

Marquette Symphony Orchestra

SOUNDS OF THE HOLIDAYS

Saturday, December 9, 2023
7:30pm at Kaufman Auditorium

Janis Shier Peterson and Stephen Grugin,
Guest Conductors

with Kristen Beth Williams & Darrius Morton,
Vocal Soloists



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Marquette Symphony Orchestra

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Competition requirements:

- 1) No previous year winners are allowed to participate.
- 2) Applicants must be string students residing in the Upper Peninsula or string students studying with an Upper Peninsula teacher at time of application deadline. Entrance Forms must be postmarked by January 2, 2024.
- 3) The 1st and 2nd place prize money will be given directly to a summer music camp experience approved by the MSO Artistic Advisory Board.
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Steve Grugin and Janis Shier Peterson, Guest Conductors

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PROGRAM NOTES

Claudia Drosen

String players are listed alphabetically.

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Marquette Symphony Orchestra

Steve Grugin and Janis Shier Peterson, Guest Conductors

presents

Sounds of the Holidays

Mark Hamari, Emcee

Saturday, December 9, 2023 – 7:30 p.m.

Louis G. Kaufman Auditorium

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Kristen Beth Williams and Darrius Morton, vocal soloists

Festive Fanfare Brian Balmages
Around the World at Christmas Time. arr. Bruce Chase
Sheep May Safely Graze. J.S. Bach/arr. Matt Riley
Dreams of Fireflies on a Christmas Night Trans-Siberian Orchestra
Star of Wonder. Mannheim Steamroller
Cantique de Noël (O Holy Night) Adolphe Adam/arr. Arthur Luck

Darrius Morton, vocal soloist

Christmas Tradition. arr. Charles Sayre
A Children's Christmas Suite Gordon Thornett

INTERMISSION

THE INTERMISSION WILL BE 15 MINUTES IN DURATION

Concert Suite from “The Polar Express” Alan Silvestri, Glen Ballard/
arr. Jerry Brubaker
I'll Be Home for Christmas* Walter Kent & Kim Gannon
How About a Hand for Mrs. Claus* Kristen Anderson-Lopez & Robert Lopez/
arr. Mac Huff
I've Got My Love to Keep Me Warm* Irving Berlin arr./Kirby Shaw
Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas* Hugh Martin & Ralph Blane

***Kristen Beth Williams, vocal soloist**

Hanukkah Light. Zamir Bavel
Christmas on Broadway arr. John Higgins



Upcoming Concerts: January 20, 2024, March 2, 2024, April 13, 2024



≈ Dr. Stephen Grugin, Guest Conductor ≈

Dr. Stephen Grugin has been the Director of Bands and Professor of Low Brass at Northern Michigan University since 1997. In addition, he teaches courses in music education and orchestration and arranging.

His previously held positions at Western Michigan University, Stephen F. Austin State University, Western Kentucky University, and Talawanda High School in Oxford, Ohio. He is very active as a performer and guest conductor, and has arranged music for numerous university marching bands, chamber ensembles and orchestras.

Since 2011, Dr. Grugin has served as the Music Director and Conductor of the Marquette City Band. During this time, the band has hosted four Upper Peninsula Community Band Festivals. In 2017, the band performed on a concert tour throughout Finland that included performances in Marquette's sister city Kajaani and at the Lieksa International Brass Festival. The Marquette City Band's successful 2020 summer concert season was featured in an article published in the international Association of Concert Bands Journal and Dr. Grugin subsequently served as a presenter in a national conference via Zoom on the topic of "Performing Live Concerts During a Pandemic: Thinking Outside the Stage." He now serves as the editor of

the "Conductor's Corner" column of the journal.

As a performer, Dr. Grugin is the principal trombonist in the Marquette Symphony Orchestra and has also conducted the orchestra in its annual "Sounds of the Holidays" concerts. He has also performed with the Keweenaw Symphony Orchestra and is a member of the MSO Brass Quintet, the NMU Far North Brass Quintet, the "Superior Sackbuts" Trombone Quartet and the Westerly Winds Big Band. He also enjoys performing with Marquette's annual TubaChristmas and Octubafest ensembles.

Dr. Grugin has also served on the faculty at various music camps including the Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp. In 2010, he conducted the Blue Lake International Southern Winds on its European tour with performances in France, Germany, Austria and Belgium. In 2011, as a delegate to Marquette's sister city Higashiomi, Japan, he presented band clinics for area high school bands.

Dr. Grugin earned bachelor's degrees in Music Education and Jazz Studies at The Ohio State University, and received a Master of Music degree in Band Conducting at Northwestern University. His PhD in Music Education is from The Florida State University. His wife, Betsy, is a middle school band director, orchestra manager and saxophonist. Their three daughters are also active in various musical organizations in the community and region. In his leisure time Dr. Grugin enjoys skiing, hiking, kayaking and camping.

≈ Mark Hamari, emcee ≈



Mark "Ham" Hamari is a Marquette native. He is the co-owner of Marquette Wallpaper & Paint, a downtown staple, along with his brother Darryl.

He is a member of local musical groups The Union Suits, The Palestras, and the Marquette Rockestra, and is the longtime president of the Marquette Area Blues Society. He lives in Marquette with his lovely wife Theresa and their dog Taika. He still believes in Santa Claus.

≈ Darrius Morton, vocal soloist ≈

Darrius Morton is an operatic tenor based in Marquette, MI. During the 2023-24 season, Darrius will perform with the Marquette Symphony Orchestra, Marquette Choral Society and as a recitalist for the benefit of St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Morton received a Bachelor of Music degree at St. Olaf College, where he had opportunities to perform as a soloist throughout the greater Twin Cities area, most notably with the Minnesota Opera, Theatre Latté



Da, Rochester Symphony Orchestra and as a soloist at Orchestra Hall. Darrius has sung as a Young Artist at Des Moines Metro Opera and with the Houston Grand Opera (YAVA). Mr. Morton moved to Marquette in 2021, was married at First Presbyterian Church and currently attends St. Paul's Episcopal Church with his wife and newborn son, where they sing in the choir. In his free time, Mr. Morton enjoys teaching voice lessons, hanging out at The Crib coffee shop, fly fishing, skiing and cooking. Darrius is very thankful to sing for wonderful audiences in Marquette, and be supported by wonderful organizations like the Marquette Symphony Orchestra.

≈ Janis Shier Peterson, Guest Conductor ≈

Janis Shier Peterson retired after 37 years as the Director of Orchestras for the Marquette Area Public Schools. During her tenure, the number of strings grew from 75 to over 200 players and her ensembles were selected for numerous honors including performances at the Michigan Youth Arts Festival, Midwestern Music Educators' Conference, EPCOT Center and the Kennedy Center. Her orchestras also performed around the U.S. (Hawaii!) and Europe.

A graduate of Michigan State University and Northern Michigan University, Mrs. Peterson has held conductor positions at Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp/Masterworks Orchestra, the Pine Mountain Music Festival, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay Music Camp and Northern Michigan University. She has served as a guest conductor for various groups including the Alaska State Honors Orchestra, Blue Lake International Symphony Orchestra and the Marquette Symphony Orchestra. As a first violinist, Janis has performed with the Scandinavian Symphony, Plymouth Symphony, Michigan Youth Symphony, Keweenaw Symphony, Pine Mountain Opera Orchestra and the Michigan Music Conference Teacher Orchestra.

Janis has been selected many times as Most Influential Educator by "top academic seniors" and was also awarded Michigan American String Teachers' Association's Orchestra Teacher of the Year, Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association's Michigan Orchestra Teacher of the Year, Marquette Teacher of the Year, UP Teacher of the Year, Marquette Arts Educator Award and several others. Janis is concertmaster, rehearsal conductor and co-founder of the Marquette Symphony Orchestra (MSO) whose mem-

bership includes many former and current string students. She also serves the MSO as an Artistic Advisory Committee member and coordinator of the Youth Concerto Competition, MSO Summer Strings, Besse Recital series, Play it Forward program and MSO Children's Concerts. She has served as President of Michigan American String Teachers' Association, Vice-President of the Michigan School Band & Orchestra Association and Coordinator of UP String Pedagogy Assembly.

Mrs. Peterson is a dedicated arts advocate, maintains a string studio where she teaches private lessons to students of all ages, and performs all genres of music with a variety of ensembles. In addition to classical music groups, Janis has performed folk music and presented workshops at the Hiawatha Traditional Music Festival. A dedicated life-long learner, Janis continues to attend workshops on conducting, string playing, improvisation and teaching.

Mrs. P. enjoys gardening, skiing, daily walks, creating in the kitchen and time with family and friends. She also loves to travel. Since her retirement, she has heard indigenous music in Panama, Ecuador, Guatemala, Morocco and Indonesia and is one state short of completing her mission of seeing all fifty states. She and her husband, John, especially enjoy visits with their four married children and six grandchildren.



≈ Kristen Beth Williams, vocal soloist ≈

Kristen Beth Williams (Ludwig) - is thrilled to join the MSO for their annual holiday concert! Since moving to Marquette last year with her family, Kristen Beth has been on faculty in the Theatre & Dance Dept at NMU. She directed and choreographed Rock of Ages this past summer, choreographed A Charlie Brown Christmas, "Take the A Train" (a jazz ballet conceived for the Co/Lab Dance Company), and a hip-hop routine for last season's Dancing With Our Stars. Coming up, she is directing/choreographing A Holiday Soiree (Dec 14 at NMU's Panowski Black Box Theatre) and Anything Goes in the spring.

As a performer, Kristen Beth's career spans Broadway, national tours, and regional theatres across the country. Her Broadway credits include Hello, Dolly with Bette Midler, Pippin, and the original Broadway casts of Paradise Square,



Nice Work if You Can Get It with Matthew Broderick and Kelli O'Hara, Anything Goes starring Sutton Foster, and Promises, Promises with Sean Hayes and Kristin Chenoweth. She originated the role of Sibella Hallward on the first national tour of A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder and starred as Dale Tremont in Top Hat in London's West End. Other favorite roles include: Kate in Kiss Me Kate (Sacramento Music Circus), Eliza Doolittle in My Fair Lady (Riverside Theatre), and both Betty and Judy Haynes in White Christmas (Ordway St Paul). She has been a featured soloist at London's Royal Albert Hall, Carnegie Hall, and New York's Town Hall. She is a graduate of The University of Oklahoma and a proud member and Councillor of Actors Equity Association, the National Labor Union for Stage Managers and Actors. @kbdubsnyc

A Festive Fanfare

Brian Balmages
Born 1975



Brian Balmages is an award-winning composer, conductor, producer, and performer. His compositions have been performed worldwide at the state, national and international level. He specializes in wind instruments, particularly brass, and enjoys working with school orchestras. He has played with professional symphony orchestras, and his music has been performed by the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony, and many more. In 2012, Mr. Balmages received the prestigious Albert Austin Harding Award from the American School Band Directors Association.

It is a mission of Mr. Balmages to share encouraging words with budding musicians. "As a composer," he says, "I used to write music only for advanced level ensembles. However, after marrying an elementary band director, and with the support of numerous friends, colleagues, and directors, I have found great joy and challenge in writing music for younger students along with

my more difficult works. After all, the youngest of musicians are equally deserving of good literature and I can only hope that my music will inspire them the way I am inspired by a Mahler symphony."

This dynamic and compelling overture features a mix of original themes and Yuletide favorites. It's not just an ordinary medley. It is a powerful fanfare, with snippets of well-loved tunes from lyrical to stately. Listen for "O Come All Ye Faithful," "Good King Wenceslas," and "Jingle Bells."

Around the World at Christmas Time

arr. Bruce Chase



That the celebration of Christmas is universal is reflected in the medley, *Around the World at Christmastime*, arranged by Bruce Chase, a musician and composer who also conducted the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. Interestingly, Chase was a direct descendant of Aquila Chase, a Massachusetts Bay colonist and co-founder of Newbury, Massachusetts. He

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was related to Salmon Portland Chase, the Secretary of the Treasury under Lincoln, and later, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and for whom the Chase Bank is named. The selections include traditional carols from Germany (“O Tannenbaum”), Poland (“Infant Holy, Infant Lowly”), England (“What Child is This?”), Sicily (“O Sanctissima”), Southern France (“Whence Comes This Rush of Wings”), as well as the African-American spiritual, “Go Tell It on the Mountain,” and with a nod to the Jewish holiday, “The Hanukkah Song.”

Sheep May Safely Graze

J. S. Bach
Born 1685—Died 1750

Arr. Matt Riley



Born in March of 1685 in Eisenach, Germany, Johann Sebastian Bach is revered through the ages for his work's musical complexities and stylistic innovations. He had a prestigious musical lineage and took on various organist positions during the early 18th century, creating famous compositions like Toccata and Fugue

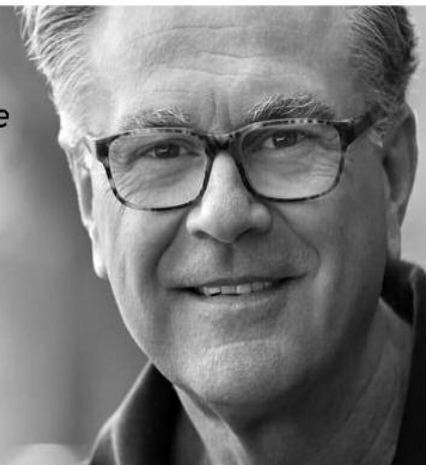
in D minor. Some of his best-known compositions are the Mass in B Minor, the Brandenburg Concertos and The Well-Tempered Clavier. Bach died in Leipzig, Germany, on July 28, 1750. Today, he is considered one of the greatest Western composers of all time.

In addition to his 199 surviving sacred cantatas, Bach composed several secular cantatas for various occasions. Cantata 208, the Hunting Cantata, also referred to as the Birthday Cantata was written in 1716. Bach was based at the nearby court of Weimar, and musicians from other courts joined together in the first performance in Weißenfels. Bach is known to have used the music again for other celebrations, and like his Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring, it is frequently played at weddings.

The recitative in Cantata 208 is built upon the following text: “Shall Pales be the last thus her respects to pay? No! I would raise my voice in song, so as the woods and land with vivats ring, here in this lovely field in honor of our Prince I sing a joyous song of praise.” It is then followed by the well-loved soprano aria Sheep May Safely Graze, the text of which is the following: “Flocks and herds may safely pasture when their shepherd guards them well. They whose monarch loves them truly knows their needs and fills them duly, will in peace and concord

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dwelling.” The piece is now celebrated for its heavenly grace, but in a rather amusing twist, it was originally composed as a secular piece of dinner theater, or *Tafelmusik*, for the birthday of Duke Christian of Saxe-Weißenfels. It was performed as banquet music in his lodge after a hunt.

The music is appropriately pastoral in nature with lyrics presenting a tableau of sheep placidly grazing (the duke’s people) under the vigilance of a good shepherd (the duke himself), though it is difficult not to interpret these lyrics from a religious standpoint as well. Composer and pianist Mary Howe adapted the piece multiple times in the 1930— for solo piano, piano duet, and two pianos.

Arranged as part of Matt Riley's *Epic Christmas Series* this innovative Hollywood- inspired version will please audiences and performers alike.

Dreams of Fireflies on a Christmas Night

Trans-Siberian Orchestra



The Trans-Siberian Orchestra is not a permanent musical organization. Rather, it is the trade name for the session orchestras assembled for a number of symphonic rock cross-over albums produced by Paul O’Neill, who is also an arranger, composer and who conceived the sounds of a 60-piece orchestra plus chorus that would perform with the impact and edge of a rock band. The result is a series of rock albums, mostly on Christmas themes. Guitarist O’Neill joined the orchestras for Broadway productions of *Hair* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

His early musical influences were the rock groups Queen and Yes, and in the mid-80s he began working as a producer with groups including Aerosmith and Badlands, and this led him to put together tours for such icons as Madonna, Sting and Bon Jovi.

O’Neill conceived a rock album, Christmas Eve and Other Stories, focusing on the theme that small acts of generosity or honesty can have far-reaching positive impacts. For it, he planned the sound of the large symphonic rock orchestra, and named it The Trans-Siberian Orchestra, though neither it nor O’Neill have any connection with Siberia. His goal was as straightforward as it was incredibly ambitious. "The whole idea," he

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explains, "was to create a progressive rock band that would push the boundaries (of the genre) further than any group before... Way, way further.

O'Neill said "I wanted to take the very best of all the forms of music I grew up on and merge them into a new style. Basically, I was building on the work of everybody I worshipped: the rock opera parts from bands like The Who; the marriage of classical and rock from bands like Queen and Emerson Lake & Palmer; the over-the-top light show from bands like Pink Floyd. I always wanted to do a full rock opera with a full progressive band and at least 18 lead singers."

So, O'Neill took the idea to Atlantic Records, who went for it and brought TSO's first release to life. "We were very fortunate," he says. "It was one of the only labels left that still did an 'old school' kid of artist development. My original concept was that we were going to do six rock operas, a trilogy about Christmas and maybe one or two regular albums."

Tonight, we will hear *Dreams of Fireflies (On a Christmas Night.)* It is from an EP by the TSO which was released in 2012, and is based on the fourth movement ("Winter") of Italian composer Antonio Vivaldi's

famous classical work from the Baroque Era, *The Four Seasons, Concerto No. 4 in F minor, Op. 8, RV 297, "L'inverno"* ("Winter.")

The story of *Dreams of Fireflies*, written by O'Neill, like many TSO stories, centers around themes of transformation and hope. An elderly man in an inner city is bullied by a young gang, a young girl is nearly killed because of gang violence, and a neighborhood is transformed by perseverance, hope and happiness. O'Neill works very hard to send a positive message into the world with each story.

O'Neill stresses that TSO "always try to write melodies that are so infectious they don't need lyrics and lyrics so poetic that they don't need a melody." When you combine the two together, he says, "they create an alloy where the sum of the parts is greater than the whole."



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*Star of Wonder/
Mannheim Steamroller Medley*

Arr. Cliff Duren



Mannheim Steamroller began as an alias for record producer and composer Chip Davis. The name "Mannheim Steamroller" comes from an 18th-century German musical technique, Mannheim roller (German: Mannheimer Walze), a crescendo passage having a rising melodic line over an ostinato bass line, popularized by the Mannheim school of composition. This wonderful medley features "God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen," "We Three Kings" and "How Great Our Joy." It is from the musical *The Star Still Shines*, a Southern gospel-style production narrated by Grammy award-winning vocalist Jason Crabb. The musical tells us of the historical events of Christ's birth, while reminding us of the light that shines in our hearts. Cliff Duren's sweeping arrangement scored for symphony is in the style of the rock sensations such as Trans-Siberian Orchestra or Mannheim Steamroller. Get ready for a celebration of epic proportions!

Cantique de Noël (O Holy Night)

Adolphe-Charles Adam/arr. Arthur Luck

Darrius Morton, tenor soloist



In Roquemaure, France at the end of 1843, the church organ had recently been renovated. To celebrate the event, the parish priest persuaded poet and wine merchant Placide Cappeau, a native of the town, to write a Christmas poem. It was titled "Minuit, chrétiens" ("Midnight, Christians"). Soon afterwards, in that same year, Adolphe Adam composed the music. The song was premiered in Roquemaure in 1847 by the opera singer Emily Laury.

Cantique de Noël (O Holy Night) became a well-known Christmas carol based on the French poem above. Transcendentalist, music critic, and Unitarian Minister John Sullivan Dwight, who also was the editor of *Dwight's Journal of Music*, created a singing edition based on Cappeau's French text in 1855. In both the French original and in the two familiar English versions of the carol, the text reflects on the birth of Jesus and of mankind's redemption. This version became popular in

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the United States, especially in the North, where the third verse (including “Chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother, And in his name all oppression shall cease”) resonated with abolitionists. The wide vocal range of the song makes it one of the more difficult Christmas songs to execute properly. In French-language churches, it is commonly used at the beginning of the Midnight Mass. This is a remarkably beautiful and memorable melody for the holiday season.

Christmas Tradition

Arr. Charles Sayre



American composer, conductor and arranger, Charles Sayre studied at Ohio State University and Berklee College of Music in Boston, MA. His career began as trombonist and arranger for the Airmen of Note, the official jazz ensemble of the U.S. Air Force. Later he became the composer and arranger for all components of the Air Force Band.

“Mr. Sayre has written several film and commercial scores that have won a number of prestigious awards. He is active as a free-lance composer, arranger, pro-

ducer, and clinician. He has served on the faculty of the Music Dept. at Reinhardt University in Northern Georgia since 2010.

Just when the hustle of daily life seems about to take its toll, the holiday season comes upon us each year to give a sense of renewal. Audiences around the globe love traditional songs, and Sayre puts a few classics together in such a way that fills us with the awe we felt when we heard them for the first time as children. They include “Joy to the World,” “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” and “Good King Wenceslas” in a sparkling and spirited celebration. Elegant presentation, resonant changes from winds to strings, and a dramatic finale make this a medley that fills our hearts with Christmas once again

A Children’s Christmas Suite

Gordon Thornett

Born 1942



Gordon Thornett studied music at Manchester University, and has had a long career as a teacher and a music therapist in the UK. A dedicated choral singer, he has written a number of new settings of

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- C. S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*

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Christmas texts, which have been performed by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra Chorus (of which he is a long-standing member) and other symphony choruses and smaller choirs in the UK, US and elsewhere. His most recent publication "Lo! In the Cold of Winter Deep", was recently named Editor's Choice by J.W. Pepper.

A Children's Christmas Suite is a fairly lighthearted piece in six short movements, which incorporates a number of well-known holiday tunes. Although written to appeal to young people with favorites like "Jingle Bells," "Little Jesus, Sweetly Sleep," "The Birds Carol," "Away in a Manger" and the "Huron Indian Carol," over the years it has enchanted people of every age. It has a particularly carefree finale, based on "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" and a reprise of "O come, little children" with which the piece opened.

Concert Suite from "The Polar Express"

Alan Silvestri Glen Ballard
arr. Jerry Brubaker



This inspiring music was written with both Chris Van Allsburg's 1985 book and the 2004 computer-animated motion picture, *The Polar Express*, in mind. One Christmas Eve many years ago, a boy, referred to as Hero Boy, lying awake in his bed, strains to hear Santa's sleigh bells. A friend of his has informed him Santa doesn't exist. His parents don't believe in him either. Later that night he still doesn't hear bells, but instead a very odd sound. He looks out of his window and is astounded to see a steam engine parked in front of his house. The conductor invites him to board the Polar Express, a train filled with children embarking on an exciting journey to the North Pole. The boy and his fellow riders journey past towns and forests full of wild things. They pass across the Great Polar Ice Cap to the North Pole. There they see Santa and his helpers, who are huddled together to plan the annual giving of the first gift of Christmas. The boy is chosen to receive this first gift. He's allowed to choose anything he wants, and decides upon a simple gift. He wants one silver bell from Santa's sleigh. Santa cuts a bell from a reindeer's harness and the delighted boy slips it into his bathrobe pocket as the clock strikes midnight and the reindeer pull the sleigh into the sky.

Sadly, the boy realizes when he gets back on the train that the bell has fallen out of a hole in his pocket. He is

crushed as he returns home. But the next morning, his little sister Sarah finds one small box with the boy's name on it among the presents below the Christmas tree. Inside is the silver bell! The boy and his sister are enchanted by its beautiful sound, but their parents cannot hear it, because they no longer believe in Santa or Christmas. The last line in the movie, said by the boy, repeats the same last line from the book:

"At one time, most of my friends could hear the bell, but as years passed it fell silent for all of them. Even Sarah found one Christmas that she could no longer hear its sweet sound. Though I've grown old, the bell still rings for me, as it does for all who truly believe."

The score for this movie sets a new standard for popular holiday music. Silvestri and Ballard's music and the medley the MSO will perform this evening, reflect the pathos and beauty of this beloved childhood tale of faith lost and restored. The medley contains *Believe*, *The Polar Express*, *When Christmas Comes to Town* and *Spirit of the Season*.

"This is a holiday story," Ballard asserts, "but...there's quiet beauty here, as well as something slightly dark...It's not your usual Christmas tinsel...It touches on both the happiness and sadness of the season."

I'll Be Home for Christmas

Walter Kent & Kim Gannon

Kristen Beth Williams, vocal soloist



In 1943, "I'll Be Home for Christmas" joined "White Christmas" to become one of America's most popular homegrown holiday songs. Recorded in a rich baritone by Bing Crosby, "I'll Be Home for Christmas" shot to the top ten of the record charts (as "White Christmas" had for Crosby the previous year) and became a holiday musical tradition in the United States.

Within about a month of its being copyrighted the song hit the music charts and remained there for eleven weeks, peaking at number three. It touched a tender place in the hearts of Americans, both soldiers and civilians, who were then in the depths of World War II, and it earned Crosby his fifth gold record. "I'll Be Home for Christmas" became the most requested song at Christmas U.S.O. shows in both Europe and the Pacific and Yank, the GI magazine, said Crosby accomplished

more for military morale than anyone else of that era.

This soulful song was recorded by Perry Como, Frank Sinatra and countless other artists. The team of Kent and Gannon continued to write songs, although none attained anywhere near popularity of "I'll Be Home for Christmas."

In December 1965, having completed the first U.S. space rendezvous and set a record for the longest flight in the U.S. space program, the astronauts Frank Borman and James Lovell hurtled back to earth aboard their Gemini 7 spacecraft. Asked by NASA communication personnel if they wanted any particular music piped up to them, the crew requested Bing Crosby's recording of "I'll Be Home for Christmas."

How About a Hand for Mrs. Claus

Kristen Anderson-Lopez and Robert Lopez
Arr. Mac Huff

Kristen Beth Williams, vocal soloist



This wonderful Christmas tune by Robert and Kristen Anderson-Lopez, the team that brought us "Frozen" and many other hits, was released in 2019. It was written for renowned American actress Idina Menzel and singer Ariana Grande. "How About a Hand for Mrs. Claus" is both jazzy and upbeat, but it is also heartwarming in that it offers a fresh perspective on the traditional holiday narrative. It pays homage to the vital yet often undervalued role of Mrs. Claus in the iconic Christmas story. The lyrics depict Mrs. Claus as a strong, compassionate woman who works tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure the success of Santa's deliveries. Her commitment and dedication shine through as she takes on crucial tasks while Santa prepares for his annual journey across the globe. With each verse, the song emphasizes the importance of recognizing and appreciating the significant contributions made by Mrs. Claus. The impact of the song is twofold. It aims to uplift and empower listeners by recognizing the importance of unsung heroes in society. It also encourages appreciation for all the backstage contributors who tirelessly work to make the world a better place. Here's a sample of the lyrics:

Every December, we always remember
To celebrate the fella in the suit



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We see the promos for reindeer and his glow nose
Believe me, I think Rudolph's nose is cute
Now I'm a fan of Frosty, I go ga-ga for The Grinch
But beneath the hype, are they the type you'd turn to in
a pinch?

There's someone more deserving of applause
How 'bout a hand for Mrs. Claus
Mm

I've Got My Love to Keep Me Warm

Irving Berlin
Born 1888–Died 1989
Arr. Kirby Shaw

Kristen Beth Williams, vocal soloist



Born in Imperial Russia in 1888, composer and lyricist Irving Berlin arrived in the US at the age of five. His music forms a large part of the Great American Songbook. Berlin received numerous honors including an Academy Award, a Grammy Award, and a Tony Award. Journalist Walter Cronkite stated he "helped write the story of this country, capturing the best of who we are and the dreams that shape our lives."

He published his first song, "Marie from Sunny Italy," in 1907, receiving 33 cents for the publishing rights, and became known as the composer of numerous international hits, starting with 1911's "Alexander's Ragtime Band." For much of his career, Berlin could not read sheet music, and was such a limited piano player that he could only play in the key of F-sharp; he used his custom piano equipped with a transposing lever when he needed to play in keys other than F-sharp. He was known for writing uncomplicated music and lyrics with his stated aim being to "reach the heart of the average American," whom he saw as the "real soul of the country."

Berlin's "I've Got My Love to Keep Me Warm" is a popular song copyrighted in 1937, and recorded by Billie Holiday with her orchestra (January 12, 1937). She was rising to fame and made this brand new standard her own. Although not strictly a Christmas song as the lyrics make no mention of the holiday, it has been recorded for many artists' Christmas albums including Dean Martin, and is a standard part of the holiday song repertoire in the U.S. Ella Fitzgerald recorded this for her 1958 release *Ella Fitzgerald Sings the Irving Berlin Songbook*.

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Speaking of Ella, her rendition of the tune is a classic. The song's lyrics talk about how love can make even the coldest winter nights feel warm and cozy. But the song has a deeper meaning than just a simple love song. With its lyrics and catchy tune, it has become a symbol of hope and resilience. The song's opening line, "The snow is snowing, the wind is blowing/ But I can weather the storm!" sets the tone for the rest of the song. Through the harshness of winter, the speaker finds comfort in the warmth of their love. The song's lyrics convey this sentiment beautifully, with lines like "I've got my love to keep me warm" and "What do I care how much it may storm?/ I've got my love to keep me warm." It was written during the Great Depression, a period of intense economic hardship in the United States. Its lyrics and melody were a source of comfort and hope to many people during those trying times. Today, the song still resonates with people going through difficult periods. Its message of love gives listeners hope that they too can weather the storm.

It is said that Irving Berlin wrote this song after seeing a couple walking arm in arm through a snowstorm. It is believed that this image inspired him to write a song about how love can keep us warm even during the coldest of winters.

Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas

Hugh Martin and Ralph Blane

Kristen Beth Williams, vocal soloist



Songwriters Hugh Martin and Ralph Blane wrote the classic song "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" for Judy Garland's 1944 movie, *Meet Me in St. Louis*, along with dozens of other songs for MGM and Broadway musicals. Since then, the song has been recorded by scores of musicians, including Bob Dylan, James Taylor, Tori Amos, Garth Brooks, just to name a few. Hugh Martin said "I found a little madrigal-like tune that I liked but couldn't make work, so I played with it for two or three days and then threw it in the wastebasket."

Luckily, Blane had heard the tune, too, and told Martin it was too good to throw away. So, they dug around in the wastebasket and Blane said "Thank the Lord we found it." With the melody saved, the two men started working on the words. Here is the first draft:

Have yourself a merry little Christmas./It may be your last.

Next year we may all be living in the past.

Have yourself a merry little Christmas./Pop that champagne cork.

Next year we may all be living in New York.

No good times like the olden days./Happy golden days of yore.

Faithful friends who were dear to us./Will be near to us no more.

But at least we all will be together./If the Lord allows.

From now on, we'll have to muddle through somehow.

So have yourself a merry little Christmas now.

But this original version was so gloomy that Judy Garland refused to sing it. She said, "If I sing that, little Margaret will cry and they'll think I'm a monster." So, the team revised it and wrote the version we know and sing today:

Have yourself a merry little Christmas/Let your heart be light

From now on/Our troubles will be out of sight

Have yourself a merry little Christmas/Make the Yule-tide gay

From now on/Our troubles will be miles away

Here we are as in olden days/Happy golden days of yore

Faithful friends who are dear to us/Gather near to us once more

Through the years We all will be together/If the fates allow

So, hang a shining star upon the highest bough

And have yourself a merry little Christmas now.

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In 2004, the song finished with a ranking of #76 on the list of American Film Institute's 100 Songs —the top tunes in American cinema.

Hanukkah Light

Zamir Bavel
Born 1929—Died 2021



Israeli native Zamir Bavel, a man of many talents, was born in Tel Aviv in 1929 and lived until the age of 92 in 2021. He was a veteran of the 1948 War for Israel's Independence, a member of the 1952 Israeli Olympic Track and Field team. and a Professor of Computer Science at the University of Kansas-Lawrence.

He came to the United States in 1952. A member of a musical family, he began the violin at the age of four and composing at age seven. His composition teachers included composers Roy Harris, Alexander Boskovich and Paul Ben-Haim. He had a doctorate in Mathematics and several other degrees. Those in music were earned from the Shulamit Conservatory of Music and Southern Illinois University. He has played with symphony orchestras and was touched when the great Leonard Bernstein called his music "delightful." He wrote poetry and fiction, and worked as a radio announcer and a silversmith.

Tonight, the MSO will play one of Bavel's festive and upbeat compositions, *Hanukkah Light*. The work was adapted especially for Vespers 1998 from his full-length work, *Hanukkah Fantasy*. The fun *Hanukkah Light* draws on traditional tunes for the Jewish celebration, but with something extra. This engaging score demands that you listen attentively. You do not want to miss a beat, because if you do, you'll overlook some hidden musical treasures waiting to surprise. Let your ears take you from Hanukkah to Christmas and back again. The complexity of this piece makes it a joy to experience. A true gift for the season to anyone of any denomination!



Christmas on Broadway

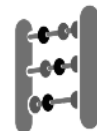
Arr. John Higgins
Born 1948



This magnificent medley brings the MSO's Sounds of the Holidays evening some dash and sparkle. The arrangement is a perfect concert closer that just might have the audience whistling these heartwarming tunes as they file out to their frosty cars. First we have "God Bless Us Everyone," then "March of the Toys," "Toyland," "It's Beginning to Look A Lot Like Christmas," "My Favorite Things," "Pine Cones and Holly Berries," and last but not least "We Need a Little Christmas."

This 2006 composition is seven minutes of unbridled joy. Please enjoy every tune with a special focus on the vast percussion section which includes bells, chimes, crash cymbals, drumset, mark tree (named after its inventor, studio percussionist Mark Stevens, who devised it in 1967. When he could not come up with a name, percussionist Emil Richards dubbed the instrument the "mark tree"), sandpaper blocks, shaker, sleigh bells, suspended cymbal, temple blocks, vibraphone, wood block and xylophone.

—Program Notes by Claudia Drosen



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