

Presented at Carnegie Hall by
MidAmerica Productions Inc.

40th Anniversary Season

1984–2024

1,479th Concert Worldwide, 1,143rd in New York, 688th in Carnegie Hall

Tuesday, December 19, 2023 at 7 PM
Isaac Stern Auditorium / Ronald O. Perelman Stage

New England Symphonic Ensemble

Preston Hawes, Artistic Director

Cailin Marcel Manson and **Will Kesling**, Conductors

JOHN RUTTER

Magnificat

Magnificat anima mea
Of a Rose, a lovely Rose
Quia fecit mihi magna
Et misericordia
Fecit potentiam
Esurientes
Gloria Patri

Cailin Marcel Manson, Conductor
Sarah Cooper, Soprano

Participating Choruses:
**Columbia Collegiate Chorale of Washington
Adventist University**, Takoma Park, MD
Anwar Ottley, Director
Freeport High School Select Chorale, Freeport, NY
Monique Retzlaff, Director
Lehigh Valley Chorale, Easton, PA
Nicholas Sienkiewicz, Director
Warwick Valley Chorale, Warwick, NY
Ron DeFesi, Director

INTERMISSION

TRADITIONAL	“Sing We Now of Christmas” (arr. Bradley Knight)
TRADITIONAL	“Angels We Have Heard On High” (arr. Gary Fry)
TRADITIONAL	“Christmas Is Coming” (arr. Mack Wilberg)
OLA GJEILO	“Ecce novum”
CRAIG COURTNEY	“A Musicological Journey Through the Twelve Days of Christmas”
TRADITIONAL	“The Virgin Mary Had a Baby Boy” (arr. Mack Wilberg)
	José Valentino Ruiz , Flute
GIULIO ROMOLO CACCINI	“Alleluia” (arr. Mack Wilberg)
STEPHEN SCHWARTZ	“When You Believe” from <i>The Prince of Egypt</i>
	Sarah Cooper , Soprano
AXEL CASTRO / DAVID EATON	“Lux Brumalis” (World Premiere)
TRADITIONAL	“God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen” (arr. Bradley Knight)
	Caroline Catterton , Vocal Soloist José Valentino Ruiz , Electric Bass
KATHERINE K. DAVIS	“Carol of the Drum” (“The Little Drummer Boy”) (arr. Bradley Knight)
GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL	“Hallelujah” from <i>Messiah</i>
	Will Kesling , Conductor
	Participating Choruses: Gainesville Master Chorale , Gainesville, FL Will Kesling , Director Kutztown University Choir , Kutztown, PA Hannah Carr , Director Naval Aviation Alumni Choir , Pensacola, FL CPT. David Carlson , US Navy, Retired, Director University of Florida Concert Choir , Gainesville, FL Will Kesling , Director

The solo voice casting for this concert is done by MidAmerica Productions Artistic Administrator Eilana Lappalainen.

The Program

JOHN RUTTER

Magnificat

The Magnificat, the canticle of the Virgin Mary, is found in the opening chapter of Saint Luke's Gospel, at the point where Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth, having just learned she is to be the mother of Christ. Traditionally, the words have been ascribed to Mary, though their strong resemblance to the Old Testament Song of Hannah and to various psalms makes it more likely that Luke himself interpolated them to express an appropriate sense of rejoicing and trust in God. Liturgically, the Magnificat belongs to the Office of Vespers (and its Anglican counterpart, Evensong), as well as to feasts of the Virgin Mary, and there are innumerable concise musical settings intended for use in church. Extended concert settings, however, are quite rare, Bach's being the most notable (and even this was designed for use in the Lutheran liturgy); in the general layout of its movements and in its scale and dimensions, Bach's *Magnificat* provided the obvious precedent for John Rutter's setting. There is even a parallel to Bach's Christmas interpolations in the use of a vernacular text on the Virgin Mary, *Of a Rose, a lovely Rose*, which (like so much medieval religious art) likens Mary and her child to a flower springing from the stem of Jesse. Like Bach, Rutter uses Gregorian themes associated with the text at various points in the work. But there all comparisons end, since the style and content of Rutter's *Magnificat* are not even remotely neo-Bachian, resting rather within an eclectic amalgam of more recent traditions that characterize much of the English composer's choral writing. This work was given its world premiere in May 1990 by the composer in a concert presented by MidAmerica Productions in Carnegie Hall.

—Louise Luegner

TRADITIONAL

“Sing We Now of Christmas” (arr. Bradley Knight)

TRADITIONAL

“God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen” (arr. Bradley Knight)

KATHERINE K. DAVIS

“Carol of the Drum” (“The Little Drummer Boy”) (arr. Bradley Knight)

“Sing We Now of Christmas,” “God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen,” and “Carol of the Drum” (“Little Drummer Boy”) come from *The Nativity Symphony* by Bradley Knight. This is a collection of imaginatively arranged seasonal songs that return us to the humble majesty of the birth of the Christ child in a humble stable that changed the world.

TRADITIONAL

“Angels We Have Heard On High” (arr. Gary Fry)

This traditional French carol was arranged by Emmy-winning composer Gary Fry for the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. The ethereal, and highly unusual setting packs an unexpected emotional punch. It begins and ends quietly, and features unison treble choir throughout. Notice the flowing soloistic woodwind and horn passages, and the stirring mid-piece climax with the full chorus and full orchestra.

TRADITIONAL

“Christmas Is Coming” (arr. Mack Wilberg)

This charitable lyric nursery rhyme of unknown authorship is usually sung as a round to the tune “Country Gardens.” The text of this carol was to associate the Christmas feast with geese (“the goose is getting fat”) as the traditional English Christmas fayre. The meaning that was conveyed to a child was that this festive period was the time to be charitable, according to their means, even if they could only give their blessing! The British “Halfpenny” was known as “ha’penny” and was minted between 1672 and 1976.

OLA GJEILO

“Ecce novum”

Ecce novum gaudium,
Ecce novum mirum,
Virgo parit filium,
quae non novit vium.

*Behold! A new joy!
A Virgin bears a son,
Behold! A new wonder!
who knew not a man.*

Sed ut pirus pirus,
Gleba fert papyrus
Florens lilium.

*But as the pear-tree bears the pear,
the flourishing papyrus brings
the lily from the soil.*

Ecce quod natura
Leges mutat;
Mutat sua iura,
Virgo parit pura Dei filium

*See how nature
changes her laws:
a pure virgin bears
the son of God.*

Amen.

Amen.

CRAIG COURTNEY

“A Musicological Journey Through the Twelve Days of Christmas”

True to its name, there are twelve verses representing the twelve days of the Christmas season, starting on December 25th and ending with the celebration of Epiphany, or the Three Kings, on January 6th. Each verse describes a gift given by “my true love.” The verses were published without music in England in 1780, and the tune we all know appears to originate around the turn of the 20th century. So why is this rhyme considered repetitive? When a new gift is mentioned, all the earlier gifts are repeated, and each verse becomes one line longer than its predecessor. Craig Courtney tries to rid us of the boredom by setting each individual verse in a specific musical style that pays homage to twelve different composers: Plainchant, Josquin des Prez, Palestrina, Vivaldi, Beethoven, Mozart, Saint-Saëns, Wagner, the Strauss family, Offenbach, Tchaikovsky, and John Philip Sousa.

TRADITIONAL

“The Virgin Mary Had a Baby Boy” (arr. Mack Wilberg)

This West Indian carol was notated by the Trinidad native and calypso performer Edric Connor (1913–68) in 1942 from the singing of James Bryce, a 92-year-old man of African descent. It was printed in *The Edric Connor Collection of West Indian Spirituals and Folk Tunes* (London, 1945) and became more widely known through its inclusion in *The Cambridge Hymnal*, published in 1967.

GIULIO ROMOLO CACCINI

“Alleluia” (arr. Mack Wilberg)

Mack Wilberg has adapted Giulio Romolo Caccini’s (1551–1618) tender and well-loved solo piece that is usually sung to “Ave Maria” and created a glorious setting where the male voices take the lead.

STEPHEN SCHWARTZ

“When You Believe” from *The Prince of Egypt*

“When You Believe” was composed by Stephen Schwartz for the 1998 DreamWorks animated musical feature *The Prince of Egypt*. It is a power ballad with meaningful and inspirational lyrics, describing the ability each person has to achieve miracles when they reach out and believe.

AXEL CASTRO / DAVID EATON

“Lux Brumalis” (World Premiere)

“Lux Brumalis” is a contemporary re-imagining of Mykola Leontovych’s historic Ukrainian carol, “Carol of the Bells.” The opening sequence guides the listener through a winter storm. There is a perceivable, then growing light radiating from a comforting destination visible now in the distance. The orchestration provides an atmospheric context for the intense yet melancholy nature of the original carol. The implementation of new-age harmony highlights how cluster chords shimmer with a unique series of overtones in an ensemble of voices.

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL

“Hallelujah” from *Messiah*

Hallelujah: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

—Revelation 19 and 11

The Artists



Cailin Marcel Manson, Conductor

Cailin Marcel Manson, baritone and conductor, is currently associate professor of practice in music and music program director at Clark University, music director of The Keene Chorale, music director of Barn Opera, and artistic director of the New England Repertory Orchestra. Manson, a Philadelphia native, has toured as a soloist and master teacher at major concert venues throughout the US, Europe, and Asia with many organizations, including the Radio-Sinfonieorchester Stuttgart, SWR Symphonieorchester, Taipei Philharmonic

Orchestra, Bayerische Staatsoper–Münchner Opernfestspiele, Choral Arts Society of Philadelphia, Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, Teatro La Fenice, Teatro San Carlo, Konservatorium Oslo, and the Conservatoire de Luxembourg. Manson has held positions as music director of the Vorarlberger Musikfest, music director and conductor laureate of the Chamber Symphony of Atlantic City, artistic director and conductor of the Montgomery County Youth Orchestra, chair of vocal studies at the

Hazleton Conservatory for the Performing Arts, director of music at The Putney School, and as the music director of the Bennington County Choral Society. He has served as a member of the faculty of the Vermont governor's Institute on the Arts and the Performing Arts Institute of Wyoming Seminary. Manson founded and directed the Germantown Institute for the Vocal Arts and the Germantown Concert Chorus. Manson studied voice performance at Temple University, and opera performance and orchestral conducting at the Universität Mozarteum Salzburg.

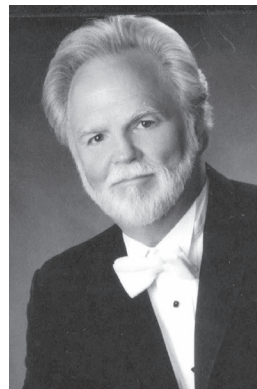
Sarah Cooper, Soprano

Sarah Cooper has received praise for her “meltingly beautiful” (*Opera News*) singing and “passionate power” (*Parterre Box*). Recent performance credits include Juliette in *Roméo et Juliette* (Opera Western Reserve), Clorinda in *La Cenerentola* (Syracuse Opera), Violetta in *La Traviata* (MassOpera), La Charmeuse in *Thaïs* (Maryland Lyric Opera), and Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Savannah Voice Festival). Cooper has also appeared as a soloist with the Handel and Haydn Society Chamber Choir, the MIT Concert Choir, the Rochester Oratorio Society, and the Harvard Radcliffe Chorus. She completed her BA in French at Princeton University and received her Master of Music Degree in Vocal Performance and Pedagogy from Westminster Choir College.



Will Kesling, Conductor

Maestro Will Kesling has conducted hundreds of choral ensembles and 50 professional symphony orchestras throughout the world. His talents for weaving together text and music, chorus and orchestra have garnered him international respect. Kesling has conducted several engagements in Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and in major concert halls internationally. He has conducted feature film scores at LA East Studios and several commercial recordings. In 2019, Centaur Records released a significant recording of the rarely performed Requiem, Op. 89 by Antonin Dvořák conducted by Kesling with Romanian and Bulgarian performing forces. Of note, Kesling made his Carnegie Hall debut conducting this Requiem under auspices of MidAmerica Productions. The June 1990 concert received the following review from *New York Daily News*: “Definitively Dvořák ... Will Kesling’s conducting was truly inspired and impeccably paced; the orchestra



played superbly; the massed choruses from Florida, Texas, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, New Jersey, and Utah produced stirring sounds.”

In recognition of his achievements, Kesling has received the Congressional Order of Merit (2003), Ronald Reagan Gold Medal (2004), and, for his contributions to the cultural life of the citizenry, the Congressional Medal of Distinction (2006). In 2020, He was named the Musician of the Year by the Foundation for the Promotion of Music and was recognized with the Albert Nelson Marquis Lifetime Achievement Award by the Marquis Who’s Who Publication Board. In 2022, Kesling was also named Professor of the Year by the Top 100 Registry of Business and Professionals. The Beijing Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs of the People’s Republic of China selected Kesling to join the Program for the Introduction of Renowned Overseas Professors and awarded him a ten-year High-Talents Visa.



José Valentino Ruiz, Flute, Electric Bass Guitar

Dr. José Valentino Ruiz is a renowned multi-instrumentalist and arts entrepreneur. Proficient as a flutist, saxophonist, and bassist, he also excels as a composer and producer across various music genres, including classical, jazz, pop, global music, and film scoring. With an impressive career that spans over 1,400 headlining concerts across six continents, 150 albums as an artist and producer, and film scores for 30 documentaries and feature films, Ruiz has garnered four Latin Grammy Awards including Best Contemporary Classical Composition and

received seven Latin Grammy nominations, encompassing categories such as Best Latin Jazz Album, Best Children’s Album, and Best Instrumental Album. Ruiz is also the record holder for his 53 Downbeat Music Awards, which include Best Jazz Soloist (x7) and Best Blues Pop Rock Soloist (x10). Additionally, he holds an Emmy Award for Best Cultural Documentary and boasts 23 Global Music Awards, including four Gold Awards of Excellence, recognizing his talents in the categories of Artist, Producer, Audio Engineer, and Album of the Year, a distinction achieved by him alone.

Preston Hawes, New England Symphonic Ensemble Artistic Director and Principal Violin

Hailed by the European Academy of Arts and Sciences as an “electrifying and virtuosic” performer with “exquisite taste and rare talent,” Canadian violinist Dr. Preston Hawes is a laureate of the Concours de musique du Canada, the Andrews International Music Competitions, and the Prix de Musique de Chambre à Fontainebleau, and is a recipient of the J.C. Van Hulsteyn Award, and Peabody Career Grant. He has been heard as a soloist in more than 35 countries and in venues including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, and Plovdiv Symphony Hall. Having earned a Master of Music degree and the coveted Artist Diploma at Yale University, Hawes completed his studies by earning a Doctorate of Musical Arts from The Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University. Hawes is a professor of music and director of strings at Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Maryland, and is the artistic director of the New England Symphonic Ensemble.



New England Symphonic Ensemble

With performances described as “flawless” (*Rhodes Magazine*), the New England Symphonic Ensemble (NESE), under the artistic direction of Dr. Preston Hawes, is among the most frequently featured organizations in Carnegie Hall. Since its inception in 1989, the NESE has drawn global critical acclaim in hundreds of concerts on the world’s most prestigious stages. In collaboration with MidAmerica Productions, the NESE has been led by a roster of guest conductors including John Rutter, Peter Tiboris, Sherrill Milnes, Helmuth Rilling, Simon Carrington, and Jonathan Willcocks, and regularly hosts international guest soloists. NESE world premieres include Dinos Constantinides’s *Byron’s Greece*, *Hymn to the Human Spirit*, and *Midnight Fantasy II* for wind ensemble; John Rutter’s *Cantate Domino*, *Distant Land*, *Magnificat*, and *Mass of the Children*; and John Leavitt’s *A Christmas Garland*. The NESE boasts multiple US premieres, including Mozart’s *Die Schuldigkeit des ersten Gebots*, Reimann’s Concerto for Violin and Cello, Tchaikovsky’s *Ode to Joy*, and René Clausen’s *Hellas: In the Name of Freedom*. The NESE can be heard on the Naxos label in an award-winning recording of spirituals with internationally renowned mezzo-soprano, the late Barbara Smith Conrad.

MidAmerica Productions, Inc.

MidAmerica Productions, Inc. was founded by Peter Tiboris in 1983. Now in its 40th season, MidAmerica presents conductors, soloists, and choral and instrumental ensembles from around the world in New York's Carnegie Hall, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, and Alice Tully Hall and David Geffen Hall, Lincoln Center. MidAmerica also presents concerts in international locations including Vienna; Salzburg; Florence; Verona; Venice; Paris; Prague; Berlin; Warsaw; Krakow; Lisbon; Porto; London; Oxford; and, since 2005, in Syros, Greece (International Festival of the Aegean), Bath; Malta; Stockholm and Uppsala. To date, MidAmerica Productions has produced more than 1,450 concerts worldwide.

Peter Tiboris: Founder, General Director and Music Director

Norman Dunfee: Executive Director and Production Manager, Emeritus

John Rutter, CBE: Conductor Laureate

MidAmerica Productions

265 Sunrise Highway, Suite 1-183; Rockville Centre, NY 11570 | 212-239-0205

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