

PROGRAM NOTES, TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

🕊️ **Jauchzet dem Herrn, alle Welt, Psalm 100 (“Rejoice in the Lord”)**

Johann Pachelbel (1653–1706)

Text: Luther’s translation of the Psalm known in English as “Make a joyful noise unto the Lord” (KJV)

Our program begins with an explosion of joy! In Pachelbel’s double choir setting of “Rejoice in the Lord,” the Chorale sings the part of first choir, while instruments represent the second. Throughout the composition the second choir reinforces the joy of the first, at times by serving as an echo but at other times by playing variations of the first choir’s lines. Jubilation swells through the piece, as the key words (“jauchzet,” “alle,” “Freuden,” “Frohlocken,” “Danken,” “Loben”) are decorated with lavish coloraturas that express barely containable emotions.

[The word-for-word translation of Luther’s German doesn’t correspond precisely with the KJV English translation of the Psalm, but I have placed in bold the English words that correspond to those that Pachelbel’s setting emphasizes.]

Jauchzet dem Herrn **alle** Welt.
Dienet dem Herrn mit **Freuden**.
Kommet vor sein Angesicht mit **Frohlocken**.
Erkennt, dass der Herr Gott ist.
Er hat uns gemacht, und nicht wir selbst,
Zu seinem Volk und zu Schafen seiner Weide.
Gehet zu seinen Toren ein mit **Danken**,
Zu seinen Vorhöfen mit **Loben**.
Danket ihm, lobet seinen Namen.
Denn der Herr ist freundlich,
Und seine Gnade währet ewig,
Und seine Wahrheit für und für.

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, **all** ye lands.
Serve the Lord with **gladness**:
Come before his presence with **singing**.
Know ye that the Lord he is God:
It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves;
We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
Enter into his gates with **thanksgiving**,
And into his courts with **praise**:
Be thankful unto him, and bless his name.
For the Lord is good;
His mercy is everlasting;
And his truth endureth to all generations.

(Transl. KJV)

🕊️ **Mother of God**

John Kenneth Tavener (1944-2013)

Words: Mikhail Lermontov (Russian Romantic poet; 1814-1841)

The famous English composer John Tavener, known for his extensive output of religious choral works, converted to the Orthodox Church in 1977, and Orthodox theology and liturgical traditions became a major influence on his work. He was particularly drawn to the mysticism of orthodoxy, and this piece (composed in 2003) that prays to an “ikon” of the Virgin Mary in her “radiant brightness” certainly seems to be touched by such influences.

Mother of God, here I stand now praying,
Before this ikon of your radiant brightness,
Not praying to be saved from a battlefield;
Not giving thanks, nor seeking forgiveness
For the sins of my soul, nor for all the souls
Numb, joyless and desolate on earth;
But for her alone, whom I wholly give you...

Ave Virgo Sanctissima

Francisco Guerrero (c. 1528-1599)

Guerrero was a Spanish priest and composer of the Renaissance. When he was about 61 years old he fulfilled a life-long dream of visiting the Holy Land—he went to Damascus, Bethlehem, and Jerusalem—but on the return voyage his ship was twice attacked by pirates. He was robbed, held for ransom, and he returned to Spain without means. After spending some time in debtor’s prison, he was finally helped by his former employer at Seville Cathedral and was able to resume his work there. (He also found time to write a book about his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, which became quite popular.) Guerrero’s desire to be closer to God by visiting the land where Christ was born is mirrored in the closeness to God that he sought when composing music as sublime as “Ave Virgo sanctissima.”

Ave Virgo sanctissima,
Dei mater piissima,
Maris stella clarissima.
Salve semper gloriosa,
Margarita pretiosa,
Sicut lilium formosa,
Nitens olens velut rosa.

Hail, Holy Virgin,
Most blessed Mother of God,
Bright star of the sea.
Hail, ever glorious,
Precious pearl,
Lovely as the lily,
Beautiful and perfumed as the rose.

(Transl. CPDL)

Magnificat

Francesco Durante (1684-1755)

During his lifetime, the now somewhat forgotten Francesco Durante was well-known as a composer of church music, but at least as importantly, he was a renowned teacher of such students as Giovanni Battista Pergolesi. Composer John Rutter says that he himself hadn’t heard of Francesco Durante until he began looking into the history of Pergolesi’s “Magnificat”—“a delightful, sunlit piece long popular with choirs,” says Rutter, “except it’s not by Pergolesi!” For many years Durante’s “Magnificat” was falsely attributed to his famous pupil but, as Rutter notes, “the incontrovertible evidence of an autograph manuscript” showed that it was composed by Durante and misattributed to Pergolesi—a misattribution which lasted for many years. Rutter admits to his own “Sherlock Holmes-like ‘aha’” when he personally examined Durante’s manuscript from the Naples library and saw an altered edition with Pergolesi’s name on it. What a shame, says Rutter, that for so many years Durante’s “first-rate” composition was doomed to remain a “mis-named musical orphan.”

Let us now allow ourselves to be transported into the musical world of this Magnificat’s true composer, as he sets to music the words of the Virgin Mary telling her cousin, Elizabeth, that she is to bear the Son of God..

Magnificat anima mea Dominum,
Et exultavit spiritus meus
In deo salutari meo.
Quia respexit humilitatem
Ancillae suae,
Ecce enim ex hoc
Beatam me dicent omnes generationes.
Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est,

My soul doth magnify the Lord,
And my spirit hath rejoiced
In God my Savior.
For he hath regarded the low estate
Of his handmaiden,
For, behold, from henceforth
All generations shall call me blessed.
For he that is mighty hath done to me great things,

Et sanctum nomen ejus.
Et misericordia ejus a progenie
In progenies timentibus eum.
Fecit potentiam in brachio suo,
Dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.

Deposuit potentes de sede,
Et exaltavit humiles.
Esurientes implevit bonis,
Et divites dimisit inanes.
Suscepit Israel puerum suum,
Recordatus misericordiae suae,
Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros,
Abraham et semini ejus in secula.

Gloria Patri et Filio
Et Spiritui Sancto,
Sicut erat in principio
Et nunc et semper,
Et in secula seculorum. Amen.

And holy is his name.
And his mercy is on them that fear him
From generation to generation.
He hath shewed strength with his arm,
He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their
hearts.
He hath put down the mighty from their seats,
And exalted them of low degree.
He hath filled the hungry with good things,
And the rich he hath sent empty away.
He hath holpen his servant Israel,
In remembrance of his mercy,
As he spake to our fathers,
To Abraham, and to his seed forever.

(Transl. Luke 1:46-55, KJV Bible)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
And to the Holy Ghost,
As it was in the beginning,
And is now, and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen.



🎭 Reigen seeliger Geister (Dance of the Blessed Spirits)

Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714-1787)

Monterey Bay Sinfonietta



🎭 Barn Jesus i en krybbe lå (“Child Jesus comes from heavenly height”)

Niels Wilhelm Gade (1817-1890) Words: Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875)

Danish traditional

(We would like to thank Dan Hansen for his help with the Danish pronunciation.)

Most of us probably know Danish author Hans Christian Andersen mainly from his fairy tales, so it might come as somewhat of a surprise that it was he who wrote the text of “Barn Jesus i en krybbe lå.” The poem was published in 1832, and 27 years later Niels Wilhelm Gade, one of the leading Danish musicians of his day, composed what has become the best known melody for this Christmas carol. It is of interest to note that, although Andersen composed relatively few religious poems, in 2003 “Barn Jesus...” was one of two of his that were included in the new edition of the Danish hymn book.

Barn Jesus i en krybbe lå,
skønt Himlen var hans øje.
Hans pude her blev hø og strå,
mørkt var det om hans leje!
Men stjernen over huset stod,
og oksen kyssed barnets fod.
Halleluja! Halleluja! Barn Jesus!

Child Jesus comes, from heav'nly height,
To save us from sin's keeping;
On manger straw, in darksome night,
The Blessed One lies sleeping;
The Star smiles down, the angels greet,
The oxen kiss the Baby's feet.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Child Jesus.

Hver sorgfuld sjæl, bliv karsk og glad,
ryst af din tunge smerte,
et barn er født i Davids stad
til trøst for hvert et hjerte.
Til barnet vil vi stige ind
og blive børn i sjæl og sind.
Halleluja! Halleluja! Barn Jesus!

Take courage, soul, in grief cast down,
Forget the bitter feeling;
A Child is born in David's town,
To touch all souls with healing;
Then let us go and seek the child,
Children like Him, meek, undefiled.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Child Jesus!

(Transl. *The Evangelical Hymnal*, N. Y., 1880)

🍷 **Heyr himna smiður**

Porkell Sigurbjörnsson [Thorkell Sigurbjörnsson] (1938–2013) Words: Kolbeinn Tumason (1173–1208). Icelandic traditional

(We would like to thank Kolbrún Jarlsdóttir for her help with the Icelandic pronunciation.)

Kolbeinn Tumason, the author of this archaic text, was one of the most powerful Viking chieftains in Iceland around the turn of the 13th century, and he was also a devoutly religious man and a poet. In 1208 he was gravely injured in battle, and as he lay on his deathbed he—speaking of himself as “the poet”—composed this text that humbly calls on the Creator (the “Smith of the Heavens”) to grant His healing mercy. The haunting music that carries the text was composed in 1973 by Icelandic composer, conductor and pianist Thorkell Sigurbjörnsson, and the setting is among the best-known Icelandic hymns.

Heyr, himna smiður,
hvers skáldið biður.
Komi mjúk til mín
miskunnin þín.
Því heit eg á þig,
þú hefur skaptan mig.
Ég er þrællinn þinn,
þú ert drottinn minn.

Guð, heit eg á þig,
að græðir mig.
Minnst, mildingur, mín,
mest þurfum þín.
Ryð þú, röðla gramur,
ríklyndur og framur,
hölds hverri sorg
úr hjartaborg.

Gæt, mildingr, mín
mest þurfum þín
helzt hverja stund
á hólða grund;
sett, meýjar mögr,
málsefni fögr,
öll es hjólp af þér
í hjarta mér.

Hear, smith of the heavens,
What the poet asks.
May thy mercy come softly
Unto me.
So I call on thee,
For thou hast created me.
I am thy servant,
Thou art my Lord.
God, I call on thee
To heal me.
Remember me, mild one,
We need thee most.
Drive out, O king of suns,
Generous and great,
Every human sorrow
From the fortress of the heart.

Watch over me, mild one,
We need thee most,
Truly every moment
In the world of men.
Send us, son of the virgin,
Noble motives.
All aid to my heart
Is from thee.

(Transl. *slightly modified Wikipedia*)

🎄 Jul, jul, strålande jul!

Gustav Nordqvist (1886-1949) Words: Edvard Evers (1853-1919)

Swedish traditional

(We would like to thank Lars Johannesson for his help with the Swedish pronunciation.)

“Jul, jul, strålande jul” is one of the most popular Swedish Christmas carols, and its imagery is characterized by a “longing for light” in the midst of winter. In this context one remembers the importance in Swedish culture of mid-December winter solstice celebrations (the St. Lucia festival) that mark the beginning of the Christmas season and are meant to bring hope and light during the darkest time of the year.

Jul, jul, strålande jul, glans över vita skogar,
Himmelens kronor med gnistrande ljus.
Glimmande bågar i alla Guds hus,
Psalm, som är sjungen från tid till tid,
Eviga längtan till ljus och frid!
Jul, jul, strålande jul: glans över vita skogar!

Kom, kom, signade jul! Sänk dina vita vingar
Över stridernas blod och larm,
Över all suckan ur människobarm,
Över de släkten som gå till ro,
Över de ungas dagande bo!
Kom, kom, signade jul, sänk dina vita vingar!

Yule, Yule, glorious Yule, shine over white woodlands,
The heavens' crowns with shimmering light,
Glistening archways in all the houses of the Lord,
Psalms that are sung throughout the ages,
The eternal longing for light and peace!
Yule, Yule, glorious Yule, glisten over white woodlands!

Come, come, blessed Yule! Lower your white wings
Over the blood and din of the battlefield,
Over the sighs out of mankind's bosom,
Over the loved ones that are laid to rest,
Over the dawn of new life!
Come, come, blessed Yule! Lower your white wings.

(Transl. Lydia Werthen)

🎄 ¡Llega la Navidad!

Ramón Díaz (1901-1976) Arr. Juan Tony Guzmán (b. 1959) Dominican Republic

Christmas in the Dominican Republic is a time of great happiness, partying, and family get-togethers, and one can imagine this spirited, dancing piece being sung at such a gathering.

¡Llega la Navidad!
El Niño Jesús nos trae
¡Llega la Navidad!
La tan deseada paz,
¡Llega la Navidad!
Cantemos le agradecidos
¡Llega la Navidad!
Y Él nos bendecirá.

¡Llega la Navidad!
Los Santos Reyes de Oriente
¡Llega la Navidad!
Con su buena voluntad,
¡Llega la Navidad!
Nos darán felices Pascuas
¡Llega la Navidad!
Y un alegre Navidad.

Joy! It is Christmas Day.
Little Jesus brings to us,
Joy! It is Christmas Day.
Gives to us the gift of peace.
Joy! It is Christmas Day.
Let us sing and shout hosanna!
Joy! It is Christmas Day.
And his blessings we'll receive.

Joy! It is Christmas Day.
Three kings from the Orient seek him,
Joy! It is Christmas Day.
With their praises and goodwill
Joy! It is Christmas Day.
Bringing joy and celebration
Joy! It is Christmas Day.
For a joyful Christmas Day.

Venid, vamos, que en Belén
Ha nacido un Niño para nuestro bien.
Alabemos la bondad
Del Rey de los hombres que nos trae la paz.

¡Llega la Navidad!
Los Santos Reyes de Oriente
¡Llega la Navidad!
Con su buena voluntad,
¡Llega la Navidad!
Nos darán felices Pascuas
¡Llega la Navidad!
Y una alegre Navidad.
¡Llega la Navidad!.

🎶 **Ríu, Ríu, Chíu**

Anonymous 16th Century; perhaps by Catalan composer Bartomeu Càrceres. Arr. Rafael Mitjana

The visitation of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Ghost is described here in drastic imagery. The rabid wolf—sin—tries to bite the innocent lamb—the Virgin Mary—but God Almighty defends her, preserving her virginity and thereby protecting her from sin. (The syllables “ríu, ríu, chíu” imitate the call of a bird, which is variously interpreted as the voice of a nightingale or the predatory call of a kingfisher.)

Solo singer:

Ríu, ríu, chíu la guarda ribera,
Dios guardó el lobo de nuestra cordera.
Dios guardó el lobo de nuestra cordera.

Refrain:

Ríu, ríu, chíu la guarda ribera,
Dios guardó el lobo de nuestra cordera.
Dios guardó el lobo de nuestra cordera.

Women:

El lobo rabioso la quiso morder,
Mas Dios Poderoso la supo defender.
Quiso la hazer que no pudiese pecar,
Ni aun original esta Virgen no tuviera.

Refrain

Men:

Este qu'es nacido es el gran monarca,
Christo patriarca de carne vestido;
Ha nos redimido con se hazer chiquito,
Aunque era infinito, finito se hizera.

Refrain

Women:

Muchas profecías lo han profetizado,
Y aun en nuestros días lo hemos alcançado.

Come, rejoice in Bethlehem,
Born a Child, the Savior. Honor to his reign.
Let us praise the goodwill
Of the King of Man, bringing love and peace.

Joy! It is Christmas Day.
Three kings from the Orient seek him,
Joy! It is Christmas Day.
With their praises and goodwill
Joy! It is Christmas Day.
Bringing joy and celebration
Joy! It is Christmas Day.
For a joyful Christmas day.
Joy! It is Christmas Day.

(Transl. F.R. Dotseth and D. Raney)

Solo singer:

Ríu, ríu, chíu,
The river bank protects her,
As God kept the wolf from our ewe.

Refrain:

Ríu, ríu, chíu,
The river bank protects her,
As God kept the wolf from our ewe.

Women:

The rabid wolf tried to bite her
But God Almighty knew how to defend her.
He wished to create her impervious to sin,
Nor was this maid to embody original sin.

Refrain

Men:

The newborn child is the mightiest monarch,
Christ patriarchal invested with flesh.
He made Himself small and so redeemed us:
He who was infinite became finite.

Refrain

Women:

Many prophecies told of His coming,
And now in our days have we seen them fulfilled.

A Dios humanado vemos en el suelo,
Y al hombre en el cielo porque el le quisiera.

Refrain

God became man, on earth we behold Him,
And see man in heaven because He so willed.

Refrain

(Transl. CPDL)

The Three Drovers

William Garnet James (1892-1977). Words: John Wheeler. Australian traditional

The Australian pianist and composer William Garnet James was a pioneer of music broadcasting in Australia and also the first music director of the newly founded Australian Broadcasting Commission. He held the position from 1931 until he retired in 1957. During these years he made regular overseas trips to persuade international artists to perform in Australia with the newly formed radio orchestras. He wrote many pieces for voice, choir and piano, but most enduring are his 15 Australian Christmas Carols, in which traditional Christmas themes were given Outback settings, such as “The Three Drovers.” The Outback is a remote, vast, sparsely populated area of Australia, with low-intensity livestock grazing in some areas, and a “drover” is one who drives cattle or sheep. In “The Three Drovers” it is they, rather than the three Magi, that are following the Christmas star.

Across the plains one Christmas night
Three drovers riding blithe and gay
Looked up and saw a starry light
More radiant than the Milky Way
And on their hearts such wonder fell
They sang with joy. “Noel! Noel!
Noel! Noel! Noel!”

The black swans flew across the sky
The wild dog called across the plain
The starry luster blazed on high
Still echoed on the Heavenly strain
And still they sang, ‘Noel! Noel!’
Those drovers three. ‘Noel! Noel!’
Noel! Noel! Noel!’

The air was dry with summer heat
And smoke was on the yellow moon
But from the heavens, faint and sweet
Came floating down a wond’rous tune
And as they heard, they sang full well
Those drovers three. ‘Noel! Noel!’
Noel! Noel! Noel!’

Seven Joys of Christmas I: The Joy of Love, This is the Truth

Kirke Mechem (born 1925; lives in San Francisco)

Words and melody: English carol “This is the Truth” (cf. Oxford Book of Carols)

In his “Seven Joys of Christmas” Kirke Mechem has collected seven carols from different countries, each of which casts light on a different aspect of joy for the Christmas season. “The Joy of Love” is the first setting in this sequence, and to express “love” Mechem has chosen the carol “This is the Truth.” The setting remains in a minor key, as the words tell of God’s plan for humanity: He created Man, He created Woman, and humankind suffered “endless woes.” But when we are told of the promise that He will “redeem us by His Son,” the tone of the music changes. Mechem directs that these words become gradually slower as they approach the word “Son”—and with that word the key suddenly changes to a blissful major, albeit a bliss combined with the utmost reverence, for “Son” is sung piano (dare we even speak His name?). After this moment of awe and wonder, the words continue speaking

of Christmas, “that season of the year [when] our blest Redeemer did appear,” and the elated tone of the music, still in a major key, expresses the relief brought to redeemed humanity. The piece ends slowly, again with great reverence, as we are told that through His LOVE he has showed us how to be saved.

Solo group: This is the truth sent from above,
Choir: The truth of God, the God of love,
Solo group: Therefore don't turn me from your door,
Choir: But hearken all both rich and poor.

Solo group: The first thing which I do relate
Choir: Is that God did man create;
Solo group: The next thing which to you I'll tell;
Choir: Woman was made with man to dwell.

Solo group and Choir:
And we were heirs to endless woes,
Till God the Lord did interpose;
And so a promise soon did run
That He would redeem us by His Son.

Solo group and Choir:
And at that season of the year
Our blest Redeemer did appear;
He here did live, and here did preach,
And many thousands He did teach.

Solo group and Choir:
Thus He in love to us behaved,
To show us how we must be saved;
And if you want to know the way,
Be pleased to hear what He did say.

Seven Joys of Christmas VI: The Joy of Dance: Fum, fum, fum!

Kirke Mechem. Melody: Catalan carol “Veinticinco de diciembre” (cf. Oxford Book of Carols)

The sixth joy of the Christmastide in Mechem's sequence of carols is “The Joy of Dance,” and he has chosen a sprightly Catalan Christmas carol to express this joy—the repeated “fum, fum, fum!” in the original carol is meant to imitate the sound of a guitar string being plucked. Mechem has greatly emphasized the dancing character of the melody, for as it happily dances along it is accompanied by increasingly exuberant, jumpy, rhythmic variations of “fum, fum, fum.”

On December twenty-fifth, sing fum, fum, fum!
On December twenty-fifth, sing fum, fum, fum!

He is born of God's pure love,
The Son of God, the Son of God;
He is born of Virgin Mary
In this night so cold and dreary. Fum, fum, fum!
Fum, fum...! [etc.]

Birds who live in ev'ry forest, fum, fum fum!
Birds who live in ev'ry forest, fum, fum fum!
Fum, fum...! [etc.]

You must leave your fledglings on the bough,
You must leave your fledglings now,
Fum, fum...! [etc.]
For to make a downy nest,
So the new-born Babe may rest.
Fum, fum...! [etc.]

All the brilliant stars in heaven, fum, fum, fum!
All the little stars in heaven, fum, fum, fum!
Fum-fum...! [etc.]
Looking down see Jesus crying, see him crying, see him
cry;
Send away the darkness lightly,
Shine your light upon us brightly,
Fum, fum...! [etc.]



🎵 Variations sur ‘Il est né, le divin enfant

Marcel Dupré (1886-1971)

Vlada Moran, organ



🎵 Angels we have Heard on High (Westminster Carol)

French-English traditional

We invite our audience to join us in singing the refrain!

Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o’er the plains,
And the mountains in reply,
Echoing their joyous strains.

Refrain:
Gloria, in excelsis Deo
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heav’nly song?

Refrain
Gloria, in excelsis Deo
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing.
Come, adore on bended knee,
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.

Refrain:
Gloria, in excelsis Deo
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

🎵 Coventry Carol

Arr. Martin Shaw (1875-1958). English traditional

This carol is so named because it was traditionally performed in Coventry, England, as part of a 16th century mystery play (Pageant of the Shearmen and Tailors) that depicts the Christmas story as related in chapter two in the Gospel of St. Matthew. It refers to Herod’s murdering of all male infants under the age of two in Bethlehem, and the carol has the form of a lullaby, sung by mothers of the doomed children.

Refrain:
Lully lullay, thou little tiny child,
By by lully lullay.
O sisters too, how may we do,
For to preserve this day,
This poor youngling for whom we do sing,
By by lully lullay.

Herod the king in his raging,
Charged he hath this day,
His men of might in his own sight,
All young children to slay.

That woe is me, poor child for thee,
And ever mourn and may,
For thy parting, neither say nor sing,
By by lully lullay.

Refrain

In the Bleak Midwinter

Gustav Holst (1874–1934). Words: Christina Rossetti (1830-1894). English traditional

Gustav Holst not only composed what was to become a beloved Christmas carol, he also brought fame to the poem by his compatriot Christina Rossetti.

In the bleak mid-winter
Frosty wind made moan;
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter
Long ago.

Angels and archangels
May have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim
Thronged the air;
But only His Mother
In her maiden bliss
Worshipped the beloved
With a kiss.

What can I give him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man
I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give Him,
Give my heart.

The Holly and the Ivy

English traditional

The holly and the ivy,
When they are both full grown,
Of all the trees that are in the wood,
The holly bears the crown.

Refrain:

The rising of the sun
And the running of the deer,
The playing of the merry organ,
Sweet singing in the choir.

The holly bears a blossom,
As white as the lily flow'r,
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ,
To be our sweet Savior.

Refrain

The holly bears a berry,
As red as any blood,
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ,
To do us sinners good.

Refrain

The holly and the ivy,
When they are both full grown,
Of all the trees that are in the wood,
The holly bears the crown.

Refrain

🎵 “The Hopeful Mother of God” (“у надї Божа Мати... (колядка)”)

Arr.: O. Tokar. Ukrainian traditional

(We would like to thank our organist, Vlada Moran, for transliterating the Cyrillic text, and Olga Ziniak for her help with the Ukrainian pronunciation.)

The melody of this carol wanders searchingly yet hopefully, as it gives voice to the emotions of “The Hopeful Mother of God” in her weary search for a place to give birth to her Child.

Though the Mother of God had hope,
She could find no place to give birth to her Son.
In a stable meant for lambs,
There she found for herself a home.
She then journeyed far and wide
In search of a safe place,
For everywhere were unbelievers
Who were killing innocent children.
Glory to the Newborn,
Who was laid in a humble manger!

Though earthly travails were great,
Elderly Joseph and Mary
Shepherded the Holy Child through life—
The Hope of sinful humanity.
All glory to the Newborn,
Who was laid in a manger!
And to Him let us all turn,
To Christ our Lord, we bow down.

(Transl. Natalie Maciukenas and Christine Bonacorsa)

🎵 Stille Nacht

Franz Gruber (1787-1863). Arr. Hermann Ebenhoech (1932-2011) Austrian traditional

“Stille Nacht” was composed in 1818 by the Austrian composer Franz Gruber, and our arrangement was also written by an Austrian, Hermann Ebenhoech. (Hermann was a conducting student of Christian Grube and a friend of the Chorale). For his setting, Hermann imagined the carol being sung by a group of friends improvising a harmonization.

Noche de paz, noche de amor,
Todo duerme en derredor,
Entre los astros que esparcen su luz,
Bella anunciando al niño Jesús
Brilla la estrella de paz.

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht,
Hirten erst kund gemacht
Durch der Engel Halleluja.
Tönt es laut von fern und nah
Christus der Retter ist da!

Silent night, holy night,
Son of God, love's pure light,
Radiant beams from thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord at thy birth..

Quempas

Michael Praetorius (1571-1621)

The tradition of “Quempas” singing in Christmas services dates back to the 15th century, when children (either alone or in groups) took turns singing the lines of the Latin hymn “Quem pastores laudavere” (English text by Imogen Holst: “Shepherds left their flocks astraying”) from the four corners of the church. “Quempas” singing was also part of the caroling tradition, when groups of choristers, also mainly children, performed in the streets, on village squares, and in homes. Michael Praetorius’ setting combines the original “Quem pastores...” hymn with the 15th century hymn “Nunc angelorum gloria” (English text by KG: “In a manger lies the Child”) and, as a refrain, he adds the 9th century hymn “Magnum nomen Domini” (English text by KG: “On this Day of Jesus’ Birth”).

We invite our audience to join us in singing the refrain!

Shepherds left their flocks astraying,
God’s command with joy obeying,
When they heard the angel saying:
“Christ is born in Bethlehem.”

In a manger lies the Child,
His mother mild a lullaby is singing.
In Bethlehem this holy night
Is born the light, salvation to all is bringing.
Lo, behold, for all to see,
A miracle is unfolding:
Enraptured souls His love now are beholding.

Refrain:
On this day of Jesus’ birth, of Jesus’ birth
Let us pray for peace on earth, for peace on earth.

Wise Men came from far and saw Him;
Knelt in homage to adore Him;
Precious gifts they laid before Him:
Gold and frankincense and myrrh.

Refrain:
On this day of Jesus’ birth, of Jesus’ birth
Let us pray for peace on earth, for peace on earth.
Let us now in ev’ry nation
Sing His praise with exultation.
All the world shall find salvation
In the birth of Mary’s Son.

Refrain:
On this day of Jesus’ birth, of Jesus’ birth
Let us pray for peace on earth, for peace on earth.

Program notes by Karen Gordon ©2024