

OPUS ARTE

on
CHRISTMAS
NIGHT

Choir of Magdalen College, Oxford
Baritone Roderick Williams · Director Daniel Hyde



On Christmas Night

	Eleanor Farjeon (1881–1965) / Christopher Steel (1938–1991)			Phillips Brooks (1835–1893) / Henry Walford Davies (1869–1941)	
1	People, look east	3.13	10	O Little Town of Bethlehem	4.33
	Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)			Anon. (c.1300) / Benjamin Britten (1913–1976)	
2	Chorale Prelude for organ ‘Es ist ein Ros entsprungen’ Op.122 No.8	2.47	11	A Hymn to the Virgin	3.05
	Anon. 15th century / Robin Nelson (b.1943)			Traditional French carol (arr. Stephen Jackson)	
3	Out of your sleep	2.44	12	Noël nouvelet	4.30
	Thomas Campion (1567–1620) / Richard H. Lloyd (b.1933)			Christina Rossetti (1830–1894) / Harold Darke (1888–1976)	
4	View me, Lord	2.41	13	In the bleak midwinter	4.29
	Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)			Herbert Sumsion (1899–1995)	
5	Chorale prelude for organ ‘Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme’ BWV 645	4.02	14	Prelude for organ on ‘The holly and the ivy’	4.33
	Anon. 15th century / William Mathias (1934–1992)			Bruce Blunt (1899–1957) / Peter Warlock (1894–1930)	
6	A babe is born	3.21	15	Bethlehem Down	4.23
	Traditional Czech carol ‘Hajej, nynjej’ (trans. Percy Dearmer) / Traditional Czech melody (collected Martin Shaw, arr. Edward Higginbottom)			John Rutter (b.1945)	
7	Rocking	2.16	16	Shepherd’s Pipe Carol	3.08
	Marcel Dupré (1886–1971)			Traditional English folk carols (collected Cecil Sharp & Ralph Vaughan Williams) / Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)	
8	Variations on ‘Il est né le divin enfant’, offertory for organ	4.02	17	Fantasia on Christmas Carols	12.45
	Anon. 15th century / John Joubert (b.1927)				69.02
9	There is no rose	2.22			
				Choir of Magdalen College, Oxford	
				Roderick Williams baritone (17)	
				Daniel Hyde director · organ (2, 5, 8, 14)	
				Anna Lapwood organ (1, 6, 10, 12)	
				William Fox organ (3, 13, 16)	
				Alexander Berry organ (17)	

Choir of Magdalen College, Oxford

Choristers

Max Langdale
Thomas Butterworth
Max Wedmore
Benjamin Castella-McDonald* (11)
Joe Travis
Harry Gant* (11)
Ben Simmons
Zane Soonawalla
Thomas Salter
Tom Ferry
Thomas Pennington-Arnold
Pip Warwick
Daniel McShane

Choral Scholars

Connor Devonish
Tom Dixon* (11)
Thomas Peet
Lewis Spring
James Black
Rupert Dugdale* (11)
Max Lawrie* (13)
Sebastian Lello* (10)
Caspar Barrie* (11)
Caleb Bester
Frederick Wickham
James Armitage
Jonathan Arnold
Francis Gush
Tom Hammond-Davies
William Pate
Andrew Hayman

**soloists*



On Christmas Night

The moment of Christ's birth – the ultimate gift to the world from God and the proof of his love – has prompted generations of composers to explosions of joy and mystical reflection. In this programme, the Choir of Magdalen College, Oxford, sample the rich variety of the 20th- and 21st-century choral music available to the contemporary British choir.

Several carols focus on the sheer joy of the miraculous Incarnation itself. William Mathias's **A babe is born (6)** is a lively setting which gives full rein to the composer's syncopated, jazzy parallelisms. Optimism is also the principal mode of Christopher Steel's **People, look east (1)**. In its ebullient joy, the piece bounces off into a different key in the third verse and deploys the voices in canon, before swinging back to a final recapitulation, replete with a jubilant descant. **Noël nouvelet (12)**, written for the choir of St Peter ad Vincula at the Tower of London, is a more reflective work, outlining the nativity story using the eponymous traditional French tune. The contemporary composer Stephen Jackson uses a variety of choral and musical effects including humming and imitation to create a setting of considerable power and mystery.

Naturally, the figure of the Blessed Virgin Mary is central to many Christmas motets and carols. **There is no rose (9)** is a setting of a macaronic carol – that is, words in both Latin and the vernacular – which likens Mary to the mystic rose and root of Jesse. John Joubert's thoughtful setting uses pairs of voices moving in parallel to create a mood of sincere adoration. For **A Hymn to the Virgin (11)**, the youthful Benjamin Britten also turned to a macaronic carol. In an early example of the astonishing compositional fecundity he was to display throughout his life, the 18-year-old composer divides the choir, allocating the Latin exclamations to a semi-chorus, as if in an angelic, hieratic commentary on the Incarnation.

In Christian interpretations of the prophecy of Isaiah, Mary is identified with the 'mystic Rose', which springs out of the Tree of Jesse, the lineage of the Messiah. This is the subject of the chorale tune **Es ist ein Ros entsprungen (2)**, better known in English as the carol 'Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming'. Brahms includes the Chorale Prelude based on this tune in his Op.122 collection of organ works, though the tune itself is clouded by 'mysterious melisma' and only faintly discernable atop a quietly optimistic harmony.

A number of carols depict the scene of the stable itself – the Holy Family, the animals bearing witness, a peaceful night, though of shattering importance. Christina Rossetti's famous poem encapsulates the way we see this scene in our mind's eye. Of the many musical settings of **In the bleak midwinter (13)**, Harold Darke's has proven an eternal favourite, topping a BBC poll of Christmas carols. Perhaps this is due to the artless simplicity of Darke's setting, in which the carol is treated strophically with gentle variations in texture. Composers often attempt to place us, the listeners, in the stable, listening to Mary diegetically, as it were, as she lulls her child to sleep. In **Rocking (7)**, Edward Higginbottom sets up an undulating pattern in the lower voices, over which the trebles sing the traditional Czech carol, with its distinctive Lydian-mode flavour.

Be it by 19th-century illustrations or the contemporary greetings card industry, the image of Bethlehem is fixed in the English imagination – a clear night, the stable surrounded by desert, illuminated by a single star. There could hardly be a more apt musical depiction of the scene as imagined in this way than the **Shepherd's Pipe Carol (16)**, probably the most enduringly popular of John Rutter's vast output of festive choral music. The composer's gift for melody and love of jazzy syncopations predominate, as the organ twinkles merrily. Peter Warlock's Bethlehem could hardly be more different. In **Bethlehem Down (15)**, the unaccompanied choir sings of the mystery of the Holy Family in harmony of exquisite poise and delicate unease. The impeccable marriage of words and music belies the rather more squalid circumstances of its composition – the impecunious composer and librettist decided to submit the carol

to a competition in the hope of financing an 'immortal carouse' on the town. **O Little Town of Bethlehem (10)** is most familiar to British congregations in the folk tune arranged by Ralph Vaughan Williams. However, his contemporary Henry Walford Davies also wrote multiple settings. This one, known as 'Christmas Carol', offers a striking simplicity and warmth.

Some responses to the Incarnation turn the attention away from the stable and the stories and back towards us. So it is in the troubled introspection of Thomas Campion's 'ayre' **View me, Lord (4)**. Richard Hey Lloyd's gently lyrical, strophic setting allows the poet's journey from doubt to trust to register fully.

Taking their cue from Jesus' parable of the wise and foolish virgins, many carols for Advent and Christmas enjoin listeners to rouse themselves and be alert to the coming of the Lord. In **Out of your sleep (3)**, by contemporary composer Robin Nelson, a dreamy organ interruption wakens to an insistent, staccato injunction from the choir, whose repetitions bring to mind a choral alarm clock. Johann Sebastian Bach enshrined the chorale tune **Wachet Auf (5)** – 'Sleepers, wake!' – in the famous setting for organ. The composer was obviously pleased with his working of the tune, as it also found its way into a cantata on the same subject.

One of the most ardent collectors of Christmas carols was Ralph Vaughan Williams, whose excursions into the still-pastoral towns of early 20th-century England yielded a treasury of folk tunes which he took pains to preserve. Many remain in a form close to the original; however, several he worked into larger compositions, including the celebrated **Fantasia on Christmas Carols (17)**. In this rousing work, first performed at the Three Choirs Festival in 1912, the baritone soloist leads the chorus through renditions of carols including 'The Truth From Above' and 'On Christmas Night'. The composer chose to favour these tunes over other, better-known carols, in order that they might be given a wider hearing.

Composers for organ have also found themselves drawn to this treasury of festive folksongs. The French organist and teacher Marcel Dupré was requested by his daughter Marguerite to write a setting of the carol **Il est né le divin enfant (8)**. The resulting piece is a set of variations on the theme, with the tune variously in the pedals, decorated, and finally worked into a masterly fugue. In a similar fashion, the Englishman Herbert Sumsion transformed a number of well-known carols into preludes for the instrument. Among them was **The holly and the ivy (14)**, which plucks little motifs from its source before gradually introducing the tune itself, building up to a grand statement before subsiding into quiet peace.

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Cette nuit de Noël

Le moment de la naissance du Christ – cadeau suprême de Dieu au monde et preuve de son amour – a inspiré des explosions de joie et des réflexions mystiques à des générations de compositeurs. Dans ce programme, le Choir of Magdalen College, Oxford, illustre la riche diversité de la musique chorale des XX^e et XXI^e siècles qui s'offre aux chœurs britanniques contemporains.

Plusieurs noëls ont pour thème la simple joie de la miraculeuse incarnation elle-même. **A babe is born (6)** de William Mathias est une pièce animée qui donne libre cours aux parallélismes syncopés du compositeur, qui évoquent le jazz. L'optimisme est également le climat prédominant de **People, look east (1)** de Christopher Steel. Dans sa joie exubérante, la pièce bondit dans une autre tonalité à la troisième strophe et déploie les voix en canon, avant de revenir pour une réexposition finale, avec un contre-chant radieux.

Noël nouvelet (12), écrit pour le chœur de Saint-Pierre-aux-Liens à la Tour de Londres, est une œuvre plus méditative, esquissant l'histoire de la Nativité à partir de l'air français traditionnel éponyme. Le compositeur contemporain Stephen Jackson utilise divers effets chorals et musicaux, dont le fredonnement et l'imitation, pour créer une pièce d'une puissance et d'un mystère considérables.

La figure de la Bienheureuse Vierge Marie occupe bien entendu une place centrale dans de nombreux motets et chants de Noël. **There is no rose (9)** est écrit sur un texte macaronique – c'est-à-dire à la fois en latin et en langue vernaculaire – qui compare Marie à la rose mystique et à la racine de Jessé. La pièce pensive de John Joubert utilise des paires de voix qui se meuvent en parallèle pour créer un climat d'adoration sincère. Pour **A Hymn to the Virgin (11)**, le jeune Benjamin Britten s'est également tourné vers un Noël macaronique. Dans un exemple précoce de l'étonnante fécondité compositionnelle qu'il devait manifester tout au long de sa vie, le compositeur de dix-huit ans divise le chœur, confiant les exclamations latines à un demi-chœur, comme un commentaire angélique et hiératique sur l'Incarnation.

Dans les interprétations chrétiennes de la prophétie d'Isaïe, Marie est identifiée à la « rose mystique » qui jaillit de l'arbre de Jessé, le lignage du Messie. C'est le sujet de la mélodie de choral **Es ist ein Ros entsprungen (2)**, plus connue en anglais comme le Noël « Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming ». Brahms fait figurer le prélude de choral fondé sur cette mélodie dans son recueil op. 122 d'œuvres pour orgue, bien que la mélodie elle-même soit obscurcie par de « mystérieux mélismes », à peine discernable au-dessus d'une harmonie tranquillement optimiste.

Un certain nombre de noëls dépeignent la scène de l'étable elle-même – la Sainte Famille, les animaux présents, la nuit paisible, d'une importance décisive. Le célèbre poème de Christina Rossetti résume la manière dont on voit cette scène en pensée. Parmi les nombreuses musiques composées sur **In the bleak midwinter (13)**, celle de Harold Darke a toujours eu les faveurs du public, se classant en tête d'un sondage de la BBC sur les chants de Noël. Peut-être est-ce dû à la simplicité naturelle de la musique de Darke, où le Noël est traité strophiquement avec de délicates variations de texture. Les compositeurs tentent souvent de nous placer, nous auditeurs, dans l'étable, pour écouter Marie de manière diégétique, en quelque sorte, tandis qu'elle berce son enfant pour l'endormir. Dans **Rocking (7)**, Edward Higginbottom instaure une formule ondulante aux voix graves, contre laquelle les dessus chantent le Noël tchèque traditionnel, avec sa saveur lydienne caractéristique.

Que ce soit à travers les illustrations du XIX^e siècle ou l'industrie contemporaine de la carte de vœux, l'image de Bethléem est inscrite dans l'imaginaire – une nuit claire, l'étable entourée par le désert, éclairée par une étoile unique. Il ne saurait guère y avoir de peinture musicale plus juste de la scène ainsi imaginée que le **Shepherd's Pipe Carol (16)**, probablement la pièce la plus durablement populaire de la vaste production de musique chorale festive de John Rutter. Le don du compositeur pour la mélodie et son goût des

syncopes jazzy prédomine, tandis que l'orgue scintille joyeusement. Le Bethléem de Peter Warlock ne pourrait être plus différent. Dans **Bethlehem Down** (15), le chœur sans accompagnement chante le mystère de la Sainte Famille dans une harmonie d'une grâce exquise et d'une délicate inquiétude. L'alliance impeccable du texte et de la musique contredit les circonstances plus sordides du travail de composition – le compositeur et le librettiste désargentés décidèrent de soumettre le Noël à un concours dans l'espoir de financer une « immortelle ribote » en ville. **O Little Town of Bethlehem** (10) est surtout connu des fidèles britanniques dans l'air traditionnel arrangé par Ralph Vaughan Williams. Toutefois, son contemporain Henry Walford Davies en composa aussi plusieurs versions. Celle-ci, connue sous le titre « Christmas Carol », est marquée par une simplicité et une chaleur saisissantes.

Certaines réactions à l'Incarnation détournent l'attention de l'étable et des récits pour la ramener sur nous-mêmes. C'est le cas dans l'introspection inquiète de l'ayre **View me, Lord** (4) de Thomas Campion. La composition strophique, délicatement lyrique, de Richard Hey Lloyd permet au voyage du poète, du doute à la confiance, de s'exprimer pleinement.

S'inspirant de la parabole des vierges sages et des vierges folles, de nombreux chants pour l'Avent et Noël invitent l'auditeur à se réveiller et à prendre conscience de la venue du Seigneur. Dans **Out of your sleep** (3), du compositeur contemporain Robin Nelson, une interruption onirique d'orgue éveille à une injonction staccato insistante du chœur, dont les répétitions évoquent un réveille-matin choral. Johann Sebastian Bach enchâsse la mélodie de choral **Wachet Auf** (5) – « Éveillez-vous ! » – dans la célèbre version pour orgue. Le compositeur était manifestement satisfait de son élaboration de la mélodie, car elle trouva aussi sa place dans une cantate sur le même thème.

L'un des plus ardents collectionneurs de chants de Noël était Ralph Vaughan Williams, dont les excursions dans les villages encore pastoraux de l'Angleterre du début du XX^e siècle donnèrent un trésor d'airs traditionnels qu'il prit grand soin de préserver. Beaucoup restent dans une forme proche de l'original ; par la suite, toutefois, il en développa plusieurs en compositions plus vastes, dont la célèbre **Fantasia on Christmas Carols** (17). Dans cette œuvre vibrante, créée lors du Three Choirs Festival en 1912, le baryton soliste conduit le chœur dans des interprétations de Noël comme « The Truth From Above » et « On Christmas Night ». Le compositeur décida de favoriser ces airs plutôt que d'autres, plus connus, afin de les faire mieux connaître.

Les compositeurs pour orgue se sont également trouvés attirés par ce trésor de chants de fête populaires. L'organiste et pédagogue français Marcel Dupré se vit ainsi demander par sa fille Marguerite un arrangement du Noël **Il est né le divin enfant** (8). La pièce qui en résulte est une série de variations sur le thème, avec la mélodie tour à tour au pédalier, ornée, et finalement élaborée en une fugue magistrale. De manière analogue, l'Anglais Herbert Sumsion a transformé un certain nombre de Noël connus en préludes pour l'instrument. Parmi eux, **The holly and the ivy** (14), qui emprunte de petits motifs à sa source avant d'introduire progressivement la mélodie elle-même, bâtissant un énoncé grandiose avant de retomber dans une paix tranquille.

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Am Weihnachtsabend

Die Geburt Christi – Gottes größtes Geschenk an die Welt und der Beweis seiner Liebe – hat Generationen von Komponisten zu Freudenausbrüchen und Reflexionen über das mystische Ereignis veranlasst. Im vorliegenden Programm stellt der Chor des Magdalen College in Oxford eine Auswahl der reichen Vielfalt an Chormusik aus dem 20. und 21. Jahrhundert vor, die zeitgenössischen britischen Chören zur Verfügung steht.

In mehreren Weihnachtsliedern steht die schiere Freude über das Wunder der Menschwerdung im Mittelpunkt. In der spritzigen Vertonung **A babe is born (6)** lässt der Komponist William Mathias synkopierten, jazzigen Parallelismen freien Lauf. Auch in Christopher Steels **People, look east (1)** herrscht Freudenstimmung vor. In seiner überschwänglichen Fröhlichkeit springt das Stück im dritten Vers, den die Stimmen im Kanon singen, in eine andere Tonart, bevor es für eine letzte Reprise, die von einem jubelnden Diskant erfüllt ist, wieder umschwingt. **Noël nouvelet (12)**, komponiert für den Chor der zum Tower of London gehörigen Kirche St. Peter ad Vincula, ist ein recht besinnliches Werk, das auf dem gleichnamigen traditionellen französischen Lied aufbaut und die Weihnachtsgeschichte in Grundzügen erzählt. Der zeitgenössische Komponist Stephen Jackson bedient sich vielzähliger chorischer und musikalischer Effekte wie Summen und Imitation und schafft damit ein ungeheuer wirkungsvolles und mysteriöses Werk.

Selbstverständlich spielt die Figur der gebenedeiten Jungfrau Maria in vielen Weihnachtsmotetten und -liedern eine zentrale Rolle. **There is no rose (9)** ist eine Vertonung eines makaronischen – d.h. teils auf Lateinisch und teils in der Volkssprache geschriebenen – Textes, der Maria mit der mystischen Rose und der Wurzel Jesse vergleicht. John Jouberts bedient sich in seiner nachdenklichen Vertonung parallel geführter Stimmpaare, um eine Stimmung ernster Verehrung zu schaffen. Der jugendliche Benjamin Britten wandte sich für **A Hymn to the Virgin (11)** ebenfalls einem makaronischen Weihnachtstext zu. Der 18-jährige Komponist gibt hier eine frühe Kostprobe der ungeheuren kompositorischen Fruchtbarkeit, die sein ganzes Leben prägte, indem er die lateinischen Ausrufe auf eine Hälfte des Chors verteilt, so dass sie wie ein hieratischer Kommentar der Engel auf die Menschwerdung klingen.

In der christlichen Auslegung der Prophezeiung Jesajas wird Maria mit der „mystischen Rose“ gleichgesetzt, die dem Jessebaum, dem Stammbaum des Messias, entspringt. Dies wird im Choral **Es ist ein Ros (2)** behandelt. Brahms nahm das Choralpräludium auf der Grundlage dieses Lieds in seine Sammlung von Orgelwerken, op. 122 auf, wobei die Melodie selbst von „geheimnisvollem Melisma“ vernebelt und über der verhalten freudvollen Harmonie nur schwach vernehmbar ist.

Zahlreiche Weihnachtslieder stellen die Szene im Stall selbst dar – die heilige Familie, die Tiere, die alles beobachten, eine friedliche und doch unwahrscheinlich bedeutsame Nacht. Christina Rossettis berühmtes Gedicht beschreibt diese Szene, wie wir sie vor unserem geistigen Auge sehen. Unter den vielen Vertonungen von **In the bleak midwinter (13)** erwies sich Harold Darkes Fassung bei einer Abstimmung der BBC als eines der beliebtesten Weihnachtslieder aller Zeiten. Vielleicht verdankt das Lied dies der unprätentiösen Einfachheit von Darkes Musik, in der es strophisch behandelt und leicht strukturell variiert wird. Viele Komponisten versuchen, den Zuhörer in den Stall zu versetzen, wo man dem diegetischen Gesang Mariens lauscht, die ihr Kind in den Schlaf singt. In **Rocking (7)** schafft Edward Higginbottom ein wogendes Muster in den tiefen Stimmen, über denen die Knabensopranen das traditionelle tschechische Weihnachtslied mit seinem charakteristischen lydischen Klang singen.

Ob durch Darstellungen aus dem 19. Jahrhundert oder durch unsere heutige Grußkartenindustrie: In den Köpfen der Engländer hat sich ein bestimmtes Bild festgesetzt – eine klare Nacht, der Stall inmitten einer Wüste, erleuchtet von nur einem einzigen Stern. Man kann sich kaum eine passendere musikalische Darstellung dieser Szene vorstellen als den **Shepherd's Pipe Carol (16)**, wahrscheinlich das populärste

unter John Rutters zahlreichen festlichen Chormusikwerken. Die melodische Begabung und die Vorliebe des Komponisten für jazzige Synkopen zeigen sich deutlich, während die Orgel fröhlich pfeift. Peter Warlocks Darstellung von Bethlehem könnte kaum unterschiedlicher sein. In **Bethlehem Down** (15) besingt der unbegleitete Chor die geheimnisvolle heilige Familie in Harmonie von ungeheurer Gefasstheit und leichter Besorgnis. Die makellose Verschmelzung von Text und Musik täuscht darüber hinweg, dass das Stück unter recht erbärmlichen Umständen entstand – der mittellose Komponist und sein ebenso armer Librettist beschlossen, das Weihnachtslied bei einem Wettbewerb einzureichen, um sich von dem Preisgeld ein „unvergessliches Trinkgelage“ in der Stadt leisten zu können. **O Little Town of Bethlehem** (10) ist britischen Gemeinden am besten in der Volksliedbearbeitung von Ralph Vaughan Williams bekannt. Auch dessen Zeitgenosse Henry Walford Davies komponierte zahlreiche Vertonungen. Die hier vertretene, als „Christmas Carol“ bekannte Fassung besticht durch auffällige Einfachheit und Wärme.

Einige Auseinandersetzungen mit der Menschwerdung lenken die Aufmerksamkeit weg vom Stall und den Geschichten und hin zu uns selbst. So geschieht es in Thomas Campions „Ayre“ **View me, Lord** (4), einer sorgenvollen Selbstbeobachtung. Richard Hey Lloyds sanft lyrische, strophische Vertonung bringt die Wandlung des Dichters von Zweifeln zu Vertrauen voll und ganz zur Geltung.

Angeregt von Jesus' Gleichnis der zehn Jungfrauen gemahnen viele Advents- und Weihnachtslieder den Zuhörer, zu erwachen und sich für die Ankunft des Herrn bereitzumachen. In dem Lied **Out of your sleep** (3) des zeitgenössischen Komponisten Robin Nelson erwacht eine träumerische Orgelunterbrechung zu einer nachdrücklichen, stakkato vorgetragenen Aufforderung des Chors, die wiederholt erklingt und somit an einen singenden Wecker denken lässt. Johann Sebastian Bach bettete die Choralmelodie **Wachet Auf** (5) in seine berühmte Orgelfassung ein. Der Komponist war offenbar zufrieden mit seiner Ausarbeitung der Melodie: Später fand sie auch Eingang in eine Kantate mit demselben Thema.

Ralph Vaughan Williams war einer der leidenschaftlichsten Sammler von Weihnachtsliedern. Bei seinen Streifzügen durch die Kleinstädte Englands, die im frühen 20. Jahrhundert noch sehr beschaulich waren, trug er einen Schatz von Volksliedern zusammen, die er unbedingt erhalten wollte. Viele sind in fast ursprünglicher Form erhalten; einige arbeitete er zu größeren Kompositionen aus, darunter die berühmte **Fantasia on Christmas Carols** (17). In diesem mitreißenden Werk, das erstmals 1912 beim Three Choirs Festival aufgeführt wurde, führt ein Bariton den Chor durch Darbietungen von Weihnachtsliedern wie „The Truth From Above“ und „On Christmas Night“. Der Komponist zog diese Lieder anderen, verbreiteteren Stücken vor, um sie bekannter zu machen.

Auch Orgelkomponisten waren von Schätzen festlicher Volkslieder angezogen. Der französische Organist und Lehrer Marcel Dupré wurde von seiner Tochter Marguerite gebeten, den Gesang **Il est né le divin enfant** (8) neu zu vertonen. Das Ergebnis war eine Reihe von Variationen des Themas, in verschiedenen Ausführungen auf der Pedalklavatur gespielt, ausgeschmückt und schließlich zu einer meisterhaften Fuge ausgearbeitet. In ähnlicher Manier verwandelte der Engländer Herbert Sumsion mehrere bekannte Lieder in Präludien für das Instrument, darunter **The holly and the ivy** (14), in dem kleine Motive aus dem Original herausgegriffen werden, bevor allmählich die eigentliche Melodie vorgestellt wird, die sich zu einer imposanten Verkündung auswächst, bevor sie still und friedlich verebbt.

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The Choir of Magdalen College, Oxford was founded in 1480. Magdalen College was then one of the oldest and largest choral foundations in late medieval England. That historic legacy has been preserved and maintained over five centuries. The Choir exists primarily to sing the daily church services in Magdalen College Chapel. They also sing at a number of special occasions throughout the year, including the famous May Day celebrations, an ancient tradition dating back to 1509. In recent years, Magdalen College Choir has toured Japan, USA, Hungary, Italy, Belgium, Holland, Germany and France; concert appearances have included the BBC Proms and Cadogan Hall. Recent orchestral performances have included collaborations with the Britten Sinfonia, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and the Academy of St Martin in the Fields. At Magdalen, they have worked every term with Phantasm, the College's consort-in-residence, with whom they have recently recorded music by John Ward and Thomas Tomkins. Other albums on the Opus Arte label have included Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu, nostri* and a recording of choral music by the award-winning British contemporary composer Matthew Martin.



Daniel Hyde has held the post of Informator Choristarum at Magdalen College since 2009, and is also a University Lecturer in the Faculty of Music. He was previously Director of Music at Jesus College, Cambridge, and before that organ scholar of King's College, Cambridge. A former assistant director of the London Bach Choir, he is equally well known as one of the UK's leading choral directors. Beyond Oxford, he has worked regularly with the BBC Singers, Britten Sinfonia, City of London Sinfonia and Academy of St Martin in the Fields. With the Choir of Magdalen College, his recording of Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu, nostri* was received to great critical acclaim on the Opus Arte label. More recently, an album of choral music by the award-winning British composer Matthew Martin has been highly praised. In chamber music, his collaborations with the viol consort Phantasm have seen recordings of music by William Lawes, John Jenkins, and John Ward. As a soloist, he has performed across three continents; he has played at the BBC Proms on numerous occasions, and made his solo debut playing the Canonic Variations of J.S. Bach on the organ of the Royal Albert Hall in 2010. During the 2014–15 season, he performed the complete organ works of J.S. Bach in a series of recitals at Merton College, Oxford on the new Dobson organ. In September 2016 he takes up the post of Organist and Director of Music at Saint Thomas Church, Fifth Avenue, New York, USA.



Roderick Williams encompasses a wide repertoire, from baroque to contemporary music, in the opera house, on the concert platform and in recital. He was named Singer of the Year at the 2016 Royal Philharmonic Society Awards.

He enjoys relationships with all the major UK opera houses and is particularly associated with the baritone roles of Mozart. He has also sung world premieres of operas by, among others, David Sawer, Sally Beamish, Michel van der Aa and Robert Saxton.

Roderick Williams has sung concert repertoire with all the BBC orchestras and many other ensembles including the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, the Philharmonia, London Sinfonietta, Manchester Camerata, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, the Hallé, Britten Sinfonia, Bournemouth Symphony, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Russian National Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Ensemble Orchestral de Paris, Academy of Ancient Music, The Sixteen, Le Concert Spirituel, Rias Kammerchor and Bach Collegium Japan. His many festival appearances include the BBC Proms, Edinburgh, Cheltenham, Aldeburgh and Melbourne.

In 2015 he sang Christus in Peter Sellars's staging of the St John Passion with the Berlin Philharmonic conducted by Sir Simon Rattle – a performance now available on DVD.

Recent and future engagements include Oronte in Charpentier's *Médée*, Toby Kramer in Van der Aa's *Sunken Garden* and Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte* for the English National Opera, Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte* at The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and with the Handel and Haydn Society in Boston, the title role in *Eugene Onegin* for Garsington Opera, Van der Aa's *After Life* at Melbourne State Theatre, Van der Aa's *Sunken Garden* at Opera de Lyon, the title role in *Billy Budd* for Opera North, a concert performance as Ned Keene in *Peter Grimes* with Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome, the Last Night of the 2014 BBC Proms, and concert performances with many of the world's leading orchestras and ensembles. He is also an accomplished recital artist who can be heard at venues and festivals including Wigmore Hall, Kings Place, LSO St Luke's, the Perth Concert Hall, Oxford Lieder Festival, London Song Festival, the Musikverein, Vienna, and on Radio 3, where he has participated on Iain Burnside's *Voices* programme.

His numerous recordings include Vaughan Williams, Berkeley and Britten operas for Chandos and an extensive repertoire of English song with pianist Iain Burnside for Naxos.

Roderick Williams is also a composer and has had works premiered at the Wigmore and Barbican Halls, the Purcell Room and live on national radio. He was Artistic Director of Leeds Lieder+ in April 2016.

SUNG TEXTS

1 People, look east

People, look east. The time is near
Of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able,
Trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the guest, is on the way.

Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,
One more seed is planted there:
Give up your strength the seed to nourish,
That in course the flower may flourish.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the rose, is on the way.

Birds, though ye long have ceased to build,
Guard the nest that must be filled.
Even the hour when wings are frozen
He for fledging time has chosen.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the bird, is on the way.

Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim
One more light the bowl shall brim,
Shining beyond the frosty weather,
Bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the star, is on the way.

Angels, announce to man and beast
Him who cometh from the East.
Set every peak and valley humming
With the news 'the Lord is coming!'
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the Lord, is on the way.

Eleanor Farjeon

3 Out of your sleep

Out of your sleep arise and wake, [taken]
For God mankind now hath ytake. [equal]
All of a maid without any make; [is supreme]
Of all women she beareth the bell.

And through a maidé faire and wise,
Now man is made of full great price;
Now angels knelen to man's service,
And at this time all this befell.

Now man is brighter than the sun, [dwell]
Now man in heav'n on high shall wone.
Blesséd be God this game is begun
And his mother the empress of helle. [health]

That ever was thrall now is he free;
That ever was small now great is she,
Now shall God deem both thee and me,
Unto his bliss if we do well.

Now man he may to heaven wend;
Now heav'n and earth to him they bend.
He that was foe now is our friend,
This is no nay that I you tell. [no idle tale]

Now blessed brother grant us grace,
At doomés day to see thy face,
And in thy court to have a place,
That we may sing thee nowell.

Out of your sleep arise and wake!
Anon. 15th century

4 View me, Lord

View me, Lord, a work of thine;
Shall I then lie drown'd in night?
Might thy grace in me but shine,
I should seem made all of light,

Cleanse me, Lord, that I may kneel
At thine altar, pure and white;
They that once thy mercies feel,
Gaze no more on earth's delight.

Worldly joys, like shadows, fade
When the heav'nly light appears;
But the cov'nants thou hast made,
Endless, know nor days nor years.

In thy word, Lord, is my trust,
To thy mercies fast I fly;
Though I am but clay and dust,
Yet thy grace can lift me high.
Thomas Campion

6 A babe is born

A babe is born all of a may,
To bring salvation unto us.
To him we sing both night and day.
Veni Creator Spiritus. [Come, Creator Spirit]

At Bethlehem, that blessed place,
The child of bliss now born he was;
And him to serve God give us grace,
O lux beata Trinitas. [O Trinity of blessed light]

There came three kings out of the East,
To worship the King that is so free,
With gold and myrrh and frankincense,
A solis ortus cardine. [from the rising of the sun]

The angels came down with one cry,
A fair song that night sung they
In worship of that child:
Gloria tibi Domine. [Glory to thee, O Lord]

Noel!
Anon. 15th century

7 Rocking

Little Jesus, sweetly sleep, do not stir;
We will lend a coat of fur.
We will rock you, rock you, rock you,
We will rock you, rock you, rock you.
See the fur to keep you warm,
Snugly 'round your tiny form.

Mary's little baby, sleep, sweetly sleep,
Sleep in comfort, slumber deep.
We will rock you, rock you, rock you,
We will rock you, rock you, rock you.
We will serve you all we can,
Darling, darling little man.
Traditional Czech carol 'Hajej, nynjej'
(trans. Percy Dearmer)

9 There is no rose

There is no rose of such virtue
as is the rose that bare Jesu:
Alleluia.
For in this rose contained was
heaven and earth in little space:
Res miranda. [wonderful thing]
By that rose we may well see
there be one God in persons three:
Pares forma. [equal in form]
Then leave we all this worldly mirth
and follow we this joyous birth:
Transeamus. [let us follow]
Anon. 15th century

10 O Little Town of Bethlehem

Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour,
which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign to you;
Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes,
and lying in a manger.

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars
go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee
tonight.

How silently, how silently, the wondrous Gift is giv'n;
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His
Heav'n.
No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him, still the dear Christ
enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings
tell;
Oh, come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!
Phillips Brooks

11 A Hymn to the Virgin

Of one that is so fair and bright
Velut maris stella, [Like a star of the sea]
Brighter than the day is light,
Parens et puella: [Both mother and maiden]
I cry to thee, thou see to me,
Lady, pray thy Son for me,
Tam pia, [so pure]
That I may come to thee.
Maria! [Mary]
All this world was forlorn,
Eva peccatrice, [because of Eve, a sinner]
Till our Lord was yborn,
De te genetrix. [through you, his mother]
With ave it went away,
Darkest night, and comes the day
Salutis; [of salvation]
The well springeth out of thee.
Virtutis. [of virtue]
Lady, flower of everything,
Rosa sine spina, [Rose without thorn]
Thou bare Jesu, heaven's king,
Gratia divina: [by divine grace]
Of all thou bearest the prize,
Lady, queen of paradise
Electa: [chosen]
Maid mild, mother
es effecta. [you are made]
Anon. (c.1300)

12 Noël nouvelet

Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici,
Dévotes gens, crions à Dieu merci!
Chantons Noël pour le roi nouvelet.
Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici.

L'ange disait 'Pasteurs, partez d'ici,
L'âme en repos et le coeur réjoui;
En Bethléem trouverez l'agnelet.'
Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici.

En Bethléem étant tous réunis,
Trouvent l'enfant, Joseph, Marie aussi.
La crèche était au lieu d'un bercelet.
Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici.

Bientôt les rois par l'étoile éclaircis
De l'Orient dont ils étaient sortis,
A Bethléem vinrent un matin.
Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici.

Voici, mon Dieu, mon sauveur Jésus Christ,
Par qui sera le prodige accompli
De nous sauver par son sang vermeillet!
Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici.
trad. French carol

13 In the bleak midwinter

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

Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him
Nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away
When He comes to reign:
In the bleak midwinter
A stable-place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty,
Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him, whom cherubim
Worship night and day,
A breastful of milk,
And a mangerful of hay;
Enough for Him, whom angels
Fall down before,
The ox and ass and camel
Which adore.

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.

Christina Rossetti

15 Bethlehem Down

'When He is King we will give him the King's gifts,
Myrrh for its sweetness, and gold for a crown,
Beautiful robes', said the young girl to Joseph
Fair with her first-born on Bethlehem Down.

Bethlehem Down is full of the starlight
Winds for the spices, and stars for the gold,
Mary for sleep, and for lullaby music
Songs of a shepherd by Bethlehem fold.

When He is King they will clothe Him in grave-sheets,
Myrrh for embalming, and wood for a crown,
He that lies now in the white arms of Mary
Sleeping so lightly on Bethlehem Down.

Here He has peace and a short while for dreaming,
Close-huddled oxen to keep Him from cold,
Mary for love, and for lullaby music
Songs of a shepherd by Bethlehem fold.

Bruce Blunt

16 Shepherd's Pipe Carol

Going through the hills on a night all starry
on the way to Bethlehem,
far away I heard a shepherd boy piping
on the way to Bethlehem.

Angels in the sky brought this message nigh:
'Dance and sing for joy that Christ the newborn King
is come to bring us peace on Earth,
and he's lying cradled there at Bethlehem.'

'Tell me, shepherd boy piping tunes so merrily
on the way to Bethlehem,
who will hear your tunes on these hills so lonely
on the way to Bethlehem?'

'None may hear my pipes on these hills so lonely
on the way to Bethlehem;
but a King will hear me play sweet lullabies
when I get to Bethlehem.'

Angels in the sky came down from on high,
hovered o'er the manger where the babe was lying
cradled in the arms of his mother Mary,
sleeping now at Bethlehem

'Where is this new King, shepherd boy piping merrily,
is he there at Bethlehem?'
'I will find him soon by the star shining brightly
in the sky o'er Bethlehem.'

'May I come with you, shepherd boy piping merrily,
come with you to Bethlehem?
Pay my homage too at the new King's cradle,
is it far to Bethlehem?'

Angels in the sky brought this message nigh:
'Dance and sing for joy that Christ the infant King
is born this night in lowly stable yonder,
born for you at Bethlehem.'

John Rutter

17 Fantasia on Christmas Carols

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

The first thing which I will relate
Is that God did man create,
The next thing which to you I'll tell,
Woman was made with man to dwell.

Then, after this, 'twas God's own choice
To place them both in Paradise,
There to remain, from evil free,
Except they ate of such a tree.

And they did eat, which was a sin,
And thus their ruin did begin,
Ruined themselves, both you and me,
And all of their posterity.

Thus 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.
'The truth sent from above' (Herefordshire)

Come all you worthy gentlemen that may be standing by,
Christ our blessed Saviour was born on Christmas day.
The blessed Virgin Mary unto the Lord did pray.
O we wish you the comfort and tidings of joy!

Christ our Blessed Saviour now in the manger lay –
He's lying in the manger, while the oxen feed on hay.
The blessed Virgin Mary unto the Lord did pray.
O we wish you the comfort and tidings of joy!
'Come all you worthy gentlemen' (Somerset)

On Christmas night all Christians sing
To hear the news the angels bring.
News of great joy, news of great mirth,
News of our merciful King's birth.

When sin departs before thy grace,
Then life and health come in its place.
Angels and men with joy may sing,
All for to see the newborn King.

From out of darkness we have light,
Which makes the angels sing this night,
'Glory to God and peace to men.
Both now and evermore, Amen.'
'On Christmas night' (Sussex)

God bless the ruler of this house and long on may
he reign,
Many happy Christmases he live to see again!
God bless our generation, who live both far and near
And we wish them a happy New Year.
Amen.



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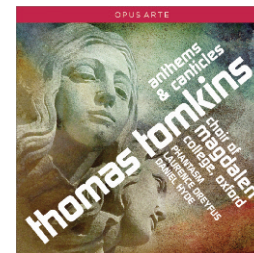
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Buxtehude: Membra Jesu nostri
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