



Press Contact: Ross Wixon  
rwixon@revelsdc.org  
(301) 830-4402

For Immediate Release

### **Washington Revels Presents One-of-a-Kind Elizabethan Holiday Celebration in DC**

**Silver Spring, MD, October 4, 2018** – Over two weekends in December, theatre-goers will throng to GW Lisner Auditorium for seasonal entertainment like none other in Washington — *The Christmas Revels!*

For its 36<sup>th</sup> annual production, Washington Revels invites audiences to spend a festive holiday evening with the Queen — Elizabeth the First, that is! The year is 1599, England is swept up in a flowering of music and drama, and master Shakespearian actor and fool Will Kemp has become an overnight sensation by Morris dancing from London to the town of Norwich in just nine days! Queen Elizabeth herself is also on the way to Norwich, and the locals enlist Kemp's help as they prepare a Winter play worthy of Her Majesty. But Elizabeth has left the trappings of court far behind — and she has much more rustic entertainment in mind.

Mummers plays meet *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in this boisterous blend of high and low, city and country, art and folk, along with timeless Revels favorites: rousing carol sing-alongs, dancing in the aisles, children's singing games, the eerily hypnotic Abbots Bromley horn dance, and the glorious tones of the Washington Revels Brass.

Experience the magic of the season with **Mark Jaster** as Will Kemp, **Sabrina Mandell** as the ringleader of some *very Rude Mechanicals*, **Katrina Van Duyn** as Queen Elizabeth, the world-renowned early music ensemble **Piffaro: The Renaissance Band**, the **Rock Creek Morris Women**, and Washington Revels' cast — ages 8-88 — of courtiers, villagers, and some would-be thespians as we celebrate the winter solstice in true Elizabethan style. *Welcome Yule!*

Combining elements of a fully staged holiday play, a choral concert sing-along, and centuries-old winter traditions, *The Christmas Revels* offers a trademark blend of professional entertainment and community initiative that reminds performers and audiences alike of the importance — and the joy — of shared celebration.

## FOR CRAFTING FUN STORIES

December 2018

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### GREAT COMMUNITY INTEREST STORIES WITH *THE CHRISTMAS REVELS*

*Themes include: Community, Tradition, Celebration, Women in the Arts, Audience Participation, Intergenerational, Outreach, Family, and more!*

- **Our 2018 Elizabethan production is a showcase of the tremendous contributions of women in and to the Arts!** Not only will Queen Elizabeth I — herself a patron of the English Renaissance — command the stage (**as portrayed by local actress Katrina Van Duyn**), but our cast is also joined by **Sabrina Mandell** from Happenstance Theater in the role of Joan, who keeps a band of “Rude Mechanicals” in check as they stumble their way towards a truncated *Pyramus and Thisbe*. DC’s only all-women Morris team, the **Rock Creek Morris Women**, adds its bold, energetic dance steps to our winter celebration. And the music, dance and drama that make this show so special are woven together by Revels’ Artistic Director **Roberta Gasbarre** and Music Director **Elizabeth Fulford**. *On that same subject...*
- This year’s production features spectacular, period-accurate costumes **designed and built by the women of the Washington Revels Costume Shop**.
- **The Children’s Chorus on stage with their "Grandparents."** All the world’s a stage, and all the stage is a family. The kids in the Children’s Chorus are part of meaningful stage families — moms, dads, siblings, grandparents. It’s just one of the ways we create a real, intergenerational community.
- *Speaking of intergenerational*, did we mention that **two members of our chorus are octogenarians?** And *wow* do they sound great!
- **Our kid’s and teen casts hail from 21 different schools (public, private, and homeschoolers) and all around the DC area.** Kids (grades 3-5) and teens (grades 9-12) have different interests, but they come together to be part of this show for some of the same, and some different, reasons. Chat with a remarkably unique and eloquent, yet surprisingly every-day, bunch of kids!
- The night before the show opens, **the cast performs for free for over 1,000 people** — school children, seniors, and others who otherwise would not have the resources or the opportunity to attend.

*High-quality images of previous Christmas Revels shows are available.*

*Revels is a national organization, with 9 Revels cities across the country. Washington Revels, founded in 1983, presents seasonal and traditional celebrations around the year, including The Christmas Revels, May Revels, five year-round performing ensembles, monthly community sings, parades, after-school workshops and more. Learn more at [www.revelsdc.org](http://www.revelsdc.org).*

# 2018 Guest Artists



## Mark Jaster (Will Kemp)

Audiences of all ages and backgrounds enjoy *Mark Jaster's* kinetic humor, playful interaction, musical wit and inventive imagination. His skills in mime were developed in training with 20th-century masters Marcel Marceau and his teacher, Etienne Decroux, and through studies in the LeCoq pedagogy of Theatrical Clown. He now frequently teaches (Shakespeare Theatre, Maryland Opera Studio, University of North Carolina School of the Arts, Round House Theatre), consults on issues of mime and

movement (Centre Stage, Round House Theatre, Adventure Theatre, Ford's Theatre, Constellation Theatre, Olney Theatre) and regularly conducts artist residencies with elementary schools. Since 2006, he has co-directed Happenstance Theater with his wife and partner, Sabrina Mandell, devising and appearing in critically acclaimed collaborative, original works of "Visual, Poetic Theater," and winning The Helen Hayes Robert Prosky Award for Outstanding Lead Actor. In addition to frequent performances with Washington Revels over MANY years, Mark has also appeared with the Philadelphia and Cambridge *Christmas Revels*, and has played A Fool Named "O" at The Maryland Renaissance Festival for over 30 years. Mark was also a proud member of The Big Apple Circus' Clown Care Unit for 20 years, performing at the Children's National Medical Center as Dr. Baldy. He is delighted to be with the hometown Revels company once again. Welcome Yule!



## Sabrina Mandell (Joan)

*Sabrina Mandell* spent several years working on traditionally rigged schooners. She stopped for a spell to study Art History. She is the founder and Artistic Co-Director of Happenstance Theater and has written, produced and performed prolifically since the company was established in 2006. As the company's manager she has maintained sustainability and as the costume designer she won a Helen Hayes Award in 2016 for Outstanding Costume Design for *IMPOSSIBLE! A Happenstance*

*Circus* and again in 2017 for *MOXIE: A Happenstance Vaudeville*. Sabrina performed for 10 years with the Big Apple Circus' Clown Care Program in DC and Baltimore. She has also taught Theatrical Clown and Physical Comedy at several institutions including the Shakespeare Theatre, Everyman Theatre in Baltimore, Round House Theatre, Duke Ellington School of the Arts, the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, Lehigh University and Brandeis University. She is also a visual artist and poet.



## Katrina Van Duyn (Queen Elizabeth I)

*Katrina Van Duyn* reprises the role of Queen Elizabeth I, which she first performed in the Elizabethan production of 2007. Other Revels roles: Haddon Hall (Lady Kathleen), French-Canadian (Raconteur - 2008, 2017), and Victorian Storybook (the Lady of the House and multiple storybook characters). It is always a delight to share in the Revelry! Ms. Van Duyn has worked in theatre since the 1980s, supporting that vocation with a career as an editor. Outside her life as a performer, she is a freelance manuscript editor, a cyclist and cycling advocate, and

teaches French privately and for Arlington County, where she also is certified with the Master Gardener and Tree Steward public education programs.



## Danny Pushkin (Lord Chamberlain)

*Danny Pushkin* is a native Washingtonian and performer specializing in very physical theater. He is passionately engrossed in the study of ritual theater traditions and the cultural role of fools. Danny was last on stage with *The Christmas Revels* in 2011 as Joha. He was an Associate Company Member of Synetic Theater from 2009-2013. In his other life Danny writes, directs, produces and performs in musicals and theater for young audiences. He is a Resident Artist at Adventure Theatre, having recently

appeared in *Caps for Sale* (National Tour and Off-Broadway).



## Piffaro: The Renaissance Band

“Widely regarded as North America’s masters of music for Renaissance wind band” (*St. Paul Pioneer Press*), *Piffaro* has delighted audiences since its founding in 1980 by recreating the elegant sounds of the official wind bands and the rustic music of the peasantry from the late Medieval and Renaissance periods. Under the direction of Artistic Directors Joan Kimball and Bob Wiemken, the ensemble has appeared at major early music festivals in the US, Canada, Europe and South America, as well as on

Early Music, chamber music, and college series throughout North America. Through Piffaro’s many recordings on Newport Classics, Deutsche Grammophon Arkiv Produktion, Dorian Recordings, PARMA/Navona, and its own house label, and through radio and internet broadcasts, its music has reached listeners as far away as Siberia. The ensemble, active in the field of education since its inception, has received two Early Music America awards for its outreach work, and most recently was honored by The American Recorder Society with its “Distinguished Artist Award.”



## Rock Creek Morris Women

With their genesis in the folk revival of the 1960s and 70s, the *Rock Creek Morris Women* have been dancing Morris in Washington for the last 40 years. They dance a mix of traditions including Ducklington, Fieldtown, and an invented tradition, “Wheaton-under-Glenmont.” They can be seen at festivals and on tour around the metropolitan DC area, and occasionally travel to England to tour and dance. Follow them on Facebook and Twitter @RockCreekMorris! (Photo credit: Arthur Stephens)



## Washington Revels Brass

The *Washington Revels Brass* lends its joyful, clarion sound to every *Christmas Revels* production. Current performers include trumpeters Bob Birch (director and member of the group since 1996) and Fred Marcellus, hornist Andrew Houde, and trombonists Bryan Bourne and Jeff Gaylord, with percussionist Don Spinelli. The ensemble views itself in a certain sense as a microcosm of Revels everywhere: they have their own rituals, traditions, and personality. They differ from every other part of the Revels only in that their ways are largely invisible to all but themselves.



### About *The Christmas Revels*:

*The Christmas Revels* is an annual celebration that takes place every December in nine cities across the US. This colorful pageant of music, dance, and drama celebrates the winter solstice and the return of the Sun after the “shortest day,” radiating hope and joy in the renewal of life and the circle of the seasons.

The theme of each *Christmas Revels* changes every year. Washington Revels’ 36 productions have drawn on different eras and traditions from many cultures including Celtic, English, French, Russian, Roma, African-American, Bulgarian, Greek, Nordic, American Appalachian, Native American, Italian, Québécois, Andalusian (including Jewish and Muslim traditions), Irish, and more.

Professionally staged and directed, each production creates an on-stage community combining adults, teens, and children together with professional actors and musicians. Many shows also feature “tradition-bearers” (performers whose lineage and teachings are from the culture(s) being celebrated that year). Audience participation is a hallmark of every production: whether singing carols, joining hands in a rousing line dance, or becoming part of the drama, the audience is always an integral part of the Revels community.

*The Christmas Revels* appeals to the community at large, young and old alike, regardless of background. Each December, tens of thousands of people around the country attend *Christmas Revels* performances in nine cities — over 10,000 see the Washington Revels show alone — satisfying a deep human need to come together in communal celebration.

Washington Revels, founded in 1983, presents seasonal and traditional celebrations throughout the year, including *The Christmas Revels*, May Revels, monthly community sings and dances, parades, concerts, after-school workshops, and much more, for a total of over 50 programs annually.

- **For more information about *The Christmas Revels*:** [www.revelsdc.org/shows-events/christmas-revels/](http://www.revelsdc.org/shows-events/christmas-revels/)
- **For a preview video of this year’s production:** <https://youtu.be/KyS5IS47Jqg>
- **For more information about Washington Revels:** [www.revelsdc.org/](http://www.revelsdc.org/)
- **For a 3-minute video *This is Washington Revels*:** [www.youtu.be/1\\_rEjpKe7b0](http://www.youtu.be/1_rEjpKe7b0)
- **To find us on Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/revelsdc](http://www.facebook.com/revelsdc)
- **To find us on Twitter:** [www.twitter.com/revelsdc](http://www.twitter.com/revelsdc)
- **Press contact:** Ross Wixon, [rwixon@revelsdc.org](mailto:rwixon@revelsdc.org) / 301-830-4402
- **Public contact:** Washington Revels, [info@revelsdc.org](mailto:info@revelsdc.org) / 301-587-3835

1983	Medieval
1984	Medieval--Haddon Hall
1985	Appalachian-American
1986	French
1987	Celtic
1988	Medieval
1989	Storybook
1990	Medieval
1991	Russian-American
1992	Celestial Fools
1993	Celtic
1994	Victorian
1995	French
1996	Northlands
1997	Medieval--King and the Fool
1998	Shepherd Alley: Washington, D.C.
1999	Celestial Fools
2000	Celtic
2001	Leonardo's Workshop – Italian Renaissance
2002	Victorian
2003	Roads of the Roma
2004	King and the Fool
2005	Northlands
2006	Early American
2007	Elizabethan (25 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary)
2008	French Canadian ( <i>Québécois</i> )
2009	Leonardo's Workshop – Italian Renaissance
2010	Thomas Hardy/Wessex
2011	Andalusian Treasures
2012	Haddon Hall (30 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary)
2013	Echoes of Thrace (Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey)
2014	Irish Immigrant
2015	Medieval/Woodland
2016	Nordic
2017	French-Canadian ( <i>Québécois</i> , 35 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary)
2018	Elizabethan



## PRESS QUOTES

The *Christmas Revels* is a seasonal gift to the community in song, dance, magic, foolery and tradition... -THE WASHINGTON POST

...a celebration to make even the most incorrigible Grinch grin. -THE WASHINGTON POST

...reflects feelings as old as humanity itself... -THE NEW YORK TIMES

...a perfect vehicle for ushering in a magical time of year. -THE WASHINGTON POST

...revives elements of the holiday season that don't go on sale... -THE WASHINGTON POST

Revels has history, tradition, arts, color and a way of turning an audience into a community. -THE BOSTON GLOBE

Revels creates a communal bridge from darkness to light... -THE SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

A better evening's entertainment, with more variety and spirit, would be hard to find... -THE WASHINGTON POST

The heart of Revels is its participatory spirit, a joining together of audience members and cast in celebratory song and dance... -THE CAMBRIDGE EXPRESS

One of those rare events that delight people of all ages. -THE WASHINGTON POST

**WWW.REVELSDC.ORG**

# WASHINGTON REVELS

*Celebrating 35 Years*

Washington Revels  
531 Dale Drive  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
**Phone:** 301-587-3835  
**Email:** info@revelsdc.org  
**Web:** revelsdc.org

## CREATING COMMUNITY THROUGH CELEBRATION!

Through performance, education, and outreach, **Washington Revels** is dedicated to reviving, sustaining, expanding, and celebrating cultural traditions — in music, dance, storytelling, and drama — that bind people together in spirit and joy.

### THE CHRISTMAS REVELS

Our flagship production features a cast of nearly 100 — professionals and volunteers, ages 5-85 — and shares **Winter traditions** from around the globe with an audience of 10,000 each December. Through our **Outreach Performance**, we provide over **1,000 free tickets** to students, seniors and other groups who could not otherwise experience this magical show.

### SEASONAL PROGRAMS

- Our second largest production of the year, **May Revels** is a **free Spring celebration** that touches over **1,000 people**.
- The themes of our **monthly Community Sings** vary by season and commemorate the traditions of cultures from around the world.
- Our lively and colorful **parade performances** on Independence and Labor Day bring the joy of Revels to **thousands of DC-area residents** every summer.
- Revels' **Pub Sings** keep spirits warm in even the coldest months.

### AFTER-SCHOOL CHILDREN'S WORKSHOPS

Revels Kids learn traditional games, songs, stories, and dances that instill in them the **confidence** to lead, the **respect** to listen, the importance of **teamwork**, and the **empathy** to care for others and the world around them. We offer **reduced and free tuition** for families with financial need.

### YEAR-ROUND PERFORMING ENSEMBLES

Our **Gallery Voices**, **Heritage Voices**, **Jubilee Voices**, **Maritime Voices**, and **Voices of History** perform throughout DC, Maryland, and Virginia, bringing traditional music and dramatic interpretations to the wider community. Most of these events are **free and open to the public**.

*Revels is not something that you just watch:*

*it is an Experience!*

### WHAT OTHERS SAY...

*One of those rare events that delight people of all ages.*  
—The Washington Post

*Revels has history, tradition, art, color and a way of turning an audience into a community.*  
—The Boston Globe

*A better evening's entertainment, with more variety and spirit, would be hard to find ... a perfect vehicle for ushering in a magical time of year.*  
—The Washington Post

*The heart of a Revels production is its participatory spirit, a joining together of audience members and cast in celebratory song and dance...*  
—The Cambridge Express

*The Christmas Revels, a seasonal gift to the community in song, dance, magic, foolery and tradition...*  
—The Washington Post



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