



~ Around the World ~

Classic & Rare Holiday Masterpieces

The Brasiles Ensemble

Saturday, November 25, 2017 ~ 7:30pm

The Chapel Restoration

Cold Spring, NY

The Brasiles Ensemble

~ Around the World ~

Classic & Rare Holiday Masterpieces

Program

Prelude Op.32 No.12 in G sharp minor

Sergei Rachmaninov
Speare Hodges ~ piano

In Dulce Jubilo

Robert L. Pearsall

The Blue Bird

Charles Villiers Stanford
Madeleine DeNitto ~ soprano

Lute-book Lullaby

William Ballet

Adam Lay Ybounden

Boris Ord

Down in Yon Forest

Peter Warlock
Laura Danilov ~ mezzo soprano

Bethlehem Down

Peter Warlock

Carol of the Birds

Catalan traditional carol
Kimberly Hiss ~ soprano

Christmas Star

John Williams
Madeleine DeNitto ~ flute

The Infant Jesus

William Elyer

The Winter Comes Slowly

Henry Purcell
Speare Hodges ~ baritone

Balulalow
Peter Warlock
Madeleine DeNitto ~ soprano

Tu scendi dalle stelle
Saint Alphonsus Liguori

S'Vivon
Traditional Hebrew song
Laura Danilov ~ mezzo soprano

Rui, Rui, Chui
Traditional Spanish villancico
Paul Phillips ~ tenor

La Peregrinacion
Los Pastores
Two Excerpts from *Navidad Nuestra*
Ariel Ramirez
Madeleine DeNitto ~ soprano
Speare Hodges ~ baritone
Paul Phillips ~ guitar

Vesi vasy lumen alle
Harri Wessman
Madeleine DeNitto ~ flute

Le Sommeil de L'enfant
Claude Debussy
Kimberly Hiss ~ soprano

The Silver Swan
Orlando Gibbons

The Lamb
John Tavener

O Magnum Mysterium
Francis Poulenc

Dormi Jesu
John Rutter





As the first question people often ask is about where the name of the group originated, here is a bit of background. It was on July 4th in 1921, that Salvatore and Madeleine DeNitto arrived in the harbor of New York City with the Statue of Liberty being the very first thing that Madeleine saw from the bow of her ship from Algeria. With her, Madeleine brought a very ill baby, a wealth of education and appreciation for the fine arts. She left Old Algiers and parents she would never see again in hopes of great opportunities in a new world. She later bore three more children who all recall her singing opera in her kitchen while baking her famous French loaves. Madeleine had left behind her native country, her beloved family and her Italian maiden name; *Brasiles*—pronounced “*BRAH-zee-lez*”. It is in her honor that I lend my grandmother’s given name to a group of fine musicians for whom she would certainly have adored.

Due to the great success of the formal *Nocturnal* concert in November of 2013 at *St. Philip’s Church in the Highlands*, I am very happy to invite you all to future performances from *The Brasiles Ensemble*. As the mission of this group is to provide audiences with unique concerts, we are thrilled to have several opportunities already in the works for 2018. Please like our official Facebook page and/or check our website for future performances.

~*Madeleine DeNitto, Founder*

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Performer Bios

Laura Danilov ~ mezzo soprano

Laura Danilov has been singing since she was a little girl. She enjoys singing all sorts of styles including musical theatre (see acting roles) & rock (Formerly with the Roy Orbison band, The Lonely.) Acting roles include: Annas in Jesus Christ Super Star (Depot Theatre); Linda in No Privacy (Aery 20/20 Festival); Weather Lady in Gasping (Drones Theatre Company); Charles Thomson in 1776 (Depot Theatre); Beggars Opera (Philipstown Depot Theatre), Much Ado About Nothing (Princeton Rep Shakespeare Festival), Violet (Putnam County Theatre), The Gift (Terry Schreiber Studio), Hidden Voices (Pillars: An Utopian Ensemble), Godspell (Oasis Theatre Co.) Besides co-directing youngsters in Shakespeare Situation & Stories for the Stage summer camp, past teaching jobs include private singing coach and movement specialist in the Williamson Technique for Actors at the Actors Movement Studio in NYC. In addition to performing, Laura is a Life Coach, working with Actors, Singers & Moms Making a Difference. She lives in Cold Spring with her husband and her famous son, Alex.

Madeleine DeNitto ~ founder, soprano / flute

During her decade of performance with a professional opera company, Madeleine was on stages regularly in major productions, including such great operas as Suor Angelica, Don Pasquale and The Merry Wives of Windsor. She was also very honored to have been chosen to perform in rare works, including Riders to the Sea, as well as special opportunities to perform in honor of Queen Anne and Princess Sophie of Romania. Proficient in sacred and early music, Madeleine was also one of eight members of an elite madrigal group for several years. In late 2012, Madeleine had a role in The Beggar's Opera performed at The Philipstown Depot Theatre, which marked her return to the music world after a ten year hiatus. For 18 years, Madeleine has been a professional organizer and is proud owner of Garrison Concierge. She is a member of the choir at St. Philip's in the Highlands Episcopal Church and the Philipstown Garden Club. Most recently, she and Kimberly Hiss created The Mary Powell, the newest vocal duo of The Hudson Valley. Madeleine and her husband, Clayton, relocated to the Hudson Valley permanently where they are able to be close to their two adult children in New York City; one daughter, a wife and mother, working in corporate HR for a major bank and a son, recent graduate Georgetown Law, working for the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau in DC. Her son is performing in this concert.

Kimberly Hiss ~ soprano

Kimberly Hiss, soprano, studied English and Vocal Performance at Penn State University then moved to Manhattan, where she enjoyed singing with groups including the Young People's Chorus of New York City, which toured Eastern Europe, and the Russian Chamber Chorus of New York, which prided itself on a repertoire of ancient liturgical chants and new works from contemporary composers. As a soloist she has recorded television commercials and performed on acoustic guitar both while living in Prague in the Czech Republic, and more recently throughout New York's Hudson River Valley. Currently, she is pleased to sing with The Brasiles Ensemble and the St. Philip's Choir, as well as creating the vocal duo, The Mary Powell, with Madeleine. Beyond music, Kimberly is a writer and editor who has contributed pieces to a range of titles from Reader's Digest and O the Oprah Magazine to The Prague Post. She lives in Peekskill, NY, with her husband and two children.

Speare Hodges ~ baritone / piano

As a founding member of The Brasiles Ensemble performing in the 2012 Nocturnal Concert, Speare Hodges is an experienced pianist and vocalist. Classically trained at young age, he has given numerous piano recitals, studying under Troy Palmer and Michael Cannon. He toured internationally with the Atlanta Young Singers of Callanwolde, and played the leading role of Claude in Hair at the Fiorello H. Laguardia High School Of Music & Art and Performing Arts (the "Fame School"). More recently, he has worked as a piano accompanist throughout college and law school. Speare is dedicated to a career in public service, working to prevent foreclosures in New York Legal Services Corp., providing relief to Hurricane Sandy victims, and serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer (Peru). He graduated Cum Laude from Georgetown University Law Center in 2017, and now works as an Honors Attorney at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau in Washington, D.C. He is Madeleine DeNitto's son.

Paul Phillips ~ tenor / guitar

Paul grew up singing with family and friends. After some initial music training in the Atlanta Boy Choir, he sang various choirs and groups throughout a somewhat nomadic childhood. In college, he was an original member of the Oberlin Obertones, who continue a cappella men's singing at Oberlin College and Conservatory to this day. He performed many major and new chorale works over the years with The New York Chamber Symphony Chorus, The Judith Clurman Chorale, The Juilliard Choral Union, and the Oxford University Press Choir. Paul has sung with ensembles ranging from The American Composers Orchestra and The Juilliard Orchestra to The New York Pops, They Might Be Giants, and The Chieftains. With the Juilliard Opera, he performed in choruses for Igor Stravinsky's Oedipus Rex and Francis Poulenc's Dialogue of the Carmelites. He has sung on stage with the New York City Ballet's Chichester Psalms as well as in the orchestra pit for Mark Morris Dance Group's Gloria. In his "other" career, Paul works in the world of educational publishing, helping create English language teaching materials for children, teens, and adults. He's found great fun working with composers and arrangers to develop songs programs for teaching English. In addition to The Brasiles Ensemble, Paul currently sings with the St. Philip's Church Choir in Garrison as well as the Newburgh Symphonic Chorale.

Ed Robinson ~ bass

Born in post-WWII Germany to a military family, Ed's childhood was split between Germany and New York City. He has spent much of his time singing with various choirs, including the Manhattan Borough-Wide Chorus, the All-City High School Chorus, the Saint Augustine Chapel Choir with Trinity Parish and presently, the Saint Philip's Church Choir since 1980. Currently retired, Ed earned a degree in mechanical engineering from The City College of New York and not only had an extensive career in control and automation system design and construction for electrical power facilities, water, and wastewater treatment plants, but is also a Vietnam Veteran and retired military NCO, a Master Sergeant with the USAF and NYANG for 22 years. Ed is also an active member of the New York Paleontological Society. He has been married to Louise Squitieri for 12 years and along with Louise's children and grandchildren, they have five children and five grandchildren.

Michael Shane Wittenburg ~ piano

Hailed as a "real virtuoso" by the late Ruth Laredo, pianist and conductor Michael Shane Wittenburg made his professional opera conducting debut with Amore Opera's recent production of *Faust* and has served with multiple opera companies including in Nashville, Orlando and Sarasota. As an Assistant Professor of music at Lee University, he was Music Director of both the Chamber Orchestra and Opera Theatre. He has made solo appearances as pianist with the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, The Chattanooga Symphony and Opera, the World Youth Symphony Orchestra, the Eastman Wind Ensemble and the Ocala Symphony as both pianist and conductor. He has also appeared in collaborative recital with such artists as Metropolitan Opera soprano Stell Zambalist and concert violinist Livia Sohn.



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Special Acknowledgements

As founder of *The Brasiles Ensemble*, I would like to thank the original group of musicians from the 2013 *Nocturnal* concert, which became the foundation of formalizing an ensemble group. I would first like to acknowledge that *Laura Danilov* and *Michael Shane Wittenburg* are returning from the *Nocturnal* concert, which greatly pleases everyone. *Julie Heckert* and her husband *Paul Heckert* were wonderfully complementary to the efforts of that first event and we certainly appreciated the time and talents that *André Herzegovitch* and *Linda Speciale* offered to further polish our collective efforts to shine. I would also like to thank my son, *Speare Hodges*, who provided piano solos and accompaniment for me, even though he was preparing to enter law school at that time. I can now report that he is graduating from law school next week and hopes that he can perform with us in future concerts, if time allows. I would love to have each of these *Nocturnal* concert members spotlighted in future concerts and hope that they will have interest when called upon. Thank you all for your encouragement over the years and please know that you will all remain in my directory of fine artists.

A big thank you to *Frank Geer* for his enthusiasm about our most recent accomplishments and for allowing us to hold rehearsals, photo shoots and recording sessions in *St. Philip's Church in the Highlands*, located in Garrison.

Another big thank you goes to *Kassie Chapman* for her amazing sewing skills for selective pieces of our classic attire and Dickensian costuming.

Continued thank yous always flow over to *Durward Entrekín* for his inspiring work with the choir of *St. Philip's Church in the Highlands* and for his blessing upon us to succeed.

Special thanks goes to musicologist, *Dr. Malena Kuss*, who gives us highly positive critiques and to my father, professor and pianist, *Dr. John DeNitto* for music consulting of tonight's program and forever nodding his head to ensure that we are on the right track as he listens to our many rehearsals. Also, to my husband, *Clayton Scales*, for his camera skills during our photo shoots in various locations for which everyone compliments us.

Also, we would like to give special nod to *Barbara DeSilva* for honoring our desire to perform in this wonderful space tonight as well as for the time she offered in helping us with scheduling and advice. To *Lauren Daisley* of *Boscobel* and to *Giorgio Spanu*, *Nancy Olnick*, *Vittorio Calabrese* and *Selika Cerofolini* from *Magazzino*, we would also like to extend our appreciation to them for giving us chances to perform in December. To *Father Shane Scott-Hamblem* for rehearsal space in *St. Mary's Episcopal Church* and his enthusiasm for our *Palm Sunday* concert in 2018 to benefit the church.

It is our desire to also mention that we try to be as green of a group as possible and that most of our costuming has come from the *That Nothing Be Lost Thrift Store at St. Christopher's Inn at Graymoor* in Garrison.

Thank you to *Archipelago at Home*, *Highlands Baskets at The Country Goose*, *Neil's Auto Care*, *All Bodies*, and *Bud Lavery* for the wonderful program ads in support of our printing costs. Please support them!!

Please mark your calendars to hear the choir from St. Philip's Episcopal Church in the Highlands perform Bach's Magnificat in December!

Sunday, December 10, 2017 ~ 5:00pm - St. Philip's Episcopal Church, Garrison, NY

Featured soloists include Elizabeth Cody, Madeleine DeNitto, Janet Entrekín, Gregory Gunder, Julie Heckert, Kimberly Hiss, Mike McKee, Friedrike Merck, Paul Philips and Terry Platz

Program Notes

America

William Eyler (??)

Mr. Eyler, who happened to be a friend of Dr. John F. DeNitto, (father to Madeleine,) was a principal at an elementary school in Savannah, Georgia, where Dr. DeNitto worked as a teacher in the late 1950's. According to Dr. DeNitto, an accomplished pianist, Mr. Eyler was not a musician. Rather, he considered himself a grammarian, trading grammar books for music books with Dr. DeNitto. In spite of not being a musician, Dr. DeNitto claimed that Mr. Eyler wrote hundreds of sweet hymns, such as the one performed this evening, which was composed in 1958. He also wrote brief operettas for the children to perform during the years he was principal. We have tried to search for Mr. Eyler, yet he remains unfound after so many years.

John Williams (1932 - present)

Perhaps a slightly overlooked piece from the second Home Alone movie, Lost In New York, this lovely holiday carol is heard in the middle of the film, where Kevin waves at a boy in the window of the St. Anne's Hospital for Children, just after speaking with a lady with dozens of pigeons in Central Park. As a highly regarded composer for over six decades of movie scores, Williams had this piece published for choirs in 1994, following the success of the movie. Known as a household name, Williams has scored for many other films, such as Jaws, the Star Wars series, the first two Jurassic Park films, Schindler's List, and the first three Harry Potter films and has won many awards. At age 85, he continues to compose, as well as conduct various orchestras from time to time.

Argentina

Ariel Ramirez (1921 - 2010)

Composer, pianist and music director, Ariel Ramirez was a prominent name, possibly peaking in the mid-1960's. Known primarily for *Misa Criolla*, perhaps his second most known work is *Navidad Nuestra*, from which tonight's two pieces, *La Peregrinacion* and *Los Pastores* come. Ramirez passed away in Buenos Aires from a neurological condition just seven years ago. As amazing as his work proves to be, it is the hope that The Brasiles Ensemble will perform both his *Misa Criolla* and *Navidad Nuestra* in their entirety for the holiday 2018 concert.

Finland

Harri Wessman (1949 - present)

Composed for the famed Tapiola Choir, *Vesi väsy lumen alle* (Water Under Snow is Weary,) is Harri Wessman's most notable choral work. Born in 1949, Wessman is a living composer, working and residing in his native Finland. A famous quote from him is "A composition is, above all, a spiritual message to another human being." His featured piece tonight certainly sends such a spiritual message.

France

Tonight's trio *Le Sommeil de L'enfant Jesus* is a traditional French carol, arranged by Jon Jeffers. The piece describes the nativity scene where the infant Jesus sleeps amidst the ox and the donkey while a thousand angels hover around the God of love.

Francis Poulenc (1899 – 1963)

O Magnum Mysterium obviously shows Francis Poulenc's gift for lyric melodies with such touching harmonies. Though his wealthy family intended for him to have a career in business within the family company, Francis Poulenc chose to enter the world of music and found his way to becoming a highly accomplished pianist, in spite of his family not allowing him to study at a music college. Born in Paris, he lived a long life of success, passing away from a heart attack. Before his passing, he insisted that his funeral be of utmost simplicity and that only the music of Bach be played.

Israel

The traditional Hebrew song, ***S'Vivon***, depicts the Hanukka dreidl, which is a small top with four sides. The dreidl is used in games of chance by children and adults during Hanukka festivities. The song repeats "Little dreidl, spin, spin, spin", which is easy to hear within the harmonies. Tonight's version was arranged by popular composer and music educator, Dr. Betty G. Bertaux, who was the founder of the Children's Chorus of Maryland. She passed away in 2014 at the age of 76.

Italy

Known as the most popular Christmas song in Italy, ***Tu scendi dalle stelle***, (From Starry Skies Descending,) was originally written in 1732 by Saint Alphonsus Liguori. Although found in many arrangements, it is traditionally associated with the zampogna, or large-format Italian bagpipe. In tonight's version, Francesco Spiga has arranged the piece with organ accompaniment.

Russia

Sergei Rachmaninov

Rachmaninov's Opus 32, is a set of thirteen preludes for solo piano, composed in 1910. This particular prelude, *Prelude Op.32 No.12 in G sharp minor*, was written during a period that many people consider to be the pinnacle of Rachmaninov's compositional career and is one of the more popular of the set. All 13 of these preludes were written during a period of 19 days. Though not used as a holiday piece, the lightness of the piece brings to mind snow flurries that become more and more intense to the point of a blizzard and then falls back to light flurries at the end of the piece.

Spain

As a traditional Catalan carol, *The Carol of the Birds* tells of nature's joy at learning of the birth of Jesus Christ in a stable in Bethlehem. The song was made famous outside Catalonia by Pablo Casals' instrumental version on the cello. After his exile in 1939, Casals was known to begin each of his concerts by playing this song. Tonight's special arrangement comes from Stephen J. Ortlip, who is the founder of The Atlanta Young Singers of Callanwolde, for which Speare Hodges was a member for ten years. Rather than singing it, Speare will switch roles and accompany the quintet on the piano tonight. It is a pleasure to state that Mr. Ortlip, affectionately known as "Mr. O", is still living happily into his 90's in Atlanta, Georgia.

Rui, Rui, Chui is a traditional Spanish Christmas carol is known as a villancico, dating from the 16th century and honors the Blessed Virgin Mary. The song is a lesson in Catholic doctrine on the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady as well as the birth of Our Lord who came to redeem the world from the guilt of sin.

United Kingdom

Robert L. Pearsall (1795 -1856)

Considered an amateur composer, Robert L. Pearsall's music was not published until after his death. However, it is recorded that he authored letters and articles that were included to the scholarly understanding of early music in both the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches. Tonight's *In dulce júbilo*, may be Pearsall's most notable work.

John Rutter (1945 - present)

John Rutter, tonight's only living composer, was born in 1945 in London. He studied music Clare College, Cambridge and is quite well known and respected. In addition to composing, Rutter conducts, edits, arranges and produces much choral music. As founder of the Cambridge Singers, there are many recordings under his baton as conductor. He is often asked to conduct other choirs as well orchestras around the world, keeping a very busy musician. Lesser known in America *Dormi Jesu* was published in 1999.

Orlando Gibbons (1583 -1625)

As a composer of the late Tudor and early Jacobean period, Orlando Gibbons was a leading composer in England in the early 17th century. Tonight's five-part piece is one of his most famous madrigals. Buried in Canterbury Cathedral, varied sources state that his sudden death was caused either from a massive stroke or from The Black Plague.

John Tavener (1944 - 2013)

Only one year younger than John Rutter, we lost John Tavener in 2013. Though Tavener suffered from numerous health issues throughout his entire life, (including a stroke, heart tumor and two massive heart attacks,) he lived to the age of 69. In spite of his frail body, he composed some of the most beautiful music over a span of nearly five decades. Set to one of William Blake's poems, *The Lamb* is one of Taverner's most highly regarded masterpieces.

Charles Villiers Stanford (1852 - 1924)

Born in Ireland, Stanford was actually one of the founding professors of the Royal College of Music in London. He was only 29 years of age when he became a founding professor there and ended up teaching there for the rest of his life, having Gustav Holst and Ralph Vaughn Williams as two of his most famous pupils. Another of his famous pupils, Ivor Gurney, whose music was featured at our "Longing" concert in May of this year, died in WWI and due to losing such people in his life, Stanford became extremely frightened of war and left London for Windsor. Stanford's *The Blue Bird* is extremely difficult to hold in tune, as well as to keep balanced with the dynamics between each of the parts. The words are taken from a poem written by British poet: Mary Coleridge. It is one of Stanford's most beautiful pieces.

Boris Ord (1897 - 1961)

Ord was organist and choirmaster of King's College, Cambridge for nearly 30 years. During that span of time, he also had to serve in the Royal Air Force during World War II. Tonight's piece Adam Lay Ybounden, was actually his only published piece of music.

Henry Purcell (1659–1695)


Taken from Purcell's masque, *The Fairy-Queen*, tonight's *Now Winter Comes Slowly*, was composed just three years before Purcell's passing at the mere age of 35. Following his death, the score was lost and only found in the twentieth century.

Peter Warlock (1894 - 1930)

Born as Philip Arnold Heseltine, Peter Warlock was a British composer and music critic who decided to take on a pseudonym to reflect his interest in practices of the occult. As a result of that decision, it may be no surprise that his life was rather unconventional and sometimes, even a bit scandalous. It is noted that his death may have been self-inflicted by inhalation of coal gas. In spite of his unsettling lifestyle, he managed to arrange some truly haunting holiday music, three of which are featured tonight.

Please mark your calendars to hear the choir from St. Philip's Episcopal Church in the Highlands in the annual Vespers concert at Mount Saint Mary College in Newburgh!

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