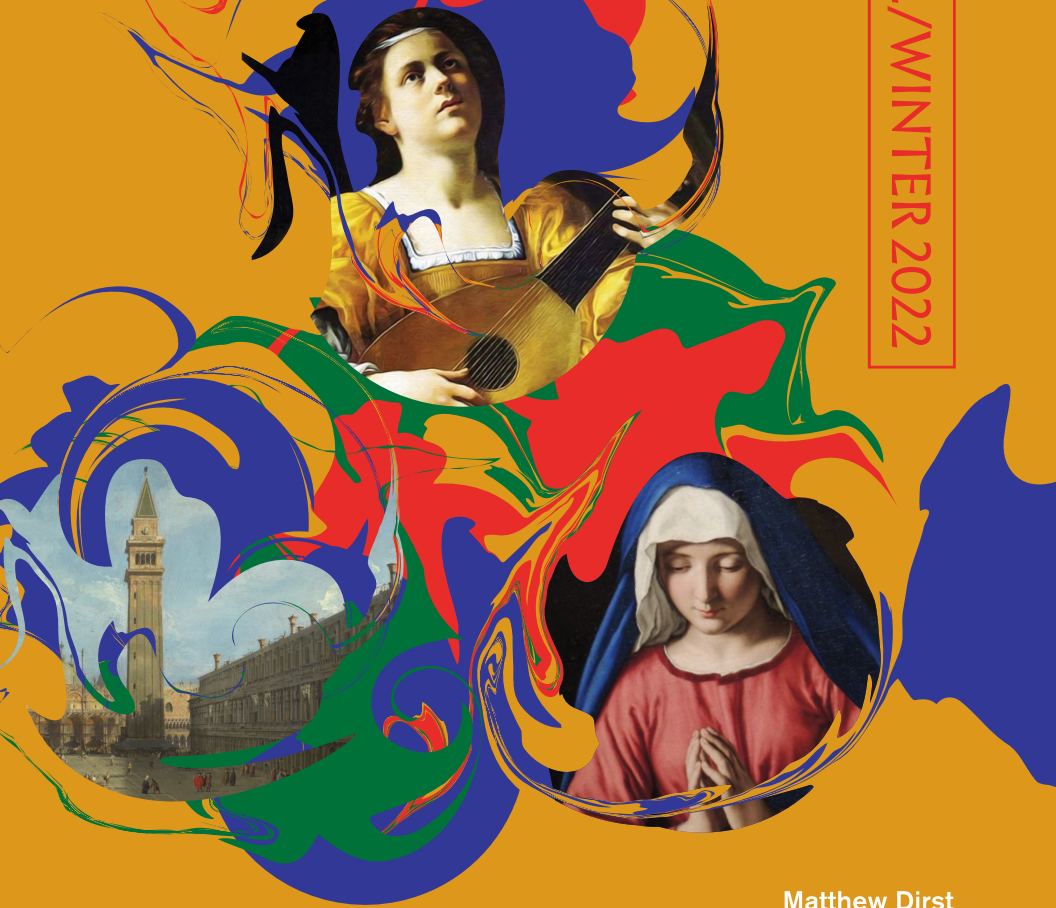


# SOUNDING LEGACIES

FALL/WINTER 2022



Matthew Dirst  
*Artistic Director*

SEP 23, 2022 7:30 PM **HAIL, BRIGHT CECILIA!**

NOV 12, 2022 7:30 PM **RED PRIEST OF VENICE**

DEC 13, 2022 7:30 PM **A MARIAN FEAST**

ARS  
LYRICA  
HOUSTON 

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Maria meets Matthew the musical magician, and the two travel back in time almost 300 years to meet Antonio Vivaldi. Next stop: Venice, Italy!

*Maria's Magical Music Adventure* is an Ars Lyrica Houston children's book, underwritten by Connie Kwan-Wong and CKW LUXE Magazine. With breathtaking illustrations and a story full of adventure and excitement, the book inspires and delights audiences of all ages. Author Emma Kent Wine also wrote original music and arranged excerpts from *The Four Seasons* to accompany the story. Listen to the music and order your copy: [www.arslyricahouston.org/maria](http://www.arslyricahouston.org/maria)



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# SOUNDING LEGACIES

## FROM THE DIRECTORS

The disruptions of the last two years have made us more grateful for things we used to take for granted, like the opportunity to make and enjoy music together. Gratitude likewise motivates our 2022/23 season, which pays homage to sounding legacies of various kinds: from that of Cecilia, our patron saint, to the enduring pastoral trope in poetry and music. We're delighted to offer in-person programs once again, with major works this season by Purcell, Vivaldi, Monteverdi, Handel, Rameau, and Bach. Featured soloists include audience favorites alongside rising stars, and our core ensemble of period string, wind, and continuo players has never been in better shape. This will be a season filled with celebration and thanksgiving!

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With gratitude,



*Matthew Dirst*  
**Matthew Dirst**  
Artistic Director



*Kinga Ferguson*  
**Kinga Ferguson**  
Executive Director



# *A Marian Feast*

Tuesday, December 13, 2022 at 7:30 pm  
St. Philip Presbyterian Church

*Program Notes, Texts and Translations*



## PROGRAM

### I

*Ave Maris Stella* plainchant alternating with polyphony by  
Guillaume Dufay (c1397–1474)  
& Jean Titelouze (1563–1633)

### II

*Alma Redemptoris Mater*, H. 44 Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1643-1704)  
*The Angel Gabriel* Sarah MacDonald (b. 1968)  
*Sonata nona* Isabella Leonarda (1620-1704)

### III

*Canzon a 6* Giovanni Gabrieli (1557–1612)  
*Magnificat a 3*, H. 73 Charpentier

### IV

*There is no Rose* Anon (c1420)  
*Liquide perle Amor* Luca Marenzio (1553–1599)  
*Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen* Hugo Distler (1908–1942)

### V

*Magnificat a 6* Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643)

*Ars Lyrica Houston thanks Kathryn and Brendan Godfrey for generously providing the post-concert receptions for 22/23 season performances.*

## ARTISTIC PERSONNEL

Soprano	Julia Fox Alexandra Gorman
Countertenor	Michael Skarke
Tenor	Kyle Stegall Thomas O'Neill
Baritone	Christopher Besch
Violin	Kurt Johnson Maria Lin
Violine	Deborah Dunham
Theorbo	Richard Savino
Organ	Mario Aschauer
Harpsichord/Conductor	Matthew Dirst

*With thanks to St. Philip Presbyterian Church for providing instruments,  
rehearsal and performance space for this program.*

*Organ by Paul Fritts & Co. (Tacoma, WA 2010)*

*Harpsichord by John Phillips (Berkeley, CA 2012) after Albert Delin (Tournai,  
1768)*

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## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

This musical celebration of Mary, mother of Jesus, begins with a Latin hymn whose text and plainsong melody date from the Middle Ages. Its first line (“Hail, star of the sea”) has long served as an invocation for safe travel while its entire text praises the Virgin Mary as a source of kindness, devotion, and love. We alternate verses in chant with polyphonic settings by two composers who stand at the opposite ends of the long Renaissance: Guillaume Dufay and Jean Titelouze. Dufay’s unaccompanied *fauxbourdon* on *Ave Maris Stella* is essentially harmonized chant, with a decorated melody in the top voice and simple counterpoint

in the two lower voices. Titelouze's three organ versets on the same melody include (in order) an introductory *plein jeu* with a slow-moving melody at the bottom of a fulsome texture, a motet-like setting with each phrase of the chant explored contrapuntally, and a trio with two accompanying voices in canon with each other.

The central groups of pieces continue the Marian focus with selections drawn from an equally wide historical spectrum. Marc-Antoine Charpentier was a prolific composer of sacred and theatrical music, much of it written for Marie de Lorraine, Duchess of Guise and first cousin to Louis XIV. Like our opening sequence, *Alma Redemptoris Mater* is a Latin hymn though one with a particular liturgical role: as part of the appointed prayers for the four Sundays in Advent. Charpentier's sonorous setting is scored for two violins, four voices, and basso continuo. The more sensual instrumental writing of his *Magnificat a 3* provides a contrapuntal frame for its longer text. A repeating bass *ostinato* (a descending melodic fourth) lends a kind of gently hypnotic air to this setting of Mary's song of praise, first uttered during her Visitation with Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist, and recorded memorably in Luke's Gospel.

Three carol settings spanning nearly six hundred years display the potential range of such pieces. The anonymous *There is no Rose* juxtaposes a repeating refrain for three voices (which resembles the sonority of Dufay's *Ave Maris Stella*) with verses in two-part counterpoint. Sarah McDonald's arrangement of the Basque carol *The Angel Gabriel* incorporates bits and pieces of the *Magnificat* text as well, in a haunting setting meant to convey "a slight feeling of unease," to quote the composer's own instructions. With its carefully staggered part writing and shimmering textures, Hugo Distler's *Lo How a Rose* (adapted from his larger *Christmas Story*) embraces a more modernist aesthetic in multiple verses each set in a distinctive manner.

Additional organ selections, both taken from a Viennese convent manuscript, include a canzona by the Venetian master Giovanni Gabrieli and a transcription of an Italian madrigal by Luca Marenzio, whose text speaks of a love so fierce as to bring "ardent pain." Isabella Leonarda's Sonata, cast in the sectional style pioneered in the early seventeenth

century, comes from the first published collection of such works by a woman. Celebrated in her hometown as the “Muse of Novara,” Leonarda entered an Ursuline convent at an early age and was one of the most prolific composers of her era.

In 1610 Claudio Monteverdi published a truly grandiose collection of sacred music comprising a “Mass for the Most Holy Virgin for six voices, and Vespers for several voices with some sacred songs.” Then court musician to the Gonzaga dukes in Mantua, where he enjoyed considerable prestige, Monteverdi clearly had his eye on a bigger prize: the position of Music Director at St Mark’s Basilica in Venice, long the most important Catholic edifice outside Rome. Having demonstrated his absolute mastery of old and new styles in what was likely an audition piece, Monteverdi took up duties at St Mark’s in 1613 and remained active there until his death in 1643. The *1610 Vespers*, as it is now known, includes everything one might want for a Marian feast, from imposing psalm settings and intimate motets to two related though distinct settings of the *Magnificat*—one expansive, the other more modest. Tonight’s program closes with the latter work.

The *Magnificat a 6* has much in common with its sister *Magnificat a 7* but without its rich panoply of instrumental color and extended virtuosic display. Both incorporate a significant dose of plainsong (simple psalm formula) against more agile vocal lines that decorate and harmonize joyfully. Tonight’s performance, which adds a bit of instrumental color to Monteverdi’s otherwise spare score, is inspired by the composer’s own practice: his edition assumes excerpting of individual sections either with groups of string and wind instruments or with organ alone.

© Matthew Dirst

## TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

*Ave, maris stella,  
Dei mater alma,  
atque semper virgo,  
Felix cæli porta.*

Hail, star of the sea,  
blessed Mother of God  
and eternal Virgin,  
happy gate of Heaven.

*Sumens illud «Ave»  
Gabrielis ore,  
funda nos in pace,  
mutans nomen Hevæ .*

Receiving that "Ave"  
from the mouth of Gabriel,  
grant us peace,  
transforming the name of "Eva."

*Solve vincla reis,  
profer lumen cæcis,  
mala nostra pelle,  
bona cuncta posce.*

Loosen the chains of sinners,  
Give light to the blind,  
Dispel all evil  
and bless us with goodness.

*Monstra te esse matrem,  
sumat per te precem  
qui pro nobis natus  
tulit esse tuus.*

Embrace your role as Mother,  
so that He may receive our prayer  
who was born for us,  
and willingly became your own.

*Virgo singularis,  
inter omnes mitis,  
nos culpis solutos  
mites fac et castos.*

Virgin above all others,  
meek above all others,  
free us from sin,  
meek and pure.

*Vitam præsta puram,  
iter para tutum,  
ut videntes Jesum  
semper colletemur.*

Bestow on us a pure life  
and keep our path safe,  
so that in seeing Jesus,  
we may ever rejoice.

*Sit laus Deo Patri,  
summo Christo decus,  
Spiritus Sancto  
honor tribus unum. Amen.*

Praise to God the Father,  
glory to Christ most high,  
and honor to the Holy Spirit,  
one in three. Amen.

***Alma Redemptoris Mater,  
quae pervia coeli  
Porta manes, et stella maris,  
succurre cadenti,  
Surgere qui curat, populo:  
tu quae genuisti,  
Natura mirante, tuum sanctum  
Genitorem  
Virgo prius ac posterius,  
Gabrielis ab ore  
Sumens illud Ave,  
peccatorum miserere.***

Loving Mother of the Redeemer,  
who opens to us  
heaven's gate and is the  
star of the sea,  
aid a fallen people who  
strive to rise.  
While nature marvelled, you  
brought forth your Creator  
and received with joy  
Gabriel's "Ave."  
Have mercy on us sinners.

**The angel Gabriel from heaven came,**  
his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame.  
"All hail," said he, "thou lowly maiden Mary,"  
"most highly favoured Lady," Gloria.

"For known a blessed Mother thou shalt be,  
all generations laud and honour thee."  
"Thy Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,"  
"Most highly favoured Lady," Gloria.

Of her Emmanuel the Christ was born  
in Bethlehem all on a Christmas morn.  
And Christian folk throughout the world will ever say:  
Most highly favoured Lady. Gloria!

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head,  
"To me be as it pleaseth God," she said.  
"My soul shall laud and magnify his holy Name,"  
Most highly favoured Lady, Gloria!

*Magnificat anima mea  
Dominum;  
Et exultavit spiritus meus  
in Deo salutari meo,  
Quia respexit humilitatem  
ancillae suae.  
Ecce enim ex hoc beatam  
me dicent  
omnes generationes.  
Quia fecit mihi magna  
qui potens est,  
et sanctum nomen ejus,  
Et misericordia ejus a progeny  
in progenies  
timentibus eum.  
Fecit potentiam in brachio suo;  
  
Dispersit superbos mente  
cordis sui.  
Deposuit potentes de sede,  
  
et exaltavit humiles.  
Esurientes implevit bonis,  
  
et divites dimisit inanes.  
  
Suscepit Israel,*

My soul magnifies  
the greatness of God  
and my spirit rejoices  
in God my Savior,  
for He has looked with favor  
on His humble servant.  
From this day  
I am blessed  
by every generation.  
The Almighty has done  
great things for me,  
and holy is His Name.  
He has mercy is on those  
that fear him  
in every generation.  
He has shown strength  
with his arm,  
he has scattered the proud  
in their conceit.  
He has cast down the mighty  
from their thrones  
and has lifted up the meek.  
He has filled the hungry  
with good things,  
and the rich He has sent  
empty away.  
He has come to help



*puerum suum,  
recordatus misericordiae suae,*

*Sicut locutus est ad  
patres nostros,  
Abraham et semini ejus  
in saecula.*

*Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui  
Sancto,  
sicut erat in principio, et nunc  
et semper:  
et in Saecula saeculorum. Amen.*

his servant Israel,  
remembering the  
promise of mercy  
that He made  
to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and his children  
for ever.  
Glory to the Father, the Son,  
and the Holy Spirit,  
as it was in the beginning is now  
and will be forever. Amen.

***There is no rose of swych vertu***  
*As is the rose that bare Jhesu.  
Alleluia.*

There is no rose of such virtue  
As is the rose that bare Jesu:  
Alleluia.

*For in this rose conteynyd was  
Heaven and erthe in lyttle space:  
Res miranda.*

For in this rose contained was  
Heaven and earth in little space:  
Thing of wonder.

*Be that rose we may weel see  
That he is God in personys thre:  
Pari forma.*

By that rose we may well see  
That he is God in person three:  
Equal in form.

*The aungelys sungyn  
the sheperdes to  
Gloria in excelsis Deo:  
Gaudeamus.*

The angels sung  
the shepherds to:  
Glory be to God on High:  
Let us rejoice.

*Leive we al this worldly merthe,  
And folwe we this joyful berthe:  
Transeamus.*

Leave we all this worldly mirth,  
And follow we this joyful birth:  
On we go.

*Es ist ein Ros entsprungen  
aus einer Wurzel zart,  
wie uns die Alten sungen,  
von Jesse kam die Art  
Und hat ein Blümlein bracht  
mitten im kalten Winter,  
wohl zu der halben Nacht.*

*Das Röslein, das ich meine,  
davon Isaias sagt,  
ist Maria die reine  
die uns das Blümlein bracht.  
Aus Gottes ew'gem Rat  
hat sie ein Kind geboren  
und blieb ein reine Magd.*

*Das Blümelein, so kleine  
das duftet uns so süß,  
mit seinem hellen Scheine  
vertreibt's die Finsternis.  
Wahr Mensch und wahrer Gott,  
hilft uns aus allem Leide,  
rettet von Sünd und Tod.*

*So singer wir all Amen  
das heißt: nun werd es wahr,  
was wir behehrn allsamen.  
O Jesu, hilf uns dar  
in deines Vaters reich,  
drin wollen wir dich loben.  
O Gott, uns das verleih.*

Behold, a Branch is growing  
Of loveliest form and grace,  
as prophets sung, foreknowing;  
It springs from Jesse's race  
And bears one little Flow'r  
In midst of coldest winter,  
At deepest midnight hour.

Isaiah hath foretold it  
In words of promise sure,  
And Mary's arms enfold it,  
A virgin meek and pure.  
Thro' God's eternal will  
This Child to her is given  
And remains spotless still.

This Flow'r whose fragrance tender  
With sweetness fills the air,  
Dispels with glorious splendor  
The darkness ev'rywhere.  
True Man, yet very God;  
From sin and death He saves us  
And lightens ev'ry load.

So sing we all now Amen,  
so that it comes to pass,  
that which we all desire.  
O Jesus, help us  
as we enter your Father's kingdom,  
where we may praise You.  
O God, grant us this wish.

*The final translation is adapted from the poetry of Harriet Reynolds Spaeth.*

## ABOUT ARS LYRICA HOUSTON

### **Board of Directors**

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### **About Ars Lyrica**

Founded in 1998 by harpsichordist and conductor Matthew Dirst, Ars Lyrica Houston presents a diverse array of music in its original context while creating connections to contemporary life. Intelligent programming features neglected gems alongside familiar masterworks, and extracts the dramatic potential, emotional resonance, and expressive power of music. Its local subscription series, according to the Houston Chronicle, “sets the agenda” for early music in Houston. Ars Lyrica appears regularly at international festivals and conferences because of its distinctive focus, and its pioneering efforts in the field of authentic performance have won international acclaim, including a Grammy nomination for Best Opera.

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HOUSTON DISTRICT

**LAFFONT  
COMPETITION**

The Metropolitan Opera

**A MARIAN FEAST  
PROGRAM**

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I

*Ave Maris Stella* plainchant alternating with polyphony by  
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*The Angel Gabriel* Sarah MacDonald (b. 1968)  
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Magnificat à 6 Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643)

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*Organ by Paul Fritts & Co. (Tacoma, WA 2010)*

*Harpichord by John Phillips (Berkeley, CA 2012) after Albert Delin (Tournai, 1768)*

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

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Houston-based tenor **Stephen Ash** frequently performs as a soloist in opera, concert, and recital repertoire. Recent opera credits include Almaviva in *The Barber of Seville in Texas* (Houston Grand Opera's Opera To Go!), Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi* (Heartland Opera Theater), and Jenik in *The Bartered Bride* (Moore's Opera Center). In the concert hall, Stephen has recently performed solos in Vivaldi's *Magnificat* (Mercury Chamber Orchestra) and Händel's *Messiah* (Houston Masterworks Chorus). Stephen earned a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor where he studied music education and voice performance, and a Master of Music degree in voice performance and pedagogy from the University of Houston. A passionate music educator, he is a Teaching Artist at Houston Grand Opera Community Outreach and teaches music theory as part of his doctoral studies at the University of Houston.



Bass-baritone **Christopher Besch** is proud to have performed in eight countries on three continents with such conductors as Lorin Maazel, Leonard Slatkin, and Jeffrey Thomas. He has been described as having “a commanding stage presence and rich resonance of deep bass sound” (DC Theatre Scene). Stage engagements have included Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro* with Opera Colorado, Frederik in Sondheim's *A Little Night Music* with the Castleton Festival, Ashby in Puccini's *La Fanciulla del West* with Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia, and many others. As a frequent performer of concert repertoire, Dr. Besch's recent performances have included Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* with the Symphony of the Hills, Verdi's *Requiem* with the Green Bay Civic Symphony, Hama in Handel's *Esther* with Ars Lyrica Houston. Additionally, he is a frequent soloist with Bach Society Houston and appeared with them at the 2017 Leipzig Bach Festival in Leipzig, Germany and will again during the upcoming 2023 festival. As a pedagogue, he currently serves as Lecturer in Voice at the Texas State University and is the Vocal Program Director for the Classical Music Institute, an education and performance organization serving the San Antonio area.



Widely admired as a Baroque violinist of expressive eloquence and technical sparkle, **Elizabeth Blumenstock** is a long-time concertmaster with the Bay Area's Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and American Bach Soloists, concertmaster of the International Handel Festival Orchestra in Goettingen, Germany, and Artistic Director of the Corona del Mar Baroque Music Festival in Orange County, California. Her love of chamber music has involved her in several accomplished and interesting smaller ensembles including Galax Quartet, Live Oak Baroque, Sarasa, and Voices of Music.

Ms. Blumenstock teaches regularly for the Juilliard Historical Performance program, at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, the American Bach Soloists' summer Festival and Academy, the International Baroque Institute at Longy, and the Valley of the Moon Music Festival. She plays a 1660 Andrea Guarneri violin built in Cremona, Italy, on generous permanent loan to her from the Philharmonia Baroque Period Instrument Trust.



**Jay Carter** is recognized as one of the nation's finest countertenors and is a leading interpreter of Baroque repertoire, lauded for his luminous tone and stylish interpretations. He has appeared with many acclaimed conductors, including Maasaki Suzuki and the Bach Collegium Japan, Nicholas McGegan leading the St. Louis Symphony, and Daniel Hyde with the Choir of Men and Boys, St. Thomas Church, and has performed in

many top performance venues. He holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Missouri Kansas City Conservatory. He earned a Master's in Music from the Yale School of Music and Institute of Sacred Music, and an undergraduate degree from William Jewell College, where he studied with Arnold Epley. Carter is on the voice faculty of Westminster Choir College in Princeton, NJ, where he leads Kantorei, an early music chamber choir. He also serves as Artistic Advisor for the Kansas City chamber choir Musica Vocale.





Ars Lyrica Artistic Director **Matthew Dirst**, recently described in the *Washington Post* as an “efficient, extremely precise conductor who has an ear for detail,” is the first American musician to win major international prizes in both organ and harpsichord, including the American Guild of Organists National Young Artist Competition and the Warsaw International Harpsichord Competition. Widely admired for his stylish playing and conducting, Dirst leads a period-instrument ensemble with several acclaimed recordings, one of which—J. A. Hasse’s *Marc Antonio e Cleopatra*—was nominated for a Grammy Award in 2011 for Best Opera. His degrees include a PhD in musicology from Stanford University and the *prix de virtuosité* in both organ and harpsichord from the Conservatoire National de Reuil-Malmaison, France, where he spent two years as a Fulbright scholar. Equally active as a scholar and as an organist, Dirst is Professor of Music at the Moores School of Music, University of Houston, and Organist at St Philip Presbyterian Church in Houston. His publications include *Engaging Bach: The Keyboard Legacy from Marpurg to Mendelssohn* (Cambridge University Press, 2012) and *Bach and the Organ* (University of Illinois Press, 2016).



Soloist in the Grammy-winning album *Duruffé: The Complete Choral Works* and praised by *The New York Times* as “a creamy voiced mezzo-soprano,” **Cecilia Duarte** is a versatile singer who specializes in early music and contemporary opera. Role premieres include Renata in the Mariachi Opera *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna* (Houston Grand Opera, Chicago Lyric Opera, San Diego Opera, El Paso Opera, NYCOpera, Europe and South America); as well as Renata in *El Milagro del Recuerdo* (HGO); Harriet/First Responder in *After the Storm* (HGO); Alicia in *Some Light Emerges* (HGO); and Alma in the new opera web series *Star Cross’d*, with Houston Grand Opera. Other operatic roles include Maria in *Maria de Buenos Aires*, Loma Williams in *Cold Sassy Tree*, Sarelda in *The Inspector*, and Tituba in *The Crucible*.

Cecilia is a regular singer with Ars Lyrica Houston and Mercury Houston, a vocalist of the Kaleidoscope Vocal Ensemble, and most recently she debuted with the Boston Early Music Festival. Future engagements include Handel’s *Messiah* in a complete Spanish language adaptation with Bach Collegium San Diego, and world premieres of music with ROCO Houston, Apollo Chamber Players, and the Kaleidoscope Vocal Ensemble, as well as the release of her first solo album, *Reencuentros*, with Reference Recordings.



Soprano **Julia Fox** embraces opera, concert and chamber performances, and premiering new music. She works to offer an “excellent performance” (Gramophone) “with dazzling effect” (Pittsburgh Stage Review) wherever she sings. She has performed leading roles from the standard operatic repertoire—Aminta, Amore, Belinda, Cundegonde, Giulia, Gretel, Italienische Sängerin, Mabel, Micaëla, and Pamina—with Empire Opera, Opera Theater Pittsburgh,

Opera in the Heights, Operativo, RecRoom Arts and others. World premiere roles have been on record with NAXOS and on stage with Musiq, Houston Grand Opera’s *Opera to Go!*, and Five College Opera. As featured soloist, she has appeared with Mercury, Da Camera, Aperio, HGO, Syzygy, Grace Song, Foundation for Modern Music, Texas New Music Ensemble, Houston Baroque, Duo Scordatura, and Greenbriar Consortium, and she is delighted to return to Ars Lyrica. She studied at Amherst College, apprenticed with the Brentano Quartet and Peabody Trio, and was Young Artist Fellow with Da Camera.



**Alexandra Gorman** is a Cuban-American soprano based out of Houston, Texas. Her most recently performed roles include her role debut Susanna in Mozart’s *Le nozze di Figaro* (Red River Lyric Opera), Cleopatra in Handel’s *Giulio Cesare* and Anne in Sondheim’s *A Little Night Music* (Moores Opera Center). Previous roles include Rosina in Mozart’s *La finta semplice* (Moores Opera Center), Calisto in Cavalli’s *La Calisto* (Red River Lyric Opera), Clorinda in

Rossini’s *La Cenerentola* (Moores Opera Center), and Papagena in Mozart’s *Die Zauberflöte* (UNT Opera Theatre). In concert, Alexandra has performed the role of Lieschen in Bach’s *Kaffeekantate* as well as the soprano solo in Handel’s *Messiah* (Enid Symphony). Alexandra completed her Master of Music degree in Vocal Performance and Pedagogy (2022) at the University of Houston Moores School of Music.



Baroque oboe and recorder player **Kathryn Montoya** appears with a variety of orchestral and chamber music ensembles including the Boston Early Music Festival Orchestra, Tafelmusik, Apollo's Fire, and Handel & Haydn, among others. She currently teaches at Oberlin Conservatory, the Longy School of Music, and has been faculty for Longy's International Baroque Institute, Oberlin's BPI, and SFEMS workshops, and has led masterclasses in

the US and China. Mrs. Montoya enjoys a varied musical career performing for the Grammy award-winning recording of Charpentier's *La Couronne de Fleurs* with the Boston Early Music Festival, the Globe's productions of *Twelfth Night* and *Richard III* on Broadway, and occasionally touring as a tin whistle player. In her free time, she can be found in Hereford, England converting a 18th century barn into a home with her husband, James.



Acclaimed as a "young star" and "complete artist" by *The New York Times* and "extravagantly gifted...poised to redefine what's possible for singers of this distinctive voice type" by the San Francisco Chronicle, countertenor **Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen** is one of the classical vocal world's most promising rising stars.

Performances of the 2021-22 season included a role debut as Handel's *Giulio Cesare* with the Moscow Chamber Orchestra conducted by Christopher Moulds, gala concerts with The Dallas Opera led by Emmanuel Villaume, and debuts at the Opernhaus Zürich in a world premiere ballet creation choreographed by Christian Spruck upon the music of Monteverdi's Madrigals and at the Metropolitan Opera in the company's new production of *Hamlet* by composer Brett Dean. Highlights of past seasons include opera performances at Houston Grand Opera, San Francisco Opera, Theater an der Wien, and Adelaide Festival and concert appearances with San Francisco Symphony, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, and the Buffalo Philharmonic.

**Mr. Nussbaum Cohen's performance is generously underwritten by Dr. Ellen R. Gritz & Milton D. Rosenau, Jr.**



**Thomas O'Neill** is a 22-year-old tenor from Abingdon, Virginia. A senior at the Moores School of Music at the University of Houston, he has appeared in Moores Opera Center productions as Don Basilio in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Mercury in *Ophée aux enfers*, Don Ramiro in *La Cenerentola*, Don Polidoro in *La Finta Semplice*, Henrik in *A Little Night Music*, and Vašek in *The Bartered Bride*. He has also appeared locally as Petermann in *Monsieur Choufleuri* for

Operativo Houston, and will appear with the same company this season as Oronte in *Alcina*. He has been a staff singer at St. Philip Presbyterian Church for four years. This past summer, Thomas played Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* at Lyric Opera Studio in Weimar, Germany, and he is delighted to make his Ars Lyrica Houston début.



**Michael Skarke**, praised for his “exquisite, almost ethereal tone quality,” (Vocal Arts Chicago) and “strong dramatic presence,” (San Diego Story) is quickly making a name for himself as one of America’s top young countertenors. Michael’s singing blends operatic, choral, and concert projects, including performances with American Baroque Opera, Transept, and the VOCES8 Scholars.

Following the outbreak of the pandemic, Michael made an exciting return to singing with two Handel role debut’s in consecutive summers with Opera NEO, a solo feature on the Houston Chamber Choir’s world premiere recording of Daniel Knaggs’ *Two Streams* with 10-time GRAMMY® award winning producer Blanton Alspaugh, performances of Mozart’s *Apollo et Hyacinthus* with American Baroque Opera, a world premiere recording of Rachmaninoff’s *All Night Vigil* with the GRAMMY® nominated PaTRAM Male Chorus in Jerusalem, and a mainstage debut as Ottone in Monteverdi’s *L’incoronazione di Poppea* with Haymarket Opera.

When not performing, you might catch Michael playing golf, basketball, or spending time with his wife Jenny and baby girl, Clarke.

*Ars Lyrica Houston gratefully acknowledges our 22/23 season artist hosts: Sonja Bruzauskas & Houston Haymon, Bettie Cartwright, Elizabeth Duerr, Kinga & Jamie Ferguson, Ed & Janet Hess, and Barrett Sills.*



Tenor **Kyle Stegall's** reputation as “an outstanding communicator” (Gramophone), combined with his “clear-toned voice” (Klassiek Centraal-Belgium), have led him to exciting collaborations with some of the most celebrated musicians and conductors of our time including Manfred Honeck, William Christie, Masaaki Suzuki, and Joseph Flummerfelt. His high tenor’s blend of “tonal sweetness and expressive urgency” (San Francisco Chronicle) make

him a frequent pick for the Bach evangelists and the haute-contre roles of the French Baroque.

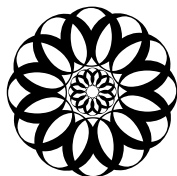
Mr. Stegall has debuted several new operas and compositions and is committed to bringing artistically potent works of new music to life. His forthcoming album of 21<sup>st</sup> century cycles for tenor and piano will feature the premiere recording of works by Hailstork, Boykin, Sdraulig, and Previn. This season features Evangelists in Austin and Houston, recordings and stage productions with Boston Early Music Festival, a world-premiere at the Mizzou International Composers Festival, performances with Portland Baroque, and recitals with fortepianist Eric Zivian.



A native Texan who is based in Houston, baritone **Kirby Traylor** has performed as a soloist and professional chorister for over 30 years. Highlights from his solo career include appearances with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, the English Chamber Orchestra, the Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra, and the Houston Symphony Chorus. He is currently a professional chorister with the Philadelphia Orchestra’s Symphonic Choir and makes several trips each

year to perform with this ensemble under the direction of Yannick Néget-Séguin. In addition to his work with the Philadelphia Symphonic Choir, he has been a professional chorister most recently with the Spoleto Music Festival in Charleston, SC, and previously with the Santa Fe Desert Chorale and the Cincinnati Vocal Arts Ensemble. He has been a Fellow with the Bach Aria Group and a selected participant in the Cleveland Art Song Festival where he intensively coached art song repertoire with baritone Benjamin Luxon and the late Arleen Auger, soprano. He studied at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music and at the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria, where at the latter he immersed himself in Lieder preparation under the coaching of Hartmut Höll, pianist, and Mitsuko Shirai, mezzo soprano.

*Ars Lyrica Houston thanks Kathryn and Brendan Godfrey for generously providing the post-concert receptions for 22/23 season performances.*



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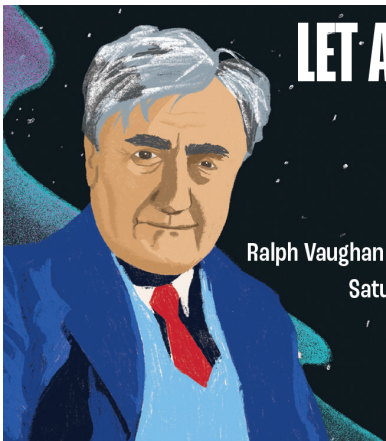
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