



EASTON *Choral Arts* SOCIETY

PRESENTS

# HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS



Alexis Renee Ward  
Artistic Director

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2023 AT 7:30PM  
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2023 AT 4:00PM

Christ Church Easton



TALBOT  
ARTS



## Artistic Director's Program Notes

Welcome to “Home for the Holidays”, a festive program featuring the diverse holiday traditions we celebrate around the United States. Many Anglican congregations know well the majestic carol arrangements of David Willcocks, featuring soaring descants and thrilling harmonizations, and thus our program opens with his arrangement of the sacred Christmas welcome, “O Come, All Ye Faithful”.

We will then embark on a journey of miracles, wonder, and light with Judith Clurman's “Eight Sacred Lights”. The piece draws inspiration from the eight lights of the Chanukah menorah, symbolizing the celebration of the liberation of the Jewish people. Next, we will sing the meditations “Umoja” (meaning “unity”) and “Kuumba” (meaning “creativity”), two sacred principles of Kwanzaa. Both pieces feature gentle percussion, vocal improvisation, and steady ostinati as singer and audience alike are invited to ponder the true meaning of these sacred words.

“Santa Lucia” brings us to traditions long celebrated on the Delmarva peninsula. Originally brought to our shores by Swedish settlers to recognize the longest and darkest night of the year, the tradition involves the procession of a girl donned in white and a candle wreath crown as she portrays St. Lucia bringing light and hope during the dark winter season.

Our program's title piece, “(There's No Place Like) Home for the Holidays”, will then kick off our journey around the country as we visit Christmas traditions in each region of the United States. “Feliz Navidad”, composed by Jose Feliciano in Los Angeles, pays homage to various US regions. Written during a bout of Christmas homesickness, Feliciano missed his Puerto Rican family back in New York City and the holiday traditions they shared. We then make our way to the Pacific Ocean with “Mele Kalikimaka”. Originally released in 1949, this Christmas song blends English and Hawaiian languages and conveys a warm island greeting during an otherwise chilly holiday season! “A Midwest Christmas” takes us down memory lane with icy streets, friendly neighbors, tree farms and goldenrod sweets as the sounds of Christmas in the Midwest are played to the strum of a gentle guitar and

the sultry, swung vocal lines. We finally make our way south with “Go, Tell It on the Mountain”, a traditional Christmas spiritual proclaiming the New Testament narrative of Christ’s birth and affirming the beliefs of southern slaves yearning for both the earthly and heavenly freedom they knew their Savior would bring. Originally a slave song passed along from one plantation to another, this new arrangement soars with complex rhythms, intricately layered harmonies and a rousing piano accompaniment.

Finally back in the northeast, our program features Leroy Anderson’s “Sleigh Ride”. Ironically, Anderson composed the piece during a severe heat wave in July of 1948, hoping to cool off listeners with a musical depiction of wintry joy. Since then it has become one of the best known holiday favorites here in the states and can be heard almost anywhere you go during the month of December. As we once again ponder being home for the holidays, “I’ll Be Home for Christmas” is a poignant holiday song accompanied by a gentle jazz band accompaniment and musical lines sung with that lovely Bing Crosby crooning style.

Our program then wraps up with a trio of sacred pieces in honor of the traditional Christmas Eve midnight mass. Starting with another of David Willcock’s epic carol arrangements, “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” features a stunning descant and a world famous musical climax in the last four measures of the piece. As a nod to the traditionally sung “Silent Night”, Elaine Hagenberg’s “Love’s Pure Light” is a lush and eloquent homage to the carol using its same text and often quoting its familiar melodies in the many layers of the overlapping vocal lines. Then in keeping with tradition, during the midnight mass as the clock strikes twelve and the congregation rises, our program will also culminate with the jubilant notes of Handel’s “Hallelujah Chorus”. This was originally intended for Easter but over time and with the steady march of tradition, has evolved into a cherished holiday favorite, symbolizing the triumphant arrival of Christmas and the hope and light that it brings.

Easton Choral Arts Society presents

**Home for the Holidays**

***“O Come All Ye Faithful”*** by J.F. Wade, arr. David Willcocks

***“Eight Days of Lights”*** by Judith Clurman with David Chase

***“Umoja”*** and ***“Kuumba”*** by Zanaida Stewart Robles  
Soloist: Katherine Nevius

***“Santa Lucia”*** arr. Thomas H. Graf  
String quartet

***“We're Gonna Decorate the Christmas Tree”*** by Greg Gilpin

***“(There's No Place Like)  
Home for the Holidays”*** by Robert Allen,  
arr. Greg Gilpin  
Soloist: Nevin Dawson

***“Feliz Navidad”*** by Jose Feliciano, arr. Paul Langford

**"Mele Kalikimaka"** by R. Alex Anderson, arr. Jay Althouse  
Soloist: Daniel Fuoco

**"A Midwest Christmas"** by Andrea von Kampen,  
arr. Alexis Renee Ward  
Soloists: Lori Royer and Matthew Holt

**"Go, Tell It on the Mountain"** arr. Rollo Dilworth

**"Sleigh Ride"** by Leroy Anderson, arr. Mark Brymer

**"I'll Be Home for Christmas"** by Walter Kent, arr. Mark Hayes  
Soloist: Scott Clausen

**"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"** by Felix Mendelssohn,  
arr. David Willcocks

**"Love's Pure Light (Silent Night)"** by Elaine Hagenberg

**"Hallelujah Chorus"** by G.F. Handel

# The Performers

**Artistic Director:** Alexis Renee Ward

## **SOPRANOS**

Susan Ahlstrom  
Simone Brown  
Katie Burkitt  
Liz Cowee  
Cherry Dearie  
Lisa Felts  
Lynne Gradisar  
Peggy Martell  
Rachel Sawyer  
BettyAnn Seabury  
Lee Thomas  
Cathy-Martin Urbanek  
Karen Walpole  
Terri Wroten  
Jacqui Yeatman

## **ALTOS**

Ann Bourne  
Joey Frankos  
Pat Greaves  
Dana Haddaway  
Carol Harrison  
Ruth Heltne  
Alethea Kardas  
Emily Moody  
Katherine Nevius  
Kaci Risser  
Lori Royer  
Sandy Ryder  
Alison Sanford  
Melinda Simpkins

\*Choral Scholar

## **TENORS**

Scott Clausen  
Kevin Crouch  
Daniel Fuoco  
Jean Hayhurst  
Patrick Mason

## **BASSES**

Julian Bobadilla\*  
Nevin Dawson  
Dick Doughty  
Matthew Holt  
Joseph Long  
Kevin Paton-Cole  
Rob Pedersen  
Charles Petty  
Phil Sayre  
Christopher Wroten

## **PIANO**

Becky Zinser

Ellen Grunden  
(rehearsal accompanist)

## **STRINGS**

Dana Bevard, violin  
Maria Rusu, violin  
Dorothy Couper, viola  
Denise Nathanson, cello  
Chris Levey, double bass  
Sandy Ryder, guitar  
Glen Wong, ukulele

## **WOODWINDS**

Rebecca Silverstein, flute

## **PERCUSSION**

Mark Gadson, percussion  
Ann Bourne, sleigh bells  
Julian Bobadilla, guiro

# 2023-2024 ECAS Sustaining Members

Many Thanks for Making our Concerts Possible!

## **Maestro's Circle ♦ \$2500+**

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Katherine Nevius  
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John & Cherry Dearie Smith

**Easton Choral Arts has an Endowment Fund managed by the Mid-Shore Community Foundation. This is well-suited for both ongoing smaller gifts as well as one-time larger gifts and bequests. For information about the Endowment Fund, please contact Carol Harrison at [ecascarol@eastonchoralarts.com](mailto:ecascarol@eastonchoralarts.com)**




PRESENTS

# OF WATER TO SKY

FRIDAY, APRIL 26, 2024 AT 7:30PM  
SUNDAY, APRIL 28, 2024 AT 4:00PM

Christ Church Easton

A decorative illustration of stylized waves in various shades of teal and light blue, rendered in a watercolor style, spanning the width of the poster.

We hope our audience will mark their calendars for our spring concert events featuring the stunning choral works of all female composers!

Any interested singers are invited to join us for a commitment free, two-week trial run starting January 9th at 7pm at Christ Church. Email [ECAS@EastonChoralArts.com](mailto:ECAS@EastonChoralArts.com) for more information and to reserve your packet of sheet music.