

A woman in a long white dress stands on a dark beach at dusk, holding a large, glowing, ethereal figure that resembles a mermaid or a spirit. The figure has long, flowing hair and a shimmering, iridescent body. The background shows a dark sea and a cloudy sky with a hint of sunset or sunrise light.

CAITRÍONA O'LEARY

# THE WEXFORD CAROLS

FEATURING

TOM JONES, ROSANNE CASH & RHIANNON GIDDENS



A person in a long, flowing white robe stands on a dark beach at dusk. Their back is to the camera, and they are looking out over the ocean. They have large, shimmering, feathered wings that appear to be made of many small lights. The sky is a mix of deep blue and orange from the setting sun. The ocean waves are visible in the distance.

# THE WEXFORD CAROLS

In 1684 Luke Waddinge, Bishop of Ferns, Co. Wexford, published *A Smale Garland of Pious & Godly Songs* in Ghent. Written as a solace for people like him, disinherited Irish Catholic gentry, Waddinge's poems are set to popular tunes of the day, both Irish & English (because, in spite of politics, music has such tremendous, borderless power, and a good tune is always a good tune!). The carols became so popular that they were reprinted twice over the next half-century. The singing of these semi-illicit carols from the penal times was given further momentum by Fr. William Devereux who, in 1728, composed *A New Garland Containing Songs for Christmas*. These two collections, along with the famous Enniscorthy Carol, form the repertoire of a tradition of carol singing in Co. Wexford.

The Waddinge and Devereux Garlands are written in English and contain lyrics for 22 Christmas songs. 12 of the carols have been handed down, mouth to ear to mouth, through the generations, and are still sung over the 12 days of Christmas in the parish of Kilmore, Co. Wexford – a beautiful living history. Over the centuries, however, many of the tunes have been lost; only 6 are still in the traditional repertoire.

I have been fascinated by these sublime carols for the past 25 years, ever since I first heard Nóirín Ní Riain's beautiful album, *The Darkest Midnight*, and completely enthralled since I first heard the carol singers of Kilmore one cold Christmas some 5 years later. Over the past 20 years I have been singing and studying the carols with the notion of expanding the current living tradition, and have also, I believe, found several of the tunes that had been lost.

When we asked Joe to produce this recording and to help present the carols in a new light, the project plans rapidly gained momentum and this all-star band of singers and players was put together.

It was a truly magical recording experience, gathered together in a beautiful stone room, isolated from the rest of the world, making music deep into the night (like Fr. Devereux's flock celebrating midnight mass in the corner of a field); a roomful of wonderful mutual admiration and creative energy, exploring the carols from different musical perspectives.

Here are the carols in both traditional and reconstructed versions. I hope that people will continue to sing these timeless Christmas carols for many many years to come, for, they are not only Ireland's national musical treasure, they really are part of humanity's heritage.

## CAITRÍONA O'LEARY

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### 1. TELL SHEPHERDS

From the Devereux Garland, this carol is no longer sung in Wexford and its tune has been lost. I have paired it with the traditional Irish tune known variously as "Corraga Bawn", "Carolan's Cup" and "The Foggy Dew".

### 2. AN ANGEL THIS NIGHT

From Waddinge's Garland, this is no longer sung in Wexford but it is likely that this is its tune (reimagined in 6/8 time).

### 3. JERUSALEM OUR HAPPY HOME

This carol was included by Devereux in his collection and is still sung in Kilmore on the Feast of the Epiphany. Also sung (to a different melody) in the English hymn tradition, it is believed to date from the time of Elizabeth I.

#### 4. THIS IS OUR CHRISTMASS DAY

Or, to give its full title: “On Christmas Day, the Yeare 1678, when the Clergie were Banish’d in the Time of the Plot”. The Plot was the infamous “Popish Plot”, a bogus conspiracy invented by Titus Oates who claimed there was a Catholic plot to assassinate Charles II. It resulted in the execution of at least 22 men (including Oliver Plunkett, whose mummified head is still on display in St. Peter’s Church in Drogheda) and the outbreak of massive anti-Catholic hysteria throughout the Kingdoms of Ireland, Scotland and England.

This carol is no longer sung in Wexford, but Waddinge gave the instruction that it should be sung “To the tune of bonny-brooe.” There is a traditional Scottish song called “The Bonny Broom” that was popular in the 17th century (it was printed in Playford’s *Musick’s Delight on the Cithren*, 1666) and I have used this as our main tune, interwoven with a more modern, traditional version of the song (“Cowdenknows” as printed in the *Grieg-Duncan Folk Song Collection*, 1925).

#### 5. NOW TO CONCLUDE OUR CHRISTMAS MIRTH

One of Devereux’s, this carol is still sung traditionally and in a very free and ornamented style. I was interested to hear what would happen if I stripped it down, removed the ornaments and locked it (but not chained!) in 4/4 time.

#### 6. THE DARKEST MIDNIGHT IN DECEMBER

Another Devereux carol, this is still sung and here I sing it in the traditional *sean-nós* (old way) style, rhythmically-free and liberally ornamented.

#### 7. AN ANGEL THIS BRIGHT MIDNIGHT

For this carol I took verses from Waddinge’s “An Angel this Night”, altered the text to fit a more regular rhyming pattern and wrote a new tune in the traditional style.

#### 8. BEHOULD THREE KINGS

The melody for this carol has been lost to time. But Waddinge calls for “I doe not Love cause thou art faire”. I reckon that could well mean the Henry Lawes song “I Do Confess Th’art Smooth and Fair” (from his *Select Musickall Ayres*, 1652), and that is the tune we have here.

#### 9. THE ANGELL SAID TO JOSEPH MILD

Waddinge also intended for this carol to be sung to “I doe not Love cause thou art faire”. Here it is set to “I Loathe that I did Love” from a 16th century lute book in the British Museum (BM MS Add. 4900 fol.62V).

#### 10. A VIRGIN QUEEN IN BETHLEHEM

Another victim of time, this Devereux carol is no longer sung in Wexford and its tune has been forgotten. I sing it to “Lulle Me Beyond Thee” from Playford’s *English Dancing Master*, 1651.

#### 11. CHRISTMAS DAY IS COME

William Henry Grattan Flood (1857-1928), a Wexford historian and musicologist who collected some of the carols in the early 20th century, submitted this Devereux poem to *The Oxford Book of Carols* (1928). Although it is now traditionally sung to a different tune, Grattan Flood has it to the tune “An Smachdaoin Crón” (aka “The Brown Little Mallet”) and that is the one we sing here.

#### 12. THE ENNISCORTHY CHRISTMAS CAROL

Grattan Flood also sent this one to the Oxford anthologists. While it does not appear in either Garland, it has been sung traditionally in Wexford since at least the mid-19th century. I was inspired by Rosanne, Rhiannon and Tom to write this close-harmony arrangement.





The Sack of Wexford in 1649, with the slaughter of its defenders & citizens and the burning of the city, is remembered as one of the most gruesome events of the Cromwellian conquest of Ireland. Cromwell and his successors were determined to make an example of Wexford. The penal laws that were enacted soon after resulted in large deportations of Catholics, confiscation of their property and the expulsion of the clergy. While these laws were briefly relaxed during the reign of Charles II, the Popish Plot of 1678 resulted in renewed suppression of Catholics.

It was within this world of suspicion and persecution that the Wexford carols were written. Luke Waddinge wrote *A Smale Garland of Pious and Godly Songs* and published it in 1684. He was a member of one of the leading Anglo-Norman Catholic families of County Wexford who had lost their lands in the Cromwellian confiscation. Prior to his consecration as Roman Catholic Bishop of Ferns he served as a parish priest in the town of Wexford where he was responsible for building a small public mass house. This feat was undoubtedly accomplished as a result of Waddinge's stature within the community and only with the permission of the Protestant authorities.

Catholic Wexford was desolated. In the thirty-five years following the Cromwellian War in Ireland the population declined from 2,000 to 400 and the general conditions of life were dire. After the defeat of James II's army at the Battle of the Boyne the situation for Catholics in Ireland worsened again. In 1728 Fr. William Devereux returned to County Wexford from Salamanca, Spain where he had been studying at the Irish College. It is presumed that it was at this time that he wrote *A New Garland Containing Songs For Christmas*. In 1730 Fr. Devereux was appointed to the parish of Drinagh, where, lacking a chapel, he said mass in the corner of a field.

During the penal times Catholics were considered heretics by the authorities and often suspected of treason and other crimes. Both the clergy and the public conducted their affairs secretly and at clandestine meetings. In this charged political climate it is easy to imagine the Irish Catholics – particularly those of the former landowning class who were not exiled – communicating with each other in coded language. While Waddinge and Devereux's carols were meant as a celebration of Christmas and a spiritual palliative for their parishioners and friends they also feature overt political content (for example *This is Our Christmass Day*, which describes the prohibition of mass at the time of the Popish Plot). As double meanings must have been an aspect of discourse it seems possible that Waddinge and Devereux deliberately, though subtly, implied connections between the Christmas story and the plight of their parishioners and countrymen.

The Wexford Carols tell the story of Christmas including; the Prophecy, the Annunciation, Mary and Joseph's Journey to Bethlehem, the Birth of Jesus in the Stable, the Star, the Angels and Shepherds, the Three Wise Men, the Slaughter of the Innocents, and the Flight to Egypt.

Mary and Joseph are turned away from the inn, the only place they can find to deliver the baby is a filthy stable, a place not dissimilar to the dung filled shambles that Waddinge converted into his chapel or the field where Devereux was forced to celebrate mass. Furthermore the Catholics were turned away from overtly participating in commerce, politics, education and religion.

Jesus is born and the Magi ask Herod if he knows where they can find the child who will become the King of the Jews. Herod orders all the male children in the vicinity of Bethlehem to be murdered. An angel appears to Joseph and warns him to flee to Egypt with Jesus and Mary. Catholics may well have seen Cromwell as a contemporary incarnation of Herod, a tyrant who massacred the Catholic population of Wexford. The survivors certainly saw his victims as innocents. After Cromwell's victory over the Catholics large parts of the population were dispossessed of their lands and exiled to Connacht and the Americas. Others fled to the continent, particularly France where many joined French regiments. This exodus gained new momentum after the Treaty of Limerick in 1691. These events suggest that the Catholic population might well have interpreted the Flight to Egypt as an allegory for their own fate and circumstances.

Additionally, the anticipation of a saviour who would deliver the faithful from their torment – a central idea of the Christmas story – may have had implicit political meaning with regard to the Carolingian and Jacobite kings who sought to restore Catholicism in England and Ireland as well the Holy See and those European monarchs who attempted to stop the Protestant juggernaut.

The Wexford community for whom the carols were written suffered great tribulations and must have found both solace and deep personal connections to this repertory. It is easy to see how the carols would have offered them hope and would have rooted their tragedy in a spiritual and liturgical context that would strengthen their faith, their sense of community, purpose and identity.

ERIC FRAAD





# 1. TELL SHEPHERDS

SINGER: CAITRÍONA O'LEARY

Tell shepherds and did your flock stray,  
Or where have you been this long night,  
Strange visions woke me before day,  
I thought it unusually bright;  
Especially over yonder stall,  
Where my Ox and my Ass I do keep,  
I hastened to see for my all,  
It's dawn go and look for your sheep;

Be still yourself man they did reply  
Your cattle are safe at their hay.  
Our charge at Tour-Ader hard by  
This morn tho in winter is like May.  
And since you seem thus far concern'd,  
Come hither we'll further disclose,  
The wonders this night we have learned,  
Which happily broke our repose.

Twas midnight, the shepherds went on,  
We knew by the pointers and Bear,  
A brightness amazing round us shone  
An angel amidst did appear.  
Fear not, quoth he, I bring you glad news,  
A saviour in Bethlehem just born;  
Messias, Christ, King of the Jews,  
All Nations shall hear of this Morn.

The truth of all this you will know,  
A babe in a manger you'll find,  
As soon as to town you shall go,  
Safely leave ye your flocks behind;  
On a sudden we heard and we saw,  
A host of sweet musick from heaven,  
Glory to god on high they gave,  
Peace to well minded sons of Men;

No sooner than the vision did cease,  
And we were well able to crawl,  
We hastened to the mentioned place,  
And found it all true in your stall;  
Your Ox and your Ass they were amazed,  
To warm soft breathing stood o'er,  
At the Mother and Infant they gazed,  
More glory than we saw before.

The shepherds went back to Pen-Ader,  
The other went back to his stall,  
To tell you how they behaved after,  
In truth I know nothing at all;  
The Infant is now King of glory,  
Thro' the world most renowned of men,  
Ye have oft heard the rest of the story,  
I wish you a good Christmass, Amen.



## 2. AN ANGEL THIS NIGHT

SINGER: CAITRÍONA O'LEARY

An Angel this night  
Doth to the shepherds bring  
Most rare and joyfull news,  
To move all harts to sing:  
A saviour from heaven  
Unto the world is come  
And God is now made man  
For mans redemption.

Here's all the hopes of Earth  
And the delights of heaven,  
The joy of all the Angels,  
And the great price of men  
The ransome of all sinners,  
All captives to set free;  
How can we but rejoyce,  
And all must merry be.

How can we but rejoyce  
To heare what now is done!  
The Son of God made man  
And man made God's true Son;  
God doth appeare on Earth  
For to Raise earth to heaven  
For what cause of greater Joy  
Could ever happen men.

Now infinite hight is low  
And infinite depth is shallow,  
The greatest length is short  
The greatest largeness narrow,  
Eternity by time Is measur'd and  
clos'd up  
Immensity confin'd And in a  
stable shut.

Then glory to the Father,  
Who order'd all things thus,  
Glory to the Son,  
Who gave himself to us  
Glory to the Holy Ghost,  
Who did this worke of heaven,  
Glory unto them now,  
And ever more, Amen.

## 3. JERUSALEM OUR HAPPY HOME

SINGER: TOM JONES

ADDITIONAL VOCALS:

RHIANNON GIDDENS, CAITRÍONA O'LEARY

*Jerusalem our happy home  
When Shall we Come to thee  
When Shall our Sorrows have an end  
Thy Joys when Shall we See*

There is no rain nor sleet or snow  
Nor filth may there be found  
There is no Sorrow nor no care  
All joys do there abound.

Through the vast streets with purity streams  
The flood of life doth flow  
And on the banks of every side  
The wood of life doth grow

For evermore those trees bear fruit  
And evermore they Spring  
And evermore the saints are glad  
And evermore they sing.

*Jerusalem our Happy Home  
Then let us Come to thee  
Our Sorrows then Shall have an end  
Thy Joys then Shall we see.*



## 4. THIS IS OUR CHRISTMASS DAY

SINGER: CAITRÍONA O'LEARY

This is our Christmass day  
The day of Christs birth  
Yet we are far from Joy  
And far from Christmass mirth  
On Christmass to have no masse  
Is our great discontent  
That with out mass this day should pass  
Doth cause us to lament.

No masse heard this great day  
No mattins sung last night  
No bells to call to pray  
No lamps, no taper light  
No chalice, no rich robes  
No Church no Chapple drest  
No Vestments precious Coapes  
No holy water blest.

King David in his dayes  
Before the Arke did dance  
With musick and with praise.  
Its honour to Advance  
But we our sad Eyes fix  
To see layd on the ground  
Our Arke our Crucifix  
Our tabernacle downe.

But if Church wales could speak  
And Old times to us tell  
If dead those graves could breake  
Where thousand years they dwell  
If that they could Arise  
To preach what practis'd was  
We should have Preists alwayes  
Our Aulters and our Masse.

But good Old times are past  
And new bad times Are come  
And worser times make hast  
And hasten to us soone  
Therefore in frights and feares  
Those holy-dayes we pass  
In sorrow and teares  
We spend our Christmass.

## 5. NOW TO CONCLUDE OUR CHRISTMAS MIRTH

SINGER:

RHIANNON GIDDENS

ADDITIONAL VOCALS:

CAITRÍONA O'LEARY, TOM JONES

Now to conclude our Christmas mirth,  
With the news of our redemption,  
We end these songs on our saviours birth  
With one that deserves attention  
Three great wonders fell on this day  
A star brought Kings where the Infant lay,  
Water made wine in Gallilee,  
And Christ baptized in Jordan.

Those Kings must have known what Balaam of old,  
Said of a star that would rise  
In Jacob's land when he foretold,  
The coming of the Messias,  
Jaspar, Melchior and Balthasar,  
Set out when they saw the new bright star,  
Leaving their eastern Kingdoms far,  
To find the new born Jesus.

Amazed to see the cottage poor,  
The stall perhaps where he was born,  
Leaving their retinue at the door  
Though great they entered without scorn,  
The blessed babe and Mother found,  
Laying their crowns and scepters down,  
Adored him prostrate on the ground,  
And might have spoken as follows,

Thou King of Kings here in disguise,  
Whom stars obey and Angels serve,  
Who Wealth and grandeur you dispise,  
You have given us more than we deserve,  
Our beds are gold and Ivory,  
Our garments rich embroidery,  
Set with stones and pageantry,  
Whilst you lie in a stable.

What else might have passed you may conceive,  
In this fond conversation,  
They bid farewell taking their leave,  
Homewards to their habitation;  
Farewell good people farewell too,  
Many a happy Christmass I wish you,  
With a blessed end hence to ensue,  
Through the merits of sweet Jesus.

## 6. THE DARKEST MIDNIGHT IN DECEMBER

SINGER: CAITRÍONA O'LEARY

The darkest midnight in December,  
No snow nor hail nor Winter's storm,  
Shall hinder us for to remember,  
The babe that on this night was born.  
With shepherds we are come to see,  
This lovely Infant's glorious charms,  
Born of a maid as the Prophets said  
The god of love in Mary's arms.

If by a Woman we were wounded,  
Another Woman brings the cure,  
If by a fruit we were confounded,  
A tree our safety would procure.  
They laughed at man but if they can,  
Let satan and his hellish swarms,  
Refuse to kneel and honour yield  
To the lovely Babe in Mary's arms.

Ye blessed angels join our voices,  
Let your gilded wings beat fluttering oer,  
Whilst every soul set free rejoices,  
And every Devil must adore;  
We'll sing and pray that he always may,  
Our Church and Clergymen Defend,  
God Grant us peace in all our days  
A merry Christmass and a happy end.





## 7. AN ANGEL THIS BRIGHT MIDNIGHT

SINGERS:

ROSANNE CASH, CAITRÍONA O'LEARY, JOHN SMITH, GRAHAM HOPKINS

An Angel this bright midnight  
Doth to the shepherds bring  
Most rare and joyful tidings  
To move all hearts to sing:  
A saviour from heaven unto the world is come  
And God is now made man  
For man's redemption

The shepherds they do quickly  
Unto the stable run  
To see this precious Baby  
Th'eternal Father's Son;  
Without an earthly father,  
His mother a pure Maid,  
By whom this heavenly infant  
Is in a manger laid.

But wits of men and angels  
Cannot conceive this bliss,  
No heart can full resent it,  
No tongue tell what it is;  
Wits must admire and marvel,  
And hearts astonish'd be,  
And tongues, with joy be silent  
In this great mystery.

The increated person  
Is now created man,  
The Creator made creature  
Who shall these secrets scan  
Who made all things of nothing  
A nothing is become,  
Our God most great and mighty  
Is a poor virgin's son.

His greatness is made humble  
And all his might is weak,  
His glory is obscured,  
His wisdom doth not speak;  
His pleasures they do suffer,  
His treasures are in want  
He made and rules the wide world,  
And yet he's bare and scant.

So let us with the shepherds  
Unto the stable go  
Those miracles and wonders  
For to adore and know:  
With humble will and wisdom  
And open eyes of faith,  
We shall believe and see then  
All that the angel saith.





## 8. BEHOULD THREE KINGS

SINGER:

ROSANNE CASH

ADDITIONAL VOCALS:

CAITRÍONA O'LEARY, JOHN SMITH, GRAHAM HOPKINS

Behould three Kings come from the East  
Ledd by a star of stars the best  
Which brought them where they did espy  
The King of Kings and saviour ly  
With gould and myrh and frankencense  
They doe Adore this new born Prince.

It's strange what did these three Kings see  
That might by them Adored be  
A tender Babe layd on the ground  
Yet they submit scepter and Crown.  
Their gould their myrh, their frankencense  
For to Adore this new born Prince.

Then let us with those three Kings bring  
Our guifts unto this new born King  
Our Sense our will our wit our heart  
And all that e're we can impart  
Our gould, our myrh, our frankencense  
For to Adore this new born Prince.



## 9. THE ANGELL SAID TO JOSEPH MILD

SINGER: TOM JONES

ADDITIONAL VOCALS:

ROSANNE CASH, RHIANNON GIDDENS, CAITRÍONA O'LEARY

The Angell said to Joseph mild  
Fly with the Mother and the Child  
Out of this Land to Egypt go  
The heavenly Babe will have it so.  
For that his hour is not yet Come,  
To die for mans Redemption.

Proud Herod he doth froth and frown  
Feareth to loose Kingdom and Crown  
Full of disdain and full of scorn  
He must destroy this young King born  
But stay, his hour is not yet come  
To die for mans Redemption.

Herod forebear this cruel flood  
Of the most pure Innocent blood  
To thee A Crown this Child doth bring  
To make thee happier than a King  
From highest heavens along he's come  
To die for man's Redemption.



## 10. A VIRGIN QUEEN IN BETHLEHEM

SINGER: CAITRÍONA O'LEARY

A Virgin queen in Bethlehem,  
This day brought fourth our saviour,  
To our young king, we'll praise and sing,  
And victory for ever  
Hail sovereign Prince our souls defence,  
O! Welcome heavenly stranger,  
Is there no inn nor place for him,  
But in a stall or manger?

God one and three that great decree,  
In Heaven's high council signed,  
Poor man to make of his own shape,  
For lasting joys designed,  
The son himself for our relief  
To pay for our transgression,  
A man to be offered so free,  
With love beyond expression.

I grieve to tell how Adam fell,  
By satan's false persuasion,  
And by his fall had damned us all  
And left us no salvation  
For poor mankind was made so blind,  
By the devil, the flesh and Adam,  
They did adore and kneel before,  
Dull sticks and stones for satan.

Cursed be his pride who false contrived  
To cheat Eve with his story,  
But for this day we all might say,  
Farewell our hopes of glory.  
So as man did fall his justice call'd,  
A man should satisfy him,  
And by his grace regain a place,  
Mock Satan and defy him.

When his throne shall shine on clouds sublime  
With all Heaven's choirs attended,  
May we then stand at his right hand  
To see his foes confounded.  
O! God that snake made us to break  
Thy laws and did confound us,  
Jesus we see what it cost thee,  
We'll sin no more forgive us.

## 11. CHRISTMAS DAY IS COME

SINGERS: RHIANNON GIDDENS, CAITRÍONA O'LEARY

Christmas Day is come let's all prepare for mirth,  
Which fills the Heaven and earth at his amazing birth,  
Tho' all the joyous Angels in strife and hurry fly,  
With glories and Hosannas, holy, holy, they all cry.  
In heaven the church triumphant adores with all her choirs,  
The Militant on Earth with humble faith admires.

But how can we rejoice should we not rather mourn,  
To see the hope of Nations thus in a stable born,  
Where is his crown and scepter, where is his throne sublime,  
Where is his train and majesty that should the stars outshine,  
Is there no sumptuous Palace nor no Inn at all,  
To lodge his heavenly Mother but in a filthy stall?

Cease ye blessed angels such clamerous joys to make,  
Tho Midnight silence favours the Shepherds are awake,  
And you O glorious star that with new splendour brings,  
From the remotest parts the learned Eastern Kings,  
Turn some way else your lustre your rays elsewhere display,  
Herod will slay the babe and Christ must straight away.

Alas to teeming nature we offer rules in vain,  
When faced with such a Prodigy it can't itself contain,  
The rocks were split asunder to grieve our saviour's death,  
And at his resurrection the dead sprung from the Earth,  
Can we now expect that on his joyful birth,  
The creatures should conceal their triumph and their mirth.

Then let our joys abound now all his grief is O'er,  
His victory we celebrate his suffering we deplore,  
This was the toil and slavery that getting was for us,  
Your welcome twice O welcome divine savior Jesus,  
Your Christmass is in glory your torments are all past,  
What e'er betide us now grant us the same at last.  
Your Christmass is in glory your torments are all past,  
What e'er betide us now grant us the same at last.



# 12. THE ENNISCORTHY CHRISTMAS CAROL

SINGERS: ROSANNE CASH, RHIANNON GIDDENS,  
CAITRÍONA O'LEARY, TOM JONES

Good people all, this Christmas time,  
Consider well and bear in mind,  
What our good God for us has done,  
In sending His beloved Son.  
With Mary holy we should pray  
To God with love this Christmas Day;  
In Bethlehem upon that morn  
There was a blessed Messiah born.

The night before the happy tide,  
The noble Virgin and her guide  
Were a long time seeking up and down  
To find a lodging in the town.  
Buy mark how all things came to pass,  
From every door repelled, alas!  
As long foretold, their refuge all,  
Was but a humble ox's stall.

Near Bethlehem did shepherds keep  
Their flocks of lambs and feeding sheep  
To whom God's angels did appear,  
Which put the shepherds in great fear.  
"Prepare and go" the angels said,  
"To Bethlehem, be not afraid  
For there you'll find this happy morn,  
A princely Babe, sweet Jesus, born."

With thankful heart and joyful mind,  
The shepherds went the Babe to find.  
And as God's angels had foretold,  
They did Our Saviour, Christ, behold.  
Within a manger He was laid,  
And by His side the Virgin Maid,  
Attending on the Lord of Life  
Who came on earth to end all strife.

There were three wise men from afar,  
Directed by a glorious star,  
Came boldly on and made no stay  
Until they came where Jesus lay.  
And when they came unto that place  
And looked with love on Jesus' face,  
In faith they humbly knelt to greet  
With gifts of gold and incense sweet.

Come let us then our tribute pay  
To our good God, as well we may,  
For all His grace and mercy shown,  
Thro' His Son to us, till then unknown.  
And as thro' life we wend our way,  
'Mid trials and sufferings, day by day,  
In faith and hope, whate'er befall,  
We'll wait in peace His holy call.

## SOURCES

Luke Wadding, *A pious garland, compos'd by the Reverend Father Luke Wadding Bishop of Ferns: which he compos'd for the solace of his friends and neighbours in their afflictions*, London, 1728

Diarmaid Ó Muirithe, *The Wexford Carols*, Naas, 1982

Joseph Ranson, *The Kilmore Carols*, an article in *The Past*, 1949



# THE WEXFORD CAROLS

Caitríona O'Leary, *Voice*

## FEATURING

Tom Jones, *Voice*

Rosanne Cash, *Voice*

Rhiannon Giddens, *Voice, Fiddle, Minstrel Banjo*

Dónal Lunny *Bouzouki*

John Smith *Guitar, Mandola, Backing Vocals*

Adrian Hart *Fiddle*

Éamonn de Barra *Flute, Whistle*

Kate Ellis *Cello*

Greg Cohen *Double Bass*

Mel Mercier *Bodhrán, Bones*

Graham Hopkins *Drums, Backing Vocals*

*Produced by* Joe Henry

*An Angel this Bright Midnight* music by

Caitríona O'Leary, words by

Caitríona O'Leary and Luke Waddinge

*Arrangements by* Caitríona O'Leary,

Dónal Lunny, Joe Henry, Greg Cohen

*Recorded, Mixed and Mastered by* Ryan Freeland

*Assistant Recording Engineer* John Henry

Recorded at Grouse Lodge Recording Studios,  
Co. Westmeath, Ireland, 21st – 25th July 2014

Mixed and Mastered at Stampede Origin Studio,  
Culver City, California

*Art Direction* Eric Fraad

*Photography* Laelia Milleri

*Graphic Design* Gareth Jones

*Styling* Gwen Jeffares Hourie

*Models* Caitríona, Zack, Justin, Dónal, Graham, Mel

Rosanne Cash appears courtesy of  
Blue Note Records/Capitol Music Group  
Rhiannon Giddens appears courtesy of  
Nonesuch Records



For additional information about  
*The Wexford Carols* please visit

[www.heresyrecords.com](http://www.heresyrecords.com)

[www.thewexfordcarols.com](http://www.thewexfordcarols.com)

# SPECIAL THANKS TO

Jeff Hamren, without whom none of this would have happened

Karina Lundström & Peter O'Leary for everything!

Joe Henry, Adrian Hart, Éamonn de Barra, Kate Ellis, Mel Mercier, Dónal Lunny, Graham Hopkins, Greg Cohen, John Smith, Rhiannon Giddens, Rosanne Cash & Tom Jones: whose collective creativity and loveliness has helped make such a thing of beauty

Ryan Freeland for your serenity and for making us sound so good

Laelia Milleri and Gwen Jeffares Hourie for making us look so good

Andy Irvine and Dave Redmond for the generous loan of their instruments

Paddy and Claire Dunning & all at Grouse Lodge for their spectacular hospitality

Paul Flynn who believed in this project from the start

All at the Irish Traditional Music Archives for your unstinting help in accessing your treasure trove

The National Library of Ireland

Dedicated to the memory of my dear friend and mentor Pat O'Brien

*Caitríona*





- 
1. Tell Shepherds (6:31)
  2. An Angel This Night (7:08)
  3. Jerusalem Our Happy Home (5:03)
  4. This Is Our Christmass Day (4:17)
  5. Now To Conclude Our Christmas Mirth (5:15)
  6. The Darkest Midnight In December (3:42)
  7. An Angel This Bright Midnight (4:36)
  8. Behould Three Kings (3:22)
  9. The Angell Said To Joseph Mild (4:06)
  10. A Virgin Queen In Bethlehem (5:24)
  11. Christmas Day Is Come (5:05)
  12. The Enniscorthy Christmas Carol (5:38)



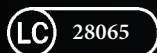


## IRELAND'S GREATEST CHRISTMAS MUSIC

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Produced by **Joe Henry**

Recorded, mixed and mastered by **Ryan Freeland**



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