



The Seraphim Choir's birth and rebirth

Description

The a cappella vocal ensemble returns to Westmount with *Naissance et Renaissance*

By **Daniel Miguez**

Seraphim, an a cappella chamber choir based in Montreal, will be performing a classical concert in Westmount at Saint Matthias' Anglican Church on December 9 at 4 pm. The 20-person choir, led by the new artistic director **John Guzik**, has been through some trials over the last two years, but with perseverance and a love of choral music, Seraphim is back on track to creating beautiful music in Westmount and in Montreal.

Historically, the choir has a deep connection to Westmount. For several years, Seraphim held its weekly rehearsals at the Place Kensington Residence on de Maisonneuve. This warm partnership meant that rehearsals were always attended. The music-loving seniors were seeking some entertainment after dinner and the choristers loved the warm attention the small weekly audience offered. The choir would also give seasonal concerts to the residents of Place Kensington, providing wonderful evenings of music. Seraphim's rehearsals now take place at Saint-Jean-Baptiste Church in the Plateau-Mont-Royal, where the choir also performs at several masses per year, but it is looking forward to coming home to perform its December concert here in Westmount, at Saint Matthias' Anglican Church.



Iwan Edwards leading the choir

This upcoming concert is called ***Naissance et Renaissance*** and it will feature a beautiful range of music spanning various musical time periods. *Naissance et Renaissance* is a meaningful title, not only because of the seasonal association, but also because of the major changes the choir has been through over the last two years. When long-time and well-loved conductor, **Penni Clarke**, retired from the choir for an excellent teaching opportunity in a local school, Seraphim was left searching for a conductor and trying to keep from disbanding. For one whole semester, rehearsals were even held in the living room of one of the choristers – a less than ideal rehearsal situation, but alternately, also a great bonding experience.

Iwan Edwards... not only musically inspired the singers but who also guided Seraphim through the process of finding a new permanent conductor... Montreal-based John Guzik.



John Guzik

Along with hard work from some devoted choristers who wanted the choir to return to performing at the same high standard as before, Seraphim was rescued in January 2017 by none other than the renowned Canadian choir conductor [Iwan Edwards](#). The choristers were privileged to learn from this giant of the choral world, who not only musically inspired the singers but who also guided Seraphim through the process of finding a new permanent conductor. At last, Seraphim found Montreal-based [John Guzik](#), a choral conductor, organist, and tenor with an impressive and diverse résumé.

Naissance et Renaissance will be Seraphim's first concert with John Guzik, representing a new and exciting phase in the life of the choir. Throughout this concert, with precise and expressive musicality, various moments in time will blend together through compositions of the past and their influences on those of the future. In works by DuFay, Sweelinck, Brahms, Martin, Siegfried, Szymko, and Gjeilo, music and words will be born and reborn over the duration of 600 years. With this presentation of *Naissance et Renaissance*, Seraphim hopes to inspire feelings of excitement, awe, and wonderment at any age.

Tickets for Seraphim's concert *Naissance et Renaissance* are available in advance or at the door.
Adults \$15 – Seniors and students \$10 – Children \$5

Saturday, December 9 at 4 pm
Saint Matthias' Anglican Church
131 Côte Saint-Antoine, Westmount

Facebook event: [facebook.com](#)



More details about Seraphim and its upcoming events can be found on its website seraphimmontreal.com and Facebook page facebook.com/seraphimmontreal

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Daniel Miguez is a librarian at the Westmount Public Library. He is also a singer and executive board member of the a cappella chamber choir Seraphim.

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