

Christmas Eve 2015

at Saint Augustine's

EVERY YEAR, a Christmas Tradition is revived at St. Augustine's Orthodox Church with the Gregorian Rite Midnight Mass preceded by glorious music of the Season. This year, a beautiful program has been prepared by the Church's resident ensemble, The AMBROSIAN CHORISTERS, soloists and orchestra.

At 11:30 pm on **Thursday, Dec. 24th**, the FESTIVAL MUSIC FOR THE EVE OF CHRISTMAS will feature a splendid Cantata—*The Mystery of Bethlehem* by “the dean of Canadian composers” Healy Willan. It is scored for chorus with soprano (Stephanie Anne Ball) and baritone (Tom Sitzler). This work in six movements tells the Christmas story through ancient texts from the Sacred Scripture, the Fathers of the Church, and the Liturgical Hymns in a beautiful and poignant manner.

At Midnight, the Mass will be sung featuring the ever-favourite, *Mass in G* by Franz Schubert for mixed choir, soprano (Phoenix Gales) tenor (Joshua Zabatta) baritone (Joe Massman) and orchestra. This beautiful, short setting of the Mass has been a beloved choice of choirs and congregations since it was first performed in Vienna in 1815. The setting of the *Benedictus qui venit* is particularly lovely being a canon for three solo voices. Adolph Adam's *O Holy Night* in the spectacular Gilchrist arrangement with Ruth Carver as soloist will be heard at the Offertory. This arrangement features a magnificent coda with the soprano soloist soaring above the choir and finishing with a flourish. During the Communion, Franz Biebl's mesmerizing *Ave Maria (Angelus Domini)*—made famous by CHANTICLEER—will be heard. This motet incorporates the text of the Angelic Salutation with the words of the Angelus and tells of the mystery of the Incarnation. It is scored for mixed choir and a trio of soloists *a capella*. A *schola cantorum* of male voices will sing the *Gregorian Chant Propers of the Mass*. Jeff Talley will be conducting and Francis E. Slechta will play the organ and direct the *school cantorum*.

All are welcome! A free will offering will be received. The Church is located at 55 West 3rd Ave at Acoma Street (80223) in the historic Baker Neighborhood of central Denver. Parking is available on the street and at the *Mi Casa lot* at 4th and Acoma or the *Eastern Star lot* at 2nd and Acoma.