



SPACIOUS VISION Song Project

Carols Rare and Bright

Elise's Tea Room, Long Beach, California

Dec. 19, 2014 7:30 p.m.

Trinity Presbyterian Church, Pasadena, California

Dec. 21, 2014 5:00 p.m.

BERNARDO BERMUDEZ, baritone
SUSAN KANE, soprano / ANTHONY MORENO, baritone
ARIEL PISTURINO, soprano / GERALD SEMINATORE, tenor
and
KRISTOF VAN GRYSERRE, piano

Alfred Burt (USA 1920-54)	All on a Christmas Morning	<i>Everyone</i>
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Introductions

J.S. Bach (Germany 1685-1750)	Ermuntre dich Ich steh' an deiner Krippen hier O Jesulein süß	<i>Anthony</i> <i>Gerald</i> <i>Ariel, Susan</i>
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Trad. German	Josef lieber, Josef mein	<i>Ariel</i>
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Max Reger (Germany 1873-1916)	Mariä Wiegenlied	<i>Anthony</i>
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Hugo Wolf (Austria 1860-1903)	Schlafendes Jesuskind	<i>Gerald</i>
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David Willcocks (England b. 1919)	The Infant King	<i>Bernardo, Ensemble</i>
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Peter Warlock (England 1894-1930)	Balulalow	<i>Gerald</i>
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Michael Head (England 1900-76)	Slumber Song of the Madonna	<i>Ariel</i>
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Joaquín Rodrigo (Spain 1901-99)	Pastorcito Santo	<i>Bernardo</i>
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Peter Warlock	The First Mercy	<i>Ensemble</i>
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(INTERMISSION)

David Willcocks	Sussex Carol	<i>Anthony, Ensemble</i>
Benjamin Britten (England 1913-76)	New Year Carol The Holly and the Ivy	<i>Anthony, Ariel Ariel, Gerald</i>
John Jacob Niles (USA 1892-1980)	What Songs Were Sung Carol of the Birds	<i>Susan Bernardo</i>
R. Vaughn Williams (England 1872-1958)	The Oxen	<i>Gerald</i>

Alfred Burt	This is Christmas Jesu Parvule Nigh Bethlehem Some Children See Him O, Hearken Ye	<i>Ariel Bernardo Anthony Ariel, Bernardo, Gerald Ensemble</i>
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<i>Trad. Spain</i>	Riú riú chiu	<i>Ensemble</i>
Juan Plaza (Venezuela, 1989-1965)	Trinan las aves	<i>Bernardo</i>
Joaquín Rodrigo	Coplillas de Belén	<i>Anthony</i>
Mark Hayes (USA b. 1953)	Un flambeau, Jeanette, Isabella	<i>Susan</i>
<i>Trad. Puerto Rico</i>	Hacia Belén	<i>Ensemble</i>

ABOUT THE SONGS

(Alphabetically by composer)

The music of **Johann Sebastian Bach** (1685-1750) is revered by musicians and listeners around the world. Bach was the Chapel Master for the choir schools at both the Saint Thomas and Saint Nicholas churches in Leipzig, and he wrote many small works for practical use in teaching and religious education. For music publisher Georg Christian Schmelli's 1736 "Musical Songbook," Bach employed an array of pre-existing Lutheran chorale melodies to create some sixty devotional songs in the *basso continuo* style.

Edward Benjamin Britten, Baron Britten (1913-76) was one of the central figures of 20th century British classical music. "The Birds" is a setting of a poem by Hillaire Belloc, and was a Christmas gift by the then sixteen-year old composer to his mother. Britten first arranged the traditional carol "The Holly and the Ivy" for chorus, and later composed a solo version. The Welsh folk song "Levy-Dew" provided the tune of the "New Year Carol," which relates a New Year's Day custom of sprinkling doorways and people with water newly drawn from a well.

Alfred Burt (1920-54) was an American musician best known for the fifteen Christmas carols he composed between 1942 and 1954. The practice of including an original composition as part of family's annual holiday card had begun with his father, and Alfred continued that tradition. Burt was an officer in the United States Army, and later lived in New York City, where he worked as a jazz trumpeter, arranger, and teacher. After a diagnosis of terminal lung cancer in 1953, he moved to California, and friends there introduced his carols to audiences and record producers. Shortly before his death, the first commercial recording of his carols was released. By the end of the decade, artists such as Fred Waring and Nat King Cole had begun to perform the Burt carols in concert and on recordings.

Mark Hayes (b. 1953) is an internationally recognized composer and arranger. A graduate of Baylor University, his predominant output is choral music in the Christian sacred and gospel music genres. The traditional French carol "Un flambeau, Jeanette, Isabella" inspired Hayes to compose a joyful concert setting in a modern idiom.

Michael Head (1900-76) was a British composer, pianist, organist, and singer. His compositional efforts were concentrated primarily in the art song genre, though he also composed choral and few large-scale instrumental works. “Slumber Song for the Madonna” is a setting of a poem by Alfred Noyes.

John Jacob Niles (1892-1980) was an American composer and singer. He was an ardent collector of tunes from America's oral tradition, particularly throughout the South, and he became world famous for his lute and dulcimer playing. Though they sound like folk songs in their directness and simplicity, “What Songs Were Sung” and “Carol of the Birds” were both original to the composer.

Venezuelan composer **Juan Plaza** (1898-1965) studied in Rome in the 1920s, and earned the title of Professor of Sacred Composition. He was later named Master of the Chapel at the Caracas Cathedral, a position that he held until his death. He wrote instrumental works, religious music, and many songs. “Trinan las aves” (“The Birds Sing”) is an example of the *villancico*. Originally designating a classical poetic form, the modern use of the term is usually associated with Christmas poems and songs. In this song, not only birds, but also the grasses and flowers announce the arrival of the Messiah.

German organist and composer **Max Reger** (1873-1916) produced an enormous body of music. He based “Mariä Wiegenlied” (“Mary’s Lullaby”) on the traditional tune “Josef lieber, Josef mein,” (“My dear Joseph”), a song often sung by the character of Mary in German mystery plays of the 16th century.

Joaquín Rodrigo (1901-99) was a Spanish composer and virtuoso concert pianist. His music is among the most popular Spanish music of the twentieth century, and his *Concierto de Aranjuez* for guitar and orchestra is perhaps the most popular classical guitar composition of all time. Rodrigo also wrote many songs. As with Plaza’s “Trinan las aves,” both “Pastorcito Santo” and “Coplillas de Belén” elevate the *villancico* to high art.

The Christmas cantata *Hodie* (“This Day”) of **Ralph Vaughn Williams** (1872-1958) is a monumental work for soloists, treble and adult choirs, and orchestra. Its texts are taken from the Gospel of St. Luke, and from poems by George Herbert, John Milton, and others. “The Oxen” is by Thomas Hardy, a favorite poet of many song composers.

Peter Warlock was the pseudonym of **Philip Arnold Heseltine** (1894-1930), an Anglo-Welsh composer and music critic. His surviving body of work includes some 150 songs, several choral pieces, and a few purely instrumental works. The words of “Balulalow” are excerpted from a longer, traditional Scottish lullaby. The poem “The First Mercy” is by Warlock’s lifelong friend Bruce Blunt (1899-1957), an English poet, journalist, and wine merchant.

David Willcocks, CBE (b. 1909) became internationally known during his tenure as Director of Music at King’s College, Cambridge. His recordings with the Choir of King’s College have been distributed worldwide, and his choral arrangements of traditional carols have helped popularize the Anglican Lessons and Carols service around the world.

Austrian composer **Hugo Wolf** (1860-1903) is particularly noted for his many songs. “Schlafendes Jesuskind” (“Sleeping Child Jesus”) demonstrates the harmonic daring, expressive intensity, and sensitivity to poetry that were hallmarks of Wolf’s musical style.

SPECIAL THANKS

These individuals and organizations have been especially supportive of our recent work.

Bowdoin College, Brunswick, ME

Longy School of Music of Bard College, MA

Brand Library Associates, Glendale

St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, Glendale

Elise’s Tea Room, Long Beach

Trinity Presbyterian Church, Pasadena

LaurisList

Isaac Bekker

Taso Papadakis Photography

Catherine Brown

Armen Guzelemian

Program Cover Illustration

Missouri Bend Paperworks

TRANSLATIONS

Chorales from Schmelli's Musical Songbook (German)

Ermuntre dich

*Take courage, my weak spirit
And endure great desire
Joyfully to embrace
A little child who is called Father!
This is the night in which he came
And took on human form
So that he might take the world
Faithfully as his bride.*

Let praise, Lord Jesus,
Be sung to you by me
You have become my brother
and overcome the world;
Help me value your goodness
Always in this time of grace
And so that I may in heaven
Praise you for eternity.

O Jesulein süß

*O Jesu sweet, o Jesu mild!
You have fulfilled
Your Father's will, and have
Come down out of heaven
In the form of us poor men.*

O Jesu sweet, o Jesu mild!
With joy you fill the world.
You are here with us on earth,
To console us in our suffering.

Ich steh' an deiner Krippen hier

*I stand here at your cradle,
O little Jesu, my life.
I bring and offer you
What you yourself have given me.
Take it, it is my spirit and mind,
Heart, soul, and courage,
Take it all,
And may it be pleasing to you.*

I lay in the shadow of death,
But you became my sun.
The sun that brought to me
Light, life, joy and gladness.
Oh, cherished light that
Awakened my faith,
How beautiful are your rays!

PETER CORNELIUS

"The Kings" (German)

Three kings are travelling from the
East, following a star.

In Judea the three inquire
Where the newborn King
might be? They want to bring
him gifts of frankincense,
myrrh, and gold.

The star shines brightly,
Leading them to a stable.
The kings enter and are amazed.
They gaze upon the Child, and
Bow down to offer him their gifts.

O children of humanity!
Keep in step with the kings,
And travel with them!
A star of love and mercy
Illuminates your destination.

Seek the Child, and if you
Have no frankincense,
Myrrh, or gold to offer,
Offer your heart to him!

HUGO WOLF

“Sleeping Jesus Child” (German)

Meditation upon a painting:

Son of the Virgin,
Lying on the ground
Asleep on the wood of suffering
That the painter has placed –
A meaningful allusion –
Under your light dreams;

You flower, still in the bud,
Waiting to reveal the glory of
God the Father!

O, who could imagine,
Behind that brow,
And those dark lashes,
What softly-changing scenes
Are being painted?

MAX REGER

“Mary’s Cradle Song” (German)

Mary sits in the rose garden,
And rocks her child Jesus.
Through the leaves,
A warm summer wind blows.

At her feet,
A colorful little bird sings:

“Sleep, sweet child, go to sleep!”
Lovely is your smile,
Lovely is your joy in slumber,
Lay your tired little head
Against your mother’s breast!”

JUAN PLAZA

“The Birds Sing” (Spanish)

The birds sing with great joy;
They announce that
Jesus the Messiah is coming.

The prairie prepares itself,
Putting on a gallant dress of
Colorful flowers.

JOAQUÍN RODRIGO

"Holy Shepherd Boy" (Spanish)

Pearl-bright shepherd boy,
Son of the dawn, where are you
Bound in such cold
So early in the morning?

Since you are the morning star
Of my dawn and my day
You are the first to appear;
Shepherd and lamb, without hut
Or fleece, where are you bound
So early in the morning?

With pearls in your eyes
And laughter on your lips,
You bring to our souls
Both pleasure and anger.

Little shock of russet hair,
Scarlet mouth, where are you
Bound in such cold
So early in the morning?

Why must you,
Blessed little shepherd,
Rise so early?

You go forth disguised
As if to seek our souls.
Where are you bound
In such cold
So early in the morning?

Trad. Carol, France

"A Torch, Jeannette, Isabelle!"

Bring a torch,
Jeannette, Isabelle!
Bring a torch, to the cradle run!
It is Jesus, all you villagers;
Christ is born, and
Mary is calling you.
Ah! Ah! Beautiful is the mother!
Ah! Ah! Beautiful is her son!

It is wrong to talk so loudly
When the child is sleeping!
Silence, as you gather around,
Lest your noise awaken him.
Hush! See how he slumbers:
Hush! See how he sleeps!

JOAQUÍN RODRIGO

"Carols of Bethlehem" (Spanish)

If the palm tree knew that
A star had fallen from heaven
To light a child sleeping
In a stable, it would offer
Its green leaves to fan
The baby in its cradle.

The Virgin prays and sings,
And the baby smiles sweetly.

How sorrowful the palm tree
Would be, if it knew what was
Yet to come.

Trad. Carol, Spain

"Riú, riú chiu"

(Chorus)

Riu, riu, chiu

The river guards them;

God has kept the rabid wolf
away from our lamb.

(Verses)

The rabid wolf (the Devil)
wanted to bite her (our Lady) /
But Almighty God knew
how to defend her /
He made her impervious to sin /
Even original sin
the Virgin did not have.

This One who is born
is the Grand Monarch /
Christ our Lord
dressed in human flesh /
He has redeemed us
by making Himself small /
Although He is infinite,
He made Himself mortal.

Many prophets foretold
that he would come /
In our time, we know it is true /
God made flesh, we now behold /
Man now ascends to heaven.

Above us a thousand angels wing,
singing songs of praise /
Glory to God in the highest,
Peace on Earth, Jesus is born!

Trad. Carol, Puerto Rico

"Hacia Belén"

(Verse)

Mary and her loving husband
Are on the road to Bethlehem.
They have in their company
An almighty God.

(Chorus)

Joy, joy, joy,
Joy, joy and pleasure!
Mary and Joseph are passing
On the way to Bethlehem.

Upon reaching Bethlehem,
They asked for lodging.
Nobody wanted to oblige
Because they were so poor.

(Chorus)

Upon seeing them pass by,
The little birds of the woods
Sang melodies to them
With harmonious chirping.

(Chorus)

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Baritone **BERNARDO BERMUDEZ** received his formal musical education at the Conservatory of Music in Caracas, Venezuela. He has appeared in principle roles in *The Barber of Seville*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *The Elixir of Love*, *The Magic Flute*, *Luisa Fernanda*, and *La Boheme*. He has also sung at prestigious summer festivals such as the Music Academy of the West and Opera North. Bernrado is a resident artist with the Education and Community Outreach programs at both the Los Angeles Opera and the San Diego Opera.

Soprano **SUSAN MOHINI KANE** has myriad credits as a soloist in concert and recital around the United States. She has presented many lectures on voice performance and pedagogy at academic conferences, and published extensively on topics related to the education and training of singers. With Kristof Van Grysperre, she is part of the classical cabaret duo "Kristof & Kane." The duo have toured extensively, both in person and virtually through Concert Window, and recorded the critically acclaimed CD "A Moment of Joy." Susan's book *The 21st Century Singer: Making the Leap from the University into the World* will be released by Oxford University Press in 2015.

Soprano **ARIEL PISTURINO** earned the Master of Music degree from the University of Southern California, where she performed with the Thornton Opera. She has also performed with the Long Beach Opera and other regional opera companies, in roles from *Carmen*, *Don Giovanni*, *Nixon in China*, and *The Magic Flute*. Ariel is a co-founder of the Chamber Opera Players of Los Angeles (COPLA), and a frequent collaborator in performances of new works. This is Ariel's second Spacious Vision concert.

Baritone **ANTHONY MORENO** will soon complete the Master of Music degree at the University of Southern California. He has appeared in principle and supporting roles with the USC Thornton Opera, and pursued advanced training in 2014 at the Taos Opera Institute. His singing has been recognized with numerous awards, including an award as Regional Finalist from the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, and a Certificate of Special Recognition from the California State Senate.

A native of Belgium, the critically acclaimed pianist **KRISTOF VAN GRYSPEERRE** is pursuing an international career as a pianist, chamber musician, vocal coach, and conductor. He has conducted more than forty operas for companies such as Opera Pacific, Baltimore Opera, Long Beach Opera, Intimate Opera Company, and the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music. He is currently the Associate Conductor at the Long Beach Opera. This is his second Spacious Vision concert.

Tenor **GERALD SEMINATORE** is the director of the Spacious Vision Song Project. He began his career with professional ensembles including the Handel and Haydn Society, the Boston Early Music Festival, and Emmanuel Music. Operatic engagements in the USA have included the Chautauqua, Dayton, Glimmerglass, Oakland, Santa Fe, and West Bay opera companies. He made his European debut at England's Aldeburgh Festival, and went on to become a member of the solo ensemble at the Dortmund Opera in Germany. He was also a frequent guest artist at the Frankfurt am Main Opera, the Rheinland/Pfalz Theater in Kaiserslautern, and the Bremen Opera. His concert performances have included appearances with many orchestras and choral ensembles. Gerald's singing has recognized with numerous awards, and in publications such as the London Times, Opera News, and San Francisco Classical Voice.

*The **SPACIOUS VISION Song Project** is a bicoastal association of accomplished professional singers and players. We bring vibrant and engaging performances of art song and vocal chamber music to diverse audiences.*

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Kaspar David Friederich, *The Wanderer Above The Mists* (1818)