

**A MESSAGE FROM OUR
Season Sponsor**



Our value to society is to enable a better, safer and more interconnected world.

Social and relationship capital is extremely important to us. SGS' relationships and interactions with communities, stakeholders, organizations and networks includes notions like trust and loyalty among other values.

The Peterborough Singers has proven that it is a welcoming choir with a reputation of enriching and transforming lives through the learning, singing and sharing of choral music in the Peterborough community.

With roots dating back more than 80 years in the Peterborough region, we are excited to help the Peterborough Singers further accomplish their mission in providing high quality, entertaining and inspiring music to our community members.

SGS

**A MESSAGE FROM OUR
Artistic Director,
Syd Birrell**



The rumours are true. I'm retiring! After 35 years, this year's Messiah concerts will be my last as Artistic Director of the Peterborough Singers.

This is a bittersweet moment. Bitter, because the Singers has given me many of the most memorable moments of my life, and I will desperately miss standing at that podium. How can I ever forget directing Handel's Messiah the night my son, James, died of cancer? The dozens of Messiah concerts since have played a key role in the healing journey of everyone who grieved with us, and healed with us.

But this moment is also sweet. I can rest knowing that, after 35 years, the choir is healthier than ever. After much reflection, I decided that now, when the choir is at its best, is the time to pass on the baton. I want to hand my successor—whoever they may be—a healthy, thriving, well-oiled machine.

This is what **Syd's Legacy Fund** is for—not a monument, but a toolkit. It will help with the things that make the choir soar: world-class soloists who lift the roof, programs that bring music into communities, and all the invisible gears that keep the machine running. It's about ensuring the next conductor walks into a room full of possibility.

If the Peterborough Singers has ever made you smile, cry, sit up straighter, or hum on the way home, I hope you'll consider supporting this next chapter. Your gift will help keep the music alive... for the next 35 years!

Syd Birrell

**2025-2026 Season
CONCERT LISTING**

Unconcert

Sunday, Oct. 19, 2025 • 7:00 PM

Yuletide Cheer

Saturday, Nov. 29, 2025 • 7:00 PM

Handel's Messiah

Sunday, Dec. 14, 2025 • 3:30 PM

Monday, Dec. 15, 2025 • 7:00 PM

On Broadway

Saturday, Feb. 28, 2026 • 2:00 PM

The Creation

Saturday, May 9, 2026 • 7:30 PM

Sunday, May 10, 2026 • 3:00 PM

CONCERT SPONSORS



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We acknowledge the generous support of:



Syd Birrell & the 100 Voices of the
**PETERBOROUGH
SINGERS**



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a Legacy*

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2025-2026 SEASON

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Yuletide Cheer

Saturday, November 29, 2025
7:00 PM • Emmanuel United Church



The holiday season hasn't really begun until after the Singers' *Yuletide* concert. That's what our longtime fans consistently tell us. And no wonder! With a venue packed to the rafters, a selection of Christmas favourites, the powerful Casavant organ shaking the building to its foundations, and hundreds of audience members joining in the sing-a-long carols, is there a better feel-good, family-friendly Christmas event anywhere in Peterborough?

This year's *Yuletide* will be Syd's last as artistic director, and so he is packing the program with his personal favourites. Once again, the Singers will be joined by the incredible *Venabrass* ensemble. This year's concert will also feature an original composition by Marcus Venables of *Venabrass*, commissioned by the Peterborough Singers to mark Syd's retirement.

FEATURING: Venabrass Quintet & Syd Birrell (organ)

Handel's Messiah

Sunday, December 14, 2025 • 3:30 PM
Monday, December 15, 2025 • 7:00 PM
Emmanuel United Church



For Artistic Director Syd Birrell, the annual *Messiah* concerts are the highlight of the year, recalling thirty-five years of memories. This year's *Messiah* performances will be especially poignant, as they mark Syd's final concerts as the Singers' artistic director.

This year, Syd wanted to bring back his favourite *Messiah* soloists. However, with dozens of world-class soloists having joined the Singers over the years, it proved impossible to choose just four. And so, there will be a total of six soloists, two of whom will swap out on different nights. Come celebrate Syd's 35-year-legacy of choral excellence, and experience the heart-lifting, healing power of Handel's masterpiece.

FEATURING: Leslie Fagan & Janelle Lucyk (Soprano), Lillian Brooks (Mezzo), Ian Sabourin (Counter Tenor), Michael Colvin (Tenor), Alex Dobson (Bass)

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BUSSEY AINSWORTH
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On Broadway

Saturday, February 28, 2026
2:00 PM • Emmanuel United Church



Musical theatre is more than belted show tunes—it's the heartbeat of storytelling, the emotion woven into melody, and the magic that brings us together in our shared humanity.

From the relentless quest for justice in *Les Misérables* to the defiant spirit of *Rent* and the yearning of *West Side Story*, Broadway captures every shade of the human experience—love, laughter, struggle, triumph—transforming them into songs that stir the soul.

This season, the Peterborough Singers invite you to revel in the music that has defined generations and to help you discover new favorites destined to take centre stage in your heart. Join us for an unforgettable concert where voices soar, melodies embrace, and the spirit of Broadway shines bright.

FEATURING: Barry Haggarty (guitar), Andrew Affleck (bass), Curtis Cronkwright (drums), Alexia Preston (piano), Anne Normand (piano)

DIRECTED BY: Melissa Wotherspoon

The Creation

Saturday, May 9, 2026 • 7:30 PM
Sunday, May 10, 2026 • 3:00 PM
Emmanuel United Church



Performed with the Peterborough Symphony Orchestra

If you think that a musical telling of the creation of the world would be big and dramatic...you'd be right! Joseph Haydn decided to write *The Creation* after hearing the epic oratorios of George Handel during visits to England. Inspired to try his hand at writing something similarly epic in scope, he tackled the creation of the world out of the primordial chaos. To do justice to this magnificent work, the Singers will be teaming up with the Peterborough Symphony Orchestra. *The Creation* (Haydn) will play for two nights. On this Mother's Day weekend, why not treat your mother or someone else you love to Haydn's musical masterpiece?

FEATURING: Karolina Podolak (Soprano), Jacob Abrahamse (Tenor), Alex Dobson (Bass), Shannon McCracken (Soprano), William Kraushaar (Bass)

DIRECTED BY: Michael Newnham

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