

THE
Celebration
Singers

ALL NATURE SINGS

OF CHRISTMAS



Friday, December 5 • 7:00 pm • ACU Boone Family Theatre

UNDERWRITTEN BY



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Suggested Donation \$10 per person

This project is supported in part by a grant from the Abilene Cultural Affairs Council and HeARTS for the ARTS.

THE CELEBRATION SINGERS PRESENT
ALL NATURE SINGS OF CHRISTMAS

- Light the Lights** Beck, Fisher
- A Very, Very, Merry, Merry Christmas** Lawrence
The Mixed Up Group
- Rockin' Holidays** Marks, arr. Billingsley
Jan Berny and The Shaner Girls, Soloists
- 'Twas the Night Before Christmas** Clement Clark Moore
The Wise Guys & Dr. Larry McGraw
- The Snow Begins to Fall** Beck
Morgan Shaner, ASL
Jill D'Entremont, Dancer
- In the Bleak Midwinter** Rossetti, Holst
The Celebration Ladies
- Shepherd's Joy** Parker, Hayes
Joyce McGlaun, Violin
- December's Keep** Chopin, Gilpin
- I Wonder as I Wander** Niles
Paul Davis, Soloist
- A Star Dances, An Angel Sings** Gilpin
The Celebration Ladies
- A Place in the Choir** Staines, arr. Wheeler
Featuring the Celebration Kids
- The Holly and the Ivy** arr. Knoedler
The Mixed Up Group

- The Friendly Beasts** Walker
 Joyce McGlaun, Violin
 Featuring the Celebration Kids
- The Cherry Tree Carol** Traditional
 The Wise Guys
- The Star Carol** Alfred Burt
 Twila Nowell & Aaron Shipp, Soloists
- And the Trees Do Moan** arr. Gaul
 Morgan Shaner, ASL
- I Wish You Christmas** Rutter
 Jan Berny, Soloist

THE CELEBRATION SINGERS

Jan Berny	Twila Nowell
Jamie Breed	Robin Roberts
Janet Cline	Christianne Robertson
Lora Cottle	Jennifer Shaner
Jill D'Entremont	Aaron Shipp
Paul Davis	Shelby Smith
Faye Dodson	Shelly Smith
Melvin Dudley	Shelby Stahlke
Chong Flint	David Swearingen
Gerald Gilkey	Karen Swearingen
Diane Jamison	Barry Triche
Kathie Justice	Jean Triche
Becky Kirkpatrick	Al Watkins
Andy Ladyman	Nicole Wiedemann
Sharon Mize	

THE MIXED UP GROUP

Jamie Breed	Aaron Shipp
Lora Cottle	Shelby Stahlke
Paul Davis	David Swearingen
Andy Ladyman	Karen Swearingen
Twila Nowell	Barry Triche
Robin Roberts	Jean Triche

THE CELEBRATION LADIES

Jamie Breed	Diane Jamison
Jill D'Entremont	Robin Roberts
Faye Dodson	Shelly Smith

THE WISE GUYS

Paul Davis	Aaron Shipp
Melvin Dudley	David Swearingen
Gerald Gilkey	Barry Triche
Andy Ladyman	Al Watkins

THE CELEBRATION KIDS

Emma Barringer	Henry Meeks
Bodie Baumgardner	Carmen Reeves
Haven Baumgardner	Conner Reeves
Kadde Bloxham	Peyton Ritter
Cece Cockerell	Morgan Shaner
Everett Cockerell	Allie Shaner
Lilybelle Erdrich	Leah Shaner
Owen James	Abigail Wiedemann
Eric Justice	Madelyn Wiedemann
Syndee Mayes	

Special Thanks

Music Notes Lora Lynn Christensen
Producer, Stage Design Nicole Wiedemann
Costumes Karen Swearingen
Choreography Jill D'Entremont
Production Assistant/Publicity David Swearingen
Art Director, Social Media Jill D'Entremont
Music Library... Christianne Robertson, Jean Triche, Barry Triche
Santa Claus Don Christensen

Thank you to McMurry University, Dawne Swearingen-Meeks & the ACU Theatre Department. Additional thanks to Craig Fisher, ACU Associate VP for Advancement and Alumni & to Makayla Kerrigan, ACU Events Coordinator.

The Celebration Singers is affiliated with the National Federation of Music Clubs and the Texas Federation of Music Clubs.

This project is supported in part by a grant from the Abilene Cultural Affairs Council and HeARTS for the ARTS.

Donate to the Celebration Singers!
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Be sure to follow us on Facebook and Instagram!

Lora Lynn Christensen

Our Director & Accompanist

Lora Lynn Christensen is a Nationally Certified Teacher of Music and owner of an independent piano studio of more than 30 years in Abilene. She has been an adjunct faculty member at McMurry University since 2011, teaching piano and accompanying vocal students. She is the Past State President of Texas Federation of Music Clubs, has served on the board of Opera in the Ozarks and is a member of the Abilene Music Teachers Association (Texas Music Teachers Association and Music Teachers National Association) and the Harmony Club (TFMC). She is also a founding member of the Abilene Opera Association.



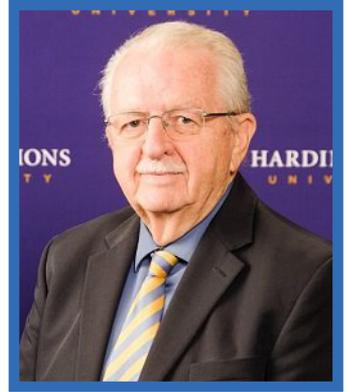
Lora Lynn currently serves on the boards of Harmony Family Services and the Celebration Singers. She is a member of the Kiwanis Club of Abilene, is an SAI patroness, and is the pianist at St. James United Methodist Church. Fun facts: she also plays the accordion, the McMurry Carillon and the Kiwanis Club of Abilene historic McMurry calliope.

Lora Lynn has served as the accompanist for the Celebration Singers since 1999, and she became the Director of the Celebration Singers in the fall of 2024.

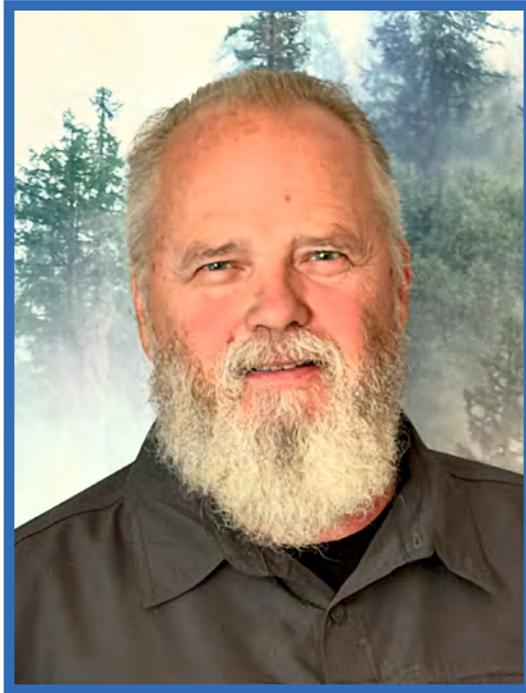
Dr. Larry McGraw

Our Master of Ceremonies

Dr. Larry McGraw serves as the Associate Dean of the Logsdon Seminary at Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas. As professor of Bible, Dr. McGraw has taught at Hardin-Simmons for 42 years. As a preacher/teacher, he has spoken at numerous churches, Bible Conferences, and special events in several states. He has written numerous articles for publications, including the "Bible Illustrator" and "Southwest Journal of Theology". On the local level, he teaches adult Sunday school classes and has written teacher guides for Baptist Way Press in connection with the Texas Baptist General Convention. He previously published devotional books on Isaiah and Matthew in "The Bible Says" series. He has been a radio personality in Abilene and the public address announcer for HSU home football, basketball, and volleyball games.



Married for 51 years, he and his wife, Sandy, have 2 adult sons, two wonderful daughters-in-law, and four fabulous grandchildren: Braylen, Ainsley, Reed, and Jaxon. Dr. McGraw was honored by HSU with the first "Golden Microphone" award for his days announcing sporting events. He has been our Celebration Singers Master of Ceremonies for 20 years where his wit and wisdom have charmed performers and patrons for many successful shows.



Paul Davis

Guest Conductor

Paul Davis has been in ministry for over 40 years, serving as Music Minister, Worship Pastor, and Pastor in various churches, and leading worship in the Navy and Naval Reserve.

Educated at Hardin-Simmons University and Logsdon Seminary with a focus on music, Bible and ministry, music is Paul's first love and joy. He believes it enables worship as nothing else can do and is honored to be able to lead Celebration Singers this semester.

He has been married to his beautiful wife, Vicki, for 36 years. They have six children and an abundance of wonderful grandchildren.

Director's Notes

Carrying on a tradition of great music for nearly 30 years takes lots of cooperation from people in many walks of life. J. G. Martin had a great vision of an all-volunteer community show choir offering concerts free to the public (of course accepting donations) and including a little information and insight into music of all types as a way of educating said public. We are proceeding into the future continuing this wonderful, crazy plan for sharing our love of vocal music.

Board members and other choir members step up to the plate to deliver costuming, props, stage design, scripts, choreography, printed program art, graphics and information and, of course, amazing concerts. If you would like to use your singing talent, please join us. If you have other talents you would like to add into the mix, we will be twice as thankful for you becoming a member.

The Friendly Beasts has always been one of my favorite Christmas carols and very few people are familiar with it. It became the basis for this show as I explored the many songs that include nature responding to the mystery surrounding the Baby Jesus' birth. The Bible tells us if we do not praise the Lord, the very rocks will cry out. As we present the program, see if you can identify all the aspects of nature involved: snow, stars, Christmas trees and cherry trees, and of course, so many animals!

PSALM 148:7-10

"Praise the Lord from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths. Lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding; you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars; wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds."

Music Notes

In the Bleak Midwinter

In the Bleak Midwinter is a poem by the English poet Christina Rossetti, published in January 1862. A line from the poem is "Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow." Epizeuxis is a literary device where the repetition of a word happens in quick succession, leading to emphasis of the word. This repetition leads to a vision of snowflakes falling and layering. It has been set to music several times. Gustav Holst's (1874-1934) version was published in 1906 in The English Hymnal. Holst, a British composer of Swedish origin also composed the orchestral suite, *The Planets*.

Shepherd's Joy

Shepherd's Joy, A Celtic Christmas Celebration was released in 2003; a collaboration by Mark Hayes and John Parker. It so well mimics the Celtic sounds it seems like it is centuries old. Mr. Hayes is an American composer and arranger of sacred and gospel music with over 1000 publications released. Many pianists have performed his piano arrangements and most church choirs have performed many of his pieces numerous times. John Parker is a native of Louisiana and has published over 600 choral works.

December's Keep

December's Keep is a poem by Greg Gilpin set to the Prelude in C minor, Opus 28, No.20 by Frederic Chopin (1810-1849), a Polish Composer of (almost) exclusively piano music and virtuoso pianist of the Romantic Period. This piece calls for singing descending half steps (the chromatic scale) representing the falling snow. The words are a beautiful description of nature in the cold month of December, "Earth lies cold, asleep in December's Keep."

The Friendly Beasts

The Friendly Beasts, arranged by Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947) is a Christmas song from 12-Century France, set to the melody of the Latin song, *Orientis Partibus*. The English words were written by Robert Davis in the 1920's and are also known as The Donkey Carol or The Gift of the Animals. The animals gave the baby Jesus their gifts: the donkey carried the mother uphill and down, safely to Bethlehem; the cow gave the manger for His bed and hay to soften it; the sheep gave his "coat" to keep Him warm; and the doves cooed Him to sleep, that he would not cry.

The Cherry Tree Carol

The Cherry Tree Carol is a traditional Herefordshire tune from the early 15th Century. This is a story taken perhaps from Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem. The fourth verse shows Joseph being "unkind." Maybe he was weary, possibly humanly doubting the words of the Angel that Jesus was God's own son. Verse six tells that the uppermost sprig bowed down to let Mary pick fruit for her unborn baby. The original tune has far more than the eight verses presented tonight.

And the Trees Do Moan

And the Trees Do Moan is the Appalachian Christmas Carol of the Mountain Whites, arranged by Harvey Gaul in 1929. The trees bear witness to Jesus' birth, King Herod's cruelty, Mary and Joseph's flight to Egypt, Jesus' work as a carpenter and His eventual fate.



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ALLIGATOR
CHERRY TREE



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OX
WEASEL

CHRISTMAS TREE

IVY
DONKEY

CAT
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OTTER

GRIZZLY BEAR

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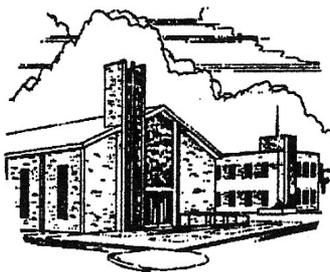
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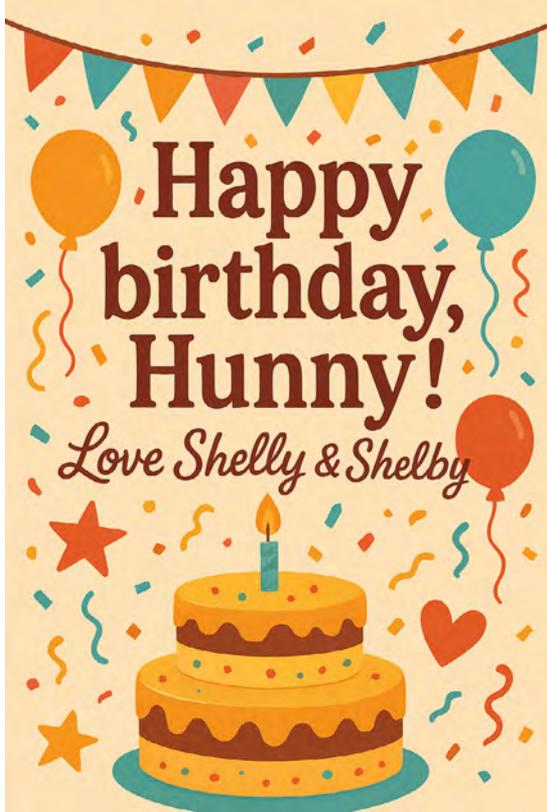


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