

Wednesday, December 3, 2025

# HOLIDAY MUSIC IN THE COURTYARD

**Vox Vocal Ensemble**

**American Brass Quintet**

**George Steel, conductor**

*Yoko Hagino, keyboard*

*Luis Herrera, percussion*

*Special performance by Boston Arts Academy Spirituals Ensemble,  
Michael W. Bradley, conductor*

**In Dulci Jubilo**

Hieronymus Praetorius (1560–1629),  
arr. George Steel

**Ding Dong Merrily on High**

Trad., arr. Charles Wood

**Dances from *Terpsichore***

Michael Praetorius (1571–1621)

## CAROL FOR ALL: O Come All Ye Faithful

**Étoile polaire**

Philip Glass

**The Holly and the Ivy**

Trad., arr. Walford Davies

**Sacro tempio d'honor spechio, Ch.95**

Giovanni Gabrieli (1557–1612)

## CAROL FOR ALL: The First Nowell

**Gaudete**

Trad.

**Hodie Christus Natus est**

J.P. Sweelinck (1562–1621)

## CAROL FOR ALL: God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen

*Special Guest Performance: Boston Arts Academy Spirituals Ensemble  
Michael Bradley, conductor*

**Canzon Prima a5**

Luigi Mazzi (active 1590–1610)

**Let It Snow!**

Jule Styne (1905–1994) & Sammy Cahn  
(1913–1993), arr. Allen Murabayashi

## CAROL FOR ALL: Hark the Herald Angels Sing

ISABELLA  
SEWART GARDNER  
MUSEUM



# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

## VOX VOCAL ENSEMBLE

### SOPRANO

Melissa Hughes  
Willow Pedersen

### ALTO

Sylvia Leith  
Geoffrey Williams

### TENOR

James Kennerley  
Steven Soph

### BASS

Scott Dispensa  
Craig Phillips

## AMERICAN BRASS QUINTET

Eric Reed, horn  
Tiago Linck, trumpet  
Anderson Romero, trumpet  
Hillary Simms, trombone  
John Rojak, bass trombone

The **American Brass Quintet** is internationally recognized as one of the premier chamber music ensembles of our time. "The most distinguished" of brass quintets (*American Record Guide*), the group has earned its stellar reputation through its celebrated performances, genre-defining commissioned works, and ongoing commitment to the education of generations of musicians. Since its founding in 1960, the American Brass Quintet has performed on five continents, made nearly 60 recordings, and premiered more than 150 contemporary works for brass.

The American Brass Quintet has premiered works by leading composers including Elliott Carter, Eric Ewazen, Jennifer Higdon, Anthony Plog, Huang Ruo, David Sampson, Gunther Schuller, William Schuman, Joan Tower, Charles Whittenberg, and John Zorn,

among many others. These works have contributed significantly to both contemporary chamber music and the foundation of the modern brass quintet repertoire. The quintet's Emerging Composer Commissioning program, with grant assistance from the Jerome Foundation, produced brass quintets by rising stars Gordon Beeferman, Jay Greenberg, Trevor Gureckis, and Shafer Mahoney. Recent commissions include David Biedenbender's *Sacred Geometry*, Ching-chu Hu's *A Distant Hope* (premiered at Chamber Music Columbus), Jennifer Higdon's *Book of Brass* (debuted at Bowling Green State University), and *Largo* by Tyshawn Sorey (premiered at the Juilliard School in 2025).

The group's latest recordings include two digitally released EPs: Higdon's *Book of Brass* and Biedenbender's *Sacred Geometry*, both released in 2025. *Perspectives* (2017) is the latest of 12 full-length albums with Summit Records and features music by Robert Paterson, Jay Greenberg, Sebastian Currier, and Eric Ewazen. It garnered praise for bringing the "utmost cohesion, balance, and expressivity to each of the scores they perform with ear-catching intensity and finesse" (*Gramophone*).

Highlights of the 2025–26 season include performances at the Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C.; the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston; Five Boroughs Music Festival in New York City; Chamber Music Society of Louisville; Chamber Music Raleigh; In Concert Sierra in Grass Valley, CA; Chamber Music Society of Logan in Utah; and Bradley Hills Presents in Bethesda, MD, as well as concerts and educational work at Interlochen Arts Academy and Oberlin Conservatory of Music.

Committed to the development of brass chamber music through higher education, the American Brass Quintet has served as Ensemble-in-Residence at the Juilliard School since 1987 and at the Aspen Music Festival since 1970. President Emeritus Joseph Polisi has said of the group's residency at Juilliard, "With intelligence, artistry, and imagination, the American Brass Quintet has exemplified

the highest standards of chamber music for brass instruments during its remarkable existence." In 2018, the group launched the ABQ Seminar @ Aspen, a four-week brass chamber music intensive at the Aspen Music Festival that offers the highest caliber of training for emerging brass quintets and musicians. Since 2000, the quintet also has shared its expertise in chamber music coaching and performance through a program of short residencies that feature regularly in the group's touring schedule. Offering young musicians an intense chamber music experience over several days, the quintet's residencies have been embraced by schools and communities throughout the United States and in a dozen foreign countries.

Among its numerous distinctions and citations, the American Brass Quintet is the 2013 recipient of the Richard J. Bogomolny National Service Award for significant and lasting contributions to the field, the highest honor accorded by Chamber Music America.

"Among North American brass ensembles none is more venerable than the American Brass Quintet."

—*New York Times*

"The members of the American Brass Quintet breathe as one, provide effortless well-matched phrasing, and generally produce a superbly balanced, fine golden sound."

—*Los Angeles Times*

"The American Brass Quintet filled the cathedral Tuesday evening with a range of color and sound that was astonishingly rich and varied . . . just as impressive was the variety of music involved, taking in its stride works from the fifteenth century to the present day . . . show players with the verve and power of this fine quintet."

—*The Times (London)*

"The high priests of brass."

—*Newsweek*

## GEORGE STEEL CONDUCTOR

A conductor, composer, pianist, teacher, musicologist, and producer, **George Steel** is the Abrams Curator of Music at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. In the words of the *New York Times*, he is "a spokesman of national stature about ways to make classical music matter to new generations of listeners."

Steel began his musical career in the choir of Washington National Cathedral and continued to sing for 20 years as a treble and then a countertenor.

During his early years in the Cathedral Choir, he was fortunate to sing the Washington premiere of Leonard Bernstein's *Kaddish* Symphony, with the composer conducting. Through that experience a friendship developed, and Bernstein went on to become Steel's most important mentor. Steel worked as Bernstein's assistant on projects like the 1981 revival of *Mass*, the 1982 Stravinsky Centennial television broadcast from Washington Cathedral, and the 1984 Washington premiere of *A Quiet Place*. Steel even had the experience of helping Bernstein to compose sections of his *Missa Brevis* and received a credit from the Maestro himself on the title page.

As a conductor, he is equally at home in the music of six centuries, being a "specialist" in several distinct kinds of music. He has conducted dozens of world premieres—including an appearance as the guest conductor of the MATA festival in 2004—as well as festivals of the music of Stravinsky and Bernstein and 19th-century masters; ongoing series devoted to Mozart, Bach, and Vivaldi; and hundreds of works from the Renaissance. He is founder and conductor of two groups, the Vox Vocal Ensemble (1990) and the Gotham City Orchestra (1998). Some of his notable concerts include Stravinsky's orchestral music at the Park Avenue Armory (the first public concert there in nearly 100 years); Bach's B-Minor Mass in New York and at Caramoor; Feldman's *Rothko Chapel* in a live radio broadcast; "Treasures of the

Sarum Rite" with the Trinity Church choir; and an all-John Zorn program in Helsinki with the Avanti! Orchestra.

As Artistic Director of the New York City Opera, he produced some of the Company's most vital work, including the New York stage premieres of Bernstein's *A Quiet Place*, Thomas Adès's *Powder Her Face*, Morton Feldman's *Neither*, Zorn's *La machine de l'être*, Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Anna Nicole*, and Rossini's *Mosè in Egitto*, among other acclaimed productions.

For 11 years, he ran the Miller Theatre at Columbia University, where he produced dance, opera, theater, music, and intellectual programs. While there, he created the Composer Portraits series, which changed the musical landscape of New York City. For 10 years, he was the host of *Live from Miller Theatre*, a one-hour weekly radio show on WKCR.

Over his career, he has had the honor of working personally with such distinguished composers as Leonard Bernstein, Luciano Berio, Iannis Xenakis, Elliott Carter, Ornette Coleman, Milton Babbitt, Pierre Boulez, John Zorn, Helmut Lachenmann, Krzysztof Penderecki, Ned Rorem, Peter Lieberson, Lou Harrison, George Crumb, Steve Reich, Lou Reed, Stephen Schwartz, and Rufus Wainwright, among many, many others.

As an advocate for new music, he has commissioned works from a phalanx of composers, including Peter Lieberson, Olga Neuwirth, John Musto, Sebastian Currier, John Zorn, Julia Wolfe, Marc-André Dalbavie, Anthony Davis, Arlene Sierra, Charles Wuorinen, Gerald Barry, Benedict Mason, Jason Eckardt, Philippe Hurel, Benet Casablancas, and dozens of others. During his tenure at Miller Theatre, he produced Composer Portraits of nearly 100 composers.

As an advocate for early music, he has conducted hundreds of acclaimed performances with Vox and with other groups, and has created or commissioned dozens of editions of early music, including

publishing the complete works of composer Robert Parsons (d. 1572) on a website, which has led to a wave of performances and recordings.

Steel has been committed to education from the beginnings of his career. In the late 1980s he lived in Morrisania in the South Bronx, where he taught at the St. Augustine School of the Arts. The school's groundbreaking work was featured on *60 Minutes* and ABC News. He has gone on to speak and teach at a wide range of institutions, including the commencement address at Rutgers University School of the Arts, and at the Aspen Music Festival, the Eastman School of Music, the Operahögskolans in Stockholm, Yale College, Davidson College, and classes at Columbia University as adjunct professor of music.

For his work, Steel has twice received the Chamber Music America Award for Adventurous Programming, as well as the inaugural Trailblazer Award from the American Music Center and the ASCAP Concert Music Award. *New York* magazine named him as one of the most influential people in New York.

Steel made his screen debut in the film *The Violinist* by writer and director Winsome Brown. He is himself a composer, and is currently at work writing the music and lyrics for a Broadway musical.

## BOSTON ARTS ACADEMY SPIRITUALS ENSEMBLE

### MICHAEL W. BRADLEY CONDUCTOR

Founded in 2009, the **Boston Arts Academy Spirituals Ensemble** explores the evolution of the African-American sacred choral music tradition. This auditioned group of 28 sophomores, juniors, and seniors at Boston Arts Academy (BAA), the city's only public arts high school, is directed by Music Department Chair Michael Bradley. In addition to their 2015 victory on *Sing That Thing!*, the group won a Gold Medal at the Massachusetts Instrumental and Choral Conductors Association Festival. They have performed at numerous community events, including recently for the inauguration of Governor Maura Healey. Several members of past ensembles have majored in music in college and have received full scholarships at leading music colleges, including Boston University, Berklee College of Music, New England Conservatory, Oberlin, and the Hartt School of Music. Other performances include the 50th Anniversary Concert of Sweet Honey in the Rock and the American Choral Directors Association Eastern Conference in March of 2024. They also released an album, *Genesis*, landing at #2 on *Billboard's* Classical Crossover Albums Chart. This remarkable achievement marks the first time in the history of Boston Public Schools (BPS) that a music ensemble has charted on *Billboard*. A second album they recorded, *The Kidz at North Station*, was subsequently nominated for a Stellar Award in 2025, again making history as the first BPS ensemble to be nominated in the professional gospel music community.

**Michael W. Bradley** (conductor) has been an active member of the arts community both locally and abroad for over 15 years. Mr. Bradley attended Berklee College of Music in Boston, where he graduated with a B.M. in Music Education. Now in his 10th year of teaching, Mr. Bradley currently serves on the Voice faculty of Boston Arts Academy where he teaches Vocal Technique, Music Theory, Contemporary Vocal Ensembles, and the award-winning Spirituals Ensemble. He continues to maintain an active schedule as a composer, arranger, performer, and director in the fields of choral and gospel music, respectively. Prior to his work at the Boston Arts Academy, Mr. Bradley worked as a General Music & Choral Director in Boston and Cambridge public schools, respectively, and the Director of Secondary Choral and Instrumental Education and Theater Studies for the Gill-Montague Regional School District. Mr. Bradley's choirs have had the opportunity to compete and place in national competitions and perform for such prominent figures as Yo-Yo Ma, Damien Woetzel, and at the White House for First Lady Michelle Obama.

# TEXTS

## In dulci jubilo, 14th-century German words and melody

*In dulci jubilo*

Nun singet und seid froh!  
Unsers Herzen Wonne  
Leit in praeseptio,  
Und leuchtet als die Sonne  
*Matris in gremio.*  
*Alpha es et O!*

*O Jesu parvule,*  
Nach dir ist mir so weh!  
Tröst mir mein Gemüte,  
*O puer optime,*  
Durch alle deine Güte,  
*O princeps gloriae.*  
*Trahe me post te.*

*O Patris caritas!*  
*O Nati lenitas!*  
Wir wär'n all verloren  
*Per nostra crimina,*  
So hat er uns erworben  
*Caelorum gaudia.*  
Eia, wär'n wir da!

*Ubi sunt gaudia*  
Nirgend mehr denn da!  
Da die Engel singen  
*Nova cantica,*  
Und da die Schellen klingen  
*In Regis curia.*  
Eia, wär'n wir da!

In sweet jubilation  
Now sing and rejoice!  
Our heart's bliss  
Lies in the manger,  
And shines like the sun  
In his mother's lap.  
You are Alpha and Omega!

O Jesu, little one,  
I yearn for you so much!  
Comfort my spirit,  
O supreme Child  
Through all your goodness,  
O Prince of glory,  
Make me follow you.

O the goodness of the Father,  
O the gentleness of the Son!  
We would all be lost  
Through our sins,  
But he has gained for us  
The joys of Heaven.  
O that we were there!

Where are those joys?  
Nowhere but there!  
There the angels are singing  
New songs  
And there the bells are ringing  
In the court of the King.  
O that we were there!

## Ding Dong Merrily on High, words by George Ratcliffe Woodward

Ding Dong! Merrily on high  
In heav'n the bells are ringing  
Ding, dong! Verily the sky  
Is riv'n with angel singing  
*Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis*

E'en so here below, below  
Let steeple bells be swungen  
And i-o, i-o, i-o  
By priest and people be sungen  
*Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis*

Pray ye dutifully prime  
Your matin chime, ye ringers  
May ye beautifully rime  
Your evetime song, ye singers  
*Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis*

## CAROL FOR ALL: O Come, All Ye Faithful

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!*

Sing, choirs of angels,  
Sing in exultation,  
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;  
Glory to God,  
In the highest:

*O come, let us adore him.  
O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
Christ the Lord!*

Yea, Lord, we greet thee,  
Born this happy morning,  
Jesu, to thee be glory giv'n;  
Word of the Father,  
Now in the flesh appearing:

*O come, let us adore him.  
O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
Christ the Lord!*

## The Holly and the Ivy, English traditional carol

The holly and the ivy  
When they are both full grown;  
Of all the trees that are in the wood  
The holly bears the crown.

*O the rising of the sun  
And the running of the deer,  
The playing of the merry organ,  
Sweet singing in the choir*

The holly bears a blossom,  
As white as any flower;  
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ  
To be our sweet Saviour.

*O the rising of the sun  
And the running of the deer,  
The playing of the merry organ,  
Sweet singing in the choir*

The holly bears a berry  
As red as any blood;  
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ  
To do poor sinners good.

*O the rising of the sun  
And the running of the deer,  
The playing of the merry organ,  
Sweet singing in the choir*

The holly bears a prick  
As sharp as any thorn;  
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ  
On Christmas day in the morn.

*O the rising of the sun  
And the running of the deer,  
The playing of the merry organ,  
Sweet singing in the choir*

The holly bears a bark  
As bitter as any gall;  
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ  
For to redeem us all.

*O the rising of the sun  
And the running of the deer,  
The playing of the merry organ,  
Sweet singing in the choir*



## CAROL FOR ALL: The First Nowell

The first Nowell the angel did say  
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;  
In fields where they lay, keeping their sheep,  
On a cold winter's night that was so deep:

*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell  
Born is the King of Israel!*

They looked up and saw a star,  
Shining in the east, beyond them far:  
And to the earth it gave great light,  
And so it continued both day and night:

*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell  
Born is the King of Israel!*

And by the light of that same star,  
Three wise men came from country far;  
To seek for a King was their intent,  
And to follow the star wherever it went:

*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell  
Born is the King of Israel!*

Then let us all with one accord  
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord,  
That hath made heaven and earth of nought,  
And with his blood mankind hath bought:

*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell  
Born is the King of Israel!*

**Gaudete**, words Anon. (16th c.), trans. © Carol Anne Perry Lagemann

Gaudete! Christus est natus  
Ex Maria vergine, gaudete!

Tempus adest gratiae  
Hoc quod optabamus,  
Carmina laetitiae  
Devote reddamus.

Deus homo factus est  
Natura mirante,  
Mundus renovatus est  
A Christo regnante

Ezechielis porta  
Clausula pertransitur,  
Unde lux est orta  
Salus invenitur.

Ergo nostra contio  
Psallat iam in lustro;  
Benedicat Domino:  
Salus Regi nostro.

Rejoice! Born is the Savior  
From the Virgin Mary's womb: Be joyful!

At this time of holy grace,  
For which we were yearning,  
In devotion let us sing,  
Hymns of joy returning.

God is made a man today;  
Nature lies in wonder.  
The world is renewed  
By Christ's reign.

Fastened was Ezekiel's gate,  
Yet he entered through it;  
So the light shone  
And found salvation.

Therefore, our assembly  
Sings now in brightness.  
We bless the Lord:  
Greetings to our King.

## **Hodie Christus natus est**, words from Magnificat Antiphon for Christmas Day Vespers

Hodie, hodie Christus natus est.  
Noe, Noe, Noe.  
Hodie, hodie Salvator apparuit.  
Alleluia.  
Hodie, hodie in terra canunt angeli,  
Laetantur archangeli.  
Noe, Noe, Noe.  
Hodie, hodie exultant iusti decentes:  
Gloria in excelsis Deo, alleluia.  
Noe, Noe, Noe.

Today, today Christ is born.  
Noel, Noel, Noel  
Today, today the Savior has appeared.  
Alleluia.  
Today, today the angels sing on earth,  
The archangels rejoice.  
Noel, Noel, Noel.  
Today, today the righteous are glad and say:  
Glory to God in the highest, alleluia.  
Noel, Noel, Noel.

## **CAROL FOR ALL: God Rest Ye Merry Gentleman**

God rest ye merry, gentlemen,  
Let nothing you dismay,  
For Jesus Christ our Saviour  
Was born upon this day,  
To save us all from Satan's power  
When we were gone astray:

*O tidings of comfort and joy,  
Comfort and joy  
O tidings of comfort and joy.*

From God our heav'nly Father  
A blessed angel came,  
And unto certain shepherds  
Brought tidings of the same,  
How that in Bethlehem was born  
The Son of God by name:

*O tidings of comfort and joy,  
Comfort and joy  
O tidings of comfort and joy.*

Now to the Lord sing praises,  
All you within this place,  
And with true love and brotherhood

Each other now embrace;  
This holy tide of Christmas  
All others doth deface:

*O tidings of comfort and joy,  
Comfort and joy  
O tidings of comfort and joy.*

## **Let It Snow!** lyrics by Sammy Cahn

Let it snow! Let it snow!

Oh the weather outside is frightful  
But the fire is so delightful  
And since we've no place to go  
Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow

It shows no sign of stopping  
And I've brought some corn for popping  
The lights are turned way down low  
Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow

When we finally say good night  
How I'll hate going out in the storm!  
But if you really hold me tight,  
All the way home I'll be warm!

The fire is slowly dying,  
And my dear, we're still goodbye-ing  
But as long as you love me so,  
Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow!

## CAROL FOR ALL: Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

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 th'angelic host proclaim,  
Christ is born in Bethlehem.

*Hark! the herald angels sing,  
Glory to the newborn King,*

Christ, by highest heav'n adored,  
Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
Late in time behold him come,  
Offspring of a virgin's womb:  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,  
Hail th'incarnate Deity!  
Pleased as man with man to dwell,  
Jesus, our Emmanuel.

*Hark! the herald angels sing,  
Glory to the newborn King,*

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!  
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all he brings,  
Ris'n with healing in his wings.  
Mild he lays his glory by,  
Born that we 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,*

Kindly turn off all electronic devices during the concert. Non-flash photography is permitted. Also, please note the location of the emergency exit doors.

### **'TIS THE SEASON OF GIVING**

Gifts to the Gardner's Annual Fund help us preserve our world-class collection, engage audiences with innovative exhibitions, and present dynamic musical experiences. Please consider making a gift before December 31. Thank you.



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Music at the Gardner is supported by Manitou Fund. The Museum thanks its generous concert donors: The Coogan Concert in memory of Peter Weston Coogan; Fitzpatrick Family Concert; James Lawrence Memorial Concert; Alford P. Rudnick Memorial Concert; David Scudder in memory of his wife, Marie Louise Scudder; Wendy Shattuck Young Artist Concert; and Willona Sinclair Memorial Concert. The piano is dedicated as the Alex d'Arbeloff Steinway. The harpsichord was generously donated by Dr. Robert Barstow in memory of Marion Huse, and its care is endowed in memory of Dr. Barstow by The Barstow Fund. Music at the Gardner is also supported in part by Barbara and Amos Hostetter, Nicie and Jay Panetta, and the Massachusetts Cultural Council, which is supported by the state of Massachusetts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

