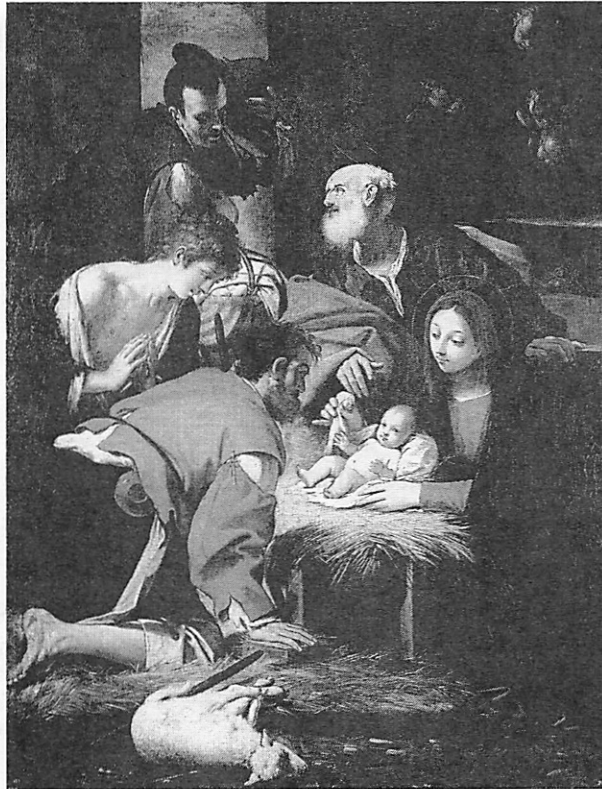




SCHOLA CANTORUM
OF SYRACUSE

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**

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

Epilogue – No. 20

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. Anonymous

<p>La hermosa María — que nació este día a dar alegría — con tanto esplendor, ésta sí que lleva la gala, ésta sí, que las otras no.</p>	<p>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.</p>
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2. Anonymous

<p>¡Ay loca esperanza vana! ¡Cuántos días ha que voy engañando el día de hoy y esperando el de mañana!</p>	<p>Ah, foolish, idle hope! How many days have I gone on deceiving the day of today, while awaiting that one of tomorrow!</p>
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3. Anonymous

<p>Atiende Joachim — a la suma ymportancia que yncluye el misterio — de mi alegre envajada.</p>	<p>Be aware, Joachim — of the supreme importance contained within the mystery — of my joyful message.</p>
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<p>El fruto que al cielo pides — en la ydea soberana reservada está a tu zelo — siendo conzebido en grazia.</p>	<p>The fruit you ask of Heaven — in its sovereign design is reserved for your zeal — being conceived in grace.</p>
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4.

Anonymous

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

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.

Francisco Gutiérrez

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

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.

Gaspar Fernández (1566-1629)

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 union
que oy se canta determina

sol y la que le parió.

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.

Gaspar Fernández

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.

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.

Anonymous

Mañanicas floridas

del frío invierno

recordad a mi niño

que duerme al hielo.

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

Gaspar Fernández

Oy al yelo naçe en Belén Dios

Today in the cold God is born.

12.

Gaspar Fernández

Norabuena vengáis al mundo,
niño de perlas,
que sin vuestra vista
no ay ora buena.

Welcome to the world in a blessed hour,
Child of pearls,
for without your presence
no hour is blessed.

Niño de jasmínes

Child of jasmínes,

rosas y asuçenas.

roses, and lilies;

Niño de la niña,

Child of the Maiden,

después dél más bella,

the most beautiful after Him.

Norabuena.... no ay ora Buena.

Welcome.... no hour is blessed.



13.

Gaspar Fernández

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.

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.

Gaspar Fernández

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...

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.

Gaspar Fernández

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

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.

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

For indeed, if he shoots them at me,
I shall have to make him cry.

16.

Gaspar Fernández

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

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

17.

Gaspar Fernández

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

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

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

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.

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

18.

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

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

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

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.

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.

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

Gaspar Fernández

Este niño se lleva la flor

This child takes the prize (flower)

20.

Gaspar Fernández

Campanitas de Belén,
tocad al alva, que sale
vertiendo divino aljófara
sobre el sol que della nace,
que los ángeles tocan,
tocan y tañen:
que es Dios hombre el sol
y el alva su madre:
dín, 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.

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.
Dín, 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.

En Belén tocan al alva,
casi al primer arrebol,

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.

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

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Go to scholasyracuse.com and click the link for the YouTube channel, where you may enjoy Schola's videos, including two short selections: **Palestrina** "Sicut cervus" (October 2024) and **Du Fay** "Ce moys de mai" (May 2024).