



# **Philia, Eros, Agape:**

*The Music of Bryan Grosbach*

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church of Denver

June 26th, 2021

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*This concert was entirely funded by the generous donations of many.*

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***Thank you to all who donated***

# Special Thanks



First, a special thank you to the Evans Choir— directed by Catherine Sailer— for allowing us to use their name for the GoFundMe donation page, granting donations to be tax-deductible. Thank you also for your help with ensuring the funds raised reached our performers and crew.

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Thank you to all 71 donors who made this concert possible. Special thanks to Claudia Dakkouri, Shandelle and Michael Grosbach, and Trinity United Methodist Church of Denver Music and Arts Ministry for going above and beyond in helping us raise the funds for this concert. We could not have done it without every donors support.

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Thank you to the St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church of Denver for allowing us to use their beautiful space for the concert, and particularly to Jon Moore and Mo. Elizabeth Randell for working with us in scheduling and options for a maskless performance.

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Thank you to Will Stowe for his flexibility, keen senses, and expertise in the production of our concert via live-stream. We couldn’t have asked for a better tech “crew.”

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Thank you to all the singers who learned the music, largely on their own, and put this concert together in very few rehearsals. Your talents, hard-work, and enthusiasm for the music has made this concert an exceptional moment in both our lives.

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A final thank you to all of you, the viewers. We appreciate you tuning in tonight— our dream was to put this music in the ears of the world, and you are the start of that. Your support for new music, and us both, is so appreciated and humbling. Thank you for listening.

*- Michael Ballard & Bryan Grosbach*

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[Patreon - Bryan Grosbach](#)

# Ensemble and Crew



*Sponsored by the Evans Choir*

**Conductor:** Michael Ballard

**Composer:** Bryan Grosbach

**Audio/Video Engineer:** Will Stowe

## Choir

### *Sopranos*

Margaret Flint

Ashley Hoffman

Sheila Malendez-Ayala

Laura Tribby

Athena Wilkinson

### *Altos*

MB Krueger

Micaela Larson Brown

Kathleen Schmidt

Jessica Sweet

### *Tenors*

Matthew Bentley

Joseph Gaines

Matthew Lea

Blake Nawa'a

Westin Sorrel

### *Basses*

Daniel Howard

Timothy J. Krueger

Matthew LaCava

Alan Polacek

Andrew Ritchie

# Program



All music composed by Bryan Grosbach

- *Welcome*

- *Introducing: "To the River!"*

**To the River! ..... (2019)**

Fair River! in thy bright, clear flow  
Of crystal, wandering water,  
Thou art an emblem of the glow  
Of beauty— the unhidden heart—  
The playful mazziness of art  
In old Alberto's daughter;

But when within thy wave she looks—  
Which glistens then, and trembles—  
Why, then, the prettiest of brooks  
Her worshipper resembles;  
For in my heart, as in they stream,  
Her image deeply lies—  
His heart which trembles at the beam  
Of her soul-searching eyes.

- *Introducing: "Fingers to the Glass"*

**Fingers to the Glass ..... (2021)**

**Text by F. Taylor Atkinson (b. 1989)**

I touch my fingers to the glass— thin and clear,  
my hand opposite yours— cold and far away.  
I'm stuck choosing between virtual  
or in person—always through a glass chasm.

I hear the howling –  
the banging of pots and pans –  
as much a release  
of pain as something to do together.

The kids look to me to know when this will end.  
I feel helpless being asked questions I don't have the answer to.  
I look back to how you led us when I was young  
but don't find the guidance I hope for.

I laugh every time I open your old cookbook.  
I didn't have a plan for the memories and instructions it holds...

Who knew that painting pebbles  
with the little ones could lead to emotions so big.  
We risk brief walks around the park and leave  
these gems behind – the seed of a smile.  
Turning these small, stone canvases over and over  
in my hands as we walk becomes a meditation...

It's funny. As the weeks turn to months of these weekend visits,  
by the time I'm done sharing my soul with you,  
I'd swear that the glass starts to feel warm.

# Program



## **- Introducing: “Herbert’s Love”**

### **Herbert’s Love; The Journey of a Martyr ..... (2020)**

**Soloists: Ashley Hoffman, Laura Tribby, MB Krueger, Blake Nawa’a, Alan Polacek**

#### **i. Immortal Love, Immortal Heat (“The Awakening”)**

Immortal Love, author of this great frame,  
Sprung from that beauty which can never fade,  
How hath man parcel'd out Thy glorious name,  
And thrown it on that dust which Thou hast made,  
While mortal love doth all the title gain!

Immortal Heat, O let Thy greater flame  
Attract the lesser to it; let those fires  
Which shall consume the world first make it tame,  
And kindle in our hearts such true desires.

#### **ii. Wit Fancies Beauty (“The Gospel”)**

Wit fancies beauty, beauty raiseth wit;  
The world is theirs, they two play out the game,  
Thou standing by: and though Thy glorious name

Wrought our deliverance from th' infernal pit,  
Who sings Thy praise? Only a scarf or glove  
Doth warm our hands, and make them write of love.

#### **iii. Our Eyes Shall See Thee (“Martyrdom”)**

Thou shalt recover all Thy goods in kind,  
Who wert disseized by usurping lust:  
All knees shall bow to Thee; all wits shall rise,  
And praise Him Who did make and mend our eyes.  
Our eyes shall see Thee, which before saw dust,

Dust blown by wit, till that they both were blind:  
Thou shalt recover all Thy goods in kind.  
Then shall our hearts pant Thee, then shall our brain  
All her invention on Thine altar lay,  
And there in hymns send back Thy fire again.

#### **iv. Love Bade Me Welcome (“Reconciliation”)**

Love bade me welcome. Yet my soul drew back  
Guilty of dust and sin.  
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack  
From my first entrance in,  
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning,  
If I lacked any thing.  
A guest, I answered, worthy to be here:  
Love said, You shall be he.  
I the unkind, ungrateful? Ah my dear,

I cannot look on thee.  
Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,  
Who made the eyes but I?  
Truth Lord, but I have marred them: let my shame  
Go where it doth deserve.  
And know you not, says Love, who bore the blame?  
My dear, then I will serve.  
You must sit down, says Love, and taste my meat:  
So I did sit and eat.

## **- Final Thank You**

# About the Works



## To the River! (2019)

Text by Edgar Allan Poe  
(1809-1849)

"To the River!" is a work symbolic of a growth point in my compositional process. I wrote it in my first year as a Graduate Student, in an attempt to explore writing music that implies the "second level" of meaning of a text opposed to its surface. This work is about love.

Using a running triplet line throughout the work, coupled with a fanfare-ish call of the words "fair river," this piece twists and turns as the poet reflects on a gently flowing crystal stream. Suddenly, a shift into a brighter key reveals that he's not actually thinking of the river, but Old Alberto's daughter—whom he loves. The joy of this love is celebrated before the poet—realizing what it means to risk love—is put in a new and uncomfortable place that only the stirrings of the heart can achieve. A darker key and slow oscillation (reminiscent of the river) reflects this discomfort as the poet realizes what love has done to him. Love has not only reflected the woman he loves in the river, but the poet's heart has become like the river itself.





# About the Works



Fingers to the Glass was commissioned by:

Michael Ballard  
Matthew Bentley  
Adele Carter  
Claudia Dakkouri  
Margaret Flint  
Michael and Shandelle Grosbach  
Ashley Hoffman  
MB and Tim Krueger  
Micaela Larson Brown  
Kathleen Schmidt  
Trinity UMC of Denver Music & Arts Ministry

## Fingers to the Glass (2021)

Text by F. Taylor Atkinson (b. 1989)

After the end of my Graduate degree in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic made writing music a difficult thing, and I all but stopped composing for the better part of a year. This piece was a return to my creative life, attempting to create closure on the creative difficulties I personally faced during the pandemic.

I've had the great pleasure of collaborating with the poet of this text before. I knew Taylor would be the perfect person to reach out to for a modern

poetic take on the

pandemic, especially as it relates to the desire for communal or familial love. He wrote a few poems for this project, and I picked one titled "A New Lens." You can find the poem in its entirety on the next page.

This piece was commissioned by a consortium of individuals and organizations. You can see their names above.

Throughout the first half of this piece, you'll hear a theme repeated over and over using the words "I touch my fingers to the glass." The repetitive and echoing nature of this theme represents the monotony of the pandemic, often experienced together through things like Zoom, where no one really ever lines up in real time.

The piece will build to a climactic point, where it seems that we just can't take it anymore-- anxiety has grown beyond the point of simply ignoring it. Suddenly, a new key will burst forth from the lower voices, while the higher voices sing melodies about the silver linings the pandemic revealed to us as time went on. This takes us to the end of the piece, where after a brief pause-- and for the first time-- all the voices sing the same words, simultaneously, together.

The piece ends on a dissonant chord— not quite resolved— representing a certain discomfort in becoming comfortable with connecting to our friends and family through the glass chasm of a device screen or a window.



# About the Works



*Original poem used for “Fingers to the Glass”:*

## **A New Lens**

By F. Taylor Atkinson

I touch my fingers to the window— thin and clear,  
my hand opposite yours— cold and far away.  
I’m stuck choosing between virtual  
or in person—always through a glass chasm.

Eight o’clock each evening reminds us of the world outside  
our home and brings the sound of sticking together  
by staying apart—forever in sight  
but not close enough to touch. I hear the howling –  
the banging of pots and pans – and I know by the sound  
of those joining the pack that it’s as much a release  
of pain as it is something to do together.

You should see what the little ones get up to with all this time  
at home – pillow forts and make believe. A way to go  
anywhere else. They ache with no friends  
and no teachers to go see. We draw closer –  
game nights, streaming, reading, and crafts—filling our time  
together can only heal so much.

The kids look to me to know when this will end.  
I feel helpless being asked questions I don’t have the answer to.  
I look back to how you led us when I was young  
but don’t find the guidance I hope for.  
I never saw my childhood from your perspective –  
you always made having the answers seem so easy.  
Each time I cry out with no end in sight,  
a neighbor on the lawn, a church member, a friend reminds us  
we are not alone. It’s a little easier  
as long as we have each other.

Who knew that painting pebbles  
with the little ones could lead to emotions so big.  
We risk brief walks around the park and leave  
these gems behind – the seed of a smile.  
Turning these small, stone canvases over and over  
in my hands as we walk becomes a meditation – interrupted  
by the rare sound of a plane, car or neighbor – and I’m struck by  
how different the world can sound with no one moving.

Remember the chalk art we used to create together?  
Now it’s my turn with the kids.  
A beach, the mountains, messages of hope –  
the scenes we create sometimes help us forget  
this year’s canceled plans and family trips  
and give us new places to travel to.  
When I remember the art you made,  
I have a lot to live up to.

I laugh every time I open your old cookbook.  
I didn’t have a plan for the memories and instructions it holds  
when I brought it home. Running my hands over your notes  
and still feeling the indentations of your pencil in the margins  
makes my heart leap and cry. Now the smell of baking  
on Sunday mornings fills the house  
and summons us to the table.  
Thank you for giving us something so tender.

It’s funny. As the weeks turn to months of these weekend visits,  
by the time I’m done sharing my soul with you,  
I’d swear that the glass starts to feel warm.

Check out more of Taylor’s published works:  
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/franklin-taylor-atkinson/>

# About the Works



## **Herbert's Love; The Journey of a Martyr (2020)**

Text by George Herbert (1593-1633)

"Herbert's Love; the Journey of a Martyr," is a reflection on the journey of one who believes so strongly in a message or creed, that they are willing to give up their lives to spread it. Personally, I believe so strongly in the power of music to transform lives that the resolve. To take this believe and reflect on the pure passion a Martyr must possess in order to be willing to sacrifice their greatest personal asset is deeply inspiring to me.

# About the Works



This piece represents a lot of growth for me as a composer. I experimented with using repetition to evoke anxiety and tension— something I've not tried before. This technique was inspired by a fantastic work by Joby Talbot: "Path of Miracles," where Talbot uses minimalistic tendencies and repetition to not only represent a pilgrimage, but the tension as the journey nears its end.

In "Immortal Love, Immortal Heat," the Martyr comes to the realization that their creed needs to be shared. It's the "call-to-action" for the Martyr. The text the choir sings in this movement essentially asks for the strength to take the journey in the first place.

The second movement, "Wit Fancies Beauty," is the sharing of that message. Chromatically falling lines accompany a marked melody in the high voices, representing the cold world without the "truth" that the Martyr possesses. They then get to share the warmth of this message to end this section. However, the world remains wholly unconvinced.

"Our Eyes Shall See Thee," the third movement, is the actual act of the disciple giving their life to stand for the message they're trying to share. The people cry out for the Martyr's life, as they attempt to preach of God's love one last time. My goal with this movement was to start intense, in the middle of the riot, and increase from there to the death of the disciple. The movement completes with an atmospheric chant over a bed of murmurs; a singing bowl chimes as the final breath has been taken and the spirit moves to the next part of its journey.

"Love Bade Me Welcome" is the last part of the Martyr's journey. They question if they succeeded. Was it worth it? Did I accomplish what I set out to do? This last movement uses the entirety of the "Love (III)" poem by Herbert, and is a dialogue between the believer and their god. In the end, their god convinces them that the work they did was enough, and invites them to eternally sit at the table and eat.

# Biographies



## ***Michael Ballard, Conductor***

A lifelong resident of Colorado, Michael has taught elementary and middle school music, drama, and choir. He was artistic director of the Rhythm of Life Community Chorus in Wheat Ridge and directed choirs at the Trinity United Methodist Church in Denver. He has sung in various choirs in the Denver area such as St. Martin's Chamber Choir, The Evans Choir, The Denver Pro Chorale, and The Colorado Symphony Chorus. Michael finished a master's degree in Choral Conducting and a graduate certificate in Music Theory Pedagogy at the Lamont School of Music this past Spring. In the Fall, Michael will begin a D.M.A. in Choral Conducting at the University of South Carolina.

## ***Bryan Grosbach, Composer***

Bryan believes that the magic of music exists in the kinship of the musicians and the audience as they take a musical journey together. Using engaging harmonic palettes, organic meter, and clarity of musical ideas, he aims to be a storyteller through his music.

His narratives use personal experiences or empathetic imaginings to facilitate a shared musical journey, in the hopes of creating a connection between the music and the listener.

Bryan has been a featured composer in concerts across the U.S. and achieves regular performances of his works at large events, such as the state MEA (Music Educators Association) and SCI (Society of Composers, Inc.) annual conferences. His music is published by BigBrook Music, and Hal Leonard. Bryan earned his Master's of Music in Composition in 2020 from the University of Nebraska - Lincoln.



## ***F. Taylor Atkinson, Poet***

Taylor graduated with a Bachelor's in creative writing and a minor in percussion performance from Metropolitan State University of Denver. In addition to still pursuing writing and music in his spare time, he has devoted his career to working for nonprofits. Taylor's love for music stems from his parents and his upbringing. He is ecstatic to collaborate with Bryan again as they work together to share meaningful human moments through music. When not busy preparing for the arrival of their first baby, you can find Taylor and his wife watching shows together, playing board games, and getting into mischief with their puppy.



# Biographies



## ***Will Stowe, A/V Engineer***

Will is a Denver-based Video Engineer and Livestream Producer, and leans on his musical background for his approach to technical production. He has worked in production for 10 years for a variety of clients, including RE/MAX LLC, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, The World Bank Group, and numerous production companies around the country.

Will specializes in concerts, live events, video production, audio engineering, projections, and special effects. Will also holds a rich singing career, performing and touring since childhood with a variety of groups including the American Boychoir, UW-Madison choirs, Fundamentally Sound a cappella, St. Paul's K St, Washington, D.C., St. Andrew's Denver, St. Martin's Chamber Choir, and others. He enjoys hiking, biking, cooking, photography, making terrible jokes, and wondering why his partner Elise doesn't laugh at them.



## ***Margaret Flint, Soprano***

Margaret Flint hails from Bucks County, PA and is a lifelong chorister who is excited and relieved to return to choir after a hiatus in 2020. For the last five years, Margaret has been singing at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church-Denver. Prior to moving to Denver, she performed with Tampa Opera, St. Petersburg Opera and Florida Pro Musica in Tampa, FL. During that time, Margaret was also a staff singer at St. Andrew's Tampa as well as served on the board for Florida Pro Musica. In Tucson, Margaret sang with Awen Rising, a semi-professional folk ensemble, and St. Phillips in the Hills Episcopal Church. Margaret holds Bachelor of Music in Education and Master of Business Administration degrees from The University of Tampa, Tampa, FL. She enjoys hiking in the Rockies with her partner and cuddling with her four kitties.

## ***Ashley Hoffman, Soprano***

Ashley Hoffman has appeared locally with the Colorado Bach Ensemble, the Archdiocesan Chorale, Denver Early Music Consort, Ars Nova Singers, as a guest soloist for St. John's Episcopal Church, the Vittoria Ensemble, and Colorado Chorale, St. Martin's Chamber Choir, and as a staff singer at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church. Before moving to Denver, Ashley performed professionally in the Los Angeles area with De Angelis Vocal Ensemble, LASchola, Jouyssance Early Music Ensemble, All Saints' Church, Beverly Hills and St. James' in the City. Her recording credits include CDs, soundtracks and video games. During the day she works as a web designer and graphic artist, on projects such as the SMCC website, and spends time with her husband Barry and daughter Lyla.



# Biographies



## ***Sheila Malendez-Ayala, Soprano***

Soprano Sheila Meléndez is a singer from the Baltimore/DC area. She is pursuing a double master's degree in Voice Performance and Choral Conducting at the University of Denver. Ms. Meléndez performs frequently as a soloist for different houses of worship in the area. As an upcoming conductor, she has directed children's choir and women's choir.

## ***Laura Tribby, Soprano***

Laura Tribby hails from Kalamazoo, Michigan, where she earned degrees in both trumpet and voice performance at Western Michigan University and lived in her father's violin shop. Called by the mountains and sunshine, Laura moved to Colorado in 2014 and has since then performed with the St. Martin's Chamber Choir, Colorado Bach Ensemble, Colorado Opera Chorus, Colorado Symphony Chorus, Denver Pro Chorale, Canto Deo, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church Choir, Wellshire Presbyterian Sanctuary Choir and Celebration Singers, Denver Jingle Singers, Vittoria Ensemble, Opera On Tap, Colorado State University Conducting Seminar choir, Temple Emmanuel choir, Voices of Light Chamber Choir, CSU Summer Masters Lab Choir, St. John's Cathedral Choir, Kantorei, and the Anima Chamber Ensemble. She directs a children's choir and youth choir and sings in the Sanctuary Choir at Bethany Lutheran Church. Outside of her thrilling chorus life, she is an active freelance musician and teaches voice lessons. She is occasionally a Colorado Honor Band instructor, as well, and enjoys working with younger students. Laura is in her fourth year of teaching general music at Maple Grove Elementary in Golden. In her free time, she can be found riding a bike, reading a book, or watching the clouds.



## ***Athena Wilkinson, Soprano***

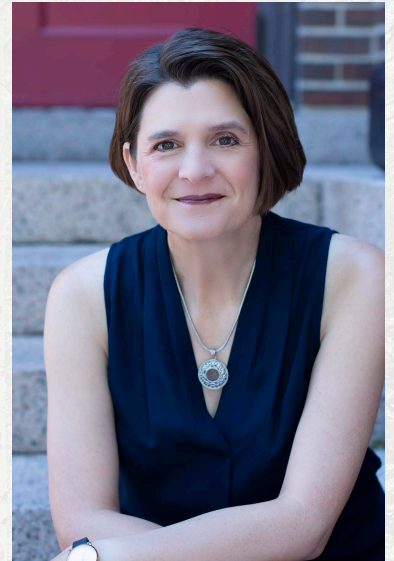
Athena has had the opportunity to perform choral music around the world, including the Vatican Basilica, Grace Cathedral, and with the Estonian Academy of Music. Having graduated from the Lamont School of Music, University of Denver with Cum Laude studying classical voice and the recording arts, Athena has been able to bring her expertise to many groups.

# Biographies



## ***MB Krueger, Alto***

Professor MB Krueger is the Director of Choral Activities at Metropolitan State University, where she directs the Chorale, University Treble Choir, and University Basso Choir and teaches all levels of undergraduate conducting. She earned her bachelor's degree at Michigan State University, where she was a National Merit Scholar, and her master's degree from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. MB served for ten years on the board of the Colorado Chapter of American Choral Directors Association, and regularly presents at CoACDA workshops, and produces an annual high school choir festival at MSU Denver. She is a professional singer with St. Martin's Chamber Choir and St. Andrew's Episcopal Church Choir, and has also sung professionally with the Santa Fe Desert Chorale, the Santa Fe Opera, the Baroque Chamber Orchestra of Colorado, and others. She was named the Outstanding Faculty Advisor of the Year at MSU Denver for the 2019-20 academic year, and won an Excellence in Teaching award from the College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences for 2020-21.



## ***Micaëla Larson Brown, Alto***

Micaëla Larsen Brown grew up singing...in India and then Denver and Brighton, Colorado. She graduated from Univ. of Sioux Falls with degrees in Music and Speech & Theater, and then lived in France for two years. She subsequently sang several concerts in France. She has sung with the Colorado Chorale, served as staff singer at Central Presbyterian Church and at St. John's Cathedral. She is currently a staff singer at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church and has sung with St. Martin's Chamber Choir since 2006. Micaëla was an elementary music teacher for 25 years. She retired from full-time teaching to pursue several mini-careers: teaching voice lessons, sewing, singing, and substitute teaching. Micaëla also volunteers as a music therapist, singing for care centers and hospice. She has received the Rotary Teacher of the Year award and Outstanding Alumni Award from Univ. of Sioux Falls. Micaëla and her husband, Jack golf, travel, raise rescue critters, and work to promote community and hospitality.



## ***Jessica Sweet, Alto***

Jessica Sweet first sang with St. Martin's Chamber Choir as a singer intern while a student at Metropolitan State University of Denver. In addition to signing with St. Martin's, she also performs with the Denver Pro Chorale, leads the Carmody Community Choir, and teaches middle school choir in Jefferson County. Jessica has experience throughout Colorado as a singer, accompanist, director and vocal coach. She lives in Lakewood with her father, son and two cats.





# Biographies



## *Kathleen Schmidt, Alto*



Kathleen Schmidt is a lyric mezzo-soprano specializing in medieval chant, Renaissance polyphony, and Baroque opera and oratorio, and is Artistic Director for the Denver Early Music Consort. She frequently performs as a soloist in concert with ensembles such as the Baroque Chamber Orchestra of Colorado, and sings in regional professional choirs such as the Evans Choir and St. Martin's Chamber Choir (for whom she recently served as interim general manager). She currently works as music assistant at Trinity United Methodist Church, managing their numerous large ensembles, and she teaches voice at East High School and the Stephenotto School of Music. Kathleen has designed curricular programs of early music for grade-school education outreach at the request of the Colorado Symphony Orchestra, and has performed and led classroom presentations at several Denver-area public schools on the Symphony's behalf. She holds a Master of Music-Voice degree from the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University, where she specialized in early music study. Upcoming appearances include a January 2019 collaboration with the Denver Art Song Project and the Denver Early Music Consort, and a staged performance of *Carmina Burana* in April 2019 with the Colorado Ballet and Evans Choir.

## *Joseph Gaines, Tenor*

A highly energetic, vibrant, and extremely versatile singer and actor, tenor Joseph Gaines has been described as "such an exuberant performer you couldn't help but smile" (**The Minneapolis Star-Tribune**). In 2017 he created the role of Dan Leno in **Opera Philadelphia's** world premiere of **ELIZABETH CREE**, by the Pulitzer Prize-winning duo of Kevin Puts and Mark Campbell; **Opera News** wrote that the role "offered a field day to light tenor Joseph Gaines, who met the challenge with vocal skill and superb physicality." A regular performer at **Pittsburgh Opera, Utah Opera, Central City Opera, Resonance Works Pittsburgh, and Opera Colorado**, recent company debuts include **San Diego Opera, Virginia Opera, and Hawaii Opera Theatre**. He joined the artist roster of **The Metropolitan Opera** for the first time in the 2013-14 season. A frequent concert artist, he has been featured with **The Philadelphia Orchestra, The Detroit Symphony, The Charlotte Symphony, The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra**, and many period and chamber ensembles, as well. Upcoming engagements include soloist with **The Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra** (2021), as well as Stuart Ullman in **THE SHINING** with **Opera Colorado** (2022). Gaines studied singing at both the University of Houston and the Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy Hochschule für Musik und Theater, Leipzig.



# Biographies



## ***Matthew Lea, Tenor***

Hailing from Wisconsin, Matthew Lea is a lifelong singer and performer. Matthew sang with the Concert Choir at the University of Wisconsin–Madison while pursuing a B.S. in Biochemistry. After graduation, he went on to perform with numerous other groups in the Badger State including the Madison Chamber Choir, Madison Choral Project and Madison Opera. In 2018, Matthew relocated to Denver where he now enjoys singing with St. Martin's Chamber Choir and working in IT Project Management. He is also a staff singer at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church.

## ***Westin Sorrel, Tenor***

Westin Sorrel is currently the Director of Choral Music at Dakota Ridge High School. He earned his Bachelors of Music degree from the School of Music at Colorado State University where he studied Vocal Music Education following the Performance Enhancement Track. During his time at CSU, Westin sang with the CSU Chamber Choir, University Chorus, Men's Chorus and the Charles and Reta Ralph Opera Center with which he held several lead roles. He also spent three years singing with the Fort Collins community group Laudamus Chamber Chorale. While at CSU, Westin was involved with the Collegiate National Association for Music Educators, the Student National Association for Teachers of Singing and the American Choral Directors' Association. In the summer of 2015, Westin had the honor of spending two weeks in Italy at the Sarteano Chamber Choral Conducting Workshop, where he worked with world-renowned conductor Simon Carrington. In addition to singing with St. Martin's Chamber Choir, Westin sings with Colorado Bach Ensemble and Anima Chamber Ensemble and is the assistant conductor of the Bethany Lutheran Chancel Choir.



## ***Matthew Bentley, Tenor***

Matthew Bentley grew up in a musical family playing the piano and the cello. He is a staff singer at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church and has taught Spanish at Kent Denver School for fourteen years. Matt graduated summa cum laude from BYU and holds a doctorate in Spanish Literature from the University of Virginia. He lives in the Baker neighborhood with his partner, Frank.

# Biographies



## ***Blake Narwa'a, Tenor***

A musician who wears many hats, Blake works around the Denver metro area as a voice teacher, music director for various musical theatre productions, tenor soloist, and occasional collaborative pianist. He sings with many of Denver's professional choral ensembles, and he is the music director of the Original Dickens Carolers, who perform seasonally throughout the extended Denver area and Salt Lake City. As a soloist, he can be heard weekly and in major concerts at Augustana Lutheran Church, as well as on his COVID-era YouTube recital series, SONGspare. A Colorado local since 2012, he holds degrees in vocal performance and choral conducting, both from the University of Denver's Lamont School of Music.



## ***Daniel Howard, Bass***

Dan Howard grew up in rural North Dakota and Minnesota. He holds B. Science and M. Music degrees in vocal performance from North Dakota State University, a M. Arts degree in musicology from the U. of Iowa, and has completed doctoral coursework in musicology at the U. of Iowa. Mr. Howard has performed in the Opera Colorado Chorus, the Fargo-Moorhead Civic Opera Chorus, Voices of Concord, the Augustana Chancel Choir, the FM Chamber Choral, the Grand Forks Master Choral, the U. of Iowa Center for New Music, and the NDSU Baroque Festival Singers. Mr. Howard has taught class and studio voice at North Dakota State University and music history at the U. of Northern Iowa and the U. of Iowa. He has been a vocal coach at Arvada West High School and teaches private voice lessons in Highlands Ranch and Arvada. During the winter months, Mr. Howard is a youth alpine instructor at Keystone Ski and Ride School. He loves to spend any time that he can traveling, reading, singing, and cooking with his wife, Angela and daughter, Isabelle.



## ***Matthew LaCava, Bass***

Matt has been singing with St. Martin's Chamber Choir since 2012. He served as the Music Director and Pastor of Worship at Redeemer Bible Church in Brighton from 2010-2017, where he lives with his wife, Kate, and their three sons. Matt studied voice throughout his undergraduate studies, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Theology and going on to receive a Master of Science in Counseling. He has been singing as a soloist and in choral groups since childhood.



# Biographies



## ***Alan Polacek, Bass***

Baritone Alan Polacek is a staff singer and soloist at Saint John's Cathedral and Saint Andrew's Episcopal Church, in Denver. As a chorister, he has worked with the Colorado Symphony, Pro Musica Colorado Chamber Orchestra, the Colorado Music Festival, and the Denver Early Music Consort. In addition to singing, he is an accomplished pianist, well versed in classical and jazz, appearing collaboratively and as a soloist. Alan received his Bachelors of Music in Composition at the University of Colorado, Boulder, in 2007.

## ***Andrew Ritchie, Bass***

Born and raised in Omaha Nebraska, Drew Ritchie is a conductor, cellist, vocalist, and educator who specializes in choral and orchestral music. After earning a Bachelors in Music Education at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln he taught in the Omaha Public Schools for 3 years while simultaneously working with the Omaha Area Youth Orchestras. Ritchie moved to Denver in 2019 to earn his Masters in Conducting with Dr. Catherine Sailer while also working with the Colorado Youth Symphony and the professional St. Martin's Chamber Choir. Drew is thrilled to help Bryan and Michael bring this fantastic music to life with incredible musicians and friends!



## ***Timothy J. Krueger, Bass***

Timothy J. Krueger, St. Martin's founder and Artistic Director, studied musicology at the Wheaton Conservatory of Music, the University of Colorado, Boulder, the Universität Hamburg, Germany, and the University of London's Royal Holloway College, where his doctoral dissertation was on the sacred music of Charles Villiers Stanford. He studied conducting with Dr. Paul Wiens and privately with Dennis Keene of the Voices of Ascension. He has sung professionally with the Santa Fe Opera, the Santa Fe Desert Chorale, Chicago A Cappella, the Vox Early Music Ensemble and the Ars Nova Singers, as well as several Episcopal cathedral choirs. In addition to being the founding Artistic Director of St. Martin's Chamber Choir, Krueger in the past served as Chorus Director for the Boulder Bach Festival and in a similar capacity for the Colorado Music Festival and the Boulder Philharmonic. He is an Affiliate Faculty member in the Music Department of Metropolitan State University of Denver. He is Choirmaster of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, overseeing one of Denver's finest classical church music programs.

