

A festive Christmas wreath border made of green evergreen branches and clusters of bright red berries frames the central text. Gold stars are visible in the corners.

# *Festival of* **CAROLS**

Sylvia McNair, Soprano  
Indianapolis Symphonic Choir  
Eric Stark, Conductor

## Festival of Carols

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| <p><b>1</b> <b>Lowell MASON</b> (1792–1872)<br/> <b>Joy to the World!</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>2:53</b></span><br/> (1836, arr. 2006, M. Wilberg, b. 1955)<br/> (Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748)</p>   | <p><b>6</b> <b>TRADITIONAL SPIRITUAL</b><br/> <b>This Little Light of Mine</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>4:06</b></span><br/> (arr. 2002, M. Hogan, 1957–2003)<br/> <i>Sylvia McNair, Soprano</i></p>                                 |
| <p><b>2</b> <b>ANONYMOUS</b><br/> <b>Sir Christèmas</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>1:25</b></span><br/> (c. 1500, arr. 1971,<br/> W. Mathias, 1934–1992)</p>   | <p><b>7</b> <b>John RUTTER</b> (b. 1945)<br/> <b>Magnificat</b> (1990) <span style="float: right;"><b>6:47</b></span><br/> (Text: Traditional)</p>   |
| <p><b>3</b> <b>David FOSTER</b> (b. 1949) /<br/> <b>Linda THOMPSON JENNER</b> (b. 1950)<br/> <b>Grown-Up Christmas List</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>4:50</b></span><br/> (1990, arr. 2002,<br/> D.T. Clydesdale, b. 1954)<br/> <i>Sylvia McNair, Soprano</i></p>  | <p><b>8</b> <b>TRADITIONAL</b><br/> <b>Kling, Glöckchen, Kling</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>3:13</b></span><br/> (2001 Setting, S. Mager)</p>  |
| <p><b>4</b> <b>Rob SWENSON</b> (b. 1983)<br/> <b>Christmas Hosanna</b> (2016) <span style="float: right;"><b>2:51</b></span><br/> <i>David Duncan, Piano</i></p>   | <p><b>9</b> <b>Johann Sebastian BACH</b> (1685–1750)<br/> <b>Christmas Oratorio, BWV 248 –</b><br/> <b>X. Sinfonia</b> (1734) <span style="float: right;"><b>5:33</b></span><br/> <i>Michael Davis, Conductor</i></p>                      |
| <p><b>5</b> <b>Felix MENDELSSOHN</b> (1809–1847)<br/> <b>Hark! the Herald Angels Sing</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>3:36</b></span><br/> (1856, arr. 2006, M. Wilberg)<br/> (Tune taken from second movement<br/> of <i>Festgesang</i>, 1840, adapted by<br/> William Cummings, 1831–1915)<br/> (Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–1788)</p> | <p><b>10</b> <b>Buddy GREENE</b> (b. 1953)<br/> <b>Mary, Did You Know?</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>4:29</b></span><br/> (1991, arr. 2016, B. Eads, b. 1978)<br/> (Text: Mark Lowry, b. 1958)<br/> <i>Sylvia McNair, Soprano</i></p> |
|  | <p><b>11</b> <b>John RUTTER</b><br/> <b>All Bells in Paradise</b> (2012) <span style="float: right;"><b>6:08</b></span></p>  |
|  | <p><b>12</b> <b>James Lord PIERPONT</b> (1822–1893)<br/> <b>Jingle Bells</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>2:40</b></span><br/> (1857, arr. 2014, M. Wilberg)</p>   |

<b>TRADITIONAL</b>			<b>TRADITIONAL</b>		
<b>13</b>	<b>Go Tell It on the Mountain</b>	<b>3:02</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella</b>	<b>4:21</b>
	(arr. 2016, B. Eads)			(arr. 2009, M. Wilberg)	
	<i>Sylvia McNair, Soprano</i>				
	<i>David Duncan, Piano</i>				
<b>William GOLDSTEIN (b. 1942)</b>			<b>Adolphe ADAM (1803–1856)</b>		
<b>14</b>	<b>'Twas the Night Before Christmas</b>	<b>6:09</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>O Holy Night</b>	<b>6:15</b>
	(1972)			(1847, arr. 2008, B. Eads)	
	(Text: Clement Clarke Moore, 1779–1863)			(Text: Traditional, Brian Eads)	
	<i>Sherry Stark, Narrator</i>			<i>Sylvia McNair, Soprano</i>	
			<b>Glenn RUDOLPH (b. 1951)</b>		
			<b>17</b>	<b>The Dream Isaiah Saw (2001)</b>	<b>5:55</b>
				(Text: Thomas H. Troeger, b. 1945)	

**Indianapolis Symphonic Choir  
Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra  
Eric Stark, Conductor**

Recorded live: 16–17 December 2016 **1 3 4 7–11 13 15–17**  
and 18–19 December 2015 **2 5 6 12 14**  
at The Palladium at The Center for the Performing Arts, Carmel, Indiana, USA

## Festival of Carols

The Indianapolis Symphonic Choir is pleased to present this collection of best-loved works from the 2015 and 2016 performances of our annual Festival of Carols concerts, recorded before live audiences. As in our live performances, this recording represents a mix of familiar and newer selections that celebrate the joys of the holiday season. We are especially honoured to include here several pieces performed with our guest artist, GRAMMY Award-winning vocalist Sylvia McNair.

The first two selections capture the joyous excitement of the holidays. Mack Wilberg's exuberant setting of *Joy to the World* opens this recording with a flourish, featuring brilliant writing for chorus and orchestra in equal measure. Arranged in 1971 by William Mathias, *Sir Christèmas* sets the anonymous 15th-century text in mixed English and French to contemporary swaggering rhythms and boisterous harmonies.

The next two works offer a thoughtful counterpoint to the hustle and bustle of the holidays. Receiving popular acclaim after singer Amy Grant's 1992 release, *Grown-Up Christmas List*, by David Foster and Linda Thompson Jenner, soars with the power of McNair's jewel-like voice. The work's sensitive plea – 'No more lives torn apart, that wars would never start ... This is my grown-up Christmas list' –

offers a heartfelt message of peace. *Christmas Hosanna* was the 2016 winner of the annual Christmas Carol Composition Competition sponsored by the Indianapolis Symphonic Choir. Utah-based composer Rob Swenson combines a shimmering accompaniment for piano and bells with evocative choral writing.

*Hark! the Herald Angels Sing* and *This Little Light of Mine*, arranged by Mack Wilberg and Moses Hogan respectively, offer updated settings of these holiday favourites, the latter sensitively led by guest vocalist Sylvia McNair.

John Rutter's *Magnificat*, written and premiered in 1990, is described by the composer as a 'Latin-flavoured fiesta', incorporating expanded percussion in the colourful orchestration. This recording of the first movement of Rutter's full work sparkles in lively rhythms and lush vocal writing that reflects the astonishment conveyed in the text: 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my saviour'.

*Kling, Glöckchen, Kling*, set by St Louis-based Stephen Mager, updates the 19th-century German carol with deft harmonic magic that surprises and delights the ear. J.S. Bach's beloved *Sinfonia* from the *Christmas Oratorio*, suggests the tranquillity of that night the shepherds encountered the angel with the good news of Christ's birth.

*Mary, Did You Know?*, by Buddy Greene and Mark Lowry, is presented in a moving new arrangement for strings and soloist by Brian Eads. At times soaring, at times reflective, Eads's setting treats tenderly the simple yet profound questions offered to Mother Mary.

A pair of bell songs revel in the festive imagery of the holiday season. In particular, Rutter's setting fervently tolls, 'All bells in paradise I heard them ring: "Glory to God on high" the angel voices sweetly sing'.

Guest artist Sylvia McNair and Indianapolis Symphonic Choir keyboard artist David Duncan pair up for a gospel-inspired rendition of *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, with a mix of improvisation and technical virtuosity that is as astonishing as it is thrilling.

Clement Clarke Moore (1779–1863) served as professor at The General Theological Seminary in New York City, in the area now known as Chelsea, on land donated to the Seminary by Moore himself. Yet he is now best known as the author credited with the famous poem *A Visit from Saint Nicholas*, first published anonymously in 1823. Now an ever-present tradition at the holidays, the charming text is presented here in a version for orchestra, chorus and narrator, in composer William Goldstein's *'Twas the Night Before Christmas*. Mixing Waring-like choral exuberance with picturesque writing for orchestra, Goldstein's setting invites the listener hearthside for an

eyewitness account of the jolly old elf's arrival. Narrator Sherry Stark, mother of Indianapolis Symphonic Choir artistic director Eric Stark, brings Moore's words to life with her sparkling delivery.

Two holiday favourites, *Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella*, arranged by Mack Wilberg, and *O Holy Night*, arranged by Brian Eads, are presented in stirring accounts by soloist Sylvia McNair, the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra and the Indianapolis Symphonic Choir.

The final selection is a piece that has become an annual feature of the Symphonic Choir's Festival of Carols performances. Written in response to the events of September 11, 2001, composer Glenn Rudolph sets the richly powerful text by Thomas Troeger in *The Dream Isaiah Saw*. Originally composed for brass, organ and percussion, this recording features Rudolph's own arrangement for full orchestra. Its message of hope, reconciliation and peace is one we share with all our friends in the extended Indianapolis Symphonic Choir family, whether in attendance at one of our live performances or enjoying the music through these recordings. Celebration, excitement, peace, hope and music ... it's a *Festival of Carols*!

**Eric Stark**

## **Sylvia McNair**

Soprano Sylvia McNair had spent years performing with esteemed orchestras and opera companies across the US and Europe. She has sung Bach's *Mass in B minor* in the Vatican for the Pope, and received an invitation to the White House from an enthusiastic Hillary Clinton. She has appeared with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the San Francisco Symphony and The Cleveland Orchestra, and has worked many times with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra conducted by Robert Shaw, the Boston Symphony Orchestra with Seiji Ozawa, the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra led by Leonard Slatkin and the New York Philharmonic with Kurt Masur.



Photo: Ronnie Griffith



Eric Stark, Conductor  
Michael Davis, Assistant Artistic Director  
David Duncan, Keyboard Artist

Founded in 1937, the Indianapolis Symphonic Choir is one of the most established and dynamic musical institutions in the US. This independent symphonic chorus reaches an audience of over 28,000 each season with more than 25 performances and a comprehensive educational/outreach programme. The approximately 200 volunteer singers demonstrate the Choir's commitment to musical excellence through their talent and dedication during each 44-week season. Under artistic director Eric Stark, the organisation is led by a professional staff and governed by a board of directors.

[www.indychoir.org](http://www.indychoir.org)



The Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra (ICO) advances and promotes music composed for the small orchestra through professional performances and education programmes. Established in 1984, the ICO presents a concert series drawing on a body of musical literature spanning four centuries. Under the direction of Matthew Kraemer, the ICO has commissioned several new works and performed American and world premieres. The ICO's *Peacemakers* work became the subject of an Emmy Award-winning PBS documentary in 2017. Offering a range of educational programmes and professional accompaniment for area arts institutions, the ICO's radio broadcast airs weekly on WFYI, 90.1.

[www.icomusic.org](http://www.icomusic.org)

## **Eric Stark**

Eric Stark has served as artistic director of the Indianapolis Symphonic Choir since 2002, and has guided the ensemble to wide acclaim, including on tour to Beijing, Shanghai and Rome and at Carnegie Hall. He received the state of Indiana's highest civilian honour, Sagamore of the Wabash, in 2014, and has been named a Fulbright Scholar for 2020, when he will be teaching at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul in Porto Alegre, Brazil. In addition to his duties with the Indianapolis Symphonic Choir, Stark is also director of choral activities and professor of music at Butler University in Indianapolis, Indiana.



Photo: Owen Thomas

This collection of best-loved Christmas repertoire was recorded live at the Indianapolis Symphonic Choir Festival of Carols concerts in 2015 and 2016. GRAMMY award-winning vocalist Sylvia McNair adds her own unique beauty and warmth, and as ever, the programme celebrates the joys of the season with sparkling versions of family favourites. The tranquillity and magic of Christmas eve, heartfelt messages of hope, reconciliation and peace, and thrilling new compositions all combine to capture the celebratory excitement of the holiday season.

## FESTIVAL OF CAROLS

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|---|--|
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 Executive producer: Michael Pettry • Engineer: Michael Graham • Editors: Eric Stark and Michael Davis  
 Booklet notes: Eric Stark • Publishers: Oxford University Press **1 5 7 11 12 15 17**,  
 Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers, Inc. **2**, Word Music **3**, performed from the manuscript **4 10 13 16**, Hal Leonard **6**,  
 Hinshaw Music **8**, Neue Bach Ausgabe **9**, New Gold Music Ltd. **14**  
 Cover image: *Christmas wreath* by malerapaso (www.iStockPhoto.com)  
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