



A Merry Melody & *A* Happy Harmony

DR. BENJAMIN STOGNER
Artistic Director

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2025
AT 7:00 PM**

**VIRGINIA WINGARD MEMORIAL
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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Meet our Mastersingers Musical Leaders

DR. BENJAMIN STOGNER

Artistic Director for The Palmetto Mastersingers



Dr. 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

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

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
Benj Cliatt
Kevin Moody
Richard Taylor
Brian Wolfe

SECOND TENOR

David Anderson
John McQuillan
Brayden Stevens
Kurt Stevens
Michael Stroupe
Joey Tucker
Karl Weeks

BARITONE

Richard Allison
Cliff Barrineau
David Deming
Charlie Hill
Jay Hudson
Boyd Saunders
Claude Sykes
Bill Tolleson

BASS

Ed Billings
Bob Curtis
Brian Gutknecht
Dale Jones
David Mitchell
Eric Robinson
Harry Smithson
Barry Stogner
Johnny Thomas



The Palmetto Mastersingers are ringing in the season with A Merry Melody and a Happy Harmony, a concert filled with fun, variety, and festive cheer. The first half of the evening features an energetic mix of Broadway favorites and pop hits—including Billy Joel's The Longest Time—showcasing the lighter side of the Mastersingers' repertoire. Then, the holiday spirit takes center stage as the choir shares a collection of Christmas favorites guaranteed to bring a smile and a song to your heart. Join us for an evening of music that blends joy, laughter, and harmony—just in time for the season of celebration.

~Dr. Benjamin Stogner

*The Palmetto Mastersingers
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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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Dec 6 - 10:00 and 2:00

Songs of Note

It's not December yet, so we have some pre-Christmas songs as well as new Yuletide arrangements.

"For the Longest Time" is a feel-good number that's been a do-wop favorite for...wait for it... a long time. Written and recorded by Billy Joel in 1984, he was inspired by the style of Frankie Lymon and the Teenagers ("Why Do Fools Fall in Love," 1956). Joel sang "For the Longest Time" on stage with Boyz II Men in 2024. It's on YouTube.

"Will the Circle Be Unbroken" is a gospel staple that dates to 1908. It was revised by A. P. Carter for the Carter Family, who recorded it in 1935. Maybell Carter's daughter June married Johnny Cash, and they frequently performed this song together. The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band released an album by this name in 1972, and the song was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 1998.

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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2025
Virginia Wingard Memorial United Methodist Church
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The Palmetto Mastersingers

Dr. Benjamin Stogner, Artistic Director

Allison Hilbish, Accompanist

Manly Men Kurt Knecht

There Is Nothin' Like A Dame Text: Oscar Hammerstein II
Music: Richard Rodgers
Arr: William Stickles
Solos: Cliff Barrineau and David Deming

Stars Text: Hertbert Kretzmer and Alain Boublil
Music: Claude-Michel Schönberg
Arr: Roger Emerson

The Longest Time Billy Joel
Arr: Roger Emerson
Solos: Landon Allison, Kurt Stevens, Michael Stroupe, Joey Tucker

My Wild Irish Rose..... Chauncey Olcott
Arr: Floyd Connett

The Naturals: Landon Allison, Kurt Stevens,
David Deming and Barry Stogner

Slow Me Down, Lord Linda Spevacek
Solo: Kurt Stevens

Will the Circle Be Unbroken Traditional Appalachian
Text: Betsy Rose, Cathy Winter and Marcia Taylor
Arr: J. David Moore

There's a Meeting Here Tonight Solo: Kurt Stevens
Bob Gibson, Alex Hassilev and Glenn Yarbrough
Arr: Cantus

Heart of My Heart..... Andrew Mack
Arr: SPEBSQSA, Inc
The Naturals: Landon Allison, Kurt Stevens,
David Deming and Barry Stogner

Midnight Clear Solos: David Deming and Richard Taylor
Russell Schulz-Widner
Adapt: Robert Scholz

Ding-a Ding-a Ding..... Greg Gilpin

A Swingin' Christmas..... Arr: Jay Althouse
Solo: Cliff Barrineau

A Very Merry Madrigal..... Kirby Shaw



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Allison Sullivan is responsible for this content.





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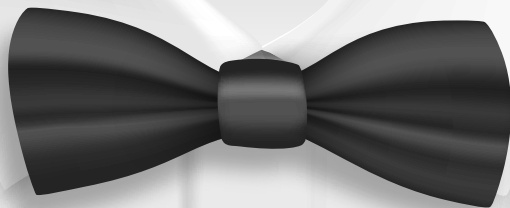
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