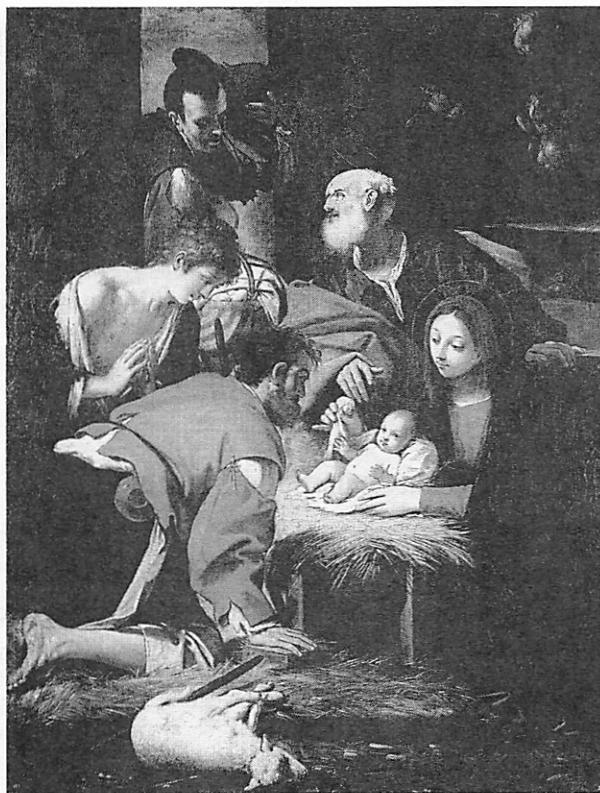




SCHOLA CANTORUM  
OF SYRACUSE

Pastores de Belén  
Shepherds of Bethlehem



Sunday, December 21, 2025, 7:00 PM -- Pebble Hill Church, DeWitt, NY  
Saturday, December 27, 2025, 7:30 PM -- Erwin 1st United Methodist Church, Syracuse

# **Pastores de Belén / Shepherds of Bethlehem**

A semi-theatrical presentation of the novella by  
Félix Lope de Vega y Carpio (1562 – 1635)

Created and directed by **Liamna Pestana**, with excerpts from the novella and musical settings of poetic texts in the novella

Translations by **Rafael Castillo Bejarano** and **Marcella Salvi**

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## Prologue – Introducing Belardo, the narrator

**Scene 1: A Journey to Bethlehem; the birth of Mary – Nos. 1 – 4**

**Scene 2: The Prophecies of the Shepherds – No. 5**

**Scene 3: The Gathering of the Shepherds – Nos. 6 – 9**

**Scene 4: The Birth of the Child – Nos. 10 – 17**

**Scene 5: Los Reyes Magos/The Three Wise Men – Nos. 18 and 19**

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## Epilogue – No. 20

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### **Schola Cantorum of Syracuse**

Rachel Bass, soprano

Thomas Sauvé, baritone-bass

Timothy Beck, countertenor

Jeffrey Snedeker, baritone-bass/cornamuse

Cassidy Chappini, mezzo-soprano

Barry Torres, countertenor/crumhorn/director

Walter Freeman, tenor

Joel Touranjoe, baritone

Arthur Lewis, tenor/crumhorn/assistant director

Gerald Wolfe, baritone-bass

Liamna Pestana, soprano

Steve Zumchak, tenor

### **Guest Artists**

Noemi Miloradovic and Edgar Tumajyan, violins

Eileen Allen, recorders/crumhorn

Sabora Miloradovic, cello

Liamna Pestana, baroque guitar

Aaron Alexander, narrator

## Program Notes

Lope de Vega (1562–1635) was one of the most prolific and influential writers of the Spanish Golden Age, credited with transforming Spanish theater into a vibrant popular art form known as *comedia nueva*. He revolutionized early modern theater through a hybrid blending of classical structure with popular themes, creating works that resonated across social classes. Known as “the Phoenix of Wits,” he wrote more than a thousand plays, as well as an extensive body of lyric poetry, pastoral novels, epics, and devotional works. A master of poetic expression across genres, Lope frequently wove verse into his prose narratives, especially in his pastoral writing, such as the lyric songs included in his novel *The Shepherds of Bethlehem: Divine Prose and Verses* (1612).

-- Marcella Salvi, December 2025

*Pastores de Belén* is the only sacred pastoral novel in Spanish literature. In it, Lope de Vega both follows and freely transforms—with his characteristic genius—the narrative patterns of the Renaissance pastoral novel, from Jorge de Montemayor’s *La Diana* to Lope’s own *Arcadia*. Its narrative discourse weaves prose and verse, walking and wandering, and the unfolding of the most significant events of the Old Testament, which gradually lead the reader to the humble portal of Bethlehem and to the presence of the incarnate Christ Child. The multiple biblical references throughout the text form a vivid testament to the writer’s profound scriptural culture and to the historical moment in which the work is set. *Pastores de Belén* is also the finest anthology of *villancicos* and lullabies in the entire history of Spanish lyric poetry.

When I first embarked on my journey into early music in Havana several decades ago, I did so from within an ensemble that placed music and theater on nearly equal footing. One of the projects born in that atmosphere was Lope de Vega’s *Pastores de Belén*, and the discovery—through a songbook compiled by the Spanish musicologist Miguel de Querol—that many of the poems from Lope’s novel had been set to music by a composer we already knew well: **Gaspar Fernandes (1566-1629)**, a singer/organist/composer of Portuguese descent, active in the cathedrals of Santiago de Guatemala (present-day Antigua, Guatemala) and Puebla de los Ángeles, New Spain (present-day Mexico). Among Fernandes’ contributions was the development of sacred *villancicos* in the New World incorporating African and Indigenous musical and textual elements in a new and vibrantly expressive way.

Although we were thrilled to hold such a treasure in our hands, we only did a couple of brief local presentations. Still, the seed had been planted in me: the desire to share the greatness of this literary masterpiece, and the wonder produced by a composer—working on the opposite side of the world—who so fully understood Lope's brilliance and transformed his sublime verses into equally divine music.

Many years would pass before Barry Torres heard me speak about this extraordinary work and became genuinely enthusiastic about it, leaving it on our list of “future projects” for the Schola Cantorum of Syracuse. To my great surprise, this year that dream finally came true. For me, it is also an honor to bring it together and represent the two cultural frontiers of Hispanic America in this project.

Lope's novel is divided into five books or internal chapters. When creating the script for this concert, I divided it into the same number of scenes as in the original text to reflect how it introduces its characters, plots, and events. Because it is difficult to condense so much material into a one-hour performance, I focused on preserving certain essential moments: the love between Aminadab and Palmira; the joyful presence of the various shepherds; the celebration of Christ's birth; the Nativity itself; Aminadab's accounts of Mary, Elizabeth, Joseph, and others; and the arrival of the Wise Kings.

Like many Spanish films I watched as a child—where a symbolic, almost minstrel-like figure appears at the beginning and end of the story, narrating from offstage—the novel also contains such a character, a detail revealed only on its final page. I found this profoundly compelling, especially because this figure speaks through his musical instrument, the *zampoña*, a type of bagpipe traditionally played only at Christmastime. In his farewell, he awakens the reader into another reality—our own—inviting us to look upon Aminadab and the shepherds as though they were figures in a museum painting: distant, eternal, tender, and joy-filled. A symbol of the everlasting love that defines this season, where winter blends with introspection and with the heart's own magic, guiding us toward a portal filled with wonder.

-- Liamna Pestana, December, 2025

1.

**La ermosa María** —que nació este día  
a dar alegría —con tanto esplendor,  
ésta sí que lleva la gala,  
ésta sí, que las otras no.

Anonymous

The lovely Mary — who was born this day  
to bring forth joy — with such splendor,  
this one indeed bears the true grace,  
this one indeed the others do not.

2.

**¡Ay loca esperanza vana!**

¡Cuántos días ha que voy  
engañoando el día de hoy  
y esperando el de mañana!

Anonymous

Ah, foolish, idle hope!

How many days have I gone on  
deceiving the day of today,  
while awaiting that one of tomorrow!

3.

**Atiende Joachim** —a la suma ymportancia  
que yncluye el misterio —de mi alegre  
envajada.

Anonymous

Be aware, Joachim — of the supreme  
importance  
contained within the mystery — of my  
joyful message.

El fruto que al cielo pides —en la ydea  
soberana  
reservada está a tu zelo —siendo  
conzebido en grazia.

The fruit you ask of Heaven — in its  
sovereign design  
is reserved for your zeal — being  
conceived in grace.



4.

**Oy nace una clara estrella**  
tan dibina y celestial  
que con ser estrella, es tal,  
que el mismo sol sale de ella.

Anonymous

Today a bright star is born,  
so divine and heavenly,  
that, even being a star, is such  
that the very sun rises from it.

5.

**Tenga yo salud**  
Niño Dios, en tu virtud,  
pues me vienes a salvar  
y ándese la gayta por el lugar.

Francisco Gutiérrez

Let me have health,  
Divine Child, by your virtue,  
since you come to save me,  
and let the bagpipe roam the village.

Para quando aga el son  
la gayta de Lucifer  
pensando que á de tener  
del alma la perdición,  
aunque en más dulce canción  
sus vanaglorias selebre,  
de tu cruz' a tu pesebre  
mi alma se piensa andar  
y ándese la gayta por el lugar.

When Lucifer's bagpipe  
plays its tune,  
thinking he shall have  
the soul's perdition  
even though in sweeter song  
he may celebrate his vain glories,  
from your cross to your manger  
my soul intends to journey—  
and let the bagpipe roam the village.



6.

Anonymous

**Deste alegre día**  
desta junta vella  
naçerà Maria  
de Jacob Estrella.

From this joyful day  
from this noble union  
shall be born Mary  
star of Jacob.

Áganle la salva  
ríndanle obediencia  
los mares y los montes,  
las aves y las fieras.

Let all salute her  
and yield obedience,  
the seas and the mountains,  
the birds and the beasts.

7.

Francisco Morales

**Hoy se biste de alegría**  
todo el prado de Isabel,  
porque nace Juan en él,  
el sobrino de María.

Today is clothed in joy  
the meadow of Elizabeth  
for John is born within it,  
the nephew of Mary.

Los prados se bisten de flores  
azules, blancas y rojas,  
los árboles verdes hojas,  
las aves nuevos colores,  
el monte biste alegría,  
todo parece verjel,  
porque nace Juan en él,  
el sobrino de María.

The meadows dress in flowers  
of blue, white, and red;  
the trees in green leaves,  
the birds in new colors;  
the mountain clothes in joy,  
all appears an Eden,  
for John is born within it,  
The nephew of Mary.

Hoy se biste.... el sobrino de María.

Today is clothed.....the nephew of Mary.

8.

**Oy la música del cielo**  
en dos puntos se cifró:  
sol y la que le parió.

La consonancia divina,  
que es una y tres puntos son,  
un dúo de eterna unión  
que oy se canta determina  
sol y la que le parió.

Gaspar Fernández (1566-1629)

Today the music of Heaven  
was written in two notes:  
The Sun, and She who bore Him.

The divine consonance,  
one yet three in notes,  
declares today a duet  
of everlasting union.

The Sun, and She who bore Him.

9.

**No son todos ruyseñores**  
los que cantan entre las flores  
sino campanicas de plata  
que tocan al alva,  
sino campanillas de oro  
que hazen la salva,  
a los soles que adoro.

Gaspar Fernández

It's not just nightingales  
that sing among the flowers;  
there are little silver bells  
that ring in the dawn,  
and little golden trumpets  
sounding to salute  
the two suns I adore.

10.

**Mañanicas floridas**  
del frío invierno  
recordad a mi niño  
que duerme al hielo.

Anonymous

Sweet mornings in bloom  
of the chill winter born,  
wake my Child up  
who sleeps in the cold.

Mañanas dichosas

del frío diciembre,

aunque el cielo os siembre

de flores y rosas,

recordad a mi niño

que duerme al hielo.

Blessed mornings

of cold December

though Heaven may sow you

with flowers and roses

wake my Child up

who sleeps in the cold.

#### 11. Instrumental

Oy al yelo naće en Belén Dios

Gaspar Fernández

Today in the cold God is born.

#### 12.

Norabuena vengáis al mundo,

niño de perlas,

que sin vuestra vista

no ay ora buena.

Gaspar Fernández

Welcome to the world in a blessed hour,

Child of pearls,

for without your presence

no hour is blessed.

Niño de jasmines

rosas y asuçenas.

Niño de la niña,

después dél más bella,

Child of jasmines,

roses, and lilies;

Child of the Maiden,

the most beautiful after Him.

Norabuena.... no ay ora Buena.

Welcome.... no hour is blessed.



13.

**No corras Gil, tan ufano,**  
a ver el Niño divino:  
piensa despacio el camino  
y lleva el alma en la mano.

El ver a Su Majestad  
que ya nuestra tierra pisa,  
no topa Gil en la prisa,  
que topa en la voluntad;  
lleva amor, lleva humildad,  
que con la fe y estos dos  
llegarás a ver a Dios  
a cualquier hora temprano.

No corras, Gil,...alma en la mano.

Gaspar Fernández

Do not run, Gil, so haughty,  
to see the divine Child;  
think carefully on the road,  
and carry your soul in your hand.

To behold His Majesty,  
who now treads upon our earth,  
does not depend, Gil, on haste,  
but rests upon the will.  
Carry love, carry humility,  
for with faith and these two,  
you shall come to see God  
ever in time, at any hour.

Do not run, Gil....soul in your hand.

14.

**Antón, si el muchacho ves,**  
baila y hagámonos rajas,  
aquí llevo las sonajas  
con ruedas de tres en tres.  
  
Toca el tamboril, Andrés,  
con saltos de dos en dos,  
que quien á de ver a Dios  
no se le an de ver los pies.  
  
Antón, si el muchacho ves...

Gaspar Fernández

Antón, if you catch sight of the Boy,  
dance, and let's dance until exhaustion,  
I've brought the jingle bells with me here  
with their jingles arranged in threes.  
  
Beat the tabor, Andrés,  
and leap in twos and twos,  
for he who goes to see God  
must let no feet be seen.  
  
Antón, if you catch sight of the Boy...

15.

Pues a fe que si me las tira  
que le tengo de hacer llorar.  
**Desnudito parece mi Niño**  
Dios de amor que con flechas está.

Pues a fe que si me las tira  
que le tengo de hacer llorar.

Gaspar Fernández

For indeed, if he shoots them at me,  
I shall have to make him cry.  
My Child, so bare, resembles  
the God of Love with arrows armed.

16.

**Zagalejo de perlas,**  
hijo del alva,  
¿dónde vais? que haze frío  
tan de mañana.

Gaspar Fernández

Little shepherd of pearls,  
Child of the morning light,  
where are you going in this cold  
so early in the morning?

17.

**Un relox á visto Andrés**  
que, sin verse rueda alguna  
en el suelo da la una,  
siendo en el cielo las tres.

O, qué bien as acertado,  
porque de los tres del cielo,  
oy la segunda en el suelo  
para bien del hombre á dado.

Gaspar Fernández

Andrés has seen a clock  
that, though no wheel is seen,  
on earth it strikes one,  
while in Heaven it is three.

O, how well you have guessed,  
for of the Three of Heaven,  
today the Second on earth  
has struck for the good of man.

Con las ruedas que no ves,  
porque está secreta alguna  
en el suelo da la una,  
siendo en el cielo las tres.

With the wheels you do not see,  
for some of them are hidden,  
on earth it strikes one,  
while in Heaven it is three.

Este relox que sustenta  
cielo y tierra es tan subtil  
que con dar una da mil  
mercedes a quien las cuenta.  
Cuenta las oras, Andrés,  
i di, sin errar alguna,  
en el suelo da la una,  
siendo en el cielo las tres.

This clock that is sustaining  
Heaven and earth is so subtle  
that, by giving one, it gives a thousand  
mercies to whoever counts them.  
Count the hours, Andrés,  
and say, without mistaking any,  
on earth it strikes one,  
while in Heaven it is three.

18.

**Los reyes siguen la estrella,**  
la estrella sigue al Señor  
y el Señor de ellos y de ella,  
sigue y busca al pecador.

Francisco Guerrero (1528-1599)  
The kings follow the star,  
the star follows the Lord,  
and the Lord of all of them,  
follows and seeks the sinner.

Teniendo de Dios noticia,  
buscan con divino celo,  
la estrella al sol de justicia,  
los Reyes al Rey del cielo.

Having knowledge from God,  
they seek with divine zeal,  
the star the Sun of Justice,  
the kings the King of Heaven.

Guiados son de una estrella  
la estrella de su Señor  
y el Señor de ellos y de ella,  
sigue y busca al pecador.

They are guided by a star,  
the star's guided by its Lord,  
and the Lord of all of them,  
follows and seeks the sinner.

19. Instrumental

**Este niño se lleva la flor**

Gaspar Fernández

This child takes the prize (flower)

20.

**Campanitas de Belén,**  
tocad al alva, que sale  
vertiendo divino aljófar  
sobre el sol que della nace,  
que los ángeles tocan,  
tocan y tañen:  
que es Dios hombre el sol  
y el alva su madre:  
din, dilín, dilín, dilín,  
que vino al fin,  
don, don, don, San Salvador,  
dan, dan, dan, que oy nos le dan.  
Tocan y tañen a gloria en el cielo  
y en la tierra tocan a paz.

En Belén tocan al alva,  
casi al primer arrebol,

Gaspar Fernández  
Little bells of Bethlehem,  
ring at dawn, for it rises,  
pouring divine dew upon  
the Sun that is born from it,  
for the angels play,  
they play and they strike:  
for God-made-man is the Sun,  
and the dawn is His Mother.  
Din, dilín, dilín, dilín,  
for He has come at last;  
don, don, don, Saint Savior;  
dan, dan, dan, for today He is given to us.  
They play and they strike for glory in Heaven,  
and on earth they ring for peace.

In Bethlehem they ring at dawn,  
almost at the first blush of light,

porque della sale el sol  
que de la noche nos salva.  
Si las aves hazen salva  
al alva del sol que ven.  
Campanitas de Belén... .tocan a paz.

Este sol se yela i arde  
de amor y frío en su oriente,  
para que la humana gente  
el cielo sereno aguarde,  
y aunque dizen que una tarde  
se pondrá en Gerusalén.

Campanitas de Belén....tocan a paz.

for from the dawn rises the Sun  
who saves us from the night.  
If the birds give their salute  
to the dawn of the Sun they see,  
Little bells of Bethlehem... they ring for peace.

This Sun freezes and burns,  
with love and cold in His rising,  
so that humankind  
may await a serene heaven,  
and although they say that one evening  
this Sun will set in Jerusalem,

Little bells of Bethlehem... they ring for peace.

## Upcoming Concerts!

**Sunday, April 19, 2026, 4:00 PM**  
*at Pebble Hill Church, Dewitt*

**A Truly Complete *Messiah***  
**directed by Arthur Lewis**

In approximate conformity with the Baroque practice of presenting oratorios during Lent when the opera houses were closed, Schola presents, in chamber-format, the complete, uncut Handel's *Messiah*, both the Christmas and the Easter portions.

**Saturday, June 13, 2026, 7:30 PM**  
*at Pebble Hill Church, Dewitt*

**Happy 50th, Schola!**

Celebrating the 50th anniversary of Schola Cantorum of Syracuse, we present important works in Schola's fifty year history featuring music of Du Fay, Ockeghem, Josquin, Lasso, Schütz, Buxtehude, and J.S. Bach.

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In addition to the contributions of our donors, concerts are made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature; by a grant from the Syracuse Sounds of Music Association; and with additional in-kind support from Erwin First United Methodist Church, Grace Episcopal Church of Syracuse, Pebble Hill Presbyterian Church, and St. Luke Lutheran Church, Ithaca.

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### Illustrations:

Cover -- *Adoración de Los Pastores*, 1628, by Giacomo Cavedone (1577-1660), in Museo del Prado.

Page 5 -- *Maria Mater Dei Virgo* (*Virgin Mary Mother of God*), detail of a historiated initial 'M'(aria).

Image taken from f. 479 of *Omne Bonum* (Jacob-Zacharias), Royal MS 6 E VII, British Library, London.

Page 6 -- *Adoració del pastors* (c. 1685-1690), by Bernat Amorós. From an article in the journal of the Museu Comarcal de Cervera, Núm. 10, 2014.

Page 9 -- *The Nativity*, c. 1500, attributed to the Pseudo Granacci (Italian, active ca. 1490-1525). The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore (online collection).



# Schola Cantorum of Syracuse

## Can you donate to help support Schola Cantorum?

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