

LIGHT OF GOLD

Cappella SF CHRISTMAS

RAGNAR BOHLIN
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR



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Veni, Emmanuel, arr. R. Bohlin ♦ Praetorius: Psallite unigenito ♦ Lo, how a Rose, arr. Jansson ♦ In dulci jubilo, arr. Gesius/Bach ♦ Silent Night, arr. Miessner ♦ Ding, dong! Merrily on high, arr. Willcocks ♦ Britten: Balulalow ♦ This little babe ♦ The first Nowell, arr. Willcocks ♦ Rutter: Candlelight carol ♦ Audete, gaudete, arr. Swingle ♦ Sixten: There is no rose * ♦ The song of the star ♦ F. Bohlin: Look! Shepherds of Bethlehem ♦ Nordqvist: Jul, jul, strålande jul ♦ Conte: Patapan ♦ O magnum mysterium ♦ Whitacre: Lux aurumque ♦ Go tell it on the mountain, arr. R. Bohlin ♦ Have yourself a merry little Christmas, arr. Bradford

*World premiere recording

Total playing time: 57:14



LIGHT OF GOLD: A CAPPELLA SF CHRISTMAS

CAPPELLA SF – RAGNAR BOHLIN, CONDUCTOR

1. Veni, veni, Emmanuel, arr. Ragnar Bohlin (1:51)
2. Michael Praetorius: Psallite unigenito (1:35)
3. Lo, how a Rose, arr. Mårten Jansson (3:43)
4. In dulci jubilo, arr. Bartholomeus Gesius and J.S. Bach (1:28)
5. Silent Night, arr. Hanns Miessner (3:23)
6. Ding, dong! Merrily on high, arr. Sir David Willcocks (1:54)
7. Benjamin Britten: Balulalow (1:27)
8. Britten: This little babe (1:34)
9. The first Nowell, arr. Willcocks (5:05)
10. John Rutter: Candlelight carol (4:15)
11. Audete, gaudete, arr. Ward Swingle (1:28)
12. Fredrik Sixten: There is no rose (5:46)
13. Sixten: The song of the star* (1:35)
14. Folke Bohlin: Look! Shepherds of Bethlehem (3:19)
15. Gustaf Nordqvist: Jul, jul, strålande jul (2:59)
16. David Conte: Patapan (1:33)
17. Conte: O magnum mysterium (3:20)
18. Eric Whitacre: Lux aurumque (4:07)
19. Go tell it on the mountain, arr. Ragnar Bohlin (1:45)
20. Have yourself a merry little Christmas, arr. Barlow Bradford (4:56)

* World premiere recording

Total playing time: 57:14

With this Christmas program I have tried to present a broad spectrum of Christmas music from different parts of the world. It starts with pieces and arrangements that have their roots in music that is quite long-standing, with an age of 500 years or more – although some arrangements of them are contemporary. After the seminal “Silent Night,” there is a section with English music - classic carol arrangements and original works by Britten and Rutter. Then, of course, I had to include some pieces from my native Sweden. Ending the CD is a section consisting of American music that features not only classics, but also contemporary pieces. My hope is that this selection of beautiful Christmas music – whether familiar or not – will help listeners get into the spirit of the Holiday Season.

– Ragnar Bohlin

1. VENI, VENI, EMMANUEL;
arr. Ragnar Bohlin

Most commonly known by its English title, “O come, o come, Emmanuel,” the text of this ancient plainchant hymn was first published in 1710 – in the multi-volume

German hymnal *Psalterium Canticum Catholicarum*. It has been set to a variety of different tunes, though its most frequently heard melody comes from fifteenth-century France. While the text’s precise Dark Ages origins remain uncertain, it dates at least as far back as the eighth century. Its verses are adapted from the seven standard *O Antiphons* that were chanted consecutively on the seven days leading up to Christmas, beginning on December 16th. Nowadays, however, it is used in many churches throughout the season of Advent. An ideal prelude to this Christmas program, Maestro Bohlin’s lovely arrangement – encompassing two verses – preserves the piece’s serenely meditative nature while adding choral challenge and fresh musical interest.

Veni, veni, Emmanuel
Captivum solve Israel,
Qui gemit in exilio,
Privatus Dei Filio.
Refrain: Gaude! Gaude! Emmanuel,
Nascetur pro te Israel!

Veni, veni O Oriens,
Solare nos adveniens,
Noctis depelle nebulas,
Dirasque mortis tenebras.
R:

Come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.
Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to Thee, O Israel!

O Come, Thou Dayspring from on high,
And cheer us by thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night
And death's dark shadow put to flight.
R:

2. Michael Praetorius (1571-1621):
PSALLITE UNIGENITO
Text: adapted from an anonymous French
chanson

The highly prolific and versatile German master Michael Praetorius – a prized composer, organist and music theorist, both in his day and ever since – remains best known for his many compositions synthesizing Protestant hymns and the Latin Liturgy. His work did much to form the basis of Lutheran hymnody, while attempting (unsuccessfully) to bridge the liturgical and musical differences between the Protestant and Catholic faiths. “Psallite unigenito” (Singt und klingt) was written

in 1609 and was traditionally sung to celebrate the end of the Advent season. An example of a “macaronic” piece (mixing vernacular texts with Latin), this popular motet-carol ingeniously interweaves Latin and German texts, combining with beautifully crafted music to scintillating and joyous effect.

Psallite, unigenito
Christo Dei Filio, Christo Dei Filio,
Redemptori Domino, puerulo, iacenti in
praesepeio.

Ein kleines Kindelein liegt in dem Krip-
pelein;
Alle liebe Engelein dienen dem Kindelein.

Psallite, unigenito
Christo Dei Filio, Christo Dei Filio,
Redemptori Domino, puerulo, iacenti in
praesepeio.

Singt und klingt, Jesu, Gottes Kind und
Maria Söhnelein

unserm lieben Jesulein im Krippelein
beim Öchslein und beim Eselein.

Sing psalms to Christ, the only begotten
Son of God,

The Lord Redeemer, child, lying in a manger.

A tiny Child lies in the manger.
All the blessed angels serve Him and sing
to Him.

Sing and resound to Jesus, child of God, and
sweet young Mary, our beloved little Jesus in
the crib between the dear ox and ass.

3. LO, HOW A ROSE, arr. Mårten
Jansson (b. 1965)
English text: Theodore Baker

Swedish composer, conductor and teacher Mårten Jansson studied musicology, music education and Dalcroze Eurhythmics. A choral specialist, he conducted Carmen, a female choir, from 1994 to 2010; he has described himself as almost entirely a sacred music composer and arranger. The cherished carol, "Lo how a rose" (also a Marian hymn), is believed to have been written anonymously, probably first appearing in 16th Century Germany; it was first published in the 1599 *Speyer Hymnal*. The most familiar harmonization is by Michael Praetorius (from 1609), and the English version of the text was penned by Theodore Baker in 1844. Widely used by Protestants and Catholics alike, its

liturgical applications can emphasize either the Virgin Mary or Jesus, or both together. Numerous and varied arrangements exist, both ancient and modern. Jansson's beguiling version pays accessible homage to this traditional holiday standard while giving it a distinctly contemporary sound and feel.

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming, from tender
stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming, as men of old
have sung.
It came, a floweret bright, amid the cold
of winter,
When half spent was the night.

Isaiah 'twas foretold it, the Rose I have in
mind;
With Mary we behold it, the Virgin
Mother kind.
To show God's love aright, she bore to us
a Saviour,
When half spent was the night.

This Flower, whose fragrance tender with
sweetness fills the air,
Disperses with glorious splendour the dark-
ness everywhere;
True man, yet very God, from sin and
death He saves us,
And lightens every load.

4. IN DULCI JUBILO, arr. Bartholomeus Gesius (1555-1613) and J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

Traditional; English text by Robert Lucas de Pearsall

While this familiar traditional carol has been has been arranged by several prominent musicians, perhaps the most commonly heard version was originally arranged by the German composer Bartholomeus Gesius in 1601; it was later adapted as a Chorale prelude for organ by the great J. S. Bach. As performed here, the first verse is the Gesius version; the second verse is Bach's harmonization. It's another prime example of a macaronic song combining Latin and a vernacular language (in this instance, English). Its original version allegedly dates back to 1328, when the German mystic and Dominican friar Heinrich Seuse claimed to have been visited by an angel, who bade him forget his earthly trials and to sing and dance with the heavenly host to the joyful song that the angel imparted to him. Among its many versions is the popular English carol, "Good Christian Men, Rejoice."

In dulci jubilo (*with sweet rejoicing*)
Now sing with hearts aglow!
Our delight and pleasure lies
in praeseptio; (*in a manger*)

Like sunshine is our treasure
matris in gremio; (*in his mother's lap*)
Alpha es et O! (*you are the alpha and omega*)
Alpha es et O!

Ubi sunt gaudia (*where is joy*)
in any place but there?
There are angels singing
nova cantica (*new songs*)
And there the bells are ringing
in Regis curia. (*In the King's courts*)
Oh, that we were there!
Oh, that we were there!

5. SILENT NIGHT, arr. Hanns Miessner (1877-1940) – orig. "Stille Nacht" by Franz Gruber (1787-1863)
Text by Joseph Mohr

The story goes that, on Christmas Eve of 1818 in the Austrian mountain town of Oberndorf, the young priest Joseph Mohr showed the schoolteacher/choir director Franz Xaver Gruber his original text to "Stille Nacht." Allegedly because the organ had broken down, Mohr asked Gruber to set his poem to an original tune with guitar accompaniment, so that the two could perform it later that night at the St. Nicholas church's midnight Christmas mass. As

the two men – standing in front of the altar – sang their new song together to Mohr's guitar, little did they realize that their little last-minute creation was destined to become the world's most familiar and universally beloved Christmas carol. English is but one of the 140 different languages this masterpiece of gentle simplicity has been translated into. Hanns Miessner's arrangement is one of the loveliest among many.

Silent night, Holy night
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon Virgin, mother and child
Holy infant, tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, Holy night
Shepherds quake, at the sight
Glories stream from heaven above
Heavenly, hosts sing Hallelujah.
Christ the Saviour is born.

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.

6. DING, DONG! MERRILY ON HIGH,
arr. Sir David Willcocks (b. 1919)
Traditional; English text by G. R. Woodward

The English conductor, organist and music educator Sir David Willcocks was Director of Music at King's College, Cambridge, from 1957 to 1974, among other prestigious Cambridge posts. In 2010, this living legend's extensive contributions to English choral art were celebrated at the Royal Albert Hall in London. Revered as a classic English carol, the basic melody of "Ding, dong! Merrily on High" first appeared in a 16th-century collection of secular French dance tunes by Jehan Tabourot. Poet G.R. Woodward then published the carol in an arrangement by Charles Wood in 1924 – again in macaronic form – with original lyrics in English that reflected his passion for ancient poetry. Sir David's saucy and energetic arrangement was published in 1970, in his second book of *Carols for Choirs* (with John Rutter).

Ding dong merrily on high,
In heav'n the bells are ringing:
Ding dong! Verily the sky
Is riv'n with angel singing.
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!

E'en so here below, below,
Let steeple bells be swungen,
And "io, io, io!"
By priest and people sungen.
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!

Pray you, dutifully prime
Your matin chime, ye ringers;
May you beautifully rime
Your evetime song, ye singers.
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!

7. & 8. Benjamin Britten (1913-1976):
BALULALOW and THIS LITTLE BABE,
from *A Ceremony of Carols*, Op. 28
Various original text sources

Benjamin Britten has been justifiably called the 20th Century's most brilliant English composer, who produced deathless masterpieces in many different genres. One of those – his immensely popular *A Ceremony of Carols* – was written in 1942 during a tedious (and hazardous) voyage aboard a Swedish cargo ship during World War II, as he travelled home to England after a protracted stay in America. With a typical English boychoir in mind, he crafted the work for the unusual combination of three-part treble choir with solo harp accompaniment. The work con-

sists of eleven movements based upon texts drawn from the *The English Galaxy of Shorter Poems* anthology that Britten had found en route in Nova Scotia while his ship was in port there. While most of the poems he selected are by anonymous authors, the origins of both movements heard here are known.

Movement 4b, "Balulalow," was adapted from a 16th-century text published by the Wedderburn brothers (James, John and Robert) in a Scottish dialect, which had in turn been translated from a Martin Luther hymn. Calling for a solo voice alternating with the choir, this lovely "cradle song" is remarkable for its surpassing melodic sweetness over gently rocking figurations from the harp.

O my deare hert, young Jesu sweit,
Prepare thy creddil in my spreit,
And I sall rock thee to my hert,
And never mair from thee depart.

But I sall praise thee evermoir,
With sanges sweit unto thy gloir;
The knees of my hert sall I bow,
And sing that richt Balulalow!

Oh my dear heart, young Jesus sweet,
Prepare your cradle in my spirit,

And I shall rock you to my heart,
And nevermore from you depart.

But I shall praise you forever,
With sweet songs to your glory;
The knees of my heart I shall bow
And sing the best lullaby.

Movement 6, "This little Babe," stands in stark contrast to the preceding lullaby. It sets a text drawn from the 16th-century Christian mystic and poet Robert Southwell's "Newe Heaven, Newe Warre," published in 1595. The poem's intensely metaphorical evocations of the tiny and helpless Christ-child's inevitable victory in battle against Satan is lent urgent wings by the tensely martial tone of Britten's music. The excitement builds as the prevailing melody undergoes two- and three-part canonic elaborations on its way to the emphatically triumphant final verse.

This little Babe so few days old
Is come to rifle Satan's fold.
All hell doth at his presence quake,
Though he himself for cold do shake;
For in this weak unarmèd wise
The gates of hell he will surprise.

With tears he fights and wins the field,
His naked breast stands for a shield;
His battering shot are babish cries,
His arrows looks of weeping eyes;
His martial ensigns Cold and Need,
And feeble Flesh his warrior's steed.

His camp is pitchèd in a stall,
His bulwark but a broken wall;
The crib his trench, haystalks his stakes,
Of shepherds he his muster makes;
And thus, as sure his foe to wound,
The angels' trumps alarum sound.

My soul, with Christ join thou in fight,
Stick to the tents that he hath pight;
Within his crib is surest ward,
This little Babe will be thy guard;
If thou wilt foil thy foes with joy,
Then flit not from this heavenly boy.

9. THE FIRST NOWELL, arr. Sir David
Willcocks
Traditional

This cherished English carol, as arranged by Sir David, is found in the *Carols for Choirs 1* collection, published in 1961. Believed to be of 18th Century Cornish origin, it was first published in roughly its current form

in 1823, though it is most often sung nowadays in John Stainer's four-part arrangement (1871) – the one that's found in most traditional hymnals. "Nowell" is the medieval English equivalent of the French word *Noël* ("Christmas season"), derived in turn from the Latin *natalis*, meaning "birth." In its standard hymn version, most Christian parishioners know much of this Yuletide classic by heart, though choirs everywhere find greater sophistication and musical interest in Willcocks' most attractive arrangement.

The First Nowell, the angels did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Refrain: Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel!

They looked up and saw a star
Shining in the East beyond them far
And to the earth it gave great light
And so it continued both day and night.
R:

And by the light of that same star
Three Wise men came from country far

To seek for a King was their intent
And to follow the star wherever it went.
R:

This star drew nigh to the northwest
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest
And there it did both pause and stay
Right o'er the place where Jesus lay.
R:

Then entered in those Wise Men three
Full reverently upon their knee
And offered there in His presence
Their gold and myrrh and frankincense.
R:

Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord
That hath made Heaven and earth of nought
And with his blood mankind has bought.
R:

10. John Rutter (b. 1945):
CANDLELIGHT CAROL
Text by the composer

John Rutter may well be the English-speaking world's most widely performed composer of sacred choral music. His highly

accessible and often deeply moving compositions – whether of large or small scale – never fail to enchant listeners, either in churches or concert halls. A conductor, teacher, publisher, editor and recording entrepreneur as well, he leads his own recording choir (Cambridge Singers) and directs his own label (Collegium); he has lectured internationally and has collaborated with Sir David Willcocks on four volumes of the *Carols for Choirs* series. “Candlelight Carol,” composed in 1984, has deservedly become a holiday favorite; few works can match its sense of gentle reverence or its tender and luminous focus on the mother/son bond between Mary and Jesus.

How do you capture the wind on the water?

How do you count all the stars in the sky?
How do you measure the love of a mother,
Or how can you write down a baby’s first cry?

Refrain: Candlelight, angel light, firelight
and star-glow

Shine on his cradle till breaking of dawn.
Gloria, Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Angels are singing; the Christ child is born.

Shepherds and wise men will kneel and
adore him,

Seraphim round him their vigil will keep;
Nations proclaim him their Lord and
their Saviour,
But Mary will hold him and sing him to
sleep.

R:

Find him at Bethlehem laid in a manger:
Christ our Redeemer asleep in the hay.
Godhead incarnate and hope of salvation:
A child with his mother that first Christmas Day.

R:

11. AUDETE, GAUDETE; arr. Ward
Swingle (1927-2015)
Traditional

The revolutionary choral pioneer Ward Swingle and his ensemble, the multiple GRAMMY-winning Swingle Singers (based in Paris; later London), skyrocketed to fame in the 1960s with their jazzy, scat-singing renditions of classical standards. American-born and -trained, a Fulbright scholarship took him to post-WW II Paris, where he lived (also in England) for most of his life. “Audete, Gaudete” is his arrangement of “Gaudete” (roughly, “rejoice”): a traditional Catholic Latin song. Both its words

and basic three-part (ATB) medieval-style harmonization were originally found in the 16th century Swedish/Finnish collection of medieval music, *Pie Cantiones* (Finland was then a part of Sweden). Thus it's entirely appropriate to lead into our album's array of Swedish works with this exuberant number!

It's interesting to note that Swingle misread the piece's title, having mistaken the source collection's large and ornate "G" for elaborate ornamentation; hence the misleading title that begins with "Audete" (the choir restores the missing letter in their performance here). But nothing's amiss in Swingle's striking arrangement; it preserves the original music's medieval feel, rapid pace and joyful mood while adding a soprano part plus a thrilling high descant in the final verse. The first four lines below are repeated before each verse.

Gaudete, Gaudete!
Christus et natus
Ex maria virgine,
Gaudete!

Tempus ad est gratiae,
Hoc quod optabamus;
Carmina laetitiae,
Devote redamus.

Deus homo factus est,
Natura mirante;
Mundus renovatus est
A Christo regnante.

Ezechiellis porta
Clausula pertransitur;
Unde lux est orta
Salus invenitur.

Ergo nostra cantio,
Psallat iam in lustro;
Benedicat Domino:
Salus Regi nostro.

Rejoice, Rejoice!
Christ is born
Of the virgin Mary,
Rejoice!

It is now the time of grace
That we have desired;
Let us sing songs of joy,
Let us give devotion.

God was made man,
And nature marvels;
The world was renewed
By Christ who is King.

The closed gate of Ezekiel

Has been passed through;
From where the light rises
Salvation is found.

Therefore let our assembly now sing,
Sing the Psalms to purify us;
Let it praise the Lord:
Greetings to our King

12. Fredrik Sixten (b. 1962):

THERE IS NO ROSE

Text: Anonymous, 14th century

Best-known for his sacred choral music, noted Swedish composer (also former cathedral organist and conductor) Fredrik Sixten studied at Stockholm's Royal College of Music and went on to study composition with choral master Sven-David Sandström. "There is no Rose of swych vertu" is one of thirteen carols found in the *Trinity Carol Roll*: the oldest known source of English carols dating from the early 1400's ("carols" then celebrated other events, too; not just Christmas). Yet again of macaronic style, perhaps its best-known setting is found in Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols*. Sixten himself describes below his own modern-sounding, yet accessible and richly harmonized setting:

"In my version I use harmonies in a melodious way. It blends together in unity as the old English blends together with the small fragments of Latin phrases that occur. The piece celebrates St. Mary and the child of incarnation. I've tried to describe the atmosphere of the great mystery."

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. (*wondrous thing*)

By that rose we may well see
There be one God in persons three,
Pares forma. (*of equal form*)

The angels sungen the shepherds to:
Gloria in excelsis deo:
Gaudeamus. (*let us rejoice*)

Leave we all this worldly mirth,
And follow we this joyful birth;
Transeamus. (*let us follow*)

Alleluia, res miranda,
Pares forma, gaudeamus,
Transeamus. Amen

13. Sixten: THE SONG OF THE STAR
(Dedicated to Cappella SF and Ragnar
Bohlin, heard here in its world premiere
performance)

Text: Hjalmar Gullberg, English version:
Leonard B. Eyre

Again, Sixten describes his original composition: "Hjalmar Gullberg is one of Sweden's more amiable poets. This short text is from a Christmas Cantata of his: *The Holy Night*. The words are simple, almost naïve, but very clear and direct despite the message, which is so complex and wondrous. The best way, I found, to interpret this is in the way of a simple, modest choral hymn."

O Star, surpassing others, so luminous
and great!
O stall, become a Mother's and Newborn's
safe retreat.

Its walls are rot and rubble, its roof is
partly gone.
That shed of mud and stubble the star
shines down upon.

O'er simple cradle sending, its beams like
silv'ry shield.
'tis past all understanding, what that night
to us reveal'd.

14. Folke Bohlin (b. 1931):
LOOK! SHEPHERDS OF BETHLEHEM
Text: J. Ivor John

Swedish musicologist, composer and choral conductor Folke Bohlin is our conductor Ragnar Bohlin's father. A former Professor at Lund University, he held that position until his retirement in 1996. A member of the Swedish Royal Academy of Music, the elder Bohlin is known primarily for his research into post-reformation Swedish church music. J. Ivor John's lyrics to this piece describe the angels' glorious announcement of the holy birth and the shepherds' (also the wise men's) visit to the infant Jesus at the stable in Bethlehem. But unlike other, more jubilant musical evocations of the Christmas story's shepherds, the senior Bohlin gives us here a more pastoral account, full of gentle praise and wonder. The mezzo-soprano and tenor soloists take turns delivering the first two verses before coming together to sing a duet in the third and final stanza – their lovely voices drifting over a wordless bed of soft choral textures.

Look! Shepherds of Bethlehem – a light
in the sky:
God's glory revealed, redemption is nigh;
Hark! Angels are singing in rapturous lays:

Let earth join with heaven the Saviour to
praise!

Rejoice my heart! A Saviour is born.

In a dimlighted stable – a bright star o'erhead
A babe in a manger where oxen had fed;
While Joseph and Mary their fond vigil keep
O'er the dear whiteclad baby enfolded in
sleep.

Sing sweet, sing low a lullaby of love.

The shepherds, adoring, in awed wonder
kneel;

The far-travelled wise men their treasures
reveal;

Let all their devotions and best offerings bring,
For worthy is Jesus, our Saviour and King.
All men, all things, give glory to our King.

15. Gustaf Nordqvist (1886-1949):

JUL, JUL, STRÅLANDE JUL

Text: Edvard Evers

Stockholm native Gustaf Nordqvist – a
composer, church musician and profes-
sor – was almost exclusively a miniatur-
ist, primarily known for his 200-plus solo
songs. Aside from his many sacred songs,
his numerous examples on themes of love
and nature remain a cornerstone of the

Swedish art song repertoire. His most no-
table work is the beautiful Christmas carol
heard here. First published in 1924, the
lyrics of “Jul, jul, strålande jul” – a prayer-
fully gentle and nostalgia-inspiring piece –
describe a White Christmas and the hope
for worldly peace that the season brings. It
remains one of the most popular carols in
Sweden, and has been subject to a multi-
tude of variants and arrangements.

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.

Christmas, Christmas, shining Christmas!
Luster over white forests,

Heaven's crowns with sparkling lights,
Glimmering arcs in all God's houses,
Psalm that is sung from time to time,
Eternal longing for light and peace!
Christmas, Christmas, shining Christmas,
Luster over white forests.

Come, come, blessed Christmas!
Lower your white wings
Over the battles' blood and alarm,
Over all sighing out from human chests,
Over those families who go to rest,
Over the young ones' dawning nest!
Come, come, blessed Christmas,
Lower your white wings.

16. PATAPAN, arr. David Conte (b. 1955)
Traditional French Burgundian Carol; author of English version unknown

Denver-born David Conte – who, as a Fulbright Scholar, was one of the legendary Nadia Boulanger's final students – is now professor and chair of the Composition Department at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, serving as well as a faculty member of the European-American Music Alliance in Paris. Also a board member of the American Composers forum, he was recently named Composer-in-Residence of Cappella SF. He

has written over eighty published works. "Patapan" was originally written by Frenchman Bernard de La Monnoye, with lyrics in the French Burgundian dialect; it was first published in 1720. It tells the biblical story of the shepherds as they joyfully celebrate the holy birth with their simple instruments: flute and drum, though some translations specify "fife" or "pipe" versus flute. But whatever the actual instruments, the a cappella choir mimics them to scintillating onomatopoeic effect, while delivering the familiar melody that Conte's ingenious arrangement spices with novel harmonics.

Willie, take your little drum; Robin take
your flute and come!
And be merry while you play!
Ture-lure-lu, pata-pata-pan,
And be merry while you play on this
joyful Christmas Day.

When the men of olden days to the King
of Kings give praise,
On the fife and drum did play,
Ture-lure-lu, pata-pata-pan,
On the fife and drum did play on this
joyful Christmas Day.

Willie, take your little drum, Robin take
your flute and come!

And be merry while you play!
Ture-lure-lu, pata-pata-pan
And be merry while you play,
On this joyful Christmas Day.

God and man are now become more in
tune than fife and drum.
When you hear the fife and drum,
ture-lure-lu, pata-pata-pan,
So be merry while you play,
Sing and dance this Christmas Day.

17. Conte: O MAGNUM MYSTERIUM
Responsory IV, Matins of Christmas Day

While its exact origins are lost in the mists of time, “O Magnum Mysterium” has come down to us from its initial form as a Gregorian Chant that was used in ancient monasteries as a responsory in the Matins (night service; midnight to dawn) of Christmas. Dating from the Dark Ages, scholars and church musicians first found it in chant anthologies going back a thousand years or more. From the medieval era through the present, the text has been set polyphonically by many dozens of composers; some of the best-known examples are by Victoria, Palestrina, Poulenc, Lauridsen and – as heard here – by David Conte. His arresting version begins homophonically, soon blossoming

into glowing harmonies and ingenious counterpoint before ending with a magnificent profusion of thrilling “alleluias.”

O magnum Mysterium
et admirabile sacramentum,
ut animalia viderent
Dominum natum,
jacentem in præsepio.
O beata Virgo,
cujus viscera meruerunt
portare Dominum Jesum Christum.
Alleluia. Alleluia.

O great mystery,
and wondrous sacrament,
that mere animals witnessed the new-born Lord,
lying in a manger!
Blessed is the Virgin whose womb
was chosen to carry
Christ the Lord.
Alleluia. Alleluia

18. Eric Whitacre (b. 1970):
LUX AURUMQUE
Text: Edward Esch; Latin Translation by
Charles Anthony Silvestri

GRAMMY-winning composer and conductor Eric Whitacre, a Nevada native, is

one of today's "hottest" choral composers. After discovering classical music (almost by accident) for the first time as a choral singer in college, he went on to study composition at the Juilliard School. Much of his music is characterized by shimmering, spine-tingling chords and progressions that often make a startlingly beautiful thing of unresolved dissonance – demanding absolute vocal clarity and pinpoint accuracy of intonation from singers. "Lux Aurum-que" (Light and Gold), composed in 2000, sets Edward Esch's single-stanza poem of the same (English) title, but after "reverse-translation" into Latin. The simple text (and the music), while not specifically sacred in nature, contains potent imagery of angels singing "to the newborn babe."

Lux, Calida
Gravis que
Pura velut aurum
Canunt et canunt et canunt
Modo natum.

Light, Warm
And heavy
Pure like gold
They sing and sing and sing
To the newborn babe.

19. GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN,
arr. Ragnar Bohlin
Traditional American spiritual/carol

"Go Tell it on the Mountain" is an African-American song that is considered a Christmas Carol, as its lyrics relate specifically to the biblical story surrounding the birth of Jesus. John Wesley Work, Jr. (1871-1925) was probably the first African-American scholar and collector (also arranger) of spirituals. He published two important collections of them, preserving a wealth of spirituals that had hitherto been known only in highly varied versions passed down orally through generations of plantation slaves. This song appeared in Work's second such collection, *Folk Songs of the American Negro* and it has been a beloved seasonal staple ever since. Our maestro's version heard here preserves the piece's "swinging" feel and joyful spirit while adding both rhythmic and harmonic sophistication.

Refrain: Go, tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and everywhere;
Go, tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born.

While shepherds kept their watching
Over silent flocks by night,
Behold, throughout the heavens,
There shone a holy light:

R:

The shepherds feared and trembled
When lo! above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus,
That hailed our Saviour's birth.

R:

20. HAVE YOURSELF A MERRY LITTLE
CHRISTMAS, arr. Barlow Bradford
Original words & music by Hugh Martin

The solo song, "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," was originally written by Hugh Martin and (allegedly) Ralph Blane; it was first performed by the great Judy Garland in the 1944 MGM musical film, *Meet me in St. Louis*. In 2001, the then 86-year-old original composer Martin, still active in religious music ministries, arranged a fresh version with different lyrics to suit more sacred applications. Meanwhile, Dr. Barlow Bradford – an accomplished composer, arranger, conductor, pianist and teacher – had arranged the song for SATB choir in 1991, maintaining the original song's gently jazzy

impression of comfort and optimism. This version wraps up Cappella SF's wide-ranging and affecting Christmas program in typically laid-back American fashion.

Christmas future is far away.
Christmas past is past.
Christmas present is here today,
Bringing joy that will last.

Have yourself a merry little Christmas,
Let your heart be light.
From now on our troubles will be out of sight.

Have yourself a merry little Christmas,
Make the Yule-tide gay,
From now on our troubles will be miles away.

Here we are as in olden days,
Happy golden days of yore.
Faithful friends who are dear to us
Gather near to us once more.

Through the years we all will be together
If the Fates allow.
Until then we'll have to muddle through
somehow,
So have yourself a merry little Christmas
now.

– Notes by Lindsay Koob

Ragnar Bohlin was named Director of the San Francisco Symphony Chorus in 2007. With them he has conducted such pieces as *Carmina Burana*, Handel's *Messiah*, Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* and *B Minor Mass* and Poulenc's *Figure Humaine*. He regularly prepares this ensemble for performances under internationally renowned conductors. His outstanding work has been recognized with a GRAMMY Award for Best Choral Performance for Mahler's *Symphony No. 8* with Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony.

Guest conducting engagements have taken him to many parts of the world, including the São Paulo Symphony in Brazil and the Malmö Symphony Orchestra in Sweden. In October 2014, Bohlin made his debut with the Stavanger Symphony and in December with the Edmonton Symphony in Canada. He served as guest director of the world-renowned men's ensemble Chanticleer in the 2014-15 season.

Mr. Bohlin has worked frequently with The Swedish Radio Choir and conducted them on their 2010 tour of the United States. He has also appeared with the Ericson Chamber Choir and the Opera Chorus of Stockholm. He was choirmaster of Stockholm's Maria

Magdalena Church and appeared regularly on Swedish radio with the Maria Magdalena Motet Choir and The Maria Vocal Ensemble. Mr. Bohlin toured internationally with his Swedish choirs, earning prizes in international competitions, and distinctions including the prestigious Johannes Norrby Medal in 2006 for expanding the frontiers of Swedish choral music making.

Mr. Bohlin studied conducting with renowned conducting teacher Jorma Panula and the legendary choir director Eric Ericson, piano with Peter Feuchtwanger in London, and singing with the great Swedish tenor Nicolai Gedda. He holds a master's degree in organ and a diploma degree in conducting from the Royal Academy of Music in Stockholm. Mr. Bohlin is on the faculty of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. In 2013 he was awarded the Swedish America Chamber of Commerce Cultural Award.

In 2014 he founded the professional chamber choir Cappella SF in San Francisco, and has already recorded two CDs with them.



Soprano:

Cheryl Cain
Julia Fischer
Elizabeth Kimble
Cecilia Lam
Kate Offer
Alexandra Sessler

Alto:

Clifton Massey
Gail Nakano
Brielle Marina Neilson
Danielle Sampson
Meghan Spyker
Nicole Takesono

Tenor:

Matthew Curtis
Elliott Encarnación
Jimmy Kansau
Sam Smith
Eric Tuan
Steven Ziegler

Bass:

Adam Cole
Tom Hart
Richard Mix
Matthew Peterson
Mark Sumner
Chung-Wai Soong

Soloists/Instrumental artists:

Track 7, “Balulalow” – soprano Alexandra Sessler

Track 14, “Look! Shepherds of Bethlehem”
– mezzo-soprano Danielle Sampson,
tenor Jimmy Kansau

Track 18, “Lux Aurumque” – soprano
Julia Fischer

Tracks 6, 9, 10, & 20 – organist Jonathan
Dimmock

Tracks 7 & 8 – harpist Emma Quinn



Cappella SF, a professional chamber choir, was established in 2014 by Ragnar Bohlin, its artistic director. By early 2015, the choir had recorded music for two compact discs and presented four concerts. Distinguished composers Fredrik Sixten and David Conte (currently the choir's Composer-in-Residence) have written two works apiece for Cappella SF, all of which were premiered by the ensemble. One of the Sixten pieces, "Song of the Star," is presented here in its world premiere recording. Cappella SF is proud to present this, its first recording. Considering a cappella music to be "...an art-form unto itself, both magical and transformative," GRAMMY award-winning Maestro Bohlin strives to showcase the choral riches of all musical periods at the highest artistic level with Cappella SF.

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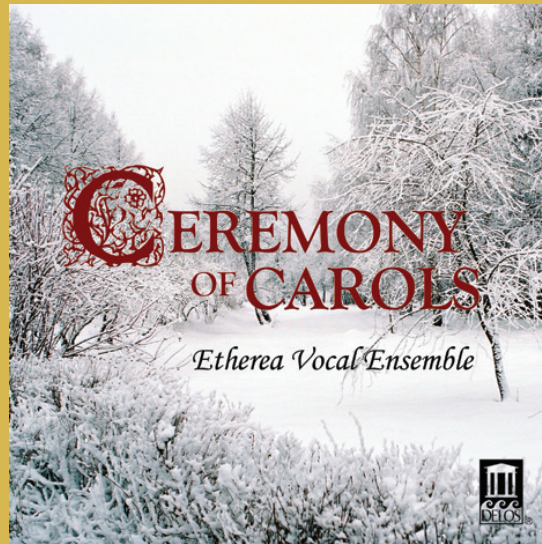
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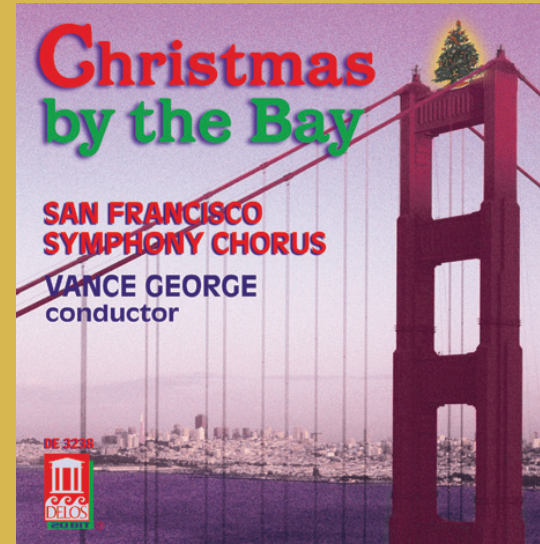
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To Catch a Christmas Star



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