



The Baroque Artists
of **Champaign Urbana**

Classic music. Contemporary inspiration.

and
Sarah Riskind, Music Director
present

**Behind the Walls:
Music from the Italian Convents**

Sunday, June 5, 2022
Holy Cross Catholic Church
Champaign, IL

PROGRAM

Sonata No. 3 for 2 Violins, Violone, and Continuo Isabella Leonarda
(1620–1704)

*Adagio - Presto - Adagio - Largo - Presto - Prestissimo - Largo -
Presto - Adagio - Allegro*

Magnificat

Audrey Vallance, soprano; Beth Otto, alto;
Ben Johnson, tenor; John Abelson, bass

Audite caeli Caterina Assandra (1590–1618)

Audrey Vallance, soprano; Ethan Lee, alto; Stephen Larson, baritone

O quam dulce Maria Xaviera Peruchona (c. 1652–after 1709)

Audrey Vallance, soprano; Ethan Lee, alto

Quid pavemus sorores

Audrey Vallance, soprano; William Mendoza, bass

Cessate tympana, cessate praelia

Audrey Vallance, soprano; Robin Sahrner, alto;
Tim Rowell, tenor; Stephen Larson, bass

~ INTERMISSION ~

O dolc'eterno Amore Vittoria Aleotti (c. 1575–after 1620)

ed. Amelia LeClair

Amor mio perche piangi ed. Richard Carrick

Viv'ardor, viva fiamma Maddalena Casulana (c. 1544–1590)

Ahi possanza d'amor

O Crux splendidior Sulpitia Cesis (1577–after 1619)

ed. Candace Smith and Bruce Dickey

Ego flos campi Raphaela Aleotti (c. 1570–c. 1646)

Vidi speciosam

Sicut lilium Attrib. to Leonora d'Este (1515–1575)

ed. Laurie Stras



MISSION STATEMENT

Baroque Artists of Champaign-Urbana

BACH is Champaign-Urbana's premier chamber choir and Baroque-presenting organization. Dr. Sarah Riskind is its third music director, succeeding second music director Joseph Baldwin in 2021. Baldwin succeeded BACH founder Chester L. Alves in 2017.

The Baroque Artists of Champaign-Urbana, Illinois ("BACH") was founded as a project-based professional ensemble in 1996 for teaching, learning, and performing music of the Baroque era. Now a thriving nonprofit community organization, BACH is proud of the diverse range of its repertoire—from its roots in Baroque music to today's most exciting new works by living composers. Today's audiences enjoy programs featuring both Baroque masterpieces and leading works from across the entire choral repertory.

It is a true community enterprise, welcoming experienced singers from the community, university, and surrounding areas, as well as the support of committed volunteers. BACH was named "Chamber Ensemble of the Year 2000" by the Illinois Council of Orchestras. It receives support from the Illinois Arts Council, as well as many generous local donors—individual and corporate.

Classic music. Contemporary inspiration.



PROGRAM NOTES

Sarah Riskind, Music Director

After three decades of heightened interest among scholars, we know that convents were rich centers of musical activity during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Evidence suggests that convent musicians became increasingly professional in their roles; skilled musicians could even be granted a dowry waiver and therefore higher status in the community than their social class implied. However, the composers featured on tonight's program faced considerable opposition.

Why was convent music such a central issue for Catholic Church authorities in the sixteenth century? In response to the Protestant Reformation, the Council of Trent created a set of reforms meant to purify the Church. "Let them keep away from churches compositions in which there is an intermingling of the lascivious or impure, whether by instrument or voice," came a decree from 1562, leading to individual authorities interpreting and enforcing these vague musical instructions in churches and monasteries throughout Europe.

Surviving documentation paints a clear picture of convent restrictions in Italy, in particular. In the 1560s and 1570s, Archbishop Carlo Borromeo of Milan feared the fact that nuns' musical and social lives were deeply intertwined, distracting them from devotion to Christ. He considered it his calling to halt this detrimental behavior with a series of decrees. The guiding principle was the reinforcement of *clausula*, the separation between cloistered women and the outside world. Borromeo outlawed male organ teachers in convents, severely limited socializing in the *parlatorio* where nuns visited with relatives, forbade the feeding of the poor outside convent walls, restricted the use of instruments, and outlawed the singing of polyphony in certain churches where the public were excessively entranced. Some nuns were forbidden to sing polyphony for several years as punishment for infractions.

Carlo Borromeo's obsession with the inherent sinfulness of nuns' music was followed eventually by the less restrictive rule of Federigo Borromeo. However, the younger Borromeo continued to limit access to the outside world, as well as overly elaborate solos, polyphony, and instrumental music.

It was surely true that some nuns sang and played music for nonreligious reasons. An account from Santa Cristina in Bologna relates, “Donna Emilia observes the actions of Donna Cecilia and, to be contrary, does something else, in such a way that even in reciting the Office in chapel they want to outdo one another with their voices; and each of them wants to get the better of the other.” Clearly, the pleasure of ensemble singing and the competition for musical acclaim were just as common in the seventeenth century as they are now!

From records of punishments, we know how determinedly many convents fought for their polyphony and their instrumental music. The Roman Congregatio super Regulares commissioned a new organ to be built in 1589, despite an earlier denial that there was any keyboard instrument there. Letters from the 1590s also show that convents continued to defy the rule against male music teachers. As for musical simplicity, S. Maria Maddalena’s large choir, *maestra di cappella*, organist, and viola da gamba did not bow to Carlo Borromeo’s will. Suor Paola Giustina, caught with several secular pieces smuggled in with Lassus motets from a relative, was likely only one of many nuns who continued to sing and play music for entertainment in the *parlatorio* and other areas of the convent. The hoped-for reduction of nuns’ music to unison chant was never realized except in the rarest cases.

Convent musicians had several ways to perform with only sopranos and altos. Evidence suggests that a viola da gamba and organ often covered the bass parts and possibly doubled the upper voices. Some pieces could be transposed enough for all of the parts to be sung by upper voices; the importance of music in convents implies that singers with strong low and high ranges were sought out and trained. It is also possible that some voice parts were sung an octave higher, resulting in more overlapping between each part. The BACH choir will perform most of tonight’s program with SATB voices, and in fact convent composers often published music that way in order to make them more widely accessible.

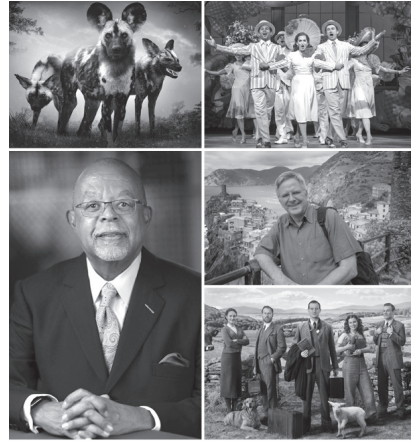
The Sonata and Magnificat that open our program are two of almost two hundred works composed by Isabella Leonarda (1620–1704). Leonarda came from a family of high status and must have had a musical education before entering the Collegio di Sant’Orsola in Lombardy, where she rose to increasingly prominent leadership roles. However, she did not compose regularly until the age of fifty. She published a wide range of sacred compositions, from motets and masses to sacred concertos and sonatas.

Though this Magnificat is on a smaller scale than better-known examples by Bach and others, Leonarda gives each section of text its own contrasting treatment, using text-driven rhythms, counterpoint, and homophony to build a satisfying structure.

Benedictine nun Caterina Assandra was based at the cloister of Sant'Agata near Pavia, also in the north-central region of Lombardy. Although some convents were not allowed to bring in male music teachers, Assandra was able to study counterpoint with Benedetto Re, and she published a number of pieces between 1609 and 1616. In *Audite Caeli*, those familiar with Claudio Monteverdi and his contemporaries may detect a similarity in style. Though we are presenting it as a vocal trio, the bass part may have originally been covered by an organ and/or viola da gamba.

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A third Lombardian composer, Maria Xaveria Peruchona, took the veil at the Collegio di Sant’Orsola—the same convent as Isabella Leonarda. She published her collection *Sacri concerti de motetti a una, due, tre, e quattro voce* in 1675. In *O quam dulce, Quid pavemus sorores*, and *Cessate tympana, cessate praelia*, many dramatic changes of meter and tempo demonstrate Peruchona’s close attention to text. From the sonorously expressive bass solo in *Quid pavemus sorores* to the trumpet-like *Quia resurrexit* in *Cessate tympana*, each phrase receives its own contrasting treatment.

Most of the works on the second half of our program represent an earlier style, giving us a nuanced picture of the metamorphosis from Renaissance to Baroque. We begin with two madrigals by Vittoria Aleotti, who studied at the Convent of San Vito before taking vows at fourteen. She published a book of madrigals entitled *Ghirlanda de madrigali a quattro voce* in 1593. It is still debated whether Vittoria and Raphaela Aleotti were the same composer or sisters. While Vittoria’s madrigal *O dolc’eterno amore* reveals itself as a sacred text in a secular guise, *Amor mio perche piangi* is the anguished and perhaps resentful lament of a lover.

Among so many works that originated “behind the walls” of Italian convents, the madrigals by Maddalena Casulana are notable exceptions. Casulana is remarkable in that she built a professional career as a singer and composer outside of convent walls. She is considered the first woman in Western music history to have published her compositions, starting in the year 1566 with a set of four-part madrigals. In a famous dedication to Isabella de’ Medici, she expressed her determination “to show the world the futile error of men who believe themselves patrons of the high gifts of intellect, which according to them cannot also be held in the same way by women.” *Viv’ardor, viva fiamma* and *Ahi possanza d’amor* both come from her second set, published in 1570. The rhetorical gestures and text painting, such as the sonorities and registers of *ard’ et agiaccio, e taccio e forte grido* (I burn and freeze, am silent and cry aloud) in *Ahi possanza*, indicate a strong presence in the musical scenes of Florence and elsewhere.

We return to sacred music with a double-choir motet by Sulpitia Cesis. Both convents where she resided, San Geminiano in Modena and Santa Lucia in Rome, were well known for their music. Like the other motets in her *Motetti spirituali* published in 1619, *O Crux splendidior* represents a conservative musical style for that time; most sacred works in 1619

would have resembled the works on the first half of our program. In *O Crux splendidior*, which was intended for the Feast of the Holy Cross, Cesis has all voices joining in reverence for the cross after the initial *O* from the first tenor. The heart of the motet is when she tenderly sets the words *dulce lignum, dulces clavos, dulcia ferens pondera* (sweet wood, sweet nails, bearing so sweet a weight), even using a triple meter to set off the miracle of Christ's sacrifice.

Our season comes full circle with three Song of Songs motets, all of which depict the love between Christ and the human soul or the Church as portrayed by two Biblical lovers, according to the Christian interpretation. We bring back two motets by Raphaela Aleotti from our November concert, from her 1593 publication *Sacrae cantiones: quinque, septem, octo & decem vocibus decantande. Ego flos campi* features a double-choir texture, like *O Crux splendidior*, but begins with a more florid and joyful entrance from the first choir. Her *Vidi speciosam*, in contrast, has a lush *stile antico* Renaissance texture.

We finish with the earliest work on tonight's program, a short but stunning motet published in an anonymous 1543 collection. Musicologist Laurie Stras brought this collection to the 2016 musical world with an attribution to Suor Leonora d'Este, a daughter of Lucrezia Borgia who became abbess of Corpus Domini in Ferrara at the age of eighteen. Many of these motets display surprising dissonance and complexity, and though *Sicut lilium* is a more consonant example, it is expertly crafted with cascading moments that captivate the listener. We invite you to close your eyes and let each voice part draw you in with melodies that emerge from the texture.

Recommended for Further Reading

Every day, scholars are learning more about composers who have been left out of our history books due to their gender and/or race. The following websites are a helpful starting place for anyone who would like to learn more about the composers we featured tonight and their contemporaries:

<http://womenssacredmusicproject.org/>

<https://www.amodernreveal.com/>

<https://hildegard.com/>

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

Isabella Leonarda: Magnificat

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
eius.
Et misericordia a progenie in
progenies,
timentibus eum.
Fecit potentiam in bracchio suo,
dispersit superbos mente cordis
sui.
Deposuit potentes de sede
et exaltavit humiles.
Esurientes implevit bonis,
et divites dimisit inanes.
Suscepit Israel puerum suum
recordatus misericordiae suae.
Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros,
Abraham et semini eius in saecula.

My soul magnifies the Lord.
And my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.
For He has regarded the lowliness of
His handmaiden.
Behold, from henceforth, I will be
called blessed by all generations.
For the Mighty One has done
great things for me, and holy is His
name.
His mercy is for those who fear Him
from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with His arm,
He has scattered the proud in the
thoughts of their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful from
their thrones and lifted up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good
things,
and sent the rich away empty.
He has helped His servant Israel
in remembrance of His mercy.
According to the promise He made to
our ancestors,
to Abraham and to His descendants
forever.

Caterina Assandra: Audite caeli

Audite caeli, que loquor,
audiat terra verba oris mei
fluat, fluat ut ros eloquium
meum
concrescat ut pluvia doctrina
mea.
Date magnificentiam Deo nostro
Dei perfecta sunt opera
et omnes viae eius iudicia.
Alleluia.

Hear, O heavens, what I speak
Let the earth hear the words of my
mouth
let my speech flow like dew;
may my doctrine drop as rain.

Give greatness to our God
God's works are perfect
and all his ways are judgments.
Alleluia.

Maria Xaviera Peruchona: O quam dulce

O quam dulce et suave, mundi dolos
evitare.

O quam gratum et iucundum carnis
fraudes vincere.

Quis triumphus, quis bellator
tantum duce no mirator.

Sibi hostes concertavit sui victor
triumphavit.

O bellum difficile, o fælix victoria,
quale gaudium, quale premium
heros fortissime te manet in
æternum.

Oh, how sweet and pleasant it is to
elude the treachery of the world.

Oh, how welcome and joyful it is to
conquer the frauds of the flesh.

What triumph, what warrior would
not marvel at such a leader?

He has confronted the enemies. and
has triumphed as the victor.

O difficult war, O happy victory,

What joy, what prize awaits you,
most valiant hero, in eternity.

Maria Xaviera Peruchona: Quid pavemus sorores

translation: Joseph McDonough

Quid pavemus sorores, quid
timemus?
quia vita religiosa est quasi pugna
dolorosa.

Ubi demon semper ferit,
Ubi caro semper perit;
Ubi mundus semper tentat

Et accidia nos tormentat.

Consolemur et laetemur.

Ad superanda omnia bella,
Virgo Maria, vince bella.

Ecce iam nobis presentatur,
Gratis nobis aggregatur.
Fortis in orbe praeliabitur;

in victoria Maria dominabitur.

What do we dread, sisters, what do
we fear?

for the religious life is like a battle,
full of trouble.

Where the devil ever strikes,
Where the flesh always passes away;
Where the world assails us
continually.

And indolence torments us.

Let us rejoice and be comforted.

To overcome all wars
Virgin Mary, be victorious.

Behold now it is shown to us,
It is added to us freely.

The strong one in the world will be
brought to battle;
Mary will rule in victory.

Maria Xaviera Peruchona: Quid pavemus sorores (continued)

Si iam virgo; fuit cara erit,

in Caelis coronata.

Si Maria stellis est adornata,
Astris dilecta vincta fulgebit

Et nos cum ipsa triumphabimus,
cum triumphantis acclamabimus;

ergo sint iubila in nostris cordibus,
ergo sint cantica in nostris oribus.

Once she was a maiden; she will be
beloved,

crowned in the heavens.

If Mary has been adorned with stars,
she will shine beloved encircled by
constellations

And we with her shall triumph,
we shall cry out with shouts of
triumph;

so let there be shouts in our hearts,
and in our mouths let there be songs.

Maria Xaviera Peruchona: Cessate tympana, cessate praelia

translation: Stephen Smith

Cessate tympana, cessate praelia
Hodie organa triumphent
Alleluia.

Tubae omnes resonate,
Stellae pulchre decantate
Quia resurrexit mundi fax
Caeli dux qui nos dilexit.

O quam dulce mi Jesu videre
Tuos claros triumphos amoris
Posunt omnes mortales gaudere
Dum tuere liber es paena dolores.

In tanta felicitate
In tanta iucunditate
Portas empirei reserate.
O praeclarissimi,
O nobilissimi caeli habitatores,

Monstrate iubila spargentes flores,
Vertendos odores,
Cantate gloria
Quia resurrexit vera vita
Quae nos dilexit.
Alleluia.

Cease, drums! Cease, battles!
Today the organ triumphs.
Alleluia!

Let all trumpets resound,
Let the beautiful stars sing forth.
For the light of the world has arisen,
Heaven's leader, who loves us.

O how sweet, my Jesus,
To see Your shining triumph of love.
All mortals can rejoice,
Being freed from pain and suffering.

In such happiness, in such delight,
You unlocked the gates of empires,
O most shining,
O most noble inhabitants of the
heavens.

Show your jubilation by scattering
flowers, spreading perfumes.
Sing of glory.
Sing of glory, for the true life has
risen, who loves us.
Alleluia.

Vittoria Aleotti: O dolc'eterno Amore

O dolc'eterno Amore, Ferito m'hai
soavemente'il core,
Onde languisco per dolcezza'e
moro.
Se fatta son tu'ancella, Non ti sarò
rubella
Non ti sarò rubella, Ma ben la
nott'e'l giorno Farò dolce Signor,
Farò dolce Signor à te ritorno.

Sweet eternal Love, you have tenderly
pierced my heart,
so that I languish in sweetness and
die
If I am called to be your handmaiden,
I shall not rebel
I shall not rebel, but night and day,
but shall, sweet Lord,
I shall return, sweet Lord, to you.

Vittoria Aleotti : Amor mio perche piangi

Amor mio, perche piangi,
perche fai tu con sì durilamenti
Più gravi'i miei tor menti,

Brama'il mio cor quel che'l tuo cor
desia
Ma che colpa' è la mia
Se Fortuna ti toglie'il don d'Amore?

Deh se tu se'il mio core
Come malgrado di Fortuna sei,
Dovresti pur sentir gli'affetti miei.

My love, why do you weep?
Why, with such harsh laments
do you worsen my sufferings?,

My heart wishes for what your heart
desires
But what fault is it of mine
if Fortune robs you of the gift of
Love?

Pray, if you are my heart,
as despite Fortune you are,
then you should also feel my
emotions.

Maddalena Casulana: Viv'ardor, viva fiamma

translation: Monika C. Otter

Viv'ardor, viva fiamma,
aces' ha'amor in dui sinceri cori,

che temp' e luoco non estingue
dramma.
Anzi si grat' odori,
escan da si bel foco
che rendon l'aer grat' in ogni luoco.
Onde nel alte ogn'un scolpito vede

d'amor piu bell' inprese:
PULISENA gentil SALON cortese.

A living fire, a living flame
has kindled love in two sincere
hearts,
and time and place cannot extinguish
the drama.
Rather, such pleasant scents
emerge from this beautiful fire
that they sweeten the air everywhere.
Hence, everyone sees inscribed on
high
the most beautiful mottos of love:
Noble Pulsena, courteous Salon.

Maddalena Casulana: Ahi possanza d'amor

Ahi possanza d'amor, com'in un
tempo
E speranz'e timor al cor mi porgi!
Io pur chiegio per lei e mort'e vita,

Ard' et agiaccio, e taccio e forte
grido
Aita al mio perir; poi morte
chiegio.
Cosi servo d'altrui felic' aspetto.

Ah the power of love, how you give
my heart
Both hope and fear at the same time!
Because of it [the power of love] I
ask for life and death

I burn and freeze, am silent and cry
aloud
For help as I perish; then I ask for
death.
Thus, as Love's servant, content, I
wait [for death].

Sulpitia Cesis: O Crux splendidior

O Crux splendidior
cunctis astris,
mundo celebris,
hominibus multum amabilis,
sanctior universis,
quæ sola digna fuisti
portare talentum mundi;
dulce lignum, dulces clavos, dulcia
ferens pondera,
salva præsentem catervam
in tuis hodie laudibus congregatam.

O Cross,
splendid beyond the stars,
celebrated throughout the world,
most worthy of the love of men,
most holy of all things,
you, who alone were worthy
to bear the ransom of the world.
Sweet wood, sweet nails,
bearing so sweet a weight,
save the present assembly
gathered here today to sing your
praises.

Raphaela Aleotti: Ego flos campi

Ego flos campi et lilium convallium.
Sicut lilium inter spinas, sic amica
mea inter filias,
Sicut malus inter ligna silvarum, sic
dilectus meus inter filios.

I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily
of the valley.
As the lily among thorns, so is my
love among the daughters.
As the apple tree among the trees of
the woods, so is my beloved
among the sons.

Raphaela Aleotti: Vidi speciosam

Vidi speciosam sicut columbam
ascendentem desuper rivos
aquare,
cuius inestimabilis odor erat
nimis.
Et sicut dies dies verni, flores
rosarum et lilia convallium.

I saw the fair one, like a dove above
the streams of water:
whose priceless fragrance clung to her
garments.
And as on a spring day, she was
surrounded by roses and lily-of-the-
valley.

Leonora d'Este: Sicut lilium

Sicut lilium inter spinas, sic amica
mea inter filias.

As the lily among thorns, so is my love
among the daughters.

THE CHAPEL OF SAINT JOHN THE DIVINE

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MEET THE ARTISTS

Previously based in Seattle and Boston, conductor and composer **Sarah Riskind** is the Director of Choral Activities/Assistant Professor of Music at Eureka College. She leads the Eureka College Chorale, Chamber Singers, and instrumental Chamber Ensemble, as well as teaching courses in composition, improvisation, musicianship, and conducting.

Riskind is a long-time faculty member and choral director at The Walden School Young Musicians Program, an inspiring summer program in New Hampshire for creative musicians ages 9–18. She has written chamber music for the Quince Contemporary Vocal Ensemble, Hub New Music, the International Contemporary Ensemble, and Ensemble Dal Niente as part of the Walden School Faculty Commissioning Project. Many of her choral works are settings of Jewish texts, such as *Psalm of the Sky* for TBB chorus, violin, and piano, which was premiered in 2020 as part of the Creative Commissions Project at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. Her compositions are available on her website and featured in the contemporary choral music catalogue Project Encore.

As a presenter and clinician, Riskind specializes in Renaissance polyphony, Sephardic music, musicianship training, and choral improvisation. In a 2021 Walden Online Workshop entitled *Chromaticism in Renaissance Music: What living musicians can learn from Gesualdo and friends*, she discussed wide-ranging uses of *musica ficta* and guided the multigenerational participants in composing with similar techniques.

In addition to choral conducting, composition, and singing early music, Sarah Riskind enjoys playing Irish and French-Canadian fiddle and classical violin. She holds a DMA in Choral Conducting from University of Washington, an MM in Choral Conducting from University of Wisconsin at Madison, and a BA in Music from Williams College.

www.sarahriskind.com

Broadway and orchestral veteran, recipient of shared Emmy, Tony, Grammy, Gran Prix du Disque, and multiple awards, **Barbara Hedlund** enjoys an active career as orchestral and chamber musician, recording artist, orchestra and college music festival administrator, music editor and publisher, orchestra founder, executive director, music librarian, professor, adjudicator, associate producer for Public Radio Television, concert, opera, and theatre productions, a City of Urbana Public Arts and Culture Commissioner, young

artist scholarship sponsor and mentor. From 1996 to 1999, she and her husband Ronald wore many hats as founders, sponsors, performers, fund raisers, administrators, and crew for the Baroque Artists, originally housed and administered in their home studio.

Born and raised in Illinois, **Emelinda Escobar** is an established performer in the Chicago area. She completed her bachelor's degree in violin performance from the University of Illinois in 2012, studying with The Pacifica Quartet and Sibbi Bernhardsson, and her master's degree in music from Northwestern University in 2014, studying under Gerardo Ribeiro. During her school studies, Emelinda participated in the Green Mountain Music Festival, Meadowmount School of Music, Triada Music Festival, Camp Musical des Laurentides in Canada, and a string quartet intensive in Iceland.

In 2014, Emelinda won the Concertmaster chair of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, launching her career as a violinist in the Chicago area. Her many accomplishments include performing with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, multiple performances at Carnegie Hall, radio performances in Chicago with YoYo Ma, and many other Chicago-based regional orchestras and chamber ensembles. She has made guest soloist appearances with Trinity University Orchestra, the South Loop Orchestra, and the Civic Orchestra of Chicago performing such works as the Sibelius violin concerto, Sarasate's Zigeunerweisen, and the Brandenburg Concertos, among others. In addition, she has acted as teaching faculty at music festivals such as the Meadowmount School of Music, Illinois Summer Youth Music, and the Elgin Chamber Academy.

Emelinda currently performs with the Chicago Opera Theater Orchestra, the Elgin Symphony, the Chicago Philharmonic, and the Fort Wayne Philharmonic. She is also currently a member of the Zafa Collective, an ensemble dedicated to performing new music composed by women of color. During the pandemic, Emelinda founded Lieta Music, a chamber music initiative that safely brought string quartet performances and masterclasses to neighborhoods and schools in and around Chicago's northside area. In addition to performing, Emelinda also maintains a private studio of students in the Chicago area.

Ion-Alexandru Malaimare, a native of Romania, has performed in recitals and concerts in Europe and the United States. An integral part of his career development as a musician was winning a scholarship offered by SoNoRo Chamber Music Workshops. He participated in masterclasses with renowned artists such as Rachel Barton Pine, Almita Vamos, Ronny Rogoff, and Helmuth Nicolai.

He participated in numerous competitions and was the first prize winner at the Young Artist Competition of MTNA and the University of Illinois Concerto Competition. With his quartet, he won awards at the Plowman Chamber Music Competition and the New York Artists International Competition, which included an invitation to perform a recital at Carnegie Hall.

He served as Concertmaster of the Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra, Principal Second violin and soloist with the Heartland Festival Orchestra, and Evansville Philharmonic, a member of the resident quartet at the University of Evansville, Adjunct Violin Professor at the University of Illinois Springfield, and earned a DMA degree from the University of Illinois.

Among other activities, he searches to expand his repertoire to include fiddle music of Romania and works from movie soundtracks. He is featured as a member of the music department for the Live Cinema workshop “Distant Vision” of Francis Ford Coppola, broadcast on July 22, 2016. He is interested in expanding his audience beyond the traditional concert hall. In this regard, he started a TikTok channel (@nicaviolin) and together with violist YooBin Lee, he started a YouTube Channel featuring music videos for viola and violin, called The Eight Strings. Presently he teaches at Millikin University and Knox College and plays an Ultralight violin made by Canadian-American Luthier Joseph Curtin.

Jonathan Young is Director of Music at the Catholic Church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in Champaign, Illinois. Jonathan holds a bachelor of music degree from Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington, a master of music degree from the Eastman School of Music, and completed doctoral coursework and recitals at the University of Illinois. Jonathan was the Alternate Winner of the 2011 Mu Phi Epsilon International Competition. He is currently Instructor of Organ at Eastern Illinois University, and was a Visiting Lecturer at the University of Illinois teaching Aural Skills courses in 2016–2017 and a Senior Lecturer and Visiting University Organist at PLU for the 2009–2010 academic year. Jonathan has appeared on several recordings with the PLU Choir of the West and Choral Union as an accompanist and soloist, including the Choral Union’s 2011 American Prize-winning *25th Anniversary Album*. Jonathan maintains an active interest in organ building and voicing, and has worked for Paul Fritts & Company, Buzard Pipe Organ Builders, and Richards, Fowkes & Company. An avid student of automotive aerodynamics and aerodynamic efficiency, Jonathan earned an Associate of Engineering Science degree at Parkland College, graduating in May 2021.

Audrey Vallance, soprano, voice teacher and coach, moved to the Champaign-Urbana area in 2006 from Houston, Texas, where she was a member of Houston Grand Opera Chorus for several years.

Audrey also lived in SE Asia for six years where she maintained a high profile as a professional singer, director, and vocal coach performing in Singapore, Myanmar (Burma), Vietnam, and Thailand. She directed many musicals in Thailand and served as rehearsal conductor and soloist for Handel's *Messiah* with the Combined Choir of Bangkok.

Currently Audrey is teaching voice at her home studio and is the new program lead for the Creative Arts Music Program at Carle Foundation Hospital.

Countertenor **Ethan Lee** is a diverse musician who has performed extensively in opera, oratorio, and chamber music and has won numerous awards as a vocalist and collaborative pianist. As an active performer, Ethan has recently appeared in leading roles such as Cesare in Handel's *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*, Oberon in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Nerone in Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, and Nero-Caligula in Ilya Demutsky's *Black Square*. Past performances include Purcell's *King Arthur*, Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*, and Yang Ming's *Sister Jiang*. Additionally, Ethan has performed as a soloist with Sinfonia da Camera Chamber Orchestra, Concerto Urbano Baroque Ensemble, and Estampe Trio.

Ethan is currently serving on the voice faculty at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Before that, he taught at the University of Illinois at Springfield and Illinois College. Ethan also serves as a member of the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) and the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA).

Ethan earned a doctor of musical arts degree in vocal performance and literature at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign under the tutelage of Dr. Ollie Watts Davis. His primary teachers include Professor Wang Bing, Professor Liu Yixin, Professor Tatyana Ivanovna, Dr. Daniel Schuetz, and Dr. Charlotte Mattax Moersch.

Stephen L. Larson, a local educator, vocal coach, conductor, and performer, received a bachelor of music education degree from Millikin University, master's degrees from VanderCook College of Music in Chicago and Eastern Illinois University, and is a doctoral candidate at Ball State University. He has taught music at all grade levels throughout Central Illinois, including nine years at Champaign Unit 4 schools. A versatile musician, Larson sings with the Baroque Artists of Champaign-Urbana (BACH), Decatur's *Opus 24*, U of I Oratorio Society, and area church choirs. Larson is a co-founder and conductor of the Urbana Pops Orchestra, and is an accomplished pianist.

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The BACH Continuo group is always growing as audience members volunteer their time to support BACH's activities. If you would like to share your time and talents, please contact our office:

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Jonathan Young

* section leader

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Frances Cramer was a lifelong lover of music and the arts. This was evident in her support of the Art Institute of Chicago, National Museum for Women in the Arts, Baroque Artists of Champaign-Urbana, and programming on public radio and TV (UI's WILL). She was a regular attendee at concerts in the area, and she rarely missed an event at Krannert Center; she listened to opera on WILL every Saturday.

In addition to her love of the arts, Fran was passionate about peace and social justice and was a longtime member of Rantoul First United Methodist Church where she served in many different positions. In 1969, Fran was on the Founding Committee for the Clothing Center in Rantoul run by Church Women United, and she served as its volunteer director for over 30 years. In recognition of her service, Fran received several awards, including the Champaign County Friend of the Family award (1977), the Diana award for exceptional service to humanity (1980), Rantoul Citizen of the Year (1995), and the Church Women United Valiant Woman Award (2000). In 2006, she was awarded the Tolly-Cramer award in from Methodist Federation for Social Action for lay persons engaged in social justice ministries. Throughout her life, Fran did her best to help others and support many causes, and her family is happy to know that her legacy of support will live on this season as a sponsor of BACH.

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