

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 20, 2023

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**VALLEJO CHORAL SOCIETY set to present *AMERICAN LUMINARIES* holiday concerts**

Conducted by **JULIA MORRIS**, with renowned GUEST SOLOISTS

- Saturday, December 2, 7 PM, Community Congregational Church, Benicia
- Sunday, December 3, 3 PM, Springbrook Masonic Temple, Vallejo

Vallejo Choral Society, more than 50-singers strong, is in final rehearsals in preparation to present an extraordinary holiday program under the artistic leadership of Julia Morris.

A focal point of the program is *The Ballad of the Brown King*, a Christmas cantata composed by **Margaret Bonds** that is woven with a variety of musical influences and text by Langston Hughes that celebrates the African King Balthazar.

The Choral Society also performs *Frostiana: Seven Country Songs*, a suite of choral art songs composed by **Randall Thompson** and featuring poetry by Robert Frost.

Guest soloists joining the Symphonic Choir include sopranos Sarita Cannon and Michele Kennedy, mezzo-sopranos Melissa Dufort and Leandra Ramm, and Tenor Sidney Ragland.

The program also features a selection of American hymns and carols, including “Star in the East,” an early American hymn from the shape note tradition arranged by Brad Holmes, and the traditional Christmas spiritual “Go Tell It on the Mountain,” arranged by John W. Work. The VCS Chamber Choir performs pieces including “A Christmas Carol” by Charles Ives; “Out of the Orient Crystal Skies,” by Richard Zgodova; and “Hail Christmas Day,” by Abbie Betinis.

**Tickets:** \$35 in advance, \$40 at door; Students are free: [www.vallejochoral.org](http://www.vallejochoral.org)

**About VCS:** In its 106<sup>th</sup> season, Vallejo Choral Society keeps its extended choral community united, inspired, singing, and learning through innovative programming.

During the height of the COVID Pandemic, the community chorus launched unique virtual programs that culminated in livestreamed concerts of Bach and Handel masterworks. In December 2021, the Choral Society made a triumphant return to live performances with concerts featuring Benjamin Britten’s *A Ceremony of Carols*, followed by a rousing season finale featuring Carl Orff’s *Carmina Burana*, set poetically among rows of whisky barrels at a Mare Island distillery. For its 105<sup>th</sup> season, VCS presented December concerts featuring Eleanor Daley’s *Requiem*, a Spring Gala set of Central and South American choral works, and in April 2023 two brilliant performances of J.S. Bach’s monumental *St. Matthew Passion* with Baroque orchestra.

Vallejo Choral Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit performing arts organization whose mission is to foster a vibrant, diverse, and interactive choral community, educate its singers and audiences, and extend its reach to youth. In 2022, VCS launched the Campanelli Youth Chorus after-school class for students throughout Solano County. VCS offers scholarships to high school and college students and offers free concert tickets for children and students.