional carol from jolly old England! The famed Canadian composer Healey Willan craftily sets an ancient Christmas Latin text (**Hodie, Christus natus est**) in an homage to the Renaissance contrapuntal style infused with modern harmonic ideas. Czech American composer Václav Nelhýbel, best known for his works for wind band, premiered **Estampie Natalis** in 1975, though so many elements of the music sound like they could be right from King Henry VIII's 16th-century Hampton Court. The Christmas set concludes with **Brightest and Best**, a sturdy Southern Harmony melody from 1835 that arranger Shawn Kirchner sets with a banjo-inspired piano accompaniment, fiddle, and vocal parts that grow from unison, to mirrored counter-melodies and finally culminating in a dramatic a cappella outburst.

We honor the beautiful holiday of Kwanzaa with three of California-based composer Zanaida Robles' **Kwanzaa Songs**. **Umoja** ("Unity") is the first principle of Kwanzaa. The cantabile melody is presented as a solo, then in canon, and eventually in an aleatoric fashion, where each singer gets to sing at their own pace, creating a beautifully cacophonous unity out of each person's individual expression. **Ujima** (Collective Work & Responsibility) is created by layering three ostinati (repeating musical patterns) that go together with a persistent pulse and percussion groove. The repetition reminds us of the work that must be done day after day to create the world in which we want to live. Finally, **Imani** (Faith) has a melody that begins with a big ascending leap, as we turn our hearts heavenward. Then each voice part enters one after another, starting the melody on different pitches, which results in surprising and moving harmonies before finishing much like it begins.

Our Hanukkah set consists of three traditional songs. **Mi Zeh Y'maleil** is based on a traditional Sephardic folk song melody sung by Jews of Tetuan, Morocco. Arranger Joshua Jacobson is founder of the Zamir Chorale of Boston and is regarded as one of the foremost authorities on Jewish choral music. The next two song settings are by GRAMMY award winning Steve Barnett, a prolific composer who has been commissioned by an array of professional choirs and orchestras in Europe and the US. **Y'mei Chanukah** tells the Hanukkah story with jazz-inspired harmonies, while **S'vivon** (known as a dreidel in Yiddish) delights with jazz harmonies and a light rock feel as we sing about the fun children's game.

The remaining works on the program each reflect on more universal themes of darkness and light, perseverance and hope for a new day. In his stunning **Water Night**, Eric Whitacre sets an English translation of the original Spanish poem by Octavio Paz. The tight harmonies and patient unfolding pour from the poetry as the piece builds eventually to "If you open your eyes..." when the singers swell into a cluster chord of 14-voice parts. Voices unfold into as many parts one more time, singing every note of a haunting dorian scale simultaneously ("a silent and beautiful current, fills you from within, flows forward,..."). Then we take in the mysterious beauty of the Moon in R. Murray Schafer's **Epitaph for Moonlight**. It is a challenging ear-training exercise as the singers learn to pitch their notes by interval from any given note that proceeds. Composed in nontraditional notation, there is no musical staff, measures, or rhythms. Instead, the music is written in dashes, dots, lines, and squiggles, which leave much interpretive freedom to the singers. Dynamics are indicated by the thickness of a line. The text comes from a group of 7th grade students tasked with finding suitable synonyms for the word "moonlight." New words in a private language were invented that expressed in sound the concept of moonlight: Nu-yu-yul, Noorwahn, Maunklinde, Malooma, Lunious, Sloofulp, Shiverglowa, Shalowa, Sheelsk, Shimonoeil, Nshmoor. What word would you invent?

While there are many songs that invite individuals to commit to a community of faith, very few name the commitment of the community to an individual. **When Pain or Sorrow is Too Much to Bear**, a new hymn created in 2019 by prolific hymn-writers Adam Tice and Sally Ann Morris, does just that. It literally came to the lyricist in a dream as he thought of what a dear friend was experiencing after the death of his brother. Then Susan LaBarr's beautiful setting of **The Wisdom of the Moon** expresses how easy it is to be happy when things are going well, but how we all need to learn to persevere and trust during difficult times, knowing that in time we will, like the moon, "emerge whole once more." When we do, we can **Rise, an' Shine!** like we do in singing Marques Garrett and Tom Trenney's uplifting arrangement of this Negro spiritual. With many of the traditional elements of the concert spiritual (e.g. call and response, syncopated rhythms), this piece inspires us to "shout and never stop... until [we] reach that mountaintop."

Repeated from last year's Solaria Solstice program by popular demand, we conclude with a powerful arrangement of the #1 hit song made famous in 1986 by pop icon Cyndi Lauper. I hope this sends you back out into the world inspired to persevere, to be fully yourselves, and let your **True Colors** shine! Have a beautiful holiday season and may your new year be full of light, peace, love, hope, and joy!

-Andrew Minear

TRANSLATIONS

Hodie, Christus Natus Est

*Hodie Christus natus est
Salvator apparuit
Hodie exultant justi, dicentes:
Gloria in excelsis Deo, alleluia!*

Today is Christ born;
today the Savior has appeared;
today the righteous rejoice, saying:
Glory to God in the highest. Alleluia!

Estampie Natalis

*Puer natus in Bethlehem, alleluia,
Unde gaudet Jerusalem, alleluia.
In cordis jubilo
Christum natum adoremus sum novo
cantico.*

The boy born in Bethlehem, alleluia,
Rejoice Jerusalem, alleluia.
In joy of heart
Let us adore the newborn Chris
with a new song.

*Assumpsit carnem Filius, alleluia.
Dei Patris altissimus, alleluia.
In cordis jubilo
Christum natum adoremus sum novo
cantico.*

The Son has assumed flesh, alleluia.
The Father most high, alleluia.
In joy of heart
Let us adore the newborn Christ
with a new song.

*Per Gabrielem nuntium, alleluia.
Virgo concepit Filium, alleluia.
In cordis jubilo
Christum natum adoremus sum novo
cantico.*

Per Gabriel's greeting, alleluia.
The virgin conceived a Son, alleluia.
In joy of heart
Let us adore the newborn Christ
with a new song.

*Hic jacet in praeseptio, alleluia.
Qui regnat sine termino, alleluia.
In cordis jubilo
Christum natum adoremus sum novo
cantico.*

He lies in the manger, alleluia.
He who rules without end, alleluia.
In joy of heart
Let us adore the newborn Christ
with a new song.

*In hoc natali gaudio, alleluia.
Benedicamus Domino, alleluia.
Laudetur Sancta Trinitas, alleluia.
Deo dicamus gracias, alleluia!*

In joy of this birth, alleluia.
Let us bless the Lord, alleluia.
The the Holy Spirit be praised,
Give thanks unto God, alleluia!

Mi Zeh Y'maleil

*Mi zeh y'maleil nisei Eil yitbonan,
biyme Matityahu ben Yochanan,
anochi esmach asis badonai,
higdil laasot im bnei Chashmonai.*

*Ram hu al ramim nigla v'sinai,
richbo ribotayim alfei shinan.
Anochi esmach asis badonai,
higdil laasot im bnei Chashmonai.*

*Dor vador rabim kamim aleinu
lechalot zeicher sh'eiriteinu,
lulei Adonai ts'vaot malkeinu
marom laarets hishlich karnan.*

*Vay'hi bimei Yavan bnei avla,
heirimu sod eitsa v'tachbuls,
gazru al shabat, rosh chodesh umila,
v'yachad shloshtan ya'av ruminan.*

*Darchu et kashtam oivim azei fanim,
Elisha v'Tarshish Kitim v'Dodanim,
al goi mam'lechet kohanim,
bau tim'u mik-dash ham'chunan.*

I sing of the wonders the Lord has done to save Mattathias and Judah his son. Give thanks to the Lord, rejoice and be glad! Sing praise to the Maccabees who set our people free.

High above the heavens, enthroned is our God, His glory, His majesty, revealed for all to see. Give thanks to the Lord, rejoice and be glad!

Sing praise to the Maccabees who set our people free. Year after year as they tried to enslave us, we prayed to God that He would come and save us.

In each generation oppressors arose
But who could oppose the Lord of Hosts?
Long, long ago Antiochus decreed all people must bow down to idols made of Stone.

He tried every torture but could not succeed! We worship none other, but God alone! Powerful the armies, outrageous the foe! From Asia, from Africa they came to draw the bow on God's chosen people, the priests of the Lord; to God's holy temple they marches in bold accord.

Y'mei Chanukah

*Yemei Ha'Chanukah
Chanukat mikdasheinu.*

*Begil uvesimchah
Nemaleh et libeinu.*

*Laila vayom, svivoneinu yisov.
Suvganiyot nochal bam larov.*

*Ha-a-iru, had'liku,
Neirot Chanukah rabim.
Al hanisi'im
Ve'al hanifla'o-ot
Asher cholelu haMaccabim.*

O Chanukah, O Chanukah
A time to remember.

A joyful, jolly holiday that comes in
December

Every day for eight days, dreidels will
spin, Crispy little latkes, tasty and
thin.

And nightly, so brightly,
The candles of Chanukah glow.
One for each night,
They shed a sweet light,
To remind us of days long ago.

S'vivon

*Sivivon, sov, sov, sov
Chanukah, hu chag tov
Chanukah, hu chag tov
Sivivon, sov, sov, sov!*

*Chag simcha hu la-am
Nes gadol haya sham
Nes gadol haya sham
Chag simcha hu la-am.*

Dreidel, spin, spin, spin
Chanukah is a great holiday.
Chanukah is a great holiday.
Dreidel, spin, spin, spin.

A holiday of happiness it is for the
nation.

A great miracle happened there.

A great miracle happened there.

A holiday of happiness it is for the
nation.

CONDUCTOR



With appearances across the United States, **Dr. Andrew Minear** is an active conductor, music educator, and choir leader. He is the founding Artistic and Executive Director of Orlando Sings where he conducts the Orlando Sings Symphonic Chorus and the professional vocal ensemble Solaria. Recent or upcoming engagements include Opera Orlando's production of "All is Calm," the National Concert Chorus in Carnegie Hall, the Seoul Oratorio Festival in South Korea, the American Choral Directors Association Southern Region SSAA Honor Choir,

Music and Worship Arts weeks in Lake Junaluska and Montreat, and all-state choirs in seven states. He has conducted multiple summers at the Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp in Michigan and led the Florida Ambassadors of Music on performance tours of Europe. Before it was cancelled due to the pandemic, Minear was one of only 40 choral leaders in the world selected to present at the 12th World Symposium on Choral Music in Auckland, New Zealand. Dr. Minear's passion for expressive music-making has been cultivated through two decades of experience in children's, church, community, middle school, high school, university, and professional choral settings.

Previously, Dr. Minear served as the Director of Choral Activities at the University of Alabama where he led the university choirs, oversaw the graduate choral conducting program, and taught courses in conducting and choral literature. Prior to his time in Alabama, Minear pursued a doctorate degree in choral conducting at Michigan State University where he served as the director of the MSU Campus Choir and assistant director of the MSU Men's Glee Club. Before going to MSU and during his tenure as Choral Director at Dr. Phillips High School, home of the Visual and Performing Arts Magnet for Orange County Public Schools in Orlando, the DPHS Concert Choir performed with the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra, and Minear's students were selected over 180 times for All-State and ACDA Honor Choirs. Cora Bella, the advanced SSAA choir, performed to acclaim at State (2011), Southern Division (2012), and National (2013) Conferences of the American Choral Directors Association.

Dr. Minear received his Doctor of Musical Arts degree in choral conducting from Michigan State University and his Bachelor of Music Education and Master of Music Education from Florida State University.

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**In memory of Ashley Minear*



ORLANDO SINGS

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- Priority access to special events
- Lunch, coffee, or Zoom with one of our conductors or star professional singers each year
- Invitations to exclusive donor events
- Dr. Minear's sincere and never-ending gratitude!
- And more as opportunities become available

THE ASHLEY MINEAR ORLANDO SINGS ENDOWMENT FUND

Help us create a sustainable future by giving today to the Ashley Minear Orlando Sings Endowment Fund. Your donations will support the programming and people of Orlando Sings for years to come. So far, we are \$66,150 of the way to our initial goal of \$120,000! For more information or to donate, go to orlandosings.org/endowment. Thank you for your support.

SPECIAL THANKS

Benoit Glazer and Timucua Arts Foundation, Roy Cockrum, Carolyn Minear, Gabe Preisser and Opera Orlando, Kate Carlton, Samuel Carlton, Sarah Purser, AArica Ardis, Kelly Jewell, Lauren Langa, Alex Stubenbort, Kenneth Swift, and all of our amazing volunteers!



ORLANDO SINGS SYMPHONIC CHORUS
and
THE ORLANDO PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Handel's

MESSIAH

MARCH 30, 2023 | 7:30 PM
STEINMETZ HALL

ORLANDO SINGS CHORAL FESTIVAL 2023

**MARGARET BONDS Credo | HEITOR VILLA-LOBOS NONETTO
ANDRÉ J. THOMAS MASS**

May 18, 2023 | 7:30 PM

HARMONIA

ORLANDO SINGS SYMPHONIC CHORUS
ALTERITY CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

HELIOS by TIMOTHY C. TAKACH

May 20, 2023 | 5:00 PM

SOLARIA SINGERS

**THE NOTEBOOKS OF LEONARDO DA VINCI by JOCELYN HAGEN
INTO THE LIGHT by JAKE RUNESTAD**

May 20, 2023 | 8:00 PM

ORLANDO SINGS SYMPHONIC CHORUS
ORLANDO PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA



ORLANDO SINGS

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Silent Auction | Dancing
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