

# Cantopi

Robert L. Harris, conductor

presents

## *Amahl and the Night Visitors*

1999

December 4 - St. Paul's Lutheran Church

December 5 - Skidaway Island  
United Methodist Church

**Alleluia**

**Randall Thompson**  
(1899-1984)

**The Holly and the Ivy (England)**

**arr. Shaw/Parker**

**Raymond R. Ellis, Daniel C. Cohen, baritones**

**Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella (France)**

**arr. Wetzler**

**Gene L. Jarvis, recorder, Billy Wooten and Sonia Yoder, percussion**

**I Wonder As I Wander (USA)**

**arr. Nestor**

**Alysa Smith, soprano**

**What Child Is This? (England)**

**arr. Shaw/Parker**

**Angels We Have Heard On High (France)**

**arr. Wagner**

**Silent Night (Germany)**

**arr. Dello Joio**

**Lois Richter, piano**

**Gene L. Jarvis, piano**

## **intermission**

**Amahl and the Night Visitors**

**Gian-Carlo Menotti**  
(1911- )

**Amahl**

**John Keena**

**Mother**

**Sonia Yoder**

**Caspar**

**Billy Wooten**

**Melchior**

**Daniel C. Cohen**

**Balthazar**

**Jonathan Hendrix**

**Page**

**Raymond R. Ellis, jr.**

**Dancers**

**Anna Anderson**

**Elizabeth Hubert**

**Director**

**Robert L. Harris**

**Choreographer**

**Travis Dodd**

**Set**

**Jamie Keena**

**Lighting**

**Jamie Keena**

**Costumes**

**Billy Wooten**

**Tickets**

**Ingrid Lelos**

**Publicity**

**Billy Wooten**

**Melissa Emery**

**Rehearsal Accompanist**

**Gene L. Jarvis**

**Raymond R. Ellis**

**Transportation**

**Preston Powers**

Somewhere in the world lives a crippled little shepherd called Amahl, with his mother, an impoverished widow. Nothing is left to them of the little they ever had, and they are now faced with hunger and cold in their empty house.

Three Wise men, on their way to Bethlehem, stop at the hut and ask to be taken in for the night. Amahl and his mother welcome them as well as they can, and are much astonished at the splendor of their robes and the wealth of gifts they are carrying with them. When Amahl's mother realizes that the Three Kings are looking for a newborn babe and that the expensive gifts are all destined for him, she becomes bitter and envious. She cannot understand why at least some of these gifts are not to be bestowed upon her own child, who is so poor and sickly.

Under cover of darkness, while the Three Kings are asleep, she steals some of the

gold from them...and is caught red-handed. When she explains to the Three Kings that she needs this gold to feed her starving child, she is readily forgiven. With great tenderness they try to explain to her who this newborn child is and how much he needs the love of every human being to build his coming kingdom. Touched by their words, the poor widow not only gives back the stolen gold, but wishes she could add a gift of her own. Little Amahl comes to her rescue. He impulsively hands to the Three Kings his wooden crutch, his most precious possession, and in doing so he is miraculously cured of his lameness.

As dawn appears in the sky, the Three Kings make ready to resume their journey. Amahl begs his mother to let him join them, and he is finally allowed to follow the Kings to Bethlehem to adore and give thanks to the Christ Child.

Gian Carlo Menotti was born in Cadegliano, Italy in 1911. He was born into a large family and his mother, Ines, made sure that her children were taught piano, violin, and cello. All the children were talented but Gian Carlo was recognized as a musical prodigy by the age of five. At 11 he composed his first opera, *The Death of Pierrot*. He arrived in America in 1928 to study at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. His first full-fledged opera *Amelia Goes to the Ball*, was presented at the Philadelphia Institute of Music on April 1, 1937.

Since that time Menotti has been the recipient of two Pulitzer Prizes for operas and has founded the Spoleto Festivals in both Italy and Charleston. His operas *The Medium* and *The Consul* both were successful in the competitive environment of Broadway. He currently resides in Scotland and continues to compose and work.

In November of 1951 he faced a serious problem. NBC had commissioned him to write the first opera composed for presentation on television and his December deadline loomed large on the horizon. While walking through the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York he paused in front of *The Adoration of the Three Kings* by Hieronymus Bosch. The painting brought to mind his child faith in the Three Kings of old who, in the imagination of Italian children was the generous bearer of Holiday gifts rather than Santa Claus. Inspired he set to work on the libretto and score of the opera which has become a Christmas classic.

**John Keena** (Amahl) is a veteran of both musical and theatrical stages in Savannah. He was a featured soloist with the Savannah Symphony last season in the Bernstein tribute concert. He has also been seen frequently on stage with the Savannah Theater company productions including *The Sound of Music* in which he shared the stage with his father Jamie Keena, Savannah folk-singer extraordinaire, and charter member of I Cantori.

**Sonia Yoder** (Mother) holds degrees in English from Georgia State University, and Music Education from Armstrong Atlantic State University. While at Armstrong she was the first recipient of the I Cantori Scholarship in Choral Music. She has appeared in several oratorio solo roles with the Savannah Symphony, both at AASU and with I Cantori. She is currently teaching choral music at South Effingham Middle School.

**Billy Wooten** (Caspar) has been a member of I Cantori since 1996. He attended the University of North Carolina and East Carolina University. His stage experience includes appearances with the Western Piedmont Lyric Theater and the Charlotte Opera in such diverse productions as *George M!*, *Oliver*, *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. He has also appeared in solo roles with the Savannah Symphony Chorus. He directs an award-winning employment and training program for disadvantaged adults with Green Thumb, a division of the US Department of Labor.

**Daniel C. Cohen** (Melchior) has been a member of I Cantori since its first con-

cert. He has had several appearances as a soloist with the Savannah Symphony in concerts of the Symphony Chorus and I Cantori. His oratorio repertoire includes Handel's *Messiah*, and the Verdi *Requiem*. He has also been active in local theatrical productions. He received degrees in vocal performance and pre-law from Presbyterian College and his law degree from the University of South Carolina. He is currently a partner with the firm of Brannen, Searcy & Smith.

**Jonathon Hendrix** (Balthazar) will graduate in December from Armstrong Atlantic State University with a degree in Spanish and a minor in music. He plays bass clarinet in the AASU Concert Band and sings in the prestigious chamber choir under the direction of Dr. Scott Buchanan. He has studied abroad in Spain and Mexico and looks forward to a career as a multi-lingual translator. Immediately after graduation he is going to Mexico for volunteer work in a remote mountain village.

**Raymond R. Ellis** (Page) is a veteran of many local theatrical productions the most recent of which was *Side By Side With Sondheim*. He graduated from Armstrong Atlantic State University with a degree in music education. A charter member of I Cantori he has been a frequent soloist both at Armstrong and with I Cantori. He is also a versatile pianist. He is currently director of choral music at Liberty County High School. He is an active member of the American Choral Directors Association and the Music Educators national Conference.

## **Acknowledgments**

### **St. Paul's Lutheran Church**

James Dugan, pastor  
Steven Branyan, organist-choir director  
Betty Miles, church administrator

### **Skidaway Island United Methodist Church**

Rev. Jim Giddens, minister  
Peggy Breese, director of music

### **Opera Carolina**

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Peggy Breese  
Erin Freeman\*  
Mari Harris  
Diane O'Brien  
Alysa Smith  
Mimi Witherington

## alto

Tonya Hillis  
Ingrid Lelos  
Carla McCurry  
Elizabeth van Beest  
Joan Warshauer\*  
Sonia Yoder

## tenor

R. Gregory Canady\*  
Randall Canady  
Raymond R. Ellis  
Timothy L. Hall  
Tim Wheelles  
Billy Wooten

## bass

Daniel C. Cohen  
Jonathan Hendrix  
Gene L. Jarvis  
Gregory Johnson\*  
Preston Powers  
Ira Ryan  
Fred White

\*currently on leave of absence



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