



# The German Society of Pennsylvania

presents

## Cantus Novus



Sunday, December 14, 2014 at 3:00pm

The German Society of Pennsylvania  
[www.germansociety.org](http://www.germansociety.org)

611 Spring Garden Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19123

# Calendar of Events

## December 2015

Sun. Dec. 28 Closing Event of our 250th Year, 3.00pm

## January 2015

Sun. Jan. 4 "Wister and More!" presents Claire Huangci, 3.00pm

Sat. Jan. 10 Buchclub: Hans Fallada's "Kleiner Mann, was nun?/Little Man, What Now?", 1.30pm

Sat. Jan. 10 **Women's Auxiliary Appreciation Day, 11.00am**

Fri. Jan. 16 Friday FilmFest presents "Die Vermessung der Welt" (German with English subtitles), 6.30pm

## February 2015

Sat. Feb. 7 **Women's Auxiliary Monthly Meeting, 10.00am**

Sat. Feb. 14 Buchclub: Wolfgang Herrndorf's "Tschick/Why We Took the Car", 1.30pm

Sun. Feb. 15 "Wister and More!" presents American Virtuosi, 3.00pm

Sat. Feb. 21 4th Annual Bierfest

Fri. Feb. 27 Friday FilmFest presents "Der Dritte Mann" (German with German subtitles), 6.30pm

## March 2015

Sat. Mar. 7 **Women's Auxiliary Monthly Meeting, 10.00am**

Sun. Mar. 15 "Wister and More!" presents Pyxis Piano Quartet, 3.00pm

Fri. Mar. 20 Friday FilmFest presents "Nachtzug nach Lisbon" (German with German subtitles), 6.30pm

## April 2015

Sat. Apr. 11 **Women's Auxiliary Monthly Meeting, 10.00am**

Sat. Apr. 11 Hamburger Abend, 7.00pm

Sun. Apr. 12 **"Wister and More!" presents Melomanie, 3.00pm**

Fri. Apr. 17 Friday FilmFest presents "Die Wand" (German with German subtitles), 6.30pm

## May 2015

Sat. May 3 **Women's Auxiliary Luncheon, 12.00pm**

Sun. May 10 **"Wister and More!" presents The Wister Quartet, 3.00pm**

Fri. May 15 **Friday FilmFest presents "Der ganz große Traum" (German with German subtitles), 6.30pm**

Sun. May 31 **"Wister and More!" in a cooperative effort with the Delius Society presents M. Djupstrom & A. Kozasa, 3.00pm**

# PROGRAM

What Sweeter Music	Bob Chilcott (b. 1955)
Weihnachten	Felix Mendelssohn (1809 - 1847)
O Magnum Mysterium	Morten Lauridsen (b. 1943)
Serenity (O Magnum Mysterium)	Ola Gjeilo (b. 1978)
The Darkest Midnight of December	Stephen Main (b. 1969)
Ancient Nova	Craig Courtney (b. 1959)
Magnificat	Francesco Durante (1684 - 1755)

## ::INTERMISSION::

What Sweeter Music	arr. John Rutter (b. 1945)
Kommet, ihr Hirten	arr. Stephen Mager (b. 1956)
Still, Still, Still	Matthew Culloton (b. 1976)
Angels Heard on High	Paul Lohman (b. 1951)
Midnight Clear	Matthew Nielsen (b. 1978)
Little Drummer Boy	arr. Philip Kern (b. 1957)
Ask the Watchman	arr. Paul Caldwell/Sean Ivory (b. 1963/b. 1969)

There will be one 15-minute intermission. We offer refreshments from our bar during that time. Your ticket to our concert also invites you to a complimentary reception with the artist in the Ratskeller (downstairs) following the performance.

# Program Notes

## *What Sweeter Music* – Bob Chilcott

Opening the program is a composition newly minted in 2012 from the British composer known chiefly as one of the King Singers. Chilcott's fresh arrangement glistens with simplicity and tenderness, creating an atmosphere of serenity and peace. Let the warmth of the harmonies and the gentleness of melody envelope you into a state of readiness for the music to come.

## *Weihnachten* – Felix Mendelssohn

Despite his death at an early age, Felix Mendelssohn's legacy to the choral world is a precious, eminently satisfying gift and this charming motet is no exception. The first in a set of six short motets (*Sechs Spüches*), *Weihnachten* is scored for 8 parts (two of each of the voices). Structured in a double-choir format (all women alternating with all men), this quaint offering reminds us of the late Renaissance composers Mendelssohn favored and studied, particularly Palestrina and the Gabrieli cousins from Venice.

## *O Magnum Mysterium* – Morten Lauridsen

Next to Tomás de Victoria's setting of this text, which some consider the "original," Morten Lauridsen's work here is equally deserving of high praise. Fluid, with tone clusters that enhance, the piece builds to an emotional high point that peaks rather than pokes our interest. One cannot question why this rendition is singularly the most popular choice for choral programs at Christmas in the twenty-first century.

## *Serenity* – Ola Gjeilo

Norwegian born composer Ola Gjeilo now makes his home in New York City. In demand as a clinician, Gjeilo is a full-time concert composer. *Serenity* represents his interpretation of the same Christmas text as the Lauridsen. Expect an atmospheric opening, followed by dense 8- and 10-part chords, accompanied by a lone cellist. Dynamic shading abounds in this unique and rather stimulating arrangement. This work was commissioned and dedicated to the Central Bucks High School West Choir whose director is Dr. Joseph Ohrt.

## *The Darkest Midnight in December* – Stephen Main

A common thread in the winter months is the theme of darkness and light. With Stephen Main's delicious setting of an Irish text, we offer the first of our 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary encores. Stillness, darkness and awe abound here.

### *Ancient Nova* — Craig Courtney

What was that “Star” that shone so bright on Christmas night? This recent setting by composer Craig Courtney to a delightful text by Susan Bental Boerma provides us with a thoughtful and sustaining answer. “*The poem speaks of creation, the birth of that star, and its role which reaches Bethlehem into eternity*” (from the octavo). You will be especially moved by the choir’s final note.

### *Magnificat* — Francesco Durante

There is perhaps no Biblical story more represented in choral music settings than this text from gospel of St. Luke. The angel Gabriel appears to Mary informing her of the role she is to play in the birth of Jesus. Her response is more than a prayer of praise. It also reminds us about the essential link between humility and holiness. Just as God has “regarded the lowliness of his handmaid” and “has done great things” for Mary in making her the Mother of his Son, so too “he has put down the mighty from their thrones (with his own might!) and has exalted the lowly.” This delightful composition has been attributed to Pergolesi, but most scholars agree that the Naples-born Durante was the authentic composer.

### *What Sweeter Music* — arr. John Rutter

John Rutter has become synonymous with choral music of the twentieth century. His writing is at once pleasing, affirming and tuneful. For choristers, it is immediately accessible and charming. This gorgeous setting serves as the inspiration for tonight’s theme. The lush harmonies and flowing melody fuse together in a richness that is comforting.

### *Kommet, ihr Hirten* (from *Weihnachtslieder*) — arr. Stephen Mager

This Austro-German carol beckons the world to Bethlehem to see the newborn savior. As the piece develops, each section adds its voice to the melody, as if a crowd has gathered to see baby Jesus. Listen for the sounds of the heavenly host that join at the end.

### *Still, Still, Still* — arr. Matthew Culloton

Normon Luboff’s arrangement of this Austrian carol set the gold standard for choral arranging, that is until now. From the great singing state of Minnesota, Matthew Culloton has penned a luxurious setting, cleverly entwining the melody among the voice parts, underscored with rhythmic undulations that support rather than hinder the flow of the tune. It is a joy to sing and we hope to hear.

### *Angels Heard on High* — Paul Lohman

Another Minnesota resident and former conductor of the National Lutheran Choir, Paul

Lohman's compositions have been performed by the St. Olaf choirs and Vocal Essence to whom this selection is dedicated.

*Midnight Clear* — arr. Matthew Nielsen

Matthew D. Nielsen beautifully sets this familiar Christmas text focusing on the images of the first Christmas night. Through the enveloping vocal lines and tempo changes, Nielsen depicts the images and sounds of bells, wings, winds and harps on a backdrop of a starry sky.

*The Little Drummer Boy* — arr. Phillip Kern

You've perhaps never hear *The Little Drummer Boy* quite like this! Refreshing, buoyant, and in a fun, pop style, you will most likely find your feet tapping and your head bouncing along. Go for it!

*Ask the Watchman* — Paul Caldwell and Sean Ivory

"Here we have two spirituals of Two Islands of South Carolina and Georgia. The culture and music of these islands is unique in American history. *Ask the Watchman* and *Yonduh Come Day* are contextually related. Both songs were sung on the eves of Christmas and New Year during Watch Night Meetings, which would begin at midnight and end after dawn. The songs were performed in a call and response style, at first slow and somber, then evolve gradually into ecstatic utterances accompanied by complex clapping rhythms."(notes from the arrangers).

**Cantus Novus** is an auditioned chamber choir based in Yardley, PA. Founded as an intimate group of choral friends and now celebrating their 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, they have become an established musical presence in the Delaware Valley, with an innovative approach to programming that at once delights and educates its audiences. Specializing in a cappella repertoire, they strive for a balance between choral masterworks of past centuries and contemporary works of the best choral composers.

Artistic Director: W. Edward McCall

Piano Accompanist: Jihye Park

# History of the German Society

In 1683 thirteen families from Krefeld under the leadership of Frankfurt lawyer, Franz Daniel Pastorius, founded the first German colony in America: Germantown — today part of Philadelphia. Many of these immigrants formed clubs that enabled them to preserve their cultural heritage. They also formed clubs that emphasized a specific geographic area, such as the Swabians, Bavarians, Saxons, Danube Swabians, Plattdeutsche, Tyroleans, and many others.

The German Society of Pennsylvania, founded in 1764, is the oldest German organization in the United States. It was founded to protect German immigrants from unscrupulous shipping agents and to ensure just treatment on their arrival here.

Since that time, the German Society has dedicated its efforts to preserving German heritage. This it does, for instance, by offering a full-fledged German language program as well as scholarships and prizes to students of German. In addition, the Society is a source of cultural programs, lectures, film series, and seminars. These events build bridges and strengthens relations among individuals, organizations, businesses, and governments.

The fine arts program also includes presentations that feature European music and literature as well as access to the *Joseph P. Horner Memorial Library* for education and research. The newly restored Library, holding over 70,000 volumes, is the largest private German library outside the Federal Republic of Germany.

In serving its members and the community, and in all its undertakings, the Society strives to benefit anyone in need of its resources.

Our 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary represents a unique opportunity for its members and friends to commemorate—to celebrate—the **German Society of Pennsylvania's** long and storied history.

During our celebratory year of 2014, we offer a series of cultural events with an ethnic German flavor, such as concerts, films and lectures on the German-American experience, as well as a number of social gatherings.

Benefactors of the  
2014 / 2015  
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In Memoriam Gunda Hack

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We also wish to acknowledge with thanks the generous support received from  
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