

signum  
CLASSICS



**CHRISTMAS CAROLS**  
WITH  
**THE KING'S SINGERS**

|           |                                                                                                             |      |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| <b>1</b>  | <b>Balulalow</b> James Burton                                                                               | 2.28 |
| <b>2</b>  | <b>Gaudete! (Rejoice!)</b> Traditional, arr. Brian Kay                                                      | 1.39 |
| <b>3</b>  | <b>O little town of Bethlehem</b><br>Traditional, arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, ad. Patrick Dunachie         | 2.36 |
| <b>4</b>  | <b>Tomorrow shall be my dancing day</b> David Willcocks                                                     | 1.48 |
| <b>5</b>  | <b>The Shepherd's Carol</b> Bob Chilcott                                                                    | 3.09 |
| <b>6</b>  | <b>La filadora (The spinner)</b> Traditional, arr. Goff Richards                                            | 3.18 |
| <b>7</b>  | <b>The quiet heart</b> June Collin                                                                          | 2.36 |
| <b>8</b>  | <b>Hodie Christus natus est (Christ is born today)</b> Plainchant                                           | 1.38 |
| <b>9</b>  | <b>Ding! Dong! Merrily on high</b> Thoinot Arbeau, arr. Charles Wood                                        | 1.43 |
| <b>10</b> | <b>O, do not move</b> John Tavener                                                                          | 1.55 |
| <b>11</b> | <b>O magnum mysterium (O great mystery)</b> Tomás Luis de Victoria                                          | 3.33 |
| <b>12</b> | <b>Once in royal David's City</b><br>Henry John Gauntlett and Arthur Henry Mann, ad. Nick Ashby             | 3.09 |
| <b>13</b> | <b>Brich an, o schönes Morgenlicht (Break, O beautiful morning light)</b><br>Johann Sebastian Bach          | 1.20 |
| <b>14</b> | <b>Julebudet til dem, der bygge (The Christmas message)</b><br>Johan Peter Emilius Hartmann, arr. Bo Holten | 2.15 |

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|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| <b>15</b> | <b>Gabriel's Message</b> Traditional, arr. Edgar Pettman                                                 | 2.20 |
| <b>16</b> | <b>Hymne à la Vierge (Hymn to the Virgin)</b> Pierre Villette                                            | 3.49 |
| <b>17</b> | <b>The little road to Bethlehem</b> Michael Head, arr. Grayston Ives                                     | 3.03 |
| <b>18</b> | <b>Dormi, dormi (Sleep, sleep)</b> Traditional, arr. Guy Turner                                          | 3.01 |
| <b>19</b> | <b>Nit de vetlla (A night of watching)</b> Traditional, arr. Goff Richards                               | 2.50 |
| <b>20</b> | <b>Wither's Rocking Hymn</b><br>Ralph Vaughan Williams, arr. Christopher Bruerton                        | 3.26 |
| <b>21</b> | <b>Jul, jul, strålande jul (Christmas, Christmas, brilliant Christmas)</b><br>Gustaf Nordqvist           | 2.45 |
| <b>22</b> | <b>The Lute-Book Lullaby</b> Anonymous, arr. Geoffrey Shaw                                               | 3.45 |
| <b>23</b> | <b>Qui creavit caelum (He by whom the heavens were made)</b><br>(Song of the Nuns of Chester) Plainchant | 3.18 |
| <b>24</b> | <b>L'adieu des Bergers (The Shepherd's Farewell)</b><br>Hector Berlioz, arr. Christopher Bruerton        | 3.27 |
| <b>25</b> | <b>Fröhliche Weihnacht überall (Merry Christmas all around)</b><br>Traditional, arr. Matthias Bucher     | 3.17 |

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| <b>Total timings</b> | <b>68.20</b> |
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# CHRISTMAS CAROLS

## WITH

# THE KING'S SINGERS

If you are a singer of any kind – be that in a church choir, as a soloist, in a professional group, or if you simply like a singsong in the shower or after a glass of wine – the chances are that Christmas music is in your blood. Even if you're not vocally-inclined, choral music still lies at the heart of many people's Christmases. For the six of us, festive carols and songs are part of the soundtracks of our lives and have been since childhood. Christmases as a child were a time of magic and mystery: from the drama of the biblical nativity story, through to the excitement of Father Christmas' visits and the excitement of hoping for snow in December, the season always seemed to

hold a sense of wonder – and its music captures this unlike anything else can. In *Christmas Carols with The King's Singers*, we wanted to bottle that frosty, moonlit, fireside Christmas wonder and pour it into our sound.

This selection of music covers everything from contemporary choral gems and folk songs through to well-loved carols. Dotted throughout the album are several of the most famous English church carols, which take the six of us right back to our earliest singing days, and which also reflect our group's heritage at King's College, Cambridge. These include *Once in royal David's city*, *Ding! Dong! Merrily on high* and *O little town*

*of Bethlehem*. Less familiar perhaps, but also belonging to that great sacred choral canon are Tomás Luís de Victoria's motet *O magnum mysterium* (O great mystery) and *Tomorrow shall be my dancing day*, which was composed by King's College's legendary Director of Music (and mentor to our forebears in The King's Singers) Sir David Willcocks. We hope that these tracks will be known to many listeners, perhaps even well enough for you to join in! They also form the backbone to this album, which then draws in strands from lots of different parts of our library, all united by that magical atmosphere of festive wonder.

As well as Christmas music written for church services, it was important to us to capture a flavour of what we call 'Christmas folk music'. These are songs based on the Christmas story, but whose origins are in traditional melodies passed

down anonymously through folk traditions across the world. Many of these tracks were great arrangements already in our music library, such as the two Catalan folk songs, *La filadora* (*The spinner*) and *Nit de vetlla* (*A night of watching*), both arranged by Goff Richards. Also from our library came the English carol *Gabriel's Message* arranged by Edgar Pettman, and *Gaudete!*, arranged by our founding bass Brian Kay. In other cases, such as the beautiful Italian carol *Dormi, dormi* (*Sleep, sleep*), arranged by Guy Turner, we have sought out newer arrangements to fit our forces perfectly, whilst maintaining all the character of the original song. Alongside these anonymous carols sit two ancient melodies with anonymous roots: *Hodie Christus natus est* (*Christ is born today*), and *Qui creavit caelum* (*He by whom the heavens were made*). *Hodie* is the Magnificat

antiphon for Christmas Day in the Catholic plainchant tradition, and is famously included as the start and end of Benjamin Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols*. The original plainchant melody first appears in a Swiss manuscript from c. 990AD, but it had likely been in circulation for a long time by then. *Qui creavit caelum* is a macaronic carol (using both Latin and English in alternation) that dates from the early 15th Century in the Benedictine nunnery of St. Mary, in the north-English city of Chester. We chose these ancient single-line melodies to offer some balance to the rich harmony in other tracks by more recent composers.

This third layer of works in *Christmas Carols with The King's Singers* comprises compositions by British composers over the last 100 years, many of which have become fixtures of Christmas carol services around the world.

Our opening track, *Balulalow*, by the esteemed composer and conductor James Burton, sets a medieval English text, and was written whilst he was still a student at Cambridge University. Another former Cambridge student (and tenor in The King's Singers from 1985 to 1997) is Bob Chilcott. His work, *The Shepherd's Carol*, was written for the Choir of King's College in 2001, and specially adapted for us in 2018. *The quiet heart* by June Collin – with words by James Morgan – has all the charm and immediate familiarity of a folk song, but was written in 1968 for musicians of the Salvation Army, with whom we have collaborated on numerous occasions. In the same kind of calming spirit as *The quiet heart*, *O, do not move* was written in 1990 by the British composer Sir John Tavener, and offers an unusual, eerier soundscape among some



of the more luscious textures on the album. In Tavener's own words, the piece is designed to create an atmosphere of 'Quiet, with unearthly stillness'. Its text, by the Greek poet Giorgos Seferis, commands the listener with

beautiful brevity and gravitas: 'O, do not move; Listen, to the gentle beginning.' From composers working earlier in the 20th Century, we have included Ralph Vaughan Williams' setting of the beautiful *Wither's Rocking Hymn* and Michael

Head's famous song, *The little road to Bethlehem* – both adapted by members of the group to fit our unique forces.

The final layer of works in this collection is influenced by our travels around the world, and includes some of the most celebrated Christmas music to come out of Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and France. Both *Brich an, o schönes Morgenlicht* (*Break, O beautiful morning light*) by Johann Sebastian Bach, and *L'adieu des Bergers* (*The Shepherd's Farewell*) by Hector Berlioz, come from large-scale oratorios – *Weihnachtsoratorium* and *L'enfance du Christ* respectively – but have taken on lives of their own as excerptible miniatures. We have taken two beautiful carols from the magical and frosty lands of Scandinavia. Inspired partly by a wonderful tour to Denmark shortly before pandemic hit in

2020, *Julebudet til dem, der bygge* (*The Christmas message*) is an old Danish carol with a beautiful lilting melody, arranged by a leading light in Danish choral music today, Bo Holten. From Sweden, Gustav Nordqvist's *Jul, jul, strålande jul* (*Christmas, Christmas, brilliant Christmas*) captures some of the beauty of the Swedish Christmas tradition, part of which is the Sankta Lucia service which takes place in mid-December, illuminated solely by candles and celebrating light at a time of darkness. For choral singers, Pierre Villette's *Hymne à la Vierge* (*Hymn to the Virgin*) may well be familiar; it explores the line between the worlds of sacred choral music and jazz, pairing its lyrical melody with sumptuous harmonisations which reach their peak in the final few seconds. Our closing track, *Fröhliche Weihnacht überall* (*Merry Christmas all around*), also treads a fine line, pairing

as it does a traditional German carol from the 19th Century, with Matthias Bucher's footloose bossa-nova-style arrangement and an orchestral flourish to finish. If the rest of this album evokes fireside warmth and nostalgia, we anticipate that *Fröhliche Weihnacht überall* might just evoke a bit of red and green tinsel and the explosion of crackers at an overlaid Christmas dinner table.

Some of the inspiration for this album came from listening back through previous Christmas recordings by The King's Singers and other artists. We wanted to work out what spoke to us most, and why. One recording to which we kept returning was the group's 2003 album *Christmas*. We felt that it captured the intimate, acoustic sound of a live King's Singers performance, and reflected the British choral heritage of our group perfectly in its repertoire. In some

ways, *Christmas Carols with The King's Singers* is a kind of homage to that album – a response from 17 years on and eight singers later. Another thing that helped inspire us while we were recording this music was a beautiful accident of the diary. With our concert calendar having been dramatically reshaped in 2020–21, we realised that – unlike many Christmas albums – we would be able to record this one in December, just before Christmas itself. So we decamped to the beautiful city of Wells in the west of England to record it over four days, and when we weren't singing, we were able to take our lunch breaks at the city's Christmas market, wander the beautiful Cathedral grounds in our scarves and coats, and fully embrace that same magical spirit which inspired the 25 tracks which make up *Christmas Carols with The King's Singers*.

# TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

## 1 **Balulalow** James Burton (b. 1974)

O my dear heart, young Jesus sweet,  
Prepare thy cradle in my spreit  
And I shall rock thee in my heart  
And never mair from thee depart.

But I shall praise thee evermore  
With sanges sweet unto thy gloir;  
The knees of my heart shall I bow  
And sing that richt Balulalow.

## 2 **Gaudete! (Rejoice!)**

Traditional, arr. Brian Kay (b. 1944)

Gaudete! Gaudete!  
Christus est natus ex Maria Virgine,  
Gaudete!

Tempus adest gratiae,  
Hoc quod optabamus,  
Carmina laetitiae  
Devote reddamus.

Deus homo factus est,  
Natura mirante,

Mundus renovatus est  
A Christo regnante.

Ezechielis porta  
Clausa pertransitur,  
Unde lux est orta  
Salus invenitur.

Ergo nostra contio  
Psallat iam in lustro;  
Benedicat Domino,  
Salus regi nostro.

*Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Christ is born of the Virgin Mary,  
Rejoice!*

*The time of grace has come,  
For which we have prayed.  
Let us devoutly sing  
Songs of joy.*

*God is made man,  
A wonder to nature,  
The world is renewed  
With Christ as King.*

*The closed gate of Ezekiel  
Has been passed through;  
Whence the light has risen,  
Salvation is found.*

*Therefore let our assembly  
Sing praises now in the light;  
Let it bless the Lord –  
Greetings to our King.*

## 3 **O little town of Bethlehem** Traditional, arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958) ad. Patrick Dunachie (b. 1993)

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.  
O come to us, abide with us,  
Our Lord Emmanuel.

## 4 **Tomorrow shall be my dancing day** David Willcocks (1919–2015)

Tomorrow shall be my dancing day,  
I would my true love did so chance  
To see the legend of my play,  
To call my true love to my dance.

Sing O my love, O my love, my  
love, my love,  
This have I done for my true love.

Sing, O my love, sing, O my love.

Then was I born of a Virgin pure,  
Of her I took fleshly substance;

Thus was I knit to man's nature,  
To call my true love to my dance.

Sing O my love, O my love, my  
love, my love,  
This have I done for my true love.

In a manger laid and wrapp'd I was,  
So very poor this was my chance,  
Betwixt an ox and a silly poor ass,  
To call my true love to my dance.

Sing O my love, O my love, my  
love, my love,  
This have I done for my true love.

Tomorrow shall be my dancing day,  
I would my true love did so chance  
To see the legend of my play,  
To call my true love to my dance.

Sing O my love, O my love, my  
love, my love,  
This have I done for my true love.

Sing, O my love, sing, O my love.

## 5 The Shepherd's Carol

Bob Chilcott (b. 1955)

We stood on the hills, Lady,  
Our day's work done,

Watching the frosted meadows  
That winter had won.

The evening was calm, Lady,  
The air so still,  
Silence more lovely than music  
Folded the hill.

There was a star, Lady,  
Shone in the night,  
Larger than Venus it was  
And bright, so bright.

Oh, a voice from the sky, Lady,  
It seemed to us then  
Telling of God being born  
In the world of men.

And so we have come, Lady,  
Our day's work done,  
Our love, our hopes, ourselves,  
We give to your son.

## 6 La filadora (The spinner)

Traditional, arr. Goff Richards  
(1944–2011)

Un pobre pagès tenia una filla,  
Tenia quinze anys i encara no fila  
Tralalà, la, la, la, primfila, primfila,

Tralalà, la, la, la, primfila i se'n va

La nit de Nadal, que és nit d'alegria,  
Pren filosa i fus, dóna un tomb  
per vila.

N'encontra el galant, el qui ella volia  
"D'on veniu, Joan?" "On aneu,  
Maria?"

"A cal teixidor, que hi tinc  
peça ordida?"

"Quantes canes hi ha,  
hermosa Maria?"

"Quantes canes hi ha, de la  
peça ordida?"

"Setze canes té; me'n manquen  
les quinze!"

"Què en farem del drap, hermosa  
Maria?"

"En farem llençols, llençols i camises."

"Del que ens quedarà  
pararem botiga:  
cap més no n'hi haurà tan  
ben proveïda."

*A poor farmer had a daughter;  
She was fifteen and she still  
didn't know how to spin.*

*Tralala, la, la, la,  
She spins expertly, she spins expertly.  
Tralala, la, la, la,  
She spins expertly, and then leaves.*

*On Christmas Eve, which is  
a joyful night,  
She takes her distaff and spindle,  
and walks round the village.*

*She finds her beau, the one she  
really wants.  
"Where are you coming from,  
John?" "Where are you going,  
Mary?"*

*"I'm going to see the weaver, for  
I have warp threads"  
"How many lengths are there,  
lovely Mary?"*

*"How many lengths are there  
of warped thread?"  
"There are sixteen lengths: I still  
need fifteen!"*

*"What shall we make with  
the cloth?"  
"Bed sheets and shirts."*

*"With whatever is left over,*



*we shall open a shop;  
There won't be a shop as  
well-stocked as ours!"*

**7 The quiet heart** June Collin

Twas in the stillness of the night  
that Jesus came;  
No blare of trumpets heralded  
his birth,  
Nor broke the wonted silence  
of the earth;  
No clang of bells or blatant  
hue and cry  
Disturbed the calm beneath  
the Bethlehem sky.  
When Jesus came 'twas night,  
And the world was still.

'Tis to the quiet heart he loves  
to come:  
Not often 'midst the tumult of  
the day,  
When we can find small time  
to think or pray,  
Or when, confused by  
agitating care,  
We find no secret place for him  
to share.

We must be still if we his voice  
would hear.  
'Tis to the quiet heart he loves  
to come.

**8 Hodie Christus natus est  
(Christ is born today)** Plainchant

Hodie Christus natus est.  
Hodie Salvator apparuit.  
Hodie in terra canunt angeli.  
Laetantur archangeli.  
Hodie exultant iusti, dicentes:  
Gloria in excelsis Deo.  
Alleluia!

*Today Christ was born.  
Today the Saviour appeared.  
Today the angels are singing  
on earth.  
The archangels are rejoicing.  
Today the righteous are  
celebrating, saying:  
Glory to God in the highest.  
Alleluia!*

**9 Ding! Dong! Merrily on high**  
Thoinot Arbeau (1520–1595),  
arr. Charles Wood (1866–1926)

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!

**10 O, do not move**  
John Tavener (1944–2013)

O, do not move;  
Listen to the gentle beginning.

**11 O magnum mysterium (O great  
mystery)** Tomás Luis de Victoria  
(1548–1611)

O magnum mysterium et  
admirabile sacramentum,  
Ut animalia viderent Dominum  
natum, iacentem in praesepio.  
O beata Virgo,  
Cuius viscera meruerunt portare  
Dominum Jesum Christum.  
Alleluia.

*O great mystery and wonderful  
sacrament,  
That beasts should see the new-  
born Lord, lying in a manger.  
O blessed virgin,  
Whose body was worthy to bear  
the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Alleluia*

**12 Once in royal David's City**  
Henry John Gauntlett (1805–1876)  
and Arthur Henry Mann (1850–1929)  
ad. Nick Ashby (b. 1987)

Once in Royal David's city  
Stood a lowly cattle shed,



Where a mother laid her Baby  
In a manger for His bed:  
Mary was that mother mild,  
Jesus Christ her little Child.

He came down to earth from  
heaven,  
Who is God and Lord of all,  
And His shelter was a stable,  
And His cradle was a stall;  
With the poor, and mean,  
and lowly,  
Lived on earth our Saviour holy.

And our eyes at last shall see Him,  
Through His own redeeming love;  
For that Child so dear and gentle  
Is our Lord in heaven above,  
And He leads His children on  
To the place where He is gone.

Not in that poor lowly stable,  
With the oxen standing by,  
We shall see Him; but in heaven,  
Set at God's right hand on high;  
Where like stars His children  
crowned  
All in white shall wait around.

**13 Brich an, o schönes Morgenlicht  
(Break, O beautiful morning light)**  
Johann Sebastian Bach

Brich an, o schönes Morgenlicht,  
Und lass den Himmel tagen!  
Du Hirtenvolk, erschrecke nicht,  
Weil dir die Engel sagen,  
Dass dieses schwache Knäbelein  
Soll unser Trost und Freude sein,  
Dazu den Satan zwingen,  
Und letztlich Friede bringen!

*Break, o beautiful morning light,  
and let heaven dawn!  
You shepherd folk, do not fear,  
For the angels tell you  
That this weak little boy  
Shall be our comfort and joy,  
Compelling Satan as well,  
and bringing peace at last!*

**14 Julebudet til dem, der bygge  
(The Christmas message)** Johan  
Peter Emilius Hartmann (1805–  
1900), arr. Bo Holten (b. 1948)

Julebudet til dem, der bygge  
Her i mørket og dødens skygge,

Det er det lys, som, aldrig slukt,  
Jager det stigende mulm på flugt,  
Åbner udsigten fra det lave,  
Trøster mildelig mellem grave.

Julebudet i vinterens vande,  
Det er Gud Faders varme ånde,  
Menneskefaldet til frelse vendt,  
Menneskets adel på ny erkendt,  
Hjertets ret til at kæmpe og vinde  
Evig fastslået, trods hver en fjende.

*The Christmas message, to those  
who dwell  
Here in the dark shadow of death,  
Is the light, which, never  
extinguished,  
Chases the rising gloom,  
Opens up the view from below,  
And gently consoles the dead.*

*The Christmas message, in the  
agony of winter,  
Is God the Father's warm breath,  
Turned to save the fall of man,  
Recognising again the nobility  
of man,  
The heart's right to fight and win  
Against all enemies.*

**15 Gabriel's Message** Traditional,  
arr. Edgar Pettman (1866–1943)

The angel Gabriel from Heaven  
came,  
His wings as drifted snow, His eyes  
as flame;  
"All hail," said he, "Thou lowly  
maiden Mary,"  
Most highly favoured lady, Gloria!

"For known a blessed Mother  
thou shalt be,  
All generations laud and honour  
thee,  
Thy Son shall be Emmanuel,  
by seers foretold,"  
Most highly favoured lady, Gloria!

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed  
her head,  
"To me be as it pleaseth God,"  
she said,  
"My soul shall laud and magnify  
his holy name."  
Most highly favoured lady, Gloria!  
Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ,  
was born

In Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,  
And Christian folk throughout the world will ever say:  
Most highly favoured lady, Gloria!

**16 Hymne à la Vierge (Hymn to the Virgin)** Pierre Villette (1926–1998)

Ô toute belle Vierge Marie,  
Votre âme trouve en Dieu le parfait amour,  
Il vous revêt du manteau de la Grâce  
Comme une fiancée parée de ses joyaux.

Alléluia, alléluia.  
Je vais chanter ta louange,  
Seigneur,  
Car tu as pris soin de moi,  
Car tu m'as enveloppée du voile de l'innocence.

Vous êtes née avant les collines,  
Ô sagesse de Dieu, porte du Salut,  
Heureux celui qui marche dans vos traces,  
Qui apprête son cœur à la voix de vos conseils.

Alléluia, alléluia.  
Car tu m'as faite avant le jour,  
Car tu m'as fait précéder le jaillissement des sources.

Avant les astres vous étiez présente,  
Mère du Créateur au profond du ciel.  
Quand Dieu fixait les limites du monde,  
Vous partagiez son cœur étant à l'œuvre avec lui.  
Alléluia.

Ô toute belle Vierge Marie.  
*O beautiful Virgin Mary,  
In God your soul discovers perfect love.  
It cloaks you with the mantle of Grace,  
Like a betrothed adorned with her jewels.*

*Alleluia, alleluia.  
I will sing your praise, Lord,  
For you have looked after me,  
For you have covered me with the veil of innocence.*

*You were born before the hills,  
O wisdom of God, the way to salvation.  
Happy is he who walks in your footsteps,  
Who prepares his heart to listen to your advice.*

*Alleluia, alleluia.  
For you have made me before the day,  
For you have made me go before the gushing of fountains.*

*You were present before the stars,  
Mother of the Creator, in the very depths of heaven.  
When God was creating the world,  
Working with Him, you shared His heart,  
Alleluia.*

*O beautiful Virgin Mary.*

**17 The little road to Bethlehem**  
Michael Head (b. 1961),  
arr. Grayston Ives (b. 1948)

As I walked down the road at set of sun,

The lambs were coming homewards one by one.  
I heard a sheepbell softly calling them  
Along the little road to Bethlehem.

Beside an open door as I drew nigh,  
I heard sweet Mary sing a lullaby.  
She sang about the lambs at close of day,  
And rocked her tiny King among the hay.

Across the air the silver sheepbells rang,  
"The lambs are coming home, " sweet Mary sang.  
"Your star of gold, your star of gold is shining in the sky,  
So sleep, my little King, go lullaby"

As I walked down the road at set of sun,  
The lambs were coming homewards one by one.  
I heard a sheepbell softly calling them  
Along the little road to Bethlehem

**18 Dormi, dormi (*Sleep, sleep*)**

Traditional, arr. Guy Turner  
(b. 1955)

Dormi, dormi, o bel bambin,  
Bel bambin, bel bambin,  
Fa la nanna, o fantolino,  
Re divin, Re divin,  
Fa la nanna, o fantolino.

Perche piange, o mio tesoro?  
Dolce amor, dolce amor,  
Fa la nanna, o caro figlio,  
Tanto bel, tanto bel,  
Fa la nanna, o caro figlio.

*Sleep, sleep o beautiful Child  
Beautiful child, beautiful child,  
Go to sleep, baby,  
King divine, King divine,  
Go to sleep, baby.*

*Why do you cry, o my treasure?  
Sweet love, sweet love,  
Go to sleep, dear Son,  
So beautiful, so beautiful,  
Go to sleep, dear son.*

**19 Nit de vetlla (*A night of watching*)**

Traditional,  
arr. Goff Richards

Eixanit és nit de vetlla.  
N'ha parit una doncella.  
La miren i fa sol,  
Un infant com una estrella.  
Loilà Kyrie eleison,  
Loilà Christe eleison.

Anirem al camp,  
Pomes a cullir,  
Pometes cullirem  
Que de Déu serem:  
Pometes al ram,  
Que de Déu sigam.

Als pastors l'àngel desvetlla,  
I els hi diu la meravella,  
La mira i fa sol,  
Amb sa dolça cantarella.  
Loilà Kyrie eleison,  
Loilà Christe eleison.

*Tonight is a night of watching.  
A maiden has given birth.  
They look at her and it's sunny,  
A child like a star.*

*Lord, have mercy,  
Christ, have mercy.*

*We will go to the field to pick  
apples,  
Apples we will reap,  
From God we will be.  
Little apples in a bouquet,  
May we be from God.*

*The angel awakens the shepherds  
And he tells them the wonder,  
He looks at her and it's sunny,  
With his sweet singsong.  
Lord, have mercy,  
Christ, have mercy.*

**20 Wither's Rocking Hymn** Ralph  
Vaughan Williams, arr. Christopher  
Bruerton (b. 1985)

*Sweet baby, sleep; what ails my dear?  
What ails my darling thus to cry?  
Be still, my child, and lend thine ear  
To hear me sing thy lullaby.  
My pretty lamb, forbear to weep;  
Be still, my dear; sweet baby, sleep.*

*The King of kings when he was born,  
Had not so much for outward ease;*

*By him such dressings were not worn,  
Nor suchlike swaddling-clothes  
as these.*

*Sweet baby, then, forbear to weep;  
Be still, my dear; sweet baby, sleep.*

*Whilst thus thy lullaby I sing,  
For thee great blessings ripening be;  
Thine eldest brother is a king,  
And hath a kingdom bought for thee.  
Sweet baby, then, forebear to weep,  
Be still, my dear; sweet baby, sleep.*

**21 Jul, jul, strålande jul (*Christmas, Christmas, brilliant Christmas*)**  
Gustaf Nordqvist (1886–1949)

*Jul, jul, strålande jul, glans över  
vita skogar,  
Himmelens kronor med  
gnistrande ljus.  
Glimmande bägar 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, brilliant  
Christmas: shine over white forests,  
Heavenly crowns with sparkling  
lights,  
Glimmering arcs in the houses  
of God,  
Hymns that are sung throughout  
the ages,  
Eternal longing for light and peace!  
Christmas, Christmas, brilliant  
Christmas, shine over white forests!*

*Come, come, blessed Christmas:  
lower your white wings,  
Over the battlefield's blood and cry,  
Over the breaths from the bosoms  
of men,  
Over the loved ones who've gone  
to their rest,  
Over the daybreak of newborn life!  
Come, come, blessed Christmas:  
lower your white wings!*

## 22 The Lute-Book Lullaby

Anonymous, arr. Geoffrey Shaw  
(1879–1943)

Sweet was the song the Virgin sang  
When she to Bethlem Judah came,  
And was delivered of a son,  
That blessed Jesu hath to name:  
"Lula, lula, lula lullaby,  
Lula, lula, lula lullaby.  
Sweet babe," sang she,  
"My son, and eke a saviour born,  
Who hast vouchsaféd from on high  
To visit us that were forlorn:  
Lalula, lalula,  
La lullaby. Sweet babe," sang she,  
And rock'd him sweetly on her knee.

That King three kingés came to see,  
His palace but a stable bare,  
Then fell they down upon their knee,  
Fitly to offer homage there.  
"Lula, lula, lula lullaby,  
Lula, lula, lula lullaby.  
Sweet babe," sang she,  
"Our Lord, a King by Virgin birth."  
So sweetly has it come to pass  
That Goddés son might walk  
on Earth:

"Lalula, lalula,  
La lullaby. Sweet babe," sang she,  
"To him all pow'r and glory be."

## 23 Qui creavit caelum (*He by whom the heavens were made*) (Song of the Nuns of Chester) Plainchant

Qui creavit coelum  
Lully, lully, lu  
Nascitur in stabulo  
By, by, by, by, by  
Rex qui regit seculum  
Lully, lully, lu

Joseph emit paniculum  
By, by, by, by, by  
Mater involvit puerum  
Lully, lully, lu  
Et ponit in praesepe  
By, by, by, by, by

Inter animalia  
Lully, lully, lu  
Iacent mundi gaudia  
By, by, by, by, by  
Dulcis super omnia  
Lully, lully, lu

Lactat mater Domini

By, by, by, by, by  
Osculatur parvulum  
Lully, lully, lu  
Et adorat Dominum  
By, by, by, by, by

Roga mater filium  
Lully, lully, lu  
Ut det nobis gaudium  
By, by, by, by, by  
In perenni gloria  
Lully, lully, lu

In sempiterna saecula  
By, by, by, by, by  
In eternum et ultra  
Lully, lully, lu  
Det nobis sua gaudia  
By, by, by, by, by

*He who created the heaven  
Lully, lully, lu  
Is born in a stable  
By, by, by, by, by  
The king who rules the world  
Lully, lully, lu*

*Joseph buys the swaddling clothes  
By, by, by, by, by*

The Mother wraps the babe  
Lully, lully, lu  
And places him in the manger  
By, by, by, by, by

Among the animals  
Lully, lully, lu  
Lies all earthly joy  
By, by, by, by, by  
The sweetest joy of all  
Lully, lully, lu

The Mother suckles the Lord  
By, by, by, by, by  
She kisses the babe  
Lully, lully, lu  
And worships her Lord  
By, by, by, by, by

O Mother, ask your son  
Lully, lully, lu  
To give us joy  
By, by, by, by, by  
In everlasting glory  
Lully, lully, lu

Unto ages of ages  
By, by, by, by, by  
To eternity and beyond  
Lully, lully, lu

May he grant us his grace  
By, by, by, by, by

**24 L'adieu des Bergers (The Shepherd's Farewell)**

Hector Berlioz (1803–1869),  
arr. Christopher Bruerton

Il s'en va loin de la terre  
Où dans l'étable il vit le jour.  
De son père et de sa mère  
Qu'il reste le constant amour,  
Qu'il grandisse, qu'il prospère  
Et qu'il soit bon père à son tour.

Cher enfant, Dieu te bénisse!  
Dieu vous bénisse, heureux époux!  
Que jamais de l'injustice  
Vous ne puissiez sentir les coups.  
Qu'un bon ange vous avertisse  
Des dangers planant sur vous.

*He takes himself away from the land  
where, in the barn, he saw day.  
May he remain the constant love  
of his father and his mother,  
may he grow, may he thrive  
and may he be a good father in  
his turn.*

Dear child, God bless you!  
God bless you, happy couple!  
May you never never feel  
The blows of injustice.  
May a good angel warn you  
Of the dangers hovering over you.

**25 Fröhliche Weihnacht überall  
(Merry Christmas all around)**  
Traditional, arr. Matthias Bucher  
(b. 1988)

“Fröhliche Weihnacht überall!”  
Tönet durch die Lüfte froher Schall.  
Weihnachtston, Weihnachtsbaum,  
Weihnachtsduft in jedem Raum!  
“Fröhliche Weihnacht überall!”  
Tönet durch die Lüfte froher Schall.

Darum alle stimmt ein  
In den Jubelton,  
Denn es kommt das Licht der Welt  
Von des Vaters Thron.

Licht auf dunklem Wege,  
Unser Licht bist du;  
Denn du führst, die dir vertrau'n,  
Ein zu sel'gen Ruh'.

Was wir ander'n taten,  
Sei getan für dich,  
Dass bekennen jeder muss,  
Christkind kam für mich.

“Merry Christmas all around!”  
Resounds joyfully through the air.  
Christmas sounds, Christmas tree,  
Christmas scent in every room!  
“Merry Christmas all round!”  
resounds joyfully through the air.

Thus all join together  
In the joyous sound  
For the Light of the World comes  
From the Father's throne.

Light on the dark path,  
You are our light;  
For You guide the faithful  
To blessed peace.

What we did for others  
Is done for You.  
Everyone must profess,  
“The Christ Child came for me.”

# THE KING'S SINGERS

**Patrick Dunachie**  
countertenor

**Julian Gregory**  
tenor

**Nick Ashby**  
baritone

**Edward Button**  
countertenor

**Christopher Bruerton**  
baritone

**Jonathan Howard**  
bass

What has always distinguished the group is their comfort in an unprecedented range of styles and genres, pushing the boundaries of their repertoire, while at the same time honouring their origins in the British choral tradition. They are known and loved around the world, and appear regularly in major cities, festivals and venues across Europe, North America, Asia and Australasia, including Carnegie Hall, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Leipzig Gewandhaus, Mozarteum Salzburg, Tonhalle Zurich, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Edinburgh International Festival, Helsinki

Music Centre, Sydney Opera House, Tokyo Opera City and the National Centre for the Performing Arts, Beijing. They also work with orchestras, recently including the NDR Radiophilharmonie and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, with whom they performed a specially commissioned work by Sir James MacMillan.

The King's Singers' extensive discography has led to numerous awards including two Grammy Awards, an Emmy Award, and a place in Gramophone magazine's inaugural Hall of Fame. As part of



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their 50th anniversary celebrations in 2018, the group undertook a series of major tours worldwide, supporting the release of a special anniversary album GOLD (also nominated for a Grammy Award), which featured important works

in the group's history and new commissions by Bob Chilcott, John Rutter and Nico Muhly.

This commitment to creating a new repertoire has always been central to the group, with over 200 commissioned works by many

leading composers of the 20th and 21st Centuries, including John Tavener, Judith Bingham, Eric Whitacre, György Ligeti, Luciano Berio, Krzysztof Penderecki and Toru Takemitsu. These join a unique body of close-harmony and a cappella arrangements, including those by individual King's Singers past and present. Many of their early collaborators' own experience with brass bands helped to inform the distinct 'King's Singers sound' and a large number of their commissioned works and arrangements are available in their own signature series with Hal Leonard, selling over two million copies worldwide. A key to the group's success has been their ability to evolve and innovate over many years – and through 28 individual members – while always retaining this special sound and musical integrity.

They also lead educational workshops and residential courses

across the world, working with groups and individuals on their techniques and approaches to ensemble singing. In 2018 they founded The King's Singers Global Foundation to provide a platform for the creation of new music across multiple disciplines, coach a new generation of performers and provide musical opportunities to people of all backgrounds.

The King's Singers were formed in 1968, when six recent choral scholars from King's College, Cambridge gave a concert at London's Queen Elizabeth Hall. By chance, the group was made up of two counter-tenors, a tenor, two baritones and a bass, and the group has maintained this formation ever since that debut.

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## THANKS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## PUBLISHERS

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Fröhliche Weihnacht überall

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# DEDICATION

Few people in history have contributed as much to the world of choral music at Christmas as Sir Stephen Cleobury. Over the course of decades, his work – particularly his radio and television broadcasts from King's College at Christmas – has offered countless people around the world peace and happiness. For generations of his choristers, choral scholars and organ scholars too, his tireless energy and commitment to his craft has left a lasting legacy. For The King's Singers – particularly those of us who spent time under his wing as students – we owe him a great debt. Never is this more keenly felt than at Christmas.

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***Christmas Carols with The King's Singers* is  
dedicated to the memory of Sir Stephen Cleobury  
(1948 – 2019)**