



The  
Palmetto  
Mastersingers

SOUTH CAROLINA'S MUSICAL AMBASSADORS

# If Thee We Sing

DR. BENJAMIN STOGNER  
*Artistic Director*

FRIDAY, MAY 23, 2025  
7:30PM

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# *Meet our Mastersingers Musical Leaders*

## **DR. BENJAMIN STOGNER**

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Artistic Director for The Palmetto Mastersingers



**D**r. Benjamin Stogner holds a Doctorate in Musical Arts in Vocal Performance from the University of South Carolina, and a Master's in Music Education from Liberty University. With a passion for choral conducting and performance, Dr. Stogner has carved an impressive path in academia and the church.

Beginning as a rehearsal conductor at Court Street United Methodist Church in Lynchburg, VA, Dr. Stogner honed his skills in leading choral ensembles. This experience laid the foundation for

the subsequent role as Director of Worship at Greenhill Baptist Church, where he not only led the choir but also conducted the accompanying orchestra, fostering a rich and harmonious worship experience.

Currently, Dr. Stogner serves as the Minister of Music at Florence Baptist Church in Forest City, North Carolina, where his leadership continues to inspire and uplift the congregation through music. His dedication to musical excellence is evident not only within the church walls but also throughout the community.

Beyond his church commitments, Dr. Stogner has showcased his talent on the operatic stage, portraying memorable roles such as the Count in "The Marriage of Figaro" at the University of South Carolina and the Police Sergeant in "The Pirates of Penzance" at Liberty University. His versatility as a performer is further demonstrated through his involvement in various musical events and recitals across the city, captivating audiences with his expressive and powerful voice.

As a member of the esteemed Palmetto Mastersingers, Dr. Stogner has contributed his talents to enriching the local choral landscape. Recently, he has taken on the role of Artistic Director of this great organization.

Driven by a deep love for music and a commitment to excellence, Dr. Stogner continues to make a profound impact on both the spiritual and artistic communities he serves.



## ALLISON HUDSON HILBISH

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Accompanist for The Palmetto Mastersingers



Having grown up in Columbia, Allison has spent her life at the heart of its local musical scene. She received her Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from the University of South Carolina after obtaining an Associate of Arts Degree from Anderson Junior College. Allison is very passionate about the art of accompanying, has been the pianist for many choral groups in the area, and is currently the pianist for the Columbia Choral Society and the Palmetto Mastersingers. She was the staff accompanist at Columbia College for over 10 years and is currently the pianist for Saint Andrews Presbyterian Church and a staff accompanist at Newberry College.



## ARPAD DARAZS

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1922 – 1986



Arpad Darazs was a native of Hungary. From 1941 to 1947, he earned three degrees from the Royal Franz Liszt Music Conservatory in Budapest. He was conductor of the Hungarian State Radio Network. He emigrated to the United States and was a music instructor at Malloy College and Columbia University before coming to the University of South Carolina in 1966 as professor of music and director of choral activities. He earned a Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1972.

Dr. Darazs was a protégé of renowned Hungarian composer Zoltan Kodaly and was an authority on the Kodaly method of choral instruction. While at USC, Darazs founded the Concert Choir and was conductor of the Columbia Philharmonic Orchestra. He organized the Palmetto Mastersingers in 1981 to promote the male choral repertoire beyond the college walls. In 1985, he was awarded the Elizabeth O'Neill Verner award for his contributions and achievement in and to the arts in South Carolina.

In recognition of this heritage, our concerts from time to time will feature compositions by Kodaly and arrangements by Darazs.

# *The Palmetto Mastersingers Members*

## FIRST TENOR

Landon Allison  
Ben Cliatt  
Ed Hynson  
Kevin Moody  
Richard Taylor

## SECOND TENOR

David Anderson  
Wayne Smith  
Brayden Stevens  
Kurt Stevens  
Michael Stroupe  
Joey Tucker  
Karl Weeks

## BARITONE

Cliff Barrineau  
David Deming  
Charlie Hill  
Boyd Saunders  
Claude Sykes  
Bill Tolleson

## BASS

Richard Allison  
Ed Billings  
Bob Curtis  
Jay Hudson  
Dale Jones  
David Mitchell  
Eric Robinson  
Harry Smithson  
Barry Stogner  
Johnny Thomas



Experience the richness of choral music in *Of Thee We Sing*, a concert that weaves together songs of faith, reflection, and celebration. Over the past season, the Palmetto Mastersingers have had the great privilege of fulfilling our role as musical ambassadors for the state of South Carolina, sharing our music in a variety of settings beyond our spring concert. This program brings together some of our most beloved sacred and patriotic selections from those performances, along with a few new additions we're excited to share. We hope this evening of heartfelt music uplifts your spirit and fills you with gratitude and joy.

~Dr. Benjamin Stogner



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- Mary Sue Lewis
- R. Kevin Moody
- Carol Rudder
- Patricia C. Russell – *In memory of Robert R. (Bob) Russell, Jr.*
- Marybeth Shelley
- Harry Smithson
- Lynn and Barry Stogner
- Ceylle and Michael Stroupe
- Kerry Stubbs
- Edna and Claude Sykes
- Corrina and Johnny Thomas, Jr.
- Stacy Thompson
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# *If Thee We Sing*

**FRIDAY, MAY 23, 2025**  
**Eastminster Presbyterian Church**  
**7:30 P.M.**

## *The Palmetto Mastersingers*

**Dr. Benjamin Stogner, Artistic Director**

**Allison Hilbish, Accompanist**

**Star Spangled Banner** ..... Text: Francis Scott Key  
Music: John Stafford Smith  
Arr: Russell Robinson

**Come Thou Holy Spirit** ..... P. Tschesnokoff  
Arr: Peter C. Tkach

**Cry Out and Shout** ..... Knut Nystedt

**At the River** ..... Hymn Tune  
Adapted by: Aaron Copeland  
Arr: R. Welding White

**Sing Me to Heaven** ..... Text: Jane Griner  
Music: Daniel E. Gawthrop  
Arr: James Holloway



**Deep River** .....Negro Spiritual  
Arr: Noble Cain

**My Lord What A Mornin'** .....H.T.Burleigh  
Arr: R Vené

**Hold On** .....Spiritual  
Arr: Eugene Thamon Simpson

**Patriotic Medley**.....Arr: Gordon (Dick) Goodwin

**Service Songs** ..... Arr: Gordon (Dick) Goodwin

**We Shall Not Sleep**..... Laura Farnell

**Tell My Father** ..... Text: Jack Murphy  
Music: Frank Wildhorn  
Arr: Andrea Ramsey

*Johnny Thomas, soloist*

**Song of the Unsung Hero**..... Text: Pamela Stewart  
Music: Joseph M. Martin  
*Kurt Stevens, Bill Tollison, soloists*

**God Bless America** .....Irving Berlin  
Arr: Roy Ringwald

**I'll Make a Man out of You** ..... Text: David Zippel  
Music: Matthew Wilder  
Arr: Roger Emerson

*Solos: Kurt Stevens, David Deming,  
Michael Stroupe, Johnny Thomas, Karl Weeks*

# VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Founded in 1981 by the visionary Dr. Arpad Darazs, the Palmetto Mastersingers has brought together men from all walks of life who share a love for choral music and a passion for uplifting our community. For over four decades, we've performed across South Carolina and beyond, enriching the cultural fabric of our region with powerful, moving music.

More than just a performance group, the Mastersingers are a musical brotherhood committed to service, excellence, and outreach. We sing in concert halls, churches, and community spaces — always striving to inspire, connect, and give back.

As we look to the future, your support helps us:

- **Expand our outreach to younger singers and new audiences**
  - by launching youth choral camps and mentorship programs, performing in schools, and creating engaging community events that welcome new listeners.
- **Fund performances and travel to underserved communities**
  - by covering transportation costs, securing venues in rural and low-access areas, and partnering with local organizations to bring music where it's needed most.
- **Preserve our musical legacy through the development of passionate vocalists**
  - by offering scholarships, hosting workshops and masterclasses, and creating pathways for young singers to join and grow within the Mastersingers.
- **Strengthen our operational foundation for years to come**
  - by investing in staff and leadership, upgrading essential equipment, and building financial reserves that ensure sustainability and growth.

We invite you to partner with us in this mission—please consider making a donation to help us continue sharing the gift of music with our community and beyond.

<https://www.palmettomastersingers.org/>





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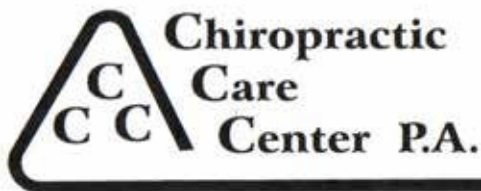
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# Songs of Note

Tonight's program features familiar patriotic melodies befitting the observance of Memorial Day. Though not as well known, we include two newer songs we find particularly moving.

*Tell My Father* is from the musical *The Civil War*. It tells the story of a young Union soldier who contemplates his own death in battle, hoping that his father will know of his bravery. "Tell my father when you can, I was a man."

*We Shall Not Sleep* is a recent musical setting of the poem, "In Flanders Fields." Canadian physician Lt. Col. John McCrae was inspired to write it in 1915 after presiding over the funeral of a fellow soldier who died in the battle of Ypres. "In Flanders Fields the poppies grow, between the crosses row on row." Red poppies grew over the graves of fallen soldiers, and the remembrance poppy became one of the world's most recognized memorial symbols for soldiers who died in combat.



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of our members

*Jim Evans*  
March 6, 2025

*Roger Hinson*  
April 23, 2025



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Allison Sullivan is responsible for this content.



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SOUTH CAROLINA'S MUSICAL AMBASSADORS

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your attendance and  
look forward to seeing  
you this fall as we  
embark on our

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