

## **Christmas at King's College**

1	trad. arr. David Willcocks: O Come All Ye Faithful	4:00
2	trad.: In Dulci Jubilo	3:31
3	trad. arr. Willcocks: Blessed be that Maid	2:36
4	trad. arr. Willcocks: God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen	3:19
5	trad.: Lutebook Lullaby	2:02
6	Jehan Tabourot arr. Willcocks:	
	Ding Dong Merrily on High (text: George Ratcliffe Woodward)	2:00
7	trad.: Myn Lyking	2:56
8	Edward Caswall: See, Amid the Winter's Snow	
	(text: Edward Caswall)	3:49
9	trad.: Personent Hodie	2:38
Α	Gustav Holst: In the Bleak Midwinter (text: Christina Rossetti)	4:45
В	trad.: Coventry Carol	2:14
C	trad. arr. Willcocks: O Little Town of Bethlehem	4:00
D	trad. arr. Willcocks: Sussex Carol "On Christmas Night"	1:57
Е	William J. Kirkpatrick arr. Willcocks:	
	Away in a Manger (text: William J. Kirkpatrick)	2:19
F	trad.: Shepherds in the Field Abiding	3:01
G	William C. Witherup: King Jesus Hath a Garden	3:49
Н	John Joubert: Torches	1:35
I	Ralph Vaughan Williams: Fantasia on Christmas Carols	11:19
J	Felix Mendelssohn: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing	
	(text: Charles Wesley)	3:33

# King's College Choir, Cambridge David Willcocks, director

with

Simon Preston, organ (11-17, 19)
London Symphony Orchestra (18)

## NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

The development of the earliest carols from purely instrumental medieval ring (round)-dances to songs with lyrics, usually with a Christmas theme, coincided with that of the mystery plays (c1350–1450). There had been those earlier, like St Francis of Assisi in the 13th century, who had introduced the crib into the church and had encouraged congregational singing, but such passionate demonstrations of faith, within the context of a church service, were frowned upon. However with the development of carols and the mystery plays the populace, especially the guilds, began to mould religious themes into forms other than the church service.

The mystery plays are known to have had occasional musical accompaniment (in Britain for example there is the *Coventry Carol*) whilst the early carols were musically simple and had a text to which everyday folk could relate. The lyrics of some carols clearly contain pagan imagery but the Christian religion has a long history of appropriating such imagery, using it within its own tradition: carol singers of today hardly give carols such as *The Holly and the Ivy*, with its fertility symbols, a second thought.

The carol disappeared under Puritan rule in the 17th century as Christmas and other religious festivals were banned by Parliament in 1647. The Restoration brought about a gradual return of the tradition of carol singing and many of the old carol tunes were also preserved as folksongs. However references to carol singing in the 1700s are scarce and it was not until the antiquarian William Sandys began collecting old tunes and verses in the 19th century that the renaissance of the carol can truly be said to have begun. During the reign of Queen Victoria Evangelical clerics such as Dr John Neale (1818–66) translated many of the old Latin hymns for use in Anglican worship, whilst at the beginning of the 20th century Cecil Sharp (1859-1924), together with Vaughan Williams, Holst and Warlock, turned their attention to the pre-Victorian carol tunes and adapted them for use in church and at Christmas holiday festivities.

Although the tradition of the service of *Nine Lessons and Carols* was initiated in the late 19th century in Truro, it is perhaps most associated with King's College Cambridge who held their first service in 1918. First broadcast in the UK in 1928, it has been regularly transmitted overseas since 1932 and the choir has boasted many fine musicians who continued to perform successfully after leaving Cambridge, including Roy Goodman, Robert Tear and Gerard Finley. Not all past choristers have persevered with a traditional musical career: the writer and broadcaster Alan Bennett sang in the choir in the late 1930s. Its Directors of Music have included Boris Ord (tenure:1929–56), David Willcocks (1957 –74), Philip Ledger (1974–82); the current incumbent is Stephen Cleobury.

ALC 1190 Booklet.indd 2 31/7/12 17:17:09No Christmas service would be complete without the stirring popular hymn *Adeste fideles* by John Wade (c1711–86) known in English as *O come all ye faithful*. It is one of the few hymns in which the congregation lose their inhibitions and 'have a go' at singing in four part harmony.

*In dulci jubilo* is a familiar macaronic 14th century German carol, apparently dictated by angels to the mystic Henry Suso, who then danced with his celestial visitors. The third stanza (beginning 'O Patris caritas') is widely believed to be the work of Martin Luther and this section first appeared in print in 1545. The work in its entirety was published in the *Piae Cantiones* (1582). This setting is by R.L. de Pearsall 1795-1856

The tunes to both *Blessed be that Maid Marie* and the *Lutebook Lullaby* (also known by its first line *Sweet was the song the Virgin sang*) were both found in William Ballet's *Lute Book* from the late 16th century. The manuscript is currently held in Trinity College, Dublin.

**God rest you merry, gentlemen** appeared in William Sandys collection of carols in 1833 and was famously mentioned in Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* nine years later. However, both text and melody are believed to date from the 18th century.

**Ding dong! Merrily on high** has a text by George Ratcliffe Woodward (1848–1934) who was a minister in London and East Anglia, also a beekeeper and keen cricket-follower! The tune is a French dance by Thoinot Arbeau (1520-95) adapted here by Charles Wood (1866–1926).

*Lullay, my liking* is one of several anonymous Christmas carols dating from the late 15th century that form part of the Sloane manuscript now held in the British museum. Gustav Holst composed this melody in 1916.

Edward Caswall (1814-78) was a curate near Salisbury who converted to Catholicism. His text for *See amid the winter's snow* first appeared in a volume of hymns adapted for use in Catholic schools in 1851. Sir John Goss (1800-80) was a chorister at the Chapel Royal who studied with Thomas Attwood (a pupil of Mozart). He became Organist of St Paul's where he taught John Stainer. For many years he was also a Professor at the Royal Academy of Music where his students included Arthur Sullivan. Goss composed this hymn in 1871.

The German tune *Personent hodie* can be traced back to 1360 and is another carol found in the *Piae Cantiones* of 1582. The English version by Jane M Joseph (1894-1929) is known by its refrain 'Sing aloud, God is good, God is truth, God is beauty. Praise him!' Gustav Holst produced ALC 1190 Booklet.indd 3 31/7/12 17:17:09this arrangement, which like *The first Nowell* is also sung during Epiphany.

The words to *In the bleak mid-winter* were written by Christina Rossetti (1830-94) for Scribners Magazine in 1872. This version by Harold Darke (1888-1976), composed whilst Darke was a student, appeared three years after another setting by Gustav Holst. In 2008 a poll amongst prominent choir leaders and organists voted Darke's version 'Best Christmas Carol'.

**Coventry Carol**, to a text by Robert Croo (1534), was first sung as part of the *Shearmen and Tailors' mystery play* in Coventry by the women whose children were about to be slaughtered by Herod's soldiers (St. Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 2). The plays

themselves had been performed in Coventry since the 1450s and were seen by visiting royalty, including Margaret, wife of Henry VI (1456), Richard III (1484), and Henry VII (1492), whilst during the 1580s the people of London saw the plays 'on tour'. The anonymous melody dates from 1591.

The setting of *O little town of Bethlehem* is by Sir Henry Walford Davies (1869-1941), who was organist of the Temple Church and also the first director of the choral Evensong broadcast by the BBC. Bishop Phillips Brooks (1835–93) wrote the words following his visit to the Holy Land in 1866. He was a Bishop in the American Episcopal Church and was exceptionally tall standing six and a half feet in his clerical socks!

The words of *Sussex Carol (On Christmas Night all Christians sing)* were included in a 17th century collection from the Irish bishop Luke Wadding, whilst the tune was collected by Cecil Sharp in Gloucestershire and by Ralph Vaughan Williams in Sussex in the early 20th century.

Shortly after its publication in Philadelphia in 1885, my American namesake James Murray suggested that *Away in a manger* had been sung by Martin Luther to his children. Since no evidence has been found that Luther had anything to do with the piece, it seems clear that this statement was a marketing ploy to sell further copies of the sheet-music for this carol.

The text to *Shepherds in the field abiding* is a translation by Rev. G R Woodward of the Latin hymn *Quem vidistis, pastores* found in the mediaeval Sarum Antiphoner. The tune *Gloria* is adapted from an old French carol *Les anges dans nos Campagnes* by Edward Shippen Barnes (1887–1958), organist at several American churches who studied with Horatio Parker and then with Vierne and d'Indy in Paris.

The old Dutch carol *King Jesus hath a garden* is known in the Netherlands as *Jesus' Bloemhof* ALC 1190 Booklet.indd 4 31/7/12 17:17:10or *Heer Jesus heeft ein Hofken waart vol bloemen staat* which first appeared in a collection in 1633 and is perhaps best known in Britain by its familiar refrain 'And harps,

and cymbals, trumpets, pipes and gentle flutes'.

Torches, which was composed by John Joubert in 1951, is based on an old Galician carol. It had been a tradition in Roman times to escort young married couples at night-time as they made their way home after the wedding. The author makes a link between the baby Jesus and his role as the Church's bridegroom. The carol was soon taken up by choirs and Joubert has written of his delight at hearing carol singers performing his work outside his house, apparently unaware that they were serenading the composer!

Ralph Vaughan Williams composed his *Fantasia on Christmas Carols* in 1912 and the work was premiered at the Three Choirs Festival, held that year at Hereford Cathedral. This work features three carols: *This is the truth sent from above, Come all you worthy gentlemen* and *On Christmas Night*. Other carols, such as *The First Nowell*, are included in instrumental sections.

The words to *Hark! The herald angels sing* were originally penned by Charles Wesley but subsequently altered by his friend Charles Whitefield. This later version appeared in Sandys' volume of carols in 1833 but in verses of four lines. Mendelssohn's famous tune first appeared in 1840 as part of a cantata to commemorate the invention of the printing press and his stirring tune was slightly adapted in 1855 by William Cummings to fit the Wesley/Whitefield text.

## - James Murray

O come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant, O Come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem. Come and behold Him, Born the King of angels; Refrain: O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

God of God, Light of Light, Lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb; Very God, begotten not created. **Refrain** 

See how the shepherds, Summoned to His cradle, Leaving their ocks, draw nigh to gaze; We too will thither Bend our joyful footsteps **Refrain** 

Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation; Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above! Glory to God, In the highest. **Refrain** 

## In dulci jubilo

Let us our homage shew: Our heart's joy reclineth In praesepio; And like a bright star shineth Matris in gremio, Alpha es et O!

O Jesu parvule,
My heart is sore for Thee!
Hear me, I beseech Thee,
O puer optime;
My prayer let it reach Thee
O Princeps gloriae.
Trahe me post te.

O patris caritas!
O Nati lenitas!
Deeply were we stained
Per nostra crimina:
But Thou for us hast gained
Coelorum gaudia,
O that we were there!

Ubi sunt gaudia, If that they be not there? There are Angels singing Nova cantica; There the bells are ringing *In Regis curia*.

O that we were there

## Blessed be that Maid Marie;

Born he was of her body; Very God ere time began, Born in time the Son of man. Refrain: *Eya! Ihesus hodie Natus est de Virgine*.

In a manger of an ass Jesus lay and lulled was; Born to die upon the Tree Pro peccante homine. Refrain:

Sweet and blissful was the song Changed of the Angel throng, 'Peace on earth,' Alleluya. In excelsis Gloria. Refrain

Fare three Kings from far-off land, Incense, gold and myrrh in hand; In Bethlehem the Babe they see, Stelle ducti lumine. Refrain

Make we merry on this fest, *In quo Christus natus est*; On this child I pray you call, To assoil and save us all. Refrain

## God rest you merry, gentlemen,

Let nothing you dismay.
For Jesus Christ our Saviour,
Was born upon this day.
To save us all from Satan's power,
When we were gone astray.
O tidings of comfort and joy.

From God our heavenly Father A blessèd angel came, And unto certain shepherds Brought tidings of the same. How that in Bethlehem was born The Son of God, by name O tidings of comfort and joy.

The shepherds at those tidings Rejoicèd much in mind. And left their ocks a-feeding In tempest, storm and wind. And went to Bethlehem straightway This blessèd Babe to nd O tidings of comfort and joy.

But when to Bethlehem they came, Whereat this infant lay They found him in a manger Where oxen feed on hay; His mother Mary kneeling Unto the Lord did pray O tidings of comfort and joy.

Now to the Lord sing praises, All you within this place. And with true love and brotherhood Each other now embrace. This holy tide of Christmas All others doth deface. O tidings of comfort and joy

## **Lutebook Lullaby:**

Sweet was the song the Virgin sang,
When she, when she to Bethlem Juda came,
And was delivered of a Son,
That blessed Jesus hath to name.
Lulla, lulla, lullaby,
Lula, lula, lullaby,
Lula, lula, lullaby, sweet Babe, sung she,
My son, and eke a Saviour born,
Who hast vouchsafed from on high
To visit us that were forlorn;
Lalula, lalula, lalulaby, sweet Babe, sang she,
And rocked him sweetly on her knee.

## Ding, dong! merrily on high

In Heav'n the bells are ringing Ding, dong! Verily the sky Is riv'n with angel-singing.

**Refrain**: Gloria! Hosanna in excelsis! E'en so here below, below, Let steeple bells be swungen,

And i-o, i-o, i-o, By priest and people sungen. **Refrain** 

Pray you, dutifully prime Your matin chime, ye ringers: May you beautifully rhyme Your evetime song, ye singers. **Refrain** 

#### Refrain:

*Lullay my liking*, my dear Son, mine Sweeting, Lullay, my dear Heart, mine own dear Darling.

I saw a fair maiden sitten and sing, She lulled a little child, a swete Lording: **Refrain** 

That eternal lord is He that made alle thing Of alle Lordës He is Lord, of every King he is King. **Refrain** 

There was mickle melody at that Childes birth, All that were in Heaven's bliss, they made mickle mirth. **Refrain** 

Angels bright they sang that night and saiden to that Child, 'Blessed be Thou, and so be she that is so meek and mild.' **Refrain** 

Pray we now to that Child, and to His mother dear, Grant them all His blessing that now maken cheer. **Refrain** 

### See amid the winter's snow,

Born for us on earth below, See, the gentle Lamb appears, Promised from eternal years.

Refrain: Hail that ever blessèd morn, Hail redemption's happy dawn, Sing through all Jerusalem: Christ is born in Bethlehem.

Lo, within a manger lies
He who built the starry skies;
He who, throned in height sublime,
Sits amid the cherubim. **Refrain.** 

Say, you holy shepherds, say, Tell your joyful news today. Why have you now left your sheep On the lonely mountain steep? **Refrain.** 

As we watched at dead of night, Lo, we saw a wondrous light; Angels singing 'Peace on earth' Told us of the Saviour's birth. Refrain.

Sacred Infant, all divine, What a tender love was Thine, Thus to come from highest bliss Down to such a world as this. **Refrain.** 

Teach, O teach us, holy Child, By Thy face so meek and mild, Teach us to resemble Thee, In Thy sweet humility. **Refrain.** 

Personent hodie voces puerulae, Laudantes iucunde qui nobis est natus, Summo Deo datus, et de virgineo ventre procreatus.

Refrain: Ideo gloria in excelsis Deo!

In mundo nascitur, pannis involvitur Praesepi ponitur stabulo brutorum, Rector supernorum perditit spolia princeps infernorum. **Refrain** 

Magi tres venerunt, munera offerunt, Parvulum inquirunt, stellulam sequendo, Ipsum adorando, aurum, thus, et myrrham ei offerendo. **Refrain** 

Omnes clericuli, partier pueri, Cantent ut angeli: advenisti mundo, Laudes tibi fundo. Ideo Gloria in excelsis Deo. (On this day earth shall ring with the song children sing to the Lord, Christ our King. Born on earth to save us; him the Father gave us.

**Refrain:** Ideo – o –o, Gloria in excelsis Deo **OR** Sing aloud, God is good, God is truth, God is beauty. Praise Him!

His the doom, ours the mirth; when he came down to earth,
Bethlehem saw his birth; ox and ass beside him from the cold would hide him. **Refrain** 

God's bright star, o'er his head, wise men three to him led; kneel they low by his bed, lay their gifts before him, praise him and adore him. **Refrain** 

On this day angels sing, with their song earth shall ring, praising Christ, heaven's King, born on earth to save us; peace and love he gave us. **Refrain**)

## In the bleak mid-winter

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 mid-winter,
Long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold him Nor earth sustain; Heaven and earth shall ee away When he comes to reign. In the bleak mid-winter A stable place sufced The Lord God almighty, Jesus Christ.

Enough for him, whom cherubim Worship night and day, A breast full of milk, And a manger full of hay: Enough for him, whom angels Bow 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.

## Coventry Carol,

Lully, lulla, thou little tiny child, By, by, lully, lullay.

O sisters, too, how may we do, For to preserve this day; This poor youngling for whom we sing, By, by, lully, lullay.

Herod the King, in his raging, Charged he hath this day; His men of might, in his own sight, All children young to slay.

Then woe is me, poor Child, for Thee, And ever mourn and say; For Thy parting, nor say nor sing, By, by, lully, lullay.

## 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.

O morning stars together Proclaim the holy birth And praises sing to God the King And peace to men on earth; For Christ is born of Mary; And gathered all above, While mortals sleep, the angels keep Their watch of wondering love.

How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of his heaven.
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.

#### Sussex Carol

## 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.

Then why should men on earth be so sad, Since our Redeemer made us glad? When from our sin he set us free, All for to gain our liberty.

When sin departs before his grace, Then life and health come in its place; Angels and men with joy may sing, All for to see the new-born King.

All out of darkness we have light, Which made the angels sing this night; 'Glory to God and peace to men, Now and for evermore. Amen.'

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,

The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head; The stars in the sky looked down where He lay, The little Lord Jesus, asleep in the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the poor Baby wakes. But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes. I love thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky. And stay by the cradle till morning is nigh

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay, Close by me forever, and love me, I pray! Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care And take us to heaven, to Live with Thee there.

## Shepherds in the eld abiding.

Tell us, when the seraph bright Greeted you with wondrous tiding What you saw and heard that night. Gloria in excelsis Deo.

We beheld it (it is no fable), God incarnate, King of bliss, Swathed and cradled in a stable, And the angel strain was this: Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Choristers on high were singing, Jesus and his Virgin birth Heavenly bells the while a-ringing 'Peace, good will to men on earth' Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Thanks, good herdmen, true your story, Have with you to Bethlehem; Angels hymn the King of glory, Carol we with you and them.

King Jesus hath a garden, full of divers owers, Where I go culling posies gay, all times and hours.

#### Refrain:

There naught is heard but Paradise bird, Harp, dulcimer, lute, With cymbal, trump and tymbal, And the tender, soothing ute.

2. The lily, white in blossom there, is Chastity: The violet, with sweet perfume, Humanity.

## Refrain

3. The bonny damask-rose is known as Patience: The blithe and thrifty marigold, Obedience.

#### Refrain

4. The crown imperial bloometh too in yonder place, 'Tis Charity, of stock divine, the ower of grace.

#### Refrain

5. Yet, 'mid the brave, the bravest prize of all may claim The Star of Bethlem-Jesus-bless'd be his Name!

## Refrain

6. Ah! Jesu Lord, my heal and weal, my bliss complete, Make thou my heart thy garden-plot, fair, trim and neat.

#### Refrain

Torches, torches, run with torches All the way to Bethlehem: Christ is born and now lies sleeping. Come and sing your song to him.

Ah, ro-ro, ro-ro my baby Ah, ro-ro, my love, ro-ro Sleep you well, my heart's own darling While we sing you, our ro-ro.

Sing my friends and make you merry, Joy and mirth and joy again: Lo, he lives, the King of heaven, Now and evermore, Amen.

## Fantasia on Christmas Carols 1. This is the truth sent 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 rst 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 was 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.

## 2. 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 Oh 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 oxen feed on hay. The blessed Virgin Mary unto the Lord did pray Oh we wish you the comfort and tidings of joy

The blessed Virgin Mary unto the Lord did pray Oh we wish you the comfort and tidings of joy The blessed Virgin Mary unto the Lord did pray Oh we wish you the comfort and tidings of joy

## 3. 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

God bless the ruler of this house and long on may he reign (From out of darkness we have light which makes the angels sing this night) Many happy Christmases he live to see again God bless our generation who live both far and near (Glory to God and peace to men)
And we wish them a happy, a happy New Year
(Both now and evermore, Amen)

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, a happy New Year.

## Hark! The Herald Angels sing,

"Glory to the new-born King; Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!" Joyful, all ye nations, rise. Join the triumph of the skies. With th' Angelic Hosts proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!" Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King."

Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ, the everlasting lord Late in time behold Him come, Off-spring of a Virgin's womb Veiled in esh the Godhead see, Hail, the incarnate deity Pleased as Man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel. Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the New-born king!"

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace, Hail, the Sun of Righteousness Light and life to all He brings, Risen with healing in His Wings. Now He lays His Glory by, Born that man no more may die Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them second birth. Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the New-born king!"

## Alto ALC1190

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