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Angel Marchese — Director
Deborah Mar — Southwood Middle School Director
Christopher Edgerton — Accompanist



PROGRAM

Procession “Hodie Christus Natus Est” (from A Ceremony of Carols) Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

A Ceremony of Carols, Op. 28, is an extended choral composition for Christmas. It was composed in 1942 on Britten’s sea voyage from the United States to England. It is comprised of nine medieval English carols which retain their Middle English texts and a Latin plainsong processional and recessional. The first movement, “Hodie Christus natus est,” is a Gregorian antiphon to the Magnificat at the Second Vespers of Christmas. It is traditionally sung exclusively by the sopranos and is patterned on a traditional processional in Christian church service. It has no time signature and can be sung in flexible tempo. The last several measures can be repeated to allow the whole ensemble to take their places.

*Today Christ was born: today the Savior appeared:
today the angels sing on earth: the archangels rejoice:
today the righteous rejoice, saying: Glory to God in the highest. Alleluia!*

Evening Prayer (from Hansel and Gretel)

Engelbert Humperdinck (1854-1921)

German composer Engelbert Humperdinck created one of the most beloved works in the operatic repertoire when he transformed a favorite Brothers Grimm fairy tale into his operatic masterpiece, “Hansel and Gretel.” The opera was first performed in the Hoftheater in Weimar on 23 December 1893, conducted by Richard Strauss. It has been associated with Christmas since its earliest performances and today it is still most often performed at Christmas time.

Ding! Dong! Merrily on High

arr. Ruth Morris Gray (1961-)

The origins of this Christmas carol date back to 16th century France. The whimsical melody is highlighted by the refrain where the sung vowel sound “o” of “Gloria” is fluidly sustained through a lengthy rising and falling melismatic melodic sequence.

Libera Me (from Requiem)

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Nickolas Novoa, Bass

Fauré premiered his Requiem or Funeral Mass in Paris in 1888, and is widely considered to be the best-known of his large works. The soloist sings with an ostinato bass rhythm of two quarter notes, a quarter rest and another quarter note. The challenging melody requires the singer to perform with a wide range, accentuated with some sharp leaps.

*Free me, Lord, from eternal death
on that terrible day
when the heavens will move and the earth,
when you come to judge the world with fire.*

Winter Dream

James DesJardins

**Nickolas Novoa, Randy Mulkay, Joel Gonzalez, Damian Frias,
Mateo Rodriguez, Jordan Colorado, Christopher Murray, Miguel Reyes-Granda, Soloists
Eden Sawchenco, Violin**

DesJardins recently composed this beautiful winterscape featuring an artful piano accompaniment with solo violin depicting an icy winter scene.





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Jingle Bell Rock arr. Alan Billingsley

First released in 1957 and famously recorded by Brenda Lee, this Christmas pop classic was covered by many artists including Chubby Checker, Hall & Oates, and most recently performed by Sam Evans and the Cheerios on Glee.

Ala Joep Beving (1976-)

Christopher Edgerton, Piano

Dutch pianist and composer, Joep Beving is known for his modern classical atmospheric piano pieces. He wrote Ala in 2019 and integrates the delicate and melancholic style associated with his music.

Je Te Laisserai Des Mots Patrick Watson (1979-)

Diamelys D'Baron, Soprano
Christopher Edgerton, Piano

Canadian signer-songwriter Patrick Watson wrote this haunting melody in 2010 and became a TikTok sensation. His music has been featured in shows such as The Walking Dead, This is Us, and Suits among many others.

Hark, all ye lovely saints Thomas Weelkes (1576-1623)
(from Balletts and Madrigals, to Five Voyces, 1598)

This ironic, charming madrigal is typical of Elizabethan musical wit, with its straight-faced text and teasing music. The text declares that with the pangs of love no longer causing pain, women will have no more reasons to mourn. Of course, the text's hidden point is that those who believe they suffer most from love, truly enjoy the experience. The music is mock-serious, with the typical descending lines, slow tempo, and changes from major to minor to illustrate such words as "weep" and "mourn."

*Hark, all ye lovely saints above,
Diana hath agreed with love, His fiery weapon to remove.
Do you not see how they agree?
Then cease, fair ladies; why weep ye?*

*See, your mistress bids you cease, And welcome Love with love's increase:
Diana hath procured your peace.
Cupid hath sworn His bow forlorn to break and burn, ere ladies mourn.*





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Can't Help Falling in Love

Hugo Peretti (1916-1986)

Kevin Sotolongo, Bass

"Can't Help Falling in Love" was featured in Elvis Presley's 1961 film Blue Hawaii. It has also been recorded by many other artists, including British reggae group UB40 and Julio Iglesias. It was listed as one of the greatest songs by Rolling Stone.

Mata del Anima Sola

Antonio Estévez (1916-1988)

Jay Hernandez, Tenor

The first section is slow and meditative, followed by a quick, rhythmic section based on the Venezuelan folk dance called Joropo. The music depicts the solitude and mystery of the llanos, the high plains of Venezuela, while the tenor soloist represents the llanero or "man of the plains" whose songs are improvised. In the Joropo section, the choir imitates the instruments that are traditionally used to play the dance. The altos and tenors have the rhythm of the cuatro (a small guitar with four strings), the sopranos imitate the harp, and the basses sing the guitar bordones, all of which combine to provide the "instrumental" accompaniment to the tenor soloist.

*Tree of the lonely soul,
wide opening of the riverside, now you will be able to say:
"Here slept Cantaclaro."*

*With the whistle and the sting of the twisting wind,
the dappled and violet dusk quietly entered the corral.*

*The night, tired mare,
shakes her mane and black tail above the riverside;
and, in its silence, your ghostly heart is filled with awe.*

Ain'-a That Good News!

William Dawson (1899-1990)

One of the most treasured spirituals, Ain'-a That Good News speaks of the treasures that await us in the kingdom: a crown, a harp, a robe, and a savior. This song tells us that we claim those treasures by "laying down this world, and shouldering up my cross." Despite the real, relentless hardship, joy bubbles up because of hope and faith.

— INTERMISSION —





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White Winter Hymnal arr. Pentatonix

Pentatonix covers this song by Fleet Foxes in their signature a cappella style, with only body percussion as accompaniment.

Do You Hear What I Hear arr. Michele Weir

“Do You Hear What I Hear?” tells a story loosely based upon the story of the Nativity. This song was originally released in 1962, and has been covered by hundreds of artists. This arrangement incorporates jazz rhythms and vocal percussion.

Mary, Did You Know? arr. Roger Emerson

Originally released in 1991 by Christian recording artist, Michael English. This beautiful arrangement was performed by Pentatonix on their 2014 Christmas album. It has become one of the most recognizable Christmas songs from modern times.

Gia il sole dal Gange (from L'honestà negli amori) Alessandro Scarlatti (1659-1725)

Già il sole dal Gange is a canzonetta written by Baroque composer Alessandro Scarlatti when he was only nineteen years of age. It was first performed in 1680, as an aria from the opera L'honestà negli amori. The character Saldino sings of the sun rising on the river Ganges, in reference to the seasons of life.

*Already, from over the Ganges, the sun
Sparkles more brightly
And dries every drop
of the dawn, which weeps.*

*With the gilded ray
It adorns each blade of grass;
And the stars of the sky
It paints in the field.*





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Fecit Potentiam from Magnificat

Kim Andre Arnesen (1980-)

Kim André Arnesen is a classical musician from Trondheim, Norway. The Magnificat was commissioned and premiered by the Nidaros Cathedral Girls' Choir. The work was subsequently recorded and nominated for a Grammy award.

*He has shown strength with His arm,
He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.*

In Dulci Jubilo

arr. Matthew Culloton (1976-)

This Christmas carol dates back to 1328 in Germany. The original song text alternates Medieval German and Latin. It was written by the German mystic Heinrich Seuse. According to folklore, Seuse heard angels sing these words and joined them in a dance of worship. This modern a cappella arrangement contains the original melody soaring above contemporary harmonies.

*In sweet rejoicing, now sing and be glad!
Our hearts' joy lies in the manger;
And it shines like the sun
in the mother's lap.
You are the Alpha and Omega!*

The Lord Bless You and Keep You

Peter Lutkin (1858-1931)

American composer Peter Lutkin composed this benediction in 1900 with its famous sevenfold Amen. This short, yet beautiful piece may be the best-known and best-loved service or concert closer in the world.





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Director's Bio

Angel Marchese is in his seventh year serving as Choral Director at Robert Morgan Educational Center, a magnet school of approximately 1800 students in Miami, FL. His ensembles consist of Varsity Singers, Men's Chorus, Women's Chorus and Rhapsody, a select contemporary cappella group. Marchese's choirs have earned Superior ratings at State MPA every year since his current tenure. In 2018, his elite women's ensemble, Nightingales, performed at the Florida Music Educators Association State Conference, and in 2019, his Women's Chorus was named a Choir of Distinction by the Florida Vocal Association. Marchese has been an FMEA Conference clinician, FVA District Chair, state-wide adjudicator, honor choir conductor, and Adjunct Vocal Instructor at Miami-Dade College. He recently enjoyed guest-conducting Seraphic Fire and is also currently performing with the Festival Singers of Florida. Prior to teaching at Robert Morgan, Marchese's career as a professional singer allowed him to perform throughout the United States and Europe. He holds an undergraduate degree in Music Education from the University of Miami and a Master's degree in Choral Conducting from Florida International University.

— ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS —

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