

The Choral Foundation, through the Andrew Cain Music Fund, presents

Candlelight & Carols With the Festival Singers

Our 36th Annual Celebration of the Beauty & Wonder of Christmas

The New South Festival Singers

William O. Baker, Founder & Interim Conductor

Julie Koenig, harp

Matthew Edwards, organ

Sunday Afternoon, 6 December 2020

St. John United Methodist Church

Atlanta, Georgia

*Awake the sleeping world with song,
This is the day the Lord has made.
Assemble here celestial throng,
In royal splendor come arrayed.
Come in, ye kings, and kiss the feet of God!*

SOLI DEO GLORIA

What wondrous love is this, O my soul?

The New South Festival Singers

William O. Baker, DMA
Music Director & Conductor

Jamea J. Sale, MME
WBCF Executive Associate Music Director
Director, Institute for Healthy Singing

Andrew Phillip Schmidt, MM
Music Director, Summer Singers of Atlanta

Amy Thropp, MM
Music Director, Zimria Festivale Atlanta

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Sean Sweeden, DMA
Composer in Residence

Jennifer Lahasky, MM
Associate Music Director, Lee's Summit

Megan Moore
Sydney Sewell
Choral Interns

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Concert Manager, Kansas City

Patrick Neas
Host, Choral Conversations Podcast

Leanne Elmer Herrmann, Staff Accompanist
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The William Baker Choral Foundation, Inc.
5450 Buena Vista Street, Suite 100
Roeland Park, Kansas 66205 913.488.7524

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Steve Brailsford '14 *Heather Sabatino '09*

**Matthew Edwards '19* *Charles St. Clair '11*

Marla Franks '03 *Sarah Sambol '14*

Felicia Hernandez '04 *Sydney Sewell '19*

Ellen Hicks '10 *Jessica Shepherd '09*

Alex Johnson '17 *Scott Smith '94*

Alexandra Kemp '18 *+Lynn Swanson '08*

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Dr. William O. Baker, Founder & Interim Conductor



William O. Baker has earned a reputation as an entrepreneurial conductor and creator of choral organizations. He founded the DeKalb Choral Guild in 1978 at the age of 19. By the age of 21 he had conducted Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem*, Vivaldi's *Gloria*, Schubert's *Mass in G*, and Handel's *Messiah* with professional orchestras, launching a career of ambitious artistic leadership that now has extended over forty years. In the last decade alone he has conducted the *St. Matthew Passion* and the *Mass in B minor* of Bach, and the *Sacred Service* of Ernest Bloch, at the time of the performances the only Kansas City-based conductor to lead the works in over a quarter-century.

Baker created the Atlanta-based William Baker Festival Singers, originally called Gwinnett Festival Singers, in 1985, and established the William Baker Choral Foundation in 1990. In 1998 the conductor moved his home to the Kansas City area and created the Kansas City ensemble of the Festival Singers. The Choral Foundation has created over a dozen ensembles based in three states, involving hundreds of singers each year. His choirs have performed for numerous conventions of the American Choral Directors Association, the National Association for Music Education, and the American Guild of Organists, in addition to the 1982 World's Fair and music festivals in the United States and Great Britain, most notably appearances before capacity audiences at Charleston's Piccolo Spoleto Festival since 1989. He has led the Festival Singers in the production of over two dozen nationally released recordings and in television and radio appearances across the nation, including *The First Art*, *The Sounds of Majesty* and National Public Radio's *Performance Today*.

No stranger to the orchestral podium, William Baker created the Mountain Park Wind Symphony in 1994 and the Kansas City Wind Symphony in 1998. Primary orchestral performances have included Vivaldi: *The Seasons*, Sibelius: *Finlandia*, Bach: *Brandenburg Concerto No. 2*, Bizet: *Suite L'Arlesienne*, Haydn: *Symphony No. 59 "Fire,"* Mozart: *Symphony No. 41*, Beethoven: *Symphony No. 7* and *Symphony No. 9*. Choral collaborations have included projects with members of the Kansas City Symphony, the Kazanetti Chamber Orchestra, the Atlanta Youth Symphony Orchestra, the Kansas City Civic Orchestra, the Baton Rouge Symphony, the Gwinnett Symphony Orchestra, the Charleston Symphony Orchestra and the Orchestra of the American Heartland.



Dr. Baker served as Minister of Music for significant Lutheran, Presbyterian and United Methodist congregations across the South and the Midwest. Major appointments have included the historic Grace United Methodist Church in Midtown Atlanta and The Village Church in suburban Kansas City, the nation's second largest Presbyterian congregation. He presently serves as Music Director for the historic St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Lee's Summit, Missouri. He is the author of two devotional books: *Hearts & Hands & Voices* and *Wonder, Love & Praise*. Dr. Baker is co-host of *Choral Conversations*, a monthly podcast with legendary classical music commentator Patrick Neas.

An Atlanta native, Dr. Baker studied voice and choral conducting at Mercer University and the University of Georgia before culminating his formal education at the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago where he earned the Doctor of Musical Arts in Choral Conducting. His accomplishments have been recognized in his home states through proclamations by two Georgia Governors, Joe Frank Harris and Sonny Purdue, by Kansas Governor Jeff Colyer, by United States Congressman Phil Gingrey, by proclamations from the cities of Kansas City, MO and Roeland Park, KS, by the Johnson County (KS) Commission, and by a 2015 proclamation by the State of Georgia House of Representatives. In 2012 he was honored for his contributions to the cultural life of his hometown by the Pro-Mozart Society of Atlanta. In 2015 he was named Conductor Emeritus of The DeKalb Choral Guild.

The New South Festival Singers

Music of Timeless Beauty and Worth in Atlanta Since 1985



The New South Festival Singers traces its history to the 1985 creation of Gwinnett Festival Singers by founder William Baker and his long-time associate, Janis Lane. The ensemble was known as The William Baker Festival Singers from 1998-2015. With the appointment of Lynn Swanson as the second Music Director & Conductor of the ensemble in June 2015 the choir took the name The Lynn Swanson Festival Singers. With the appointment of Andrew Phillip Schmidt in 2017 as the third Music Director & Conductor the ensemble is now “The New South Festival Singers” in homage to Henry W. Grady’s description of Atlanta’s historic legacy of tolerance, justice, opportunity and enterprise. The Founder & Music Director, William Baker, has returned to the podium for the 2020-2021 concert season as the Choral Foundation conducts a search for the next Music Director of the Festival Singers.

The Festival Singers specializes in short-form sacred a cappella classics and spirituals, in addition to annual performances of masterworks for chorus and chamber orchestra. Major concerts have included a performance of Brahms *Ein deutsches Requiem* with the Gwinnett Symphony Orchestra, and a performance in Spivey Hall of Johann Sebastian Bach’s *St. John Passion* and *Mass in B Minor*. Other masterworks over the years have included Stravinsky *Symphony of Psalms*, Bernstein *Chichester Psalms*, Mozart’s *Requiem*, *Solemn Vespers*, *Missa Brevis in D*, and *Mass in C minor*; Buxtehude’s *Membra Jesu Nostri*, and Britten’s *Rejoice in the Lamb* and *Ceremony of Carols*, along with dozens of works from Palestrina to Kodaly. The Festival Singers performed the Ernest Bloch *Avodath Hakodesh* for the rededication of the magnificent pipe organ at The Temple on Peachtree, and at the historic Community Christian Church in Kansas City, a performance broadcast in its entirety by Kansas Public Radio on the eve of Passover 2012. This coming March The New South Festival Singers & Chamber Orchestra will perform works of Bach, Martini and Buxtehude.

The ensemble is known for its expressive memorized performances of signature a cappella concerts demonstrating a striking diversity and depth of repertoire. The sound of the Festival Singers has been hailed by music critics and the general public, including The Atlanta Journal-Constitution “*Sensuous tonal beauty ...a level of balance, blend, intonation and expressiveness that puts the average community chorus to shame...*” The Charleston Post & Courier, “*...the South’s premier a cappella choir...exceptional tone and ferocious emotion...*” and the New Orleans Times-Picayune, “*...inspiring and exhilarating.*”

The Festival Singers has produced 25 nationally released recordings hailed in reviews by *The Atlanta Constitution* and *The American Record Guide*. The choir has been featured in local television programs across the South, and on national radio programs that include *The Sounds of Majesty*, *The First Art* and National Public Radio’s *Performance Today*. They have toured throughout the South and Midwest in the United States and Great Britain, having appeared in Birmingham’s Divinity Chapel, Atlanta’s Spivey Hall, the DeKalb International Choral Festival, Canterbury Cathedral, and the Bristol (England) Festival, in addition to annual performances before capacity audiences at the Piccolo Spoleto Festival in Charleston, SC, since 1989.



The Festival Singers has become a model for professional-level volunteer choruses that have inspired the creation of similar organizations in the Atlanta area and across the nation. Indeed, the ambitious chorus that met for a first rehearsal in the basement of a Norcross church in 1985 is now the flagship ensemble of the William Baker Choral Foundation, a national arts organization that through the years has created over a dozen choirs involving hundreds of men, women and young people in Georgia, Kansas and Missouri.

www.NewSouthFestivalSingers.org

THE NEW SOUTH FESTIVAL SINGERS

Dr. William O. Baker, Founder & Interim Conductor

Sydney Sewell, Choral Intern Scott Smith, Choral Associate & Administrator

"A (Rutter) Requiem that excels conceptually, chorally and orchestrally. The soloists also sang beautifully ...This is a handsome account of the Requiem that does honor to Rutter, to the liturgy, and to the performers themselves."

-Phillip Greenfield, American Record Guide, November/December 2020

"The Festival Singers is one of the very finest choral groups of any size or genre in the Southeastern United States and beyond. Their annual performances at the Piccolo Spoleto Festival, usually before standing room only audiences, are excellent, breathtaking and inspiring."

-Ellen Dressler Moryl, Former Director, Cultural Affairs for the City of Charleston, Founder of Piccolo Spoleto

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Celebrating Our 36th Concert Season in Atlanta

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Performing at Piccolo Spoleto Since 1989*

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St. John United Methodist Church in North Atlanta

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Please Call 913-488-7524 or Email Mail@FestivalSingers.org

www.NewSouthFestivalSingers.org

Candlelight & Carols With the Festival Singers

Sunday Afternoon, 6 December 2020
St. John United Methodist Church, Atlanta, Georgia

The New South Festival Singers

Dr. William O. Baker, Founder & Interim Conductor
Julie Koenig, harp Matthew Edwards, organ

As a courtesy to others, please do not text or take photographs during the performance.

Please silence all electronic devices and please refrain from applause until after the Retiring Procession

+For the safety of all please wear your mask at all times while in the church building+

Welcome

Opening Voluntary: SILENT NIGHT

Franz GRUBER, 1787-1863
Arranged by Claire Ryan

PROCESSION “O Come All Ye Faithful”

ADESTE FIDELES

The Audience Will Please Rise

You may meditate on these words, or hum or sing quietly under your mask

*O come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem,
Come and behold Him, Born the King of Angels,
O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!*

*The highest, most holy, Light of light eternal,
Born of a Virgin a mortal He comes,
Son of the Father, Now in flesh appearing,
O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!*

*Sing choirs of angels, Sing in exultation,
Sing all ye citizens of heaven above,
Glory to God, Glory in the highest,
O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!*

THIS CHRISTMASTIDE

Donald FRASER, Born 1943

*This Christmastide was composed for Jessye Norman, 1945-2019, and is performed here in thanksgiving for her life and career
Recorded by the Festival Singers on the album “Images of Wonder”*

READING I *In the night I cry to You, O Lord...*

MY SONG IN THE NIGHT

*American Traditional arranged by Paul Christiansen
Recorded by the Festival Singers on the album “Star in the East”*

READING II *And it shall come to pass in the latter days...*

BEFORE THE MARVEL OF THIS NIGHT

Carl SCHALK, Born 1929

Recorded by the Festival Singers on the album "A Festival For Christmas"

READING III *Seek the Lord while He may be found...*

TO HIM WE SING

Robert YOUNG, Born 1923

Recorded by the Festival Singers on the album "A Festival For Christmas"

READING IV *My soul magnifies the Lord...*

LO, HOW A ROSE E'RE BLOOMING

Hugo DISTLER, 1908-1942

Recorded by the Festival Singers on the album "Images of Wonder"

THERE IS NO ROSE

Sean SWEEDEN, Born 1987

Dr. Sweeden is a Composer in Residence of the Festival Singers There Is No Rose was premiered in 2018

Recorded by the Festival Singers on the album "The Heart Worship at Christmas"

PRELUDE ON Greensleeves

Richard PURVIS, 1913-1994

CAROL "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

ST. LOUIS

The Audience Will Please Rise

You may meditate on these words, or hum or sing quietly under your mask

*O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.*

*For Christ is born of Mary; and gathered all above,
While mortals sleep the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars together proclaim the Holy Birth!
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth.*

*O Holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!*

READING V *And there were shepherds abiding in the fields...*

A LA NANITA

Sung in Spanish & English

Spanish Traditional arranged by Roger Folstrom

Recorded by the Festival Singers on the album "The Heart Worship at Christmas"

READING VI *In the beginning was the Word...*

THE WORD WAS GOD

Rosephyne POWELL, Born 1962

Recorded by the Festival Singers on the album "Light Everlasting"

READING VII *How beautiful upon the mountains...*

NOEL AYISYEN

Sung in Haitian

Emile DESAMOURS, Born 1941

Jeff Kershner, percussion

RETIRING PROCESSION “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing”

MENDELSSOHN

The Audience Will Please Rise

You may meditate on these words, or hum or sing quietly under your mask

*Hark, the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled.
Joyful all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies.
With angelic hosts proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Hark, the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”*

*Christ by highest heaven adored, Christ the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold Him come, offspring of the Virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, Hail th’Incarnate Deity!
Pleased as Man with men to dwell, Jesus our Emmanuel.
Hark, the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”*

*Hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace, hail the Son of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings, risen with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glories by; born that Man no more may die.
Born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth.
Hark, the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”*

*The Musical Family of the William Baker Choral Foundation
Wishes You and Yours a Merry Christmas & A Joyous New Year*

Upcoming With The New South Festival Singers

The 16th Annual Andrew Cain Memorial Masterworks Concert

The New South Festival Singers & Chamber Orchestra

Arietha Lockhart, soprano Andrew Phillip Schmidt, bass

Buxtehude, Martini & Bach

Giovanni Battista Martini: AD ADJUVANDUM ME FESTINA

Dietrich Buxtehude: JESU MEINE FREUDE, BuxWV 62

Johann Sebastian Bach: ICH WILL DEN KREUZSTAB GERNE TRAGEN, BWV 56

Johann Sebastian Bach: JAUCHZET GOTT IN ALLEN LANDEN, BWV 51

Johann Sebastian Bach: CHRIST LAG IN TODESBANDEN, BWV 4

Sunday Afternoon, 7 March 2021 at 3:00 PM

St. John United Methodist Church, 550 Mt. Paran Road, Atlanta, Georgia

www.FestivalSingers.org/concerts

SYDNEY SEWELL, Student Intern/Atlanta

Sydney Sewell comes to the William Baker Choral Foundation from a rich musical background. She began her musical studies in the Atlanta area as a student in the Atlanta Area Suzuki Piano Association, where she studied piano under Robin Blankenship for thirteen years. Sydney later attended Georgia Southern University in Statesboro, where she graduated with the Bachelor of Music Education. She taught choral music at the high school level for two years after graduating. Sydney has also directed and assisted with several church choirs in the Statesboro and Atlanta areas. She was appointed Student Intern in May. She conducted selections with the 2019 Cobb Summer Singers under Dr. Norma Raybon, in the current season, and assisted with the Summer Singers of Atlanta under Dr. William Baker.



Sydney's long-term goals include completing her master's and doctorate in choral conducting and conducting a collegiate or professional ensemble. She is thrilled to be a part of the Choral Foundation and is enjoying her work as Student Intern for the 2019-2021 New South Festival Singers under the direction of Music Director Andrew Phillip Schmidt and Interim Conductor William Baker.

JULIE KOENIG, Harp

Julie Koenig is an Atlanta-based professional harpist with repertoire ranging from classical to contemporary. An Ohio native, she played seven seasons with the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra. She holds the Bachelor of Music in Harp Performance from the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. Julie has been principal harpist of the Georgia Symphony Orchestra since 1994 and has performed frequently with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the DeKalb Symphony Orchestra, and the Johns Creek Symphony. She has backed various artists including Trisha Yearwood, Amy Grant, Michael W. Smith, Itzhak Perlman, Yo-Yo Ma, Indigo Girls, and Ray Charles. Ms. Koenig has also provided music at private events for President Jimmy Carter, Tyler Perry, Coca-Cola, Chick-Fil-A, Home Depot, and Widespread Panic. She has played harp for thousands of wedding ceremonies and countless other special occasions. She has performed on European tours in Rome, Italy, and Vienna, Austria. Ms. Koenig has performed and recorded numerous works with the Festival Singers over the past thirty years, including John Rutter's *Requiem*, recently lauded by *The American Record Guide*.



MATTHEW ALAN EDWARDS, Organ



Matthew Alan Edwards is a multi-faceted musician who teaches, performs and composes. He earned the Bachelor of Music in Organ Performance with Dr. Faythe Freese and the Master of Arts in Secondary Education (Music Education, Vocal/Choral Emphasis) with Dr. Marvin Latimer, both from the University of Alabama. In metro Atlanta he teaches piano at M. D. Roberts School of the Arts in Clayton County, serves as a substitute organist, and performs with The New South Festival Singers as bass section leader. For more information on upcoming concerts, available compositions, or recordings, visit MatthewAlanEdwards.com.

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The William Baker Festival Singers, Prairie Village, Kansas, 1998

The Summer Singers of Atlanta, Midtown Atlanta, 1990

Andrew Phillip Schmidt, MM, Music Director & Conductor

The New South Festival Singers, Atlanta, Georgia, 1985

Gwinnett Festival Singers, 1985-1998 William Baker Festival Singers Atlanta, 1998-2015 Lynn Swanson Festival Singers, 2015-2017

William O. Baker, DMA, Founder & Interim Conductor

Zimria Festivale Atlanta, Dunwoody, Georgia, 2014

Amy Thropp, MM, Music Director & Conductor

The Summer Singers of Kansas City, Kansas City, Missouri, 1999

William O. Baker, DMA, Music Director & Conductor

The Cobb Summer Singers, Marietta, Georgia, 2006

The Summer Singers of Lee's Summit, Lee's Summit, Missouri, 2014

William O. Baker, DMA, & Jennifer Lahasky, MM, Music Directors

The Institute for Healthy Singing, Roeland Park, Kansas, 2015

Jamea J. Sale, MME, Director

The Institute for Choral Creativity, Roeland Park, Kansas, 2020

Ed Frazier Davis, MM, Director

Kansas City Bronze, Roeland Park, Kansas, 2018

Choral Conversations Podcast with Patrick Neas & William Baker, Roeland Park, Kansas, 2018

The Jane Sullivan Choral Resource Library, Roeland Park, Kansas, 2016

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www.ChoralFoundation.org

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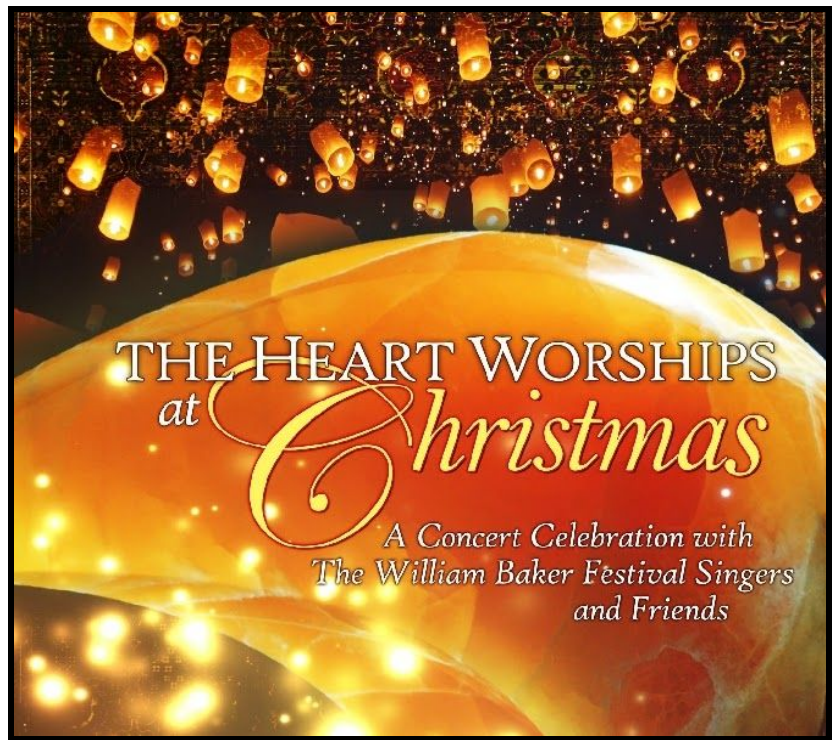
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