

## Notes From the Podium – Behold The Star

December, 2011



This year's holiday concerts center mostly on the Christmas Star, a beautiful image. Picture a dark night and a single shining star, snow on the ground, and the kind of quiet that makes a winter night so special. For the religious there is much more to this image, but for any of us

it's beautiful in its simplicity and serenity, in the wonder it inspires, in its light amidst the silent darkness.

This sense of tranquility and stillness is reflected in the works by up-and-coming composers: Carson Cooman's *Love Came Down at Christmas*, Brian Holmes' *Remember* and Mark Schweizer's *Christmas Joy*. A special piece, *The Star: A Christmas Scene*, arranged by Jon Washburn, will combine two "folk" hymns; John Jacob Niles' *I Wonder As I Wander* and *Rise Up Shepherd and Follow* with Carl Sandberg's poem *Special Starlight*.

This program also features two works by Robert H. Young, a longtime friend and collaborator of Albany Pro Musica. Robert was a personal friend and mentor of mine. Sadly he passed away this summer at the age of 88. For us, being able to perform his music helps us mourn his passing and celebrate his life, and I know we can bring some of that passion to the audience.

We'll do a number of popular carols, including *Do You Hear What Hear*, *I'll Be Home for Christmas*, *O Holy Night* and *It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year*. We even have the medieval *Gaudete* from the *Piae Cantiones*, arranged by our very own Rae Jean Teeter!

The audience will also have a chance to sing along with familiar carols like *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* and *Silent Night*. This audience participation is one of the reasons Albany Pro Musica's holiday concerts are so special. Lifting our voices together in song is a great way to get into the Christmas spirit!

~ David Griggs-Janower