

Strings Attached Orchestra
10th Annual Holiday Concert
HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS



3:00 pm Sunday, December 17th, 2023

Al Green Theatre

We fill our lives with music and we share it with others

www.StringsAttachedOrchestra.com



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Strings Attached Orchestra



violin - viola - cello - bass - percussion - piano - bass - cello - viola - violin

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The Strings Attached Orchestra

We fill our lives with music and we share it with others

Rehearsals are Mondays evenings
September through June
in the Earl Bales Community Centre in North York

email us at: info@stringsattachedorchestra.com

Musicians of all levels are welcome to join our community orchestra

Welcome to Today's Performance



Thank you for joining us this afternoon for Strings Attached Orchestra's sold-out 10th annual Holiday Concert! Whether you have been to every concert since we started, are joining us for the first time, or somewhere in between, whether you are here in person or watching on Zoom, we are very happy to have you in our audience!

We are very excited to be marking our tenth season! We have once again welcomed many new players this year and have grown back to our pre-pandemic membership level. Our community concert calendar is full – we are looking forward to playing three full orchestra retirement home concerts in the winter and spring, and have played several smaller group concerts this fall, with more to come in the spring. It is very gratifying to be invited back to retirement homes that we have played for in the past – it helps us to know that we are making an impact.

As you can see from the full house today, we've come a long way from our first Holiday concert, and you will hear it as well in the music we will play for you. We are grateful for the opportunity to play and perform together, and we thank you, our family and friends, for your ongoing support. There are so many other people to thank - members who have contributed in many ways - musically, financially and with all the work that goes into running the orchestra and producing concerts, and our many very generous donors, advertisers in this programme book, and others who have contributed time and expertise.

Our Conductor and Music Director, Jonathan Wong, continues to challenge us with new music and coach us to perform at our best and produce the best sound possible. We hope you enjoy the result!

For more information about Strings Attached Orchestra, if you'd like us to perform in your community, if you know any amateur string players who are looking for a musical home (or if you are one yourself), or if you'd like to make a donation to our orchestra, please contact us through our website at www.StringsAttachedOrchestra.com or by email at info@StringsAttachedOrchestra.com.

Check out SAO concert postings through [#SAOplays](https://twitter.com/SAOorchTO).

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Strings Attached Orchestra is a Canadian Registered Charity. Registration No. 83585 3599 RR0001

SAO - Orchestra with a Mission

It's our tenth year of filling our lives with music and sharing it with others!



Strings Attached Orchestra (SAO) is a member-based group of dedicated amateur string musicians located in Toronto. Whether we learned to play a string instrument as a child or took it up as an adult, we share a love for playing music and a desire to keep growing musically. Music is not only special for ourselves, but sharing that music in a way that touches others and brings happiness to the world is an integral part of why this is so special for us. Ask any of our members and you will hear how important being part of this group is to them.

Under the baton of Conductor and Music Director Jonathan Wong we play repertoire from a broad range of styles and periods, from the 17th century to contemporary, and from popular music to jazz and classics. We've also been known to play video game music!

The majority of our musical season focuses on performing live concerts in retirement homes, community centres, and schools. Where venues cannot accommodate our full orchestra, we send chamber groups. This is to fulfill our mission of bringing joy to audiences who have limited opportunities to experience live musical performances.

To help raise funds for these community concerts, our orchestra performs two concerts annually for you, our friends and family. This is also a time when we get to showcase what we have been working on to our audience. We are proud of the work we have put in and the musical growth our orchestra has experienced over the years. We are strong believers in the importance of community orchestras and the positive impact they make. Strings Attached Orchestra is a member of Orchestras Canada and CAMMAC (Canadian Amateur Musicians – Musiciens Amateurs du Canada), and is a Canadian Registered Charity (Registration No. 83585 3599 RR0001)



Jonathan Wong

Conductor & Music Director



We are thrilled to have Jonathan Wong as part of the SAO family as our Conductor and Music Director. Jonathan joined us in our 9th Season and this concert marks his second season with Strings Attached Orchestra.

Jonathan is a Toronto-based conductor, keyboardist, clarinetist, singer, and educator. His wide-ranging work is unified by a love for music's communicative power and its ability to build communities in inimitable ways.

This season Jonathan serves as Conductor and Music Director of Strings Attached Orchestra and Conductor of the Toronto Chinese Orchestra. Jonathan has also served as Instructor of Conducting at Tyndale University. He was twice a conducting fellow with the Denis Wick Canadian Wind Orchestra, Apprentice Conductor with Orchestra Toronto, and a recipient of the College Band Directors National Association Mike Moss Conducting Study Grant.

Jonathan's experience as an award-winning clarinetist includes solo, chamber, orchestral, and wind band playing. Career highlights include performing at Carnegie Hall as concertmaster of the Toronto Youth Wind Orchestra and a concerto performance with the University of Toronto Wind Ensemble as a winner of the University of Toronto Winds Concerto Competition. As a keyboardist, Jonathan plays both modern and historical instruments. He particularly enjoys collaborative and continuo work on piano, harpsichord, and organ.

Jonathan is fiercely committed to education in community, classroom, and private settings. In addition to his work at Tyndale University, he teaches and coaches clarinet, piano, and voice, and he can be found leading sectionals, clinics, and masterclasses across the Greater Toronto Area and beyond. Engaging beyond the local community, he was recently a Research Fellow with the Institute of Composer Diversity, examining works for wind band by underrepresented composers, and is a volunteer editor of The Wind Repertory Project.

Jonathan holds an Advanced Certificate in Performance, Early Music (harpsichord) and a Bachelor of Music with Honours (music education, clarinet) from the University of Toronto.

Upcoming Concerts

Join Us for Our Friends & Family Concert Series

10th Annual Season Finale Concert

• 7:30 pm, Sunday, June 9th, 2024

2024 Holiday Concert

• 3:00 pm, Sunday, December 15th, 2024

2023-24 Community Concert Series

As part of our giving within the community, the majority of our concert season is devoted to performing for residents of retirement homes, hospitals, and other such venues where people would not normally have the opportunity to hear live orchestra music. In a typical year, we play 5–6 full orchestra concerts and 6–8 chamber concerts.

Last season, with pandemic restrictions easing up, we were thrilled to be able to return to playing our community concerts in person. We continue to be ready to work with our communities in order to share our music with them. This past season we were able to perform 7 community concerts to enthusiastic audiences and we are thrilled to have more lined up for the 2023-24 season.

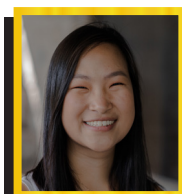
To get an idea of what we can do and to let us know of a venue that would appreciate a community concert, please

visit our website at: www.StringsAttachedOrchestra.com
or send us an email at: info@StringsAttachedOrchestra.com

If you would like to help us continue to bring music into the community by sponsoring SAO in our 2023-24 season, please contact us at donations@StringsAttachedOrchestra.com.

Meet Our Members

SAO Season 10 - 2023-24



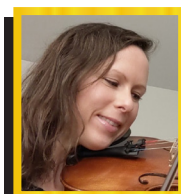
Caroline Pai
violin



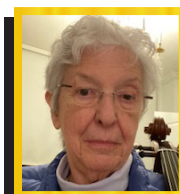
Chris Petrucci
viola/violin/cello



Christa Golding
violin



Claire Hibbert
viola



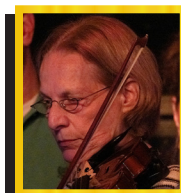
Claire Nunes-Vaz
cello



Andrea Pines
violin



Andrea Rush
viola/violin/cello



Bonnie Wasser
violin



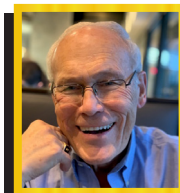
Braden Hommy
violin



Gary Tom
violin



Hélène Lussier
violin



Ivan Lavine
violin



Jenna Lee
violin



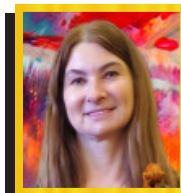
Jerry Loterman
violin



Jill Fraleigh
violin



Laura Walkovich
violin



Laurie Hayden
violin



Lee Coplan
violin



Len Silverberg
cello



Linda Byron
violin



Malcolm Noble
cello



Margaret Kerr
violin



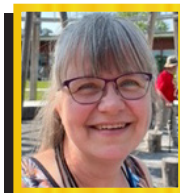
Matthew Poon
bass



Myriam Shechter
piano



Nadia Romito
violin



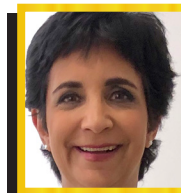
Nelly Sinclair
violin



Paul Collier
violin



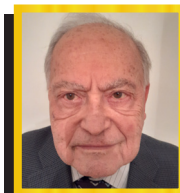
Peter Grant
cello



Rhonda Haznof
violin



Rita Shahin
cello



Rudolf Abel
violin



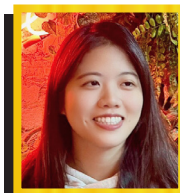
Ruth Levenstein
viola/violin/cello



Sarah Morgan
violin



Sofia Vendittelli
violin



Susan Chan
violin



Venita Sitahal
viola



Zee Chan
violin



Our Music Director Writes

Dear Guests,

Welcome to SAO's 10th Annual Holiday Concert!

This afternoon we welcome you Home for the Holidays with music inspired by our holiday traditions and the priceless warmth of being home surrounded by loved ones. We open the programme with the great classics: Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker* and Handel's *Messiah* probably top most classical music lovers' holiday playlists—and don't worry, we've managed to condense the *Nutcracker* to three minutes (or less!), and we're playing just one of *Messiah*'s 50-odd movements. Following the Handel, we consider a different musical tradition celebrating a different birth with the Sephardic folk song *Quando el Rey Nimrod*. I always enjoy exploring how many of today's holiday favourites didn't start out as holiday fare, and we compare how compatriots and colleagues Ralph Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst created very different treatments of one not-exactly-festive tune.

In the second half of the programme, we explore music touching on that irreplaceable feeling of being home, beginning with Dvořák's ever-wistful Largo from his *New World Symphony*. While the lyrics to *Goin' Home* weren't fit to Dvořák's melody until nearly three decades later, they perfectly reflect the theme's song-like essence: "Goin' home, goin' home - I'm a goin' home ...". Keeping with the nostalgic mood, we feature SAO's very own Gary Tom in that beloved classic *I'll Be Home for Christmas*. We also pay tribute to Gordon Lightfoot, the great homegrown singer-songwriter who passed away earlier this year. Gordon Lightfoot's *Song for a Winter's Night*—as reimaged by SAO's homegrown arranger Chris Petrucci—definitely encapsulates that longing for warmth and companionship during a dark Toronto winter.

Finally, we round things off with a favourite from the SAO library, this year the Disney movie *Frozen* celebrates a decade since its release into the world. And in a happy coincidence (or not), so does SAO! Though you may be hearing these melodies *For the First Time in Forever*, maybe they will inspire you to enjoy the wintry outdoors - *Do You Want to Build a Snowman?* - or maybe just sit back and *Let It Go* until the new year.

Of course, this is only the start of our 10th anniversary celebrations, and I hope to welcome you back next June as we celebrate our season finale! We'll be featuring plenty of special guests and incredible music by diverse composers as we reflect upon a decade of music-making and look ahead to SAO's next decade of bringing the joy we have all gained in music to everyone we can.

I hope you'll be inspired to make SAO part of your holiday traditions! After all, is it really the holidays without music?

Musically yours,

Jonathan Wong

Strings Attached Orchestra

Performing Today

Jonathan Wong, Conductor

Violin

Concertmaster

Linda Byron

Principal Second Violin

Lee Coplan

Rudolf Abel

Susan Chan

Zee Chan

Paul Collier

Jill Fraleigh

Laurie Hayden

Rhonda Haznof

Emily He

Braden Hommy

Marg Kerr

Ivan Lavine

Jenna Lee

Jerry Loterman

Hélène Lussier

Sarah Morgan

Caroline Pai

Andrea Pines

Nadia Romito

Nelly Sinclair

Gary Tom

Sofia Vendittelli

Laura Walkovich

Bonnie Wasser

Claire Watson

Viola

Principal Viola

Ruth Levenstein

Venita Sitahal

Chris Petrucci

Gabriel Rouer

Cello

Principal Cello

Michael Wong

Peter Grant

Elaine Liao

Claire Nunes-Vaz

Rita Shahin

Double Bass

Ethan Shapiro

Percussion

Bobby Ho

Noah Ullmann

Piano

Myriam Shechter

The members of Strings Attached Orchestra would like to thank you for joining us for today's performance. We hope you enjoy the concert and we look forward to playing for you both today and in the future.

Concert Programme

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

The 3-Minute Nutcracker

For Unto Us from *Messiah*

Quando el Rey Nimrod

Fantasia on Greensleeves

The Dargason - Finale from *St. Paul's Suite*

Johsefins Dopvals (*Josefin's Waltz*)

Largo from the *New World Symphony*

I'll Be Home for Christmas

Song for a Winter's Night

Music from *Frozen*

Do You Want to Build a Snowman? • Let It Go • For the First Time in Forever

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893) *arr. Lloyd Conley*

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759) *arr. Robert S. Frost*

Traditional *arr. Carlos Ramirez Guzmán*

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) *arr. Ralph Greaves*

Gustav Holst (1874-1934)

Roger Tallroth (b.1958)

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904) *arr. Percy Hall*

Walter Kent (1911-1994) *arr. Erik Morales*

vocal solo: Gary Tom

Gordon Lightfoot (1938-2023) *arr. Chris Petrucci*

Kristen Anderson-Lopez (b.1972) and Robert Lopez (b.1975)
arr. Robert Longfield

For those at the Al Green Theatre

Absolutely no food or drink is permitted in the auditorium. Absolutely no smoking is permitted on the premises.

The use of a recording device is strictly forbidden and may constitute an infringement of Canadian copyright laws.

Out of respect for the performers, photographs may only be taken with no flash. Late comers will be seated at a suitable break in the performance.

For those attending online

We hope you enjoy this concert from the comfort of your homes. Please keep your microphone on mute so that everybody can enjoy the music.

Recording this zoom session is strictly forbidden and may constitute an infringement of Canadian copyright laws.

Programme Notes

The 3-Minute Nutcracker (1926)

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893) arr. Lloyd Conley

The Nutcracker might be the most popular ballet of all time, and Tchaikovsky's whimsical, delightful score certainly deserves great credit for its success. The story is set in the imagination of a young child on Christmas Eve, as gingerbread men, tin soldiers, candy canes, and even the Sugar Plum Fairy herself come to life. Today we whiz through the Miniature Overture, March, Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy, Dance of the Reed Flutes, Waltz of the Flowers, and Trepak.

For Unto Us from Messiah (1741)

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759) arr. Robert S. Frost

With this and other works such as *Israel in Egypt* and *Alexander's Feast*, Handel practically defined the English genre of the oratorio as a sacred concert-style counterpart to the theatricalities of opera. Premiered in Dublin, *Messiah* takes the proverbial cake in ratio of composition time to number of performances, written in 24 days in 1741 and performed every year since. It certainly helped that Handel was an efficient recycler: this celebratory choral movement about the prophesized birth of the messiah is a reworking of his earlier duet *Nò, di voi non vo' fidarmi*, originally featuring two sopranos complaining about the tyranny of Love and Beauty.

Quando el Rey Nimrod (1890)

Traditional arr. Carlos Ramirez Guzmán

Quando el Rey Nimrod, meaning "When King Nimrod" is a Sephardic folk song, sung in the Judaeo-Spanish or Ladino language. The piece chronicles the birth of the patriarch Abraham. Now perhaps the most popular Sephardic song worldwide, the music can be traced back to an anonymous Moroccan melody using the Maqam Hijaz, a musical mode in the Arabic system.

Fantasia on Greensleeves (1934)

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) arr. Ralph Greaves

Ralph (rhyming with safe) Vaughan Williams originally used the titular folk song in his opera *Sir John in Love*, based on Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

The tune was first registered in September 1580 and already popular enough by 1597 for Shakespeare to reference it by name in the play. While the original lyrics speak of rejected love and possibly promiscuity, the tune's first association with Christmas and New Year texts came around the late 1600s. Under Vaughan Williams' supervision, Ralph (pronunciation unknown) Greaves excerpted it from the opera and added the folk song *Lovely Joan* as a contrasting middle section to create the version we perform today.

The Dargason - Finale from St. Paul's Suite (1913)

Gustav Holst (1874-1934)

Gustav Holst is best remembered for his orchestral suite *The Planets*, but throughout his diverse compositional career he remained committed to his teaching work, including as a pioneering music educator for young women at St. Paul's Girls' School in the West London district of Hammersmith. There he taught for nearly thirty years until his death and composed many pieces for his pupils, including this four-movement suite. Holst arranged this final movement from the final movement of his 1911 *Second Suite in F for Military Band*, a cornerstone of the wind band repertoire.

Johsefins Dopvals (Josefin's Waltz)

Roger Tallroth (b.1958)

Dopvals is a Swedish word translating to baptism waltz, att doppa being the Swedish verb for to dip. Folk musician and composer Roger Tallroth wrote this beautiful tune for the christening of his niece.

Largo from the New World Symphony (1893)

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904) arr. Percy Hall

Dvořák's ninth and final symphony was written in the first half of 1893 and premiered on December 16 of that year by the New York Philharmonic under Anton Seidl at Carnegie Hall. Its roaring success was preceded by Dvořák's widely publicised statements that a properly American national school of music should be founded upon the music of African and Native Americans. This second movement and its eminently singable main theme are often cited as examples of the influence of Negro spirituals on Dvořák's writing, due to its prominent use of the pentatonic scale. Twenty-nine years later, Dvořák's former American student William Arms Fisher wrote the words *Goin' Home* to fit the tune.

Programme Notes cont.

I'll Be Home for Christmas (1943)

Walter Kent (1911-1994) arr. Erik Morales

In the height of World War II, lyricist Kim Gannon and composer Walter Kent wrote this song from the perspective of an overseas soldier unable to be home for the holidays. Its unique blend of nostalgia and melancholy has made it a regular holiday favourite. Bing Crosby recorded it first in 1943, followed by other luminaries including Perry Como (1946), Elvis Presley (1957), and Johnny Mathis (1958). Interestingly, while the U.S. War Department released its own discs of Crosby's performance of the song, widely loved by Americans at home and abroad, the BBC banned the song from broadcast, fearing it might lower British troop morale.

Song for a Winter's Night (1967)

Gordon Lightfoot (1938-2023) arr. Chris Petrucci

Song for a Winter's Night was included on Gordon Lightfoot's 1967 album *The Way I Feel*. He wrote the song while on tour in Cleveland, Ohio, missing his first wife Brita Ingegerd Olaisson on a hot summer night. Gordon Lightfoot was regularly named Canada's greatest songwriter, his influence reaching across the world during the 1960s and '70s heyday of folk-pop and beyond. He was born in Orillia and lived in Toronto from the 1970s to his death on May 1, 2023, at Sunnybrook Hospital at the age of 84.

Music from Frozen (2013)

**Kristen Anderson-Lopez (b.1972) and Robert Lopez (b.1975)
arr. Robert Longfield**

The 2013 animated Disney film *Frozen* was inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale *The Snow Queen*. Contemporary news articles describe the smash hit's "Frozen-mania", accompanied with incessant rewatching, endless singing, and considerable distress from parents and teachers. Nevertheless, the film was praised for themes of family bonds and young female empowerment, and it took home Academy Awards for *Best Animated Feature* and *Best Original Song*, including *Let It Go*, sung by Idina Menzel, "Queen of Broadway." Apologies in advance if you can't stop humming the tunes for the rest of the year...

Programme Notes by Jonathan Wong

In Memoriam - Russell Spencer

We are very sad that one of our founding members passed away suddenly in November. Russell Spencer was an integral part of our orchestra, and he contributed so much to the music and the character of the group over the past nine and a half years. He shared his musical knowledge generously and made an impact on everyone who played with him and got to know him, both in our orchestra and in other fiddle and klezmer groups where many of us and others had the privilege of playing with him. Many of you will remember Russ playing improvisational violin jazz solos in our earlier years.



We are grateful to have had Russ as a member and colleague and it's hard to believe that he is no longer with us. In Russ's memory this afternoon, we will be playing *Josefin's Waltz*, a favourite tune of his.



Rest In Peace Russ – we know you're making music somewhere.

SAO Board of Directors

President	Ruth Levenstein
Vice President	Bonnie Wasser
Treasurer	Ivan Lavine
Secretary	Jerry Loterman
Directors	Andrea Pines Claire Nunes-Vaz

Thank You to our Volunteers

SAO is a charitable organization that runs thanks to the extended efforts of some very dedicated volunteers. The board of directors would like to thank those both within and outside of the orchestra who work hard to help us throughout the year.

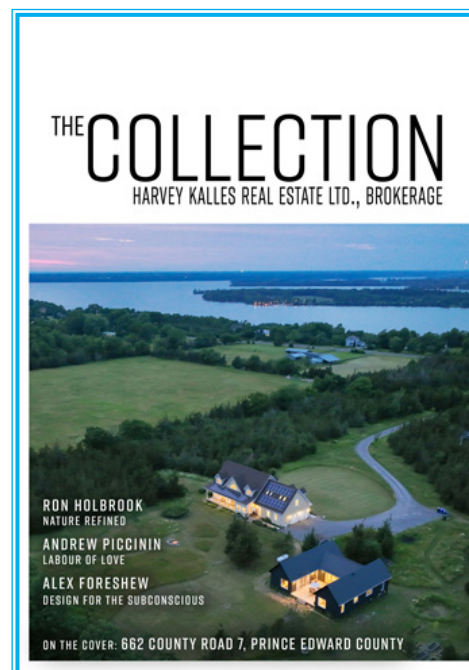
Today's Concert Volunteers

Gabriel Kaplan
Isidor Kaplan
Amy Leung

Larry Levenstein
Janet Loterman
Matthew Poon

*A special thank you to all of our volunteers!
We couldn't have done it without you!*

There is a large amount of work that goes on behind the scenes. SAO would also like to extend a special thank you to all the orchestra members whose collaborative efforts throughout the season make everything we do possible.



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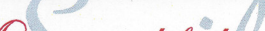
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VIVRE LA MUSIQUE - LET'S MAKE MUSIC

CAMMAC (Canadian Amateur Musicians/Musiciens amateurs du Canada) is a registered charity devoted to creating opportunities for people of all ages to experience the joy of making music together in a supportive environment.

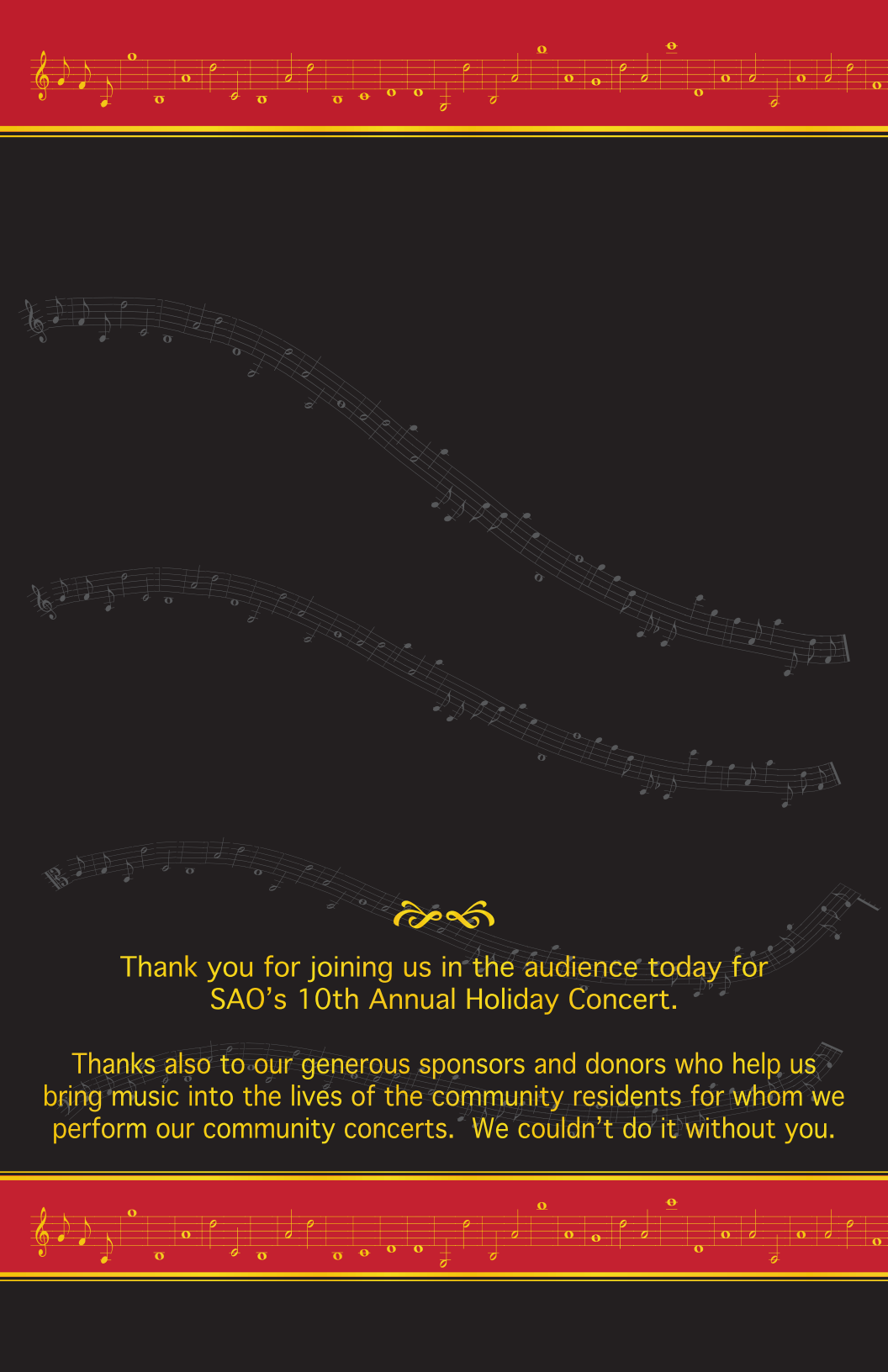
We offer monthly reading sessions for singers and instrumentalists to play through large-scale works with a professional conductor with no preparation required. The Toronto Region upcoming 2023-24 complete list of Readings will be online by September. To date the following have been confirmed:

Jan. 21, 2024	Requiem by Fauré
Feb. 24, 2024	Celtic Mass for the Sea by MacMillan
March 24, 2024	Choral Fantasy by Beethoven
April 28, 2024	A Sea Symphony by Vaughan Williams
May 26, 2024	Te Deum by Charpentier

All Readings begin at 2:00pm sharp in Elliott Hall at Christ Church Deer Park, 1570 Yonge Street, and end at 4:30pm.

For further info on readings, please visit:
<https://cammac.ca/toronto/toronto-region-music-readings/>





Thank you for joining us in the audience today for
SAO's 10th Annual Holiday Concert.

Thanks also to our generous sponsors and donors who help us
bring music into the lives of the community residents for whom we
perform our community concerts. We couldn't do it without you.