

Join Us Again Next Year for our 5th Season!

November 9, 2018 at 7pm — Michael Kocour and Guests!



Michael Kocour, piano and Hammond B3 | **Juli Wood**, tenor sax and vocals | **Jeff Libman**, guitar | **Dom Moio**, drums | **Ben Hedquist**, bass

Michael Kocour returns to Arts at Ascension and is bringing along many musicians to share the stage. Don't miss this night of jazz standards and Mike's original tunes.

January 11, 2019 at 7pm — The Santa Fe Guitar Quartet



Hailing from Santa Fe, **Argentina**, the Santa Fe Guitar Quartet will present an exciting program of classical Argentinian guitar music, and other Spanish guitar inspired pieces.

February 9, 2019 at 7pm — Catalin Rotaru, double bass
with pianist Wan Ting Yu



In demand around the world and originally from Bucharest, Romania, Catalin Rotaru has served as principal bass in the Sibiu Philharmonic Orchestra, Virtuosi Chamber Orchestra of Bucharest, and Orchestra Sinfonica Europea. He will be joined by Wan Ting Yu who will be flying in from Taiwan just for this performance!

March 8, 2019 at 7pm — Charles and Friends!



Arts at Ascension Artistic Director Charles Szczepanek returns to the stage for an evening of classical music and Broadway tunes, joined by lots of guest artists!

Jehanne

Jehanne —An Anthem—



March 16, 2018 — 7pm

Arts at Ascension

A war story, a love story, a ghost story, a thriller...

It would take five centuries for the brave and brilliant medieval warrior Jehanne Romée even to be considered for canonization. But by then, having been called everything from a saint to a sorceress, she was firmly fictionalized as an ironically armored fair-haired sylph with goo-goo eyes and a perpetually pious Heavenward gaze. Oh, yes: and a name she would never have recognized: Joan of Arc. Quite in fact, we have no idea what the so-called “Maid of Orléans” looked like, as her enemies would meticulously destroy every painting, every written description, every physical trace of her life.

But the fact remains: She was not some anomalous teenage Shirley Temple meekly providing battlefield imagery for the real soldiers doing the real fighting; she was a war-hardened battle-wounded genuine general who rode and fought with the front ranks in every battle, a tactical military genius whose innovations in the use of artillery would be taught and employed even through the Second World War.

Had I not been personally so very impressed by those and so many other matters about her, I doubt I would have gone through the enormous effort and inconvenience to write the opera that became the anthem that this evening will come to life. She was illiterate except for the ability to write her own name. And yet she changed the world. And so, ladies and gentlemen—introducing the woman you never knew. You will be pleased to meet her.

—Paul Harvey Jr.

Cora Blouch — playing Isabelle, townswoman, and chorus.

Cora Blouch is a Phoenix mezzo-soprano who has been an active contributor in the local music community for over 15 years. Cora's formal music education began at Northern Arizona University which she attended on an Opera Scholarship. She finished her degree at Arizona State University earning her Bachelor of Arts in Vocal Performance. She has received several awards including First Place in the Arizona NATS competition on two occasions. She has sung with various jazz and rock bands over the years, and has lent her voice to different recording projects around the Valley both as a singer and as a voice-over actor. Cora is currently in her thirteenth season with the Grammy-Award Winning *Phoenix Chorale*, and she is the alto soloist and section leader of the Trinity Episcopal Cathedral Choir. In addition to pursuing her vocal talents, she is a partner in a small fiber arts business and also works in marketing & communications.



Sarah Smith — playing Jeanette, and chorus.

Sarah Smith has been heard singing professionally in the Phoenix area since 2010 after receiving her MM in Voice Performance from ASU. First appearing as a soloist with the *Phoenix Symphony* and *Ballet Arizona*, she has also been featured in the 2011 and 2015 *Arizona Bach Festivals* as well as with Arizona Opera Chorus in 2014. Specializing in both early and new classical music, Sarah has appeared in concert with *Colorado New Music Ensemble*, *Classical Revolution Phx*, and is heard through the season with *Solis Camerata*, as well as *St. Barnabas on the Desert Choir* and *North Valley Chorale*. When not performing, Sarah teaches private voice lessons in Tempe and Scottsdale, and is director of St. Barnabas on the Desert Children's Choir. Sarah further assists in the management and administration of the St. Barnabas music department and concert series.

Josiah Hagstrom — playing a soldier, a courtier, the jailkeeper, townsman, and chorus.

Josiah Hagstrom is an Arizona native and after growing up in Mesa, now resides in Gilbert with his amazing wife Mindy, his beautiful two-year old daughter Kayla, their golden retriever Kaia, and their recent addition of baby Noah (2/02)! After studying at MCC and ASU for a degree in Choral Education, opportunity for a different profession took precedence. He graduated Summa Cum Laude with a Bachelor's degree in Liberal Studies from ASU in 2012, and currently manages an optometry practice in Phoenix after working in the field since the age of 18. Previous performance ensembles include Dr. Craig Peterson's *Canto Vivo*, *Vocal Fix*, ASU's *Symphonic Chorale*, *Chamber Choir*, and *Early Music Chamber Ensemble*. Currently, Josiah performs as a tenor with *The Phoenix Chorale* as well as serving as lead vocalist at Harvest Bible Church in Gilbert.



Nina Garguilo — playing townswoman, and chorus.

Originally from Memphis, Nina Cole Garguilo has performed roles including Despina (*Così fan tutte*), Lauretta (*Gianni Schicchi*), and Maria in *West Side Story*. Additionally, she has been a featured soloist in many choral works. While obtaining her Bachelor's degree at Ole Miss, Nina was a soloist for Ola Gjeilo's "*Tundra*", and his premieres of "*Liberation of Ellisbell*" and "*New York I & II*". In the summer of 2013, Nina sang the title role in the opera, *Das Tagebuch der Anna Frank* at the *Mittelsächsisches Theater* in Freiberg, Germany. In 2017, Nina earned her Doctorate in Music from ASU. Her most recent performance was in New York and Brooklyn for her "*Southern Comfort*" recital series. In the future, Nina plans to promote American Opera, Art Song, and Broadway.

Meet the Artists



Lisa Meehan — playing *Jehanne*, and chorus.

Lisa is thrilled to return to Arizona to originate the role of *Jehanne* under the direction of composer, Paul Harvey Jr. The experience has been a masterclass in oration, theater, collaboration, drama, history, and, of course, music. She is deeply grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with such immense musicians, and to share this incredibly important work with the audience at Ascension.

Lisa obtained her Bachelor's degree in Vocal Performance at Arizona State University, and has pursued the art of singing with Dr. Julia Hunt Nielsen. She can most recently be heard with best friend and piano extraordinaire, Charles Szczepanek, and husband/talented cellist, Terry Meehan, in the trio *Vocelliano* (www.vocelliano.com), performing spiritual music and hits from numerous genres. In addition to her writing and performing with *Vocelliano*, Lisa can regularly be heard as the cantor at St. Joseph's Cathedral, San Diego. When not singing Lisa can be found outdoors with her family and dog.

Christopher Herrera — playing *Alfonso*, a soldier, and chorus.

Christopher Herrera, a native of Los Angeles, earned both a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and a Bachelor of Music degree in Vocal Performance from California State University, Northridge. He continued his studies at the University of Arizona, earning a Master of Music degree in Vocal Performance and is currently completing his Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Vocal Performance. In 2000, Mr. Herrera made his international debut in Italy performing the role of Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* as a last minute replacement with only two weeks notice. Locally, he has since performed roles with companies such as Arizona Opera and Phoenix Opera in productions of *La Traviata*, *La Bohème*, *The Magic Flute*, *Macbeth*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, and *Three Penny Opera*. He has been a featured soloist with *The Phoenix Symphony* and in 2014 he joined *The Phoenix Chorale*, an award-winning professional choral ensemble. The Chorale's most recent recording, Rachmaninoff's *All-Night Vigil*, was the recipient of a "Grammy for Best of Choral Performance" at this year's ceremony. Mr. Herrera currently holds a voice faculty position at Grand Canyon University.



Vassili Makavos — playing *Bishop Cauchon*, *Prince Charles*, *Gilles de Rais*, soldier, townsman and chorus

Vassili received Bachelor's Degrees in both Vocal Performance and Composition from Arizona State University. He also received his Masters in Opera Performance from ASU. After graduating in May 2015, Vassili started performing with Arizona Opera and is now a core chorus member. He has been a guest composer and conductor around Arizona and has had commissions and works performed by the *Musica Nova Orchestra* of Scottsdale, *Metropolitan Youth Symphony*, *Phoenix Youth Symphony String Orchestra*, and *Portland Symphony* under the direction of Robert Moody. Currently he is Director of Choirs and Orchestras for the high school and junior high program at American Leadership Academy's Ironwood 7-12 campus in Queen Creek. This summer he will be joining the Cincinnati Opera Chorus for their 98th season as they present the US premier of Roger Waters' *The Wall*. He is a vocal student of Augustino Paglialunga and Henri Venanzi. He is very thankful and blessed to have had the opportunity to be a part of *Jehanne* and hopes to see this brilliant work progress into the world with many more performances to come.

Stephen Schermitzler — playing *Alençon*, an Assessor, the Executioner, courtier, soldier, and chorus.

Stephen Schermitzler earned his Bachelor's degree in Music Composition from Arizona State University in 2010, developing a singing career after spending time as a collaborative pianist in Arizona and New York. A student of Phoenix voice instructor Tom Jones, Stephen has been a featured soloist in Valley performances of the Faure *Requiem*, the Brahms *Requiem*, Haydn's *The Creation*, and Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. His *Sing Phoenix!* Choral Festival is now in its third year, and is open to the public. Focusing on choral education for the developing and passionate singer, this central-Phoenix festival will host multiple choirs and guest composer Morten Lauridsen in October.

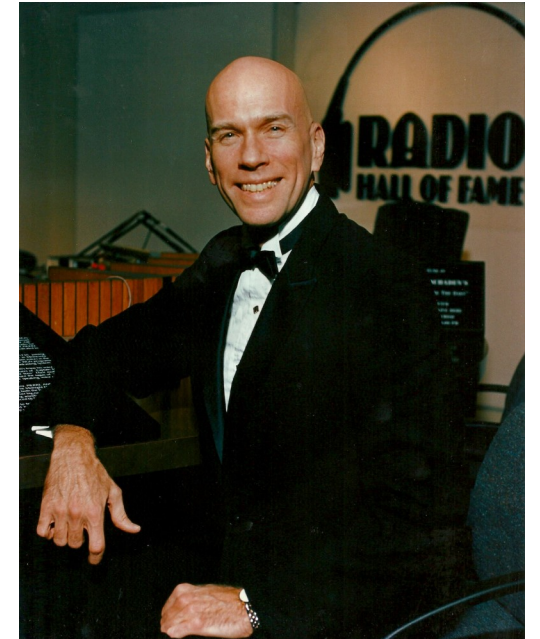
Stephen is a musical theatre aficionado, directing and playing keyboard for over fifty theatrical productions nationwide. Previous musical theatre director positions include: Detour Company Theatre (Scottsdale), the Palms Dinner Theatre (Mesa), and Hope Summer Repertory Theatre (Holland, MI). He is grateful to Paul and Charles, and is honored to be working with such a fine cast and creative team on the first professional performance of *Jehanne*. Love always to Raylah.



Meet the Composer & Narrator

Paul Harvey Jr.

The author, librettist, and composer of *JEHANNE* has been called "America's Storyteller." He is award-winning journalist, author, pianist, composer, playwright, and broadcaster Paul Harvey Jr. who, following a successful twelve-year career as a concert pianist, became creator, producer, and writer of the longest-running and most popular series in radio history *THE REST OF THE STORY®*. Both he and his father, veteran broadcaster Paul Harvey, shared the microphone through its decades on the air, reaching tens of millions of listeners nationwide and innumerable more worldwide. Honors include his induction into The Radio Hall of Fame, two Edward R. Murrow Awards for writing, and a Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in Radio Broadcasting presented by the New York Festivals—the only international award in the field of radio.



Meet the Director & Pianist

Charles Szczepanek

Hailed by American Record Guide as "an accomplished interpreter of romantic piano" whose "playing is bold, powerful, and agile," Szczepanek is a prizewinner in the Jacob Flier Intl Piano Competition, the Bosendorfer Intl Piano Competition, and the Steinway Society of Chicago's Most Promising Young Artist Competition. A Mason & Hamlin Artist, Szczepanek is a pioneer, writing and arranging new virtuosic piano music. His three solo albums have each been critically acclaimed, and he most recently has collaborated in the trio, *Vocelliano*, who released their debut album in January of 2018. He is the Founding Artistic Director of **Arts at Ascension**, a concert series that benefits fine arts education in inner-city schools. He tours as the collaborative pianist for celebrated tubist Patrick Sheridan. Szczepanek has also been featured in concert with Charles Bruffy and the Grammy-Winning Phoenix Chorale. As a member of BMI, he arranges music for artists world-wide.



Arts at Ascension 2017/2018 is supported through the generosity of:

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In-Kind Supporters

Arts at Ascension welcomes in-kind contributions including donations of goods, services, and more. In-kind contributions help offset costs and can have a positive impact on our operations. If you would like to contribute, consider the following:

- Printing and mailing services
- Print and digital advertising space
- Frequent flier miles
- Airline tickets
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Consider Becoming a Sponsor for the 18/19 Season

Did you know? Only 50% of our budget comes from ticket sales—**the rest comes from donors just like you!** Your tax-deductible contribution is essential to our musical excellence, growth, and success.

As Arts at Ascension comes to the close of its fourth season, it has been able to provide \$60,000 to fine arts education programming at St. Matthew School. Simultaneously, programming efforts continue to provide a variety of musical genres at the highest level. Additionally, ticket prices have remained low to make concerts accessible to larger audiences. Success at achieving these goals has only been possible through the generosity of concert sponsors. Concert sponsors underwrote over \$10,000 of concert expense during the 2017-18 season. Additionally, Paul Harvey Jr. contributed \$18,000 to underwrite the final concert of the season. The point is that while ticket sales are an important component to making Arts at Ascension viable, we couldn't do it without our sponsors. Please consider becoming a concert sponsor for the 2018-2019 season. Sponsorships start at just \$500.

Special Thanks to the Following Crew Members and Supporters of this Concert:

Corinne Butts—Ticket Sales
Bev Hamilton—Page Turner
Dina Kinnan—Audio Assistant
Robert Hamilton—Audio Supervisor
Matt Maloy—Front of House Audio Engineer
Ben Taylor (OmniClassic Recording)—Audio Recording
Chris Brodman (LIT Lighting) — Lighting Design and Operation
Kurt Crosley (LIT Lighting) — Lighting Design and Operation
Nancy Beck and the reception ladies—Reception Organization

Program

Verse 1: Rouen

Jehanne

Verse 2: Rome

See the Man

The Exorcism

My Once Upon a Time

Verse 3: Domremy

Under the Fairies' Tree

My Once Upon a Time (reprise)

The Answered Call

Verse 4: Chinon

Anywhere But Here

Someone Like You

The Answered Call (reprise)

Verse 5: Orleans

And the Wall Came Down

Someone Like You (reprise)

Verse 6: Reims

Jehanne (reprise)

We Almost Touch

See the Man (reprise)

Verse 7: Rouen

Under the Fairies' Tree (reprise)

See the Man (reprise)

I Had a Dream

Jehanne (reprise)

The Exorcism (reprise)

My Once Upon a Time (reprise)

The performance is approximately 2 hours long and will not include an intermission. Should use of the restroom be necessary, please make your way to the narthex as quickly and quietly as possible so as to not distract audience members around you.

Out of courtesy for those around you, please silence all cellular phones, watch chimes, and any other electronic devices.

Mason & Hamlin is the official piano of Arts at Ascension.