



Song of the Nativity

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An Enduring Voice

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Good night, beloved

"An excellent album...beautifully performed and expertly produced."

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Carol of the Bells The Sixteen HARRY CHRISTOPHERS

COR16188



hristmas is that most important season of the year when love and hope prevail. Above all, it is a time for families, and we hope that this collection of carols will bring the spirit of Christmas into your home. No other festival in the Christian year has inspired so many tunes. The typical carol is one that embraces basic emotions; words and music are both simple and approachable. It is a pity, therefore, that in recent years, arrangements of well-known carols have become so elaborate, to the extent that they almost obscure a well-loved tune.

Our collection is both traditional and contemporary. Of the five traditional carols, we have kept as close as possible to the original texts and have adopted their simple harmonisations from the old Oxford Book of Carols, first published in 1928. Most of these have sadly gone out of fashion (*Carol of the Advent* and *All in the morning* for example) but we hope that, through this recording, they will become a part of the family Christmas once again.

The bulk of the carols are, however, from our own time. Many of them have become classics in their own right, like Mykola Leontovich's *Carol of the Bells*, immortalised in the Christmas film *Home Alone*, Eric Whitacre's shimmering *Lux aurumque* and Cecilia McDowall's punchy rendition of the medieval poem *Of a rose*, taking us into an archaic soundworld but with the added spice of rhythmic vitality and spiky dissonances. With *Long, long ago*, Herbert Howells shows us his total mastery of the English language adorning this gorgeous poem with equally gorgeous harmonies, and Gustav Holst gives us a masterclass of part-song writing with his lilting setting of the old Cornish poem *This have I done for my true love*. There are many others which in the course of time will also become classics; every one of them, by their unashamed simplicity, captures the joy and sincerity of this most wonderful of seasons. Central to the album are Bob Chilcott's sumptuous *Advent Antiphons*; based on plainsong melodies, they anticipate the coming of Christmas.

It only remains for us to wish you all a very happy Christmas where peace, love and goodwill may prosper.

thany animper,

1	Bob CHILCOTT (Pilgrim Jesus			2.04		
2	2 Michael PRAETORIUS (c.1571-1621) / Jan SANDSTRÖM (b.1954)							
					Lo, how a r	ose e	e'er blooming	4.23
3	Traditional				Sans Day Carol			2.50
4	Matthew MARTIN (b.1976)				Adam lay ybounden			3.13
5	Mykola LEONTOVICH (1877-1921)				Carol of the Bells			1.16
6	Cecilia McDOWALL (b.1951)				Of a rose			2.31
7	Traditional				Carol of the Advent			2.08
8	Kim PORTER (b.1965) Chris					ristmas Eve		
9	Sir Richard Rodney BENNETT (1936-2012) Susan					anni (from Five Carols)		
10	Alan BULLARD (b.1947)				Glory to the Christ Child			2.53
11	Eric WHITACRE (Lux aurumque			4.16		
12	Jonathan DOVE (b		I am the day			6.54		
13	Gustav HOLST (18		This have I done for my true love			5.46		
14	Traditional Wassail Song							3.16
15	Herbert HOWELL	Long, long ago			5.30			
16	William WALTON (1902-83) All this time							1.47
17	Traditional All in the morning							3.00
18	Joseph PHIBBS (b.1974) Lullay, lullay, thou lytil child						ou lytil child	4.28
19	James BURTON (b.1974)				Balulalow			2.20
20	Traditional				Herrick's Carol			3.16
	Bob CHILCOTT				Advent Antiphons			
21	O Sapientia	2.04	22	O Adonaï	1.46	23	O Radix Jesse	1.43
24	O Clavis David	2.20	25	O Oriens	2.08	26	O Rex gentium	1.34
27	O Emmanuel	1.46					Total Run Time	79.37

enturies of the novel, long decades of television soaps and today's booming biography industry have stoked demand for stories about the lives of individuals, usually people like us, prey to the temporary madness of extreme passions. The stories we like best happen in time, whether past or present, and involve recognisable characters, even the most fantastical among them. In one sense, the Nativity is a tale about particular individuals at a particular moment in history; in another, it belongs to the universal repertoire of myth, those superficially simple yet profoundly complex stories that transcend time and speak of eternal truths.

This album rises from a living musical tradition fully in tune with the history and myths of Christmas yet not constrained by either. Its potent blend of ancient and modern, folk and art music, sacred and secular includes pieces written long, long ago and others composed in recent times. While the range of composers is wide, each holds a common feeling for the season's

significance and an understanding of how to trigger powerful emotions with words and music, conditions easier to describe in theory than achieve in practice.

Bob Chilcott learned invaluable lessons about music's affective powers as a boy chorister and choral scholar at King's College, Cambridge. He later applied them to arrangements written during his time as a member of The King's Singers and, since the late 1990s, to his work as a full-time composer. Chilcott's elegantly crafted scores for Christmas appeal to all singers, amateur and professional alike. Pilgrim Jesus offers a joyful response to Kevin Crossley-Holland's words, originally written for the King's College Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols. Chilcott flicks the spotlight switch to illuminate the text's Latin refrain with big, block chords, reminiscent of Poulenc at his pious best. He matches the striking imagery of the carol's folk-like English verse to a lively dance riff, syncopated by metrical shifts and coloured by engaging changes of texture and timbre.

Advent, for many synonymous with Christmas, evolved as a season in which to contemplate the imminent birth of Christ and the promise of the light to come. It was a time of penitence and fasting, of thinking about death, salvation and the Second Coming. Advent's strands of Christology come together in the so-called O Antiphons. Part of the Roman liturgy since the late eighth century, these short Latin texts were chanted before and after the Magnificat on each of the seven days before Christmas Eve. Bob Chilcott's Advent Antiphons were written in 2004 for the choir of Reykjavik Cathedral. They grow from the O Antiphon plainchant melodies presented, as the composer observes, "in different guises", a strategy enriched by sublime harmonies and imaginative use of double-choir forces. The third and fifth antiphons contain allusions to the plaintive sound of birdsong, echoes of a mystical, divine language known to God and all the angels in heaven.

The plainchant hymn Veni, veni Emmanuel, sung at Vespers during Advent, calls for

the Messiah's return; its folk-like melody, performed by The Sixteen (on COR16167 A Renaissance Christmas) in a version preserved in a 15th-century French manuscript, expresses the expectation shared by those awaiting the birth of 'God's dear son'. Jonathan Dove's I am the day, composed in 1999 to words appropriate to Advent from the Book of Revelation and the legend of St Christopher, weaves the Veni, veni Emmanuel melody into its second section, sung by the choir's upper voices. The composition's bold textural contrasts and rhythms suggest the infinite, eternal nature of Jesus the son and God the father, the alpha and omega, the first and the last, a central theme of Advent.

Eleanor Farjeon, best known today as author of *Morning has broken*, was once familiar to many for her children's stories, singing games and nursery rhymes. Her poem *People, look east* was first published in 1928 as *Carol of the Advent* in *The Oxford Book of Carols*, assigned to the section of "Modern Texts Written for or Adapted to

Traditional Tunes". The traditional tune in question, perhaps from Besançon, was already "more than a century old" when it appeared in *La clef des chansonniers*, an anthology of popular melodies compiled and published in 1717 by Jean-Baptiste-Christophe Ballard, music printer to the King of France.

An event measurable in time and the eternal moment, untouched by past regrets or future fears, run together in *Lo, how a rose e'er blooming*. Jan Sandström's exquisite work presents a radical reimagining of *Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen*, a 15th-century melody harmonised in the early 1600s by the German composer Michael Praetorius. Extruded chords and long melodic echoes, sustained by two choirs, rise from Praetorius' hymn to suggest the universal order of cosmic harmony, while words foretelling the Messiah's birth emerge from the texture with glacial slowness.

Millions have been moved by the pure melodic lines, shimmering textures and intricate harmonic layers of Eric Whitacre's choral music. *Lux aurumque* sets Charles Anthony Silvestri's Latin translation of a short English poem written by the composer under the pseudonym Edward Esch. It offers a meditation on the scene of the Nativity and the celestial light that shines on the infant Jesus. Whitacre changes the tonal spectrum of what he describes as his work's "tight harmonies" by the addition or subtraction of chords, sometimes dissonant, always analogous to the radiance of light.

So many modern Christmas compositions owe their existence to lyrics written in late medieval times. The words of *Adam lay ybounden* and *Of a rose*, for instance, are both preserved in a 15th-century manuscript of carols, songs and poems probably compiled by the Benedictine monks of Bury St Edmunds. *Adam lay ybounden* recalls the *felix culpa*, the 'happy fault' of the first sin, necessary cause of Christ's birth and mankind's salvation; *Of a rose*, meanwhile, connects with

popular devotion to Mary and the five joys of the Virgin (the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Epiphany, the Resurrection and the Ascension). Matthew Martin's setting of Adam lay ybounden, written Westminster Cathedral Choir in 2006, grows from an austere duet for two male voices. The work, imbued with the sonorities of medieval polyphony, reflects on the suffering bequeathed to future generations by sinful Adam, the joyful prospect of redemption through Christ and the beneficence of Mary, Oueen of Heaven. Martin honours the holy mother by implanting a fragment of the Marian plainchant Ave maris stella into his composition, shared by the two upper voices.

Echoes of 15th-century carols resound in Cecilia McDowall's *Of a rose*. Her rousing setting, first performed at the Royal Hospital Chelsea in December 1993, also embraces the carol's distant origins as a round-dance, often performed in a state of ecstasy by monks or clerics. McDowall penetrates the

surface of the work's archaic soundworld with spikes of modern harmony and sudden dissonances to remind listeners of its late-20th-century origins. James Burton's Balulalow became an instant Christmas classic following its publication in 2015. Its text began life as a translation by 16thcentury Scottish poet James Wedderburn of Martin Luther's Christmas hymn Vom Himmel hoch, da komm' ich her. Burton's tender setting of Wedderburn's cradle-song unfolds from a single unison to reveal rich four-part chordal harmonies that flourish with the addition of an extra alto line in its second verse. The anonymous 15th-century author of Lullay, lullay, thou lytil child adopts the perspective of an eyewitness at the nativity to recall Mary's tender lullaby for her new-born son. Joseph Phibbs' setting, written for the Fairhaven Singers in 2012, casts a solo soprano as narrator and represents Christ's dialogue with his mother by alternating between the austere sounds of an ensemble of four soloists and warmer. more comforting music for full choir.

As a member of The Sixteen and other professional choirs and fine composer and arranger for voices, Kim Porter represents the best in British choral music. Her *Christmas Eve*, written in 2016 for the Choir of the Chapels Royal, HM Tower of London, amplifies the sense of anticipation embedded in Christina Rossetti's verse. Porter's mellifluous choral melodies complement the poem's arresting images of Christmastide's blazing darkness, warming chillness and ineffable beauty. The work closes with a soaring evocation of the music of birds and bells and the answering angelic choir.

While the great wealth of English courtly carols and the sacred hymns and chants of Christmas belonged to a literate culture, countless other seasonal pieces survived through oral transmission. The great migration of people from the impoverished country to booming industrial towns throughout the 1800s posed an existential threat to many folk tunes and texts, yet many were saved from extinction by roving

antiquarians and song collectors. As the clergyman and composer Erik Routley noted of English folksong: "The best, of course, have survived. The toughest have proliferated. The others have gone." This album contains a selection of the best and hardiest of traditional carols. The *Sans Day Carol*, named for the Cornish village of St Day and first notated there from the singing of W Daniel Watson in the early 1900s, reached far beyond Cornwall after its inclusion in *The Oxford Book of Carols*.

Those at the top of England's old class hierarchies and squirearchies knew that a little Christmas cheer could help keep workers onside during the tough winter months to come. The wassail tradition, which permitted farm labourers to beg hospitality from their feudal masters at Yuletide, generated its own lively repertoire. The words of the *Wassail Song* may have been cobbled together by wassailers from the north of England around 1850, although its melody is almost certainly much older.

Ralph Vaughan Williams began collecting folksongs and carols in 1903. He discovered All in the morning five years later while on a field trip to the Derbyshire village of Castleton, sung by a Mr J Hall, and made a fine arrangement of it for four-part choir soon after his discharge from military service at the end of the First World War. Mykola Leontovich found equally rich material in the peasant songs and dances of western Ukraine, where he served as a music teacher in the early 1900s. His arrangement of the traditional New Year's song Shchedryk became an international hit following its first performance in the United States, given in 1921 by the Ukrainian National Chorus and their charismatic conductor, Alexander Koshetz. The choir's North American tours established Shchedryk's popularity, a position secured in the 1930s with the publication of Peter Wilhousky's English-language version, Carol of the Bells.

This have I done for my true love stems from Gustav Holst's passion for English folk

music. He discovered its words, possibly of Cornish origin, pinned to a door of Thaxted parish church in Essex by Conrad Noel, the so-called Red Vicar, a prominent Christian socialist and grandson of a lady-in-waiting to Queen Victoria. Holst's composition begins by sharing a confidence about Christmas, expressed by solo soprano: Jesus' love for mankind and the dance of life. It continues with a succession of choral verses, each varied in texture, timbre and intensity, that tell of the virgin birth, the Trinity, Christ's temptation and betrayal, his crucifixion and resurrection.

Herrick's Carol invokes thoughts of spring and the renewal ushered in by Jesus, darling of the world and prince of flowers. Crafted by Robert Herrick, one-time associate of Ben Jonson, William Lawes and other luminaries of the early Stuart court and clergyman in Dean Prior, Devon, it was supposedly first sung in the presence of Charles I at Whitehall. The version performed by The Sixteen, to a traditional German tune, was recorded and

introduced to many during the 1950s by the Deller Consort.

Interest in carols grew during the last century with the publication of landmark collections of Christmas music and the proliferation of cathedral and collegiate carol services. These in turn imparted energy to a wave of new carol compositions, many of them influenced by music from the past. Richard Rodney Bennett's Susanni, the last of five simple carols written in 1967 for the Choir of St Matthew's Church, Northampton, takes its title from an old German term for lulling a child to sleep. The short work, to 14th-century English lyrics, is propelled by the irresistible urge to communicate the good news of Jesus' birth. While the verse-and-refrain structure and melody of All this time share much in common with early English carols, the prominent fourths and fifths of its harmonies sound more modern than archaic. William Walton's setting of this anonymous 16thcentury text was commissioned by Oxford University Press in 1970 for inclusion in the

enormously successful second volume of its *Carols for Choirs*.

Herbert Howells wrote Long, long ago in a single day in September 1950. The work sets a poem written by John Buxton after he was taken prisoner of war by the Germans in 1940. Howells' setting, with its echoes of ancient modal harmonies and expressive modulations, heightens Buxton's vision of Jesus as Saviour, "who gives his joy to all men / And brings to them peace." Alan Bullard studied with Howells at the Royal College of Music during the late 1960s. His extensive output of Christmas compositions includes pieces conceived for performance by singers of all ages and abilities. Glory to the Christ Child, written in 2005, complements the exuberant spirit of its anonymous 17th-century verses with music of tremendous vitality. Bullard surrounds the "blessed babe divine" with a halo of unhurried chords, opening space in which states of profound reverence and joy may flourish.

■ Bob CHILCOTT (b.1955)Pilgrim Jesus

Jesus! Christus! Jesus! Natus!
In the manger of my body
Leaps the tiny child, and his breath
Is the word – the dance of God.

Corpus! Beatus! Peregrinus! Natus! In the ocean of my head The steadfast ship rides tide and storm On its pilgrim crossing. Oceanus! Peregrinus! Christus! Natus! In the orchard of my heart
Springs the singing tree. Its root
Is faith and its sweet fruit charity.

Cor! Arbor! Amor! Christus!
Riding ship, springing tree,
And in the manger leaps the child
Who is the word – the dance of God.

Words: Kevin Crossley-Holland (b.1941) © Kevin Crossley-Holland. Reproduced by permission of Enitharmon Press

☑ Michael PRAETORIUS (*c.*1571-1621)/Jan SANDSTRÖM (b.1954) **Lo, how a rose e'er blooming**

Soli: Alexandra Kidgell soprano, Edward McMullan alto, Mark Dobell tenor, Rob Macdonald bass

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 flower bright,
Amid the cold of winter
When half-gone was the night.

3 TRADITIONAL

Sans Day Carol

Now the holly bears a berry as white as the milk, And Mary bore Jesus, all wrapped up in silk: And Mary bore Jesus Christ our Saviour for to be, And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly.

Now the holly bears a berry as green as the grass, And Mary bore Jesus, who died on the cross: And Mary bore Jesus Christ...

Now the holly bears a berry as black as the coal, And Mary bore Jesus, who died for us all: And Mary bore Jesus Christ...

Now the holly bears a berry, as blood is it red, Then trust we our Saviour, who rose from the dead: And Mary bore Jesus Christ...

Words: anon. Cornish

4 Matthew MARTIN (b.1976) Adam lay ybounden

Soli: Ben Davies, Rob Macdonald bass

Adam lay ybounden, Bounden in a bond; Four thousand winter Thought he not too long. And all was for an apple, An apple that he took, As clerkes finden Written in their book

Ne had the apple taken been, The apple taken been, Ne had never our lady Abeen heav'né queen. Blessed be the time That apple taken was, Therefore we moun singen, Deo gracias!

Words: anon. 15th century

5 Mykola LEONTOVICH (1877-1921)

Carol of the Bells

Hark how the bells, sweet silver bells, all seem to say, "throw cares away."

Christmas is here, bringing good cheer, to young and old, meek and the bold,

Ding dong ding dong, that is their song, with joyful ring all carolling, One seems to hear, words of good cheer from ev'rywhere filling the air,

Oh, how they pound, raising the sound, o'er hill and dale, telling their tale,

Gaily they ring while people sing songs of good cheer, Christmas is here,

14

Merry, merry, merry, merry Christmas, Merry, merry, merry, merry Christmas,

On, on they send, on without end, their joyful tone to every home:

Ding dong, ding dong!

Words and Arr.: Peter J Wilhousky (1902-78)

The flower sprong in heye Bethlem,
That is both bryht and schen:
The rose is Marye, hevene qwene,
Out of here bosom the blosme sprong.
Alleluia.

The ferste braunche is ful of myht, That sprong on Chrystemesse nyht, The sterre schon over Bethlem bryht That is bothe brod and long. Alleluia. The secunde braunche sprong to helle, The fiendes power doun to felle: Therein myht non soule dwelle; Blyss'd be the time the rose sprong! Alleluia.

The thredde braunch is good and swote, It sprang to hevene, crop and rote, There to dwell and ben our bote; Ev'ry day it schewit in prystes hond. *Alleluia*.

Words: anon. 14th century

☐ TRADITIONAL

Carol of the Advent

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

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

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6 Cecilia McDOWALL (b.1951)

Of a rose

Listen, lordynges, old and yonge, How this rose began to sprynge; Such a rose to mine lykynge In all this world ne knowe I non. *Alleluia*. The aungel came fro hevene tour To greet Marye with gret honour, Seyde she should bere the flour That should breke the fiendes bond. *Alleluia*.

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

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

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

Words: Eleanor Farjeon (1881-1965)

Kim PORTER (b.1965) Christmas Eve

Christmas hath a darkness
Brighter than the blazing moon,
Christmas hath a chillness
Warmer than the heat of June,
Christmas hath a beauty
Lovelier than the world can show:
For Christmas bringeth Jesus,
Brought for us so low.

Earth, strike up your music, Birds that sing and bells that ring; Heaven hath answering music For all angels soon to sing: Earth, put on your whitest Bridal robe of spotless snow: For Christmas bringeth Jesus, Brought for us so low.

Words: Christina Rossetti (1830-94)

Sir Richard Rodney BENNETT (1936-2012)Susanni (from Five Carols)

A little child there is yborn,
Eia, eia, susanni, susanni, susanni.
And he sprang out of Jesse's thorn,
Alleluya, alleluya,
To save all us that were forlorn.

Now Jesus is the childes name, And Mary mild she is his dame, And so our sorrow's turned to game.

It fell upon the high midnight.
The stars they shone both fair and bright.
The angels sang with all their might.

Three kings there came with their presents, Of gold and myrrh and frankincense, As clerkes sing in their sequence.

Now sit we down upon our knee, And pray we to the Trinity, Our help and succour for to be.

Words: anon. 14th century

Alan BULLARD (b.1947)Glory to the Christ Child

Glory, glory alleluia to the Christ, Glory, glory alleluia to the Christ Child!

Out of the orient crystal skies A blazing star did shine, Showing the place where sleeping lies A blessed babe divine. Glory, glory alleluia...

This very star the kings did guide, E'en from the furthest East, To Bethlehem where it betide This blessed babe did rest. Glory, glory alleluia...

And for the joy of his great birth A thousand angels sing: 'Glory and peace unto the earth Where born is this new King!' *Glory, glory alleluia...*

Verses taken from BM Add. MS 29401, c.1610

■ Eric WHITACRE (b.1970)

Lux aurumque

Solo: Julie Cooper soprano

Lux,
calida gravisque pura velut aurum,
et canunt angeli molliter
modo natum.

Light, warm and heavy as pure gold, and the angels sing softly to the new-born baby.

Words: Charles Anthony Silvestri (b.1965) Translation of "Light and gold" by Edward Esch (b.1970)

Jonathan DOVE (b.1959)

I am the day

I am the day soon to be born.

I am the sprig from the root of David and the brightest star of morning. I am the alpha and the omega, and the first and the last, and the beginning and the end.

Words: The legend of St Christopher; Revelation 22:26, 13

3 Gustav HOLST (1874-1934)

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 oh my love, oh my love, my love, my love,
This have I done for my true 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 oh my 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 oh my love...

Then afterwards baptised I was; The Holy Ghost on me did glance, My Father's voice heard from above, To call my true love to my dance. Sing oh my love... Into the desert I was led, Where I fasted without substance; The Devil bade me make stones my bread, To have me break my true love's dance. Sing oh my love...

The Jews on me they made great suit, And with me made great variance, Because they loved darkness better than light, To call my true love to my dance. Sing oh my love...

For thirty pence Judas me sold, His covetousness for to advance: Mark whom I kiss, the same do hold! The same is he shall lead the dance. Sing oh my love...

Before Pilate the Jews me brought, When Barabbas had deliverance; They scourged me and set me at nought, Judged me to die to lead the dance. Sing oh my love... When on the cross hanged I was, Where a spear my heart did glance, There issued forth both water and blood, To call my true love to my dance. Sing oh my love...

Then down to hell I took my way, For my true love's deliverance, And rose again on the third day, Up to my true love and the dance. Sing oh my love... Then up to heav'n I did ascend, Where now I dwell in sure substance On the right hand of God, that man May come unto the general dance. Sing oh my love...

Words: anon. Cornish 17th century

14 TRADITIONAL

Wassail Song

Soli: Katy Hill, Alexandra Kidgell soprano, Ben Davies, Tim Jones bass

Here we come a-wassailing Among the leaves so green, Here we come a-wandering So fair to be seen: Love and joy come to you, And to you your wassail too, And God bless you, and send you A Happy New Year. Our wassail cup is made
Of the rosemary tree,
And so is your beer
Of the best barley:
Love and joy come to you...

We are not daily beggars
That beg from door to door,
But we are neighbours' children
Whom you have seen before:
Love and joy come to you...

Call up the butler of this house,
Put on his golden ring;
Let him bring us up a glass of beer,
And better we shall sing:
Love and joy come to you...

We have got a little purse Of stretching leather skin; We want a little of your money To line it well within. Love and joy come to you...

Bring us out a table
And spread it with a cloth;
Bring us out a mouldy cheese,
And some of your Christmas loaf.
Love and joy come to you...

God bless the master of this house, The mistress also; And all the little children That round the table go. Love and joy come to you...

And all your kin and kinsfolk, That dwell both far and near; I wish you a merry Christmas, And a happy New Year. Love and joy come to you...

Words: anon. North English

Herbert HOWELLS (1892-1983)Long, long ago

Long, long ago,
Oh! so long ago,
Christ was born in Bethlehem
To heal the world's woe.

His mother in the stable Watched him where he lay And knew for all his frailty He was the world's stay. Long, long ago...

21

While he lay there sleeping In the quiet night She listened to his breathing And oh! her heart was light. Long, long ago...

She tended him and nursed him, Giving him her breast, And knew that it was God's son In her crook'd arm at rest. Long, long ago... Shepherds at the sheepfolds Knew him for their King; And gold and myrrh and frankincense Three wise men did bring. Long, long ago...

For he should be the Saviour Making wars to cease, Who gives joy to all men, And brings them peace. Long, long ago...

Words: from Such Liberty by John Buxton (1912-89)

III William WALTON (1902-1983)

All this time

All this time this song is best: 'Verbum caro factum est.'
This night there is a child yborn That sprang out of Jesse's thorn; We must sing and say thereforn, All this time...

Jesus is the childes name, And Mary mild is his dame; All our sorrow shall turn to game: All this time... It fell upon high midnight:
The starres shone both fair and bright;
The angels sang with all their might.

All this time

Now kneel we down on our knee, And pray we to the Trinity Our help, our succour for to be; All this time

Words: anon. 16th century

☑ TRADITIONAL Arr. Ralph Vaughan WILLIAMS (1872-1958)All in the morning

It was on Christmas day,
And all in the morning,
Our Saviour was born,
And our heav'nly King;
And was not this a joyful thing?
And sweet Jesus they called him by name.

It was on New Year's Day
And all in the morning,
They circumcised our Saviour
And our Heavenly King;
And was not this...

It was on Twelfth Day And all in the morning, The Wise Men were led To our Heavenly King; And was not this It was on Twentieth Day And all in the morning, The Wise Men returned From our Heavenly King; And was not this...

It was on Candlemas Day And all in the morning, They visited the Temple With our Heavenly King; And was not this...

Words: anon.

IB Joseph PHIBBS (b.1974)

Lullay, lullay, thou lytil child

Soli: Charlotte Mobbs soprano, Edward McMullan alto, George Pooley tenor, Tim Jones bass

This other night I saw a sight,
A mayd a cradle keep:
"Lullay," she sung, and said among,
"Lie still, my child, and sleep."
Lullay, lullay, thou lytil child,
Sleep and be well still;
The King of bliss thy father is,
As it was his will.

"How should I sleep? I may not for weep, So sore am I begone: Sleep I would: I may not for cold, And clothes have I none." Lullay, lullay...

"For Adam's guilt mankind is spilt
And that me rueth sore;
For Adam and Eve here shall I live
Thirty winter and more."

Lullay, lullay...

Words: anon. 16th century

James BURTON (b.1974)

Balulalow

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

Words: James Wedderburn (c.1495-1553)

20 TRADITIONAL

Herrick's Carol

What sweeter music can we bring, Than a carol, for to sing The birth of this our heav'nly King? Awake the voice! Awake the string!

We see him come, and know him ours, Who with his sunshine and his showers Turns all the patient ground to flowers.

Dark and dull night, fly hence away, And give the honour to this day, That sees December turned to May. If we may ask the reason, say: We see him come... The darling of the world is come, And fit it is we find a room To welcome him. The nobler part Of all the house here, is the heart. We see him come...

Which we will give him; and bequeath This holly and this ivy wreath,
To do him honour who's our King,
And Lord of all this revelling.
We see him come...

Words: Robert Herrick (1591-1674)

Bob CHILCOTT

Advent Antiphons

21 O Sapientia

O Sapientia, quae ex ore Altissimi prodisti, attingens a fine usque ad finem, fortiter: suaviter disponensque omnia: Veni, ad docendum nos viam prudentiae.

O Wisdom, coming forth from the mouth of the Most High, reaching out mightily from end to end, and sweetly arranging all things: come, and teach us the way of prudence.

22 O Adonaï

O Adonaï, et dux domus Israel, qui Moïsi in igne flamme rubi apparuisti, et ei in Syna legem dedisti: Veni, ad redimendum nos in brachio extento.

O Mighty Lord, and leader of the house of Israel, who appeared to Moses in the fire of the burning bush, and on Sinai gave him the law: come, and redeem us with outstretched arm.

23 O Radix Jesse

O Radix Jesse, qui stas in signum populorum, super quem reges continebunt os suum, quem gentes deprecabuntur: Veni ad liberandum nos. iam noli tardare.

> O Root of Jesse, standing as a sign for the people, kings stand silent in your presence, whom the nations will worship: come, and deliver us, and delay no longer.

24 O Clavis David

O Clavis David, et sceptrum domus Israel, qui aperis et nemo claudit, claudis et nemo aperit: Veni, et educ vinctum de domo carceris, sedentem in tenebris et umbra mortis.

O Key of David, and sceptre of the house of Israel, you open, and no one shuts, you shut, and no one opens: come, and lead the prisoners from jail, those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death.

25 O Oriens

O Oriens, splendor lucis aeternae et sol iustitiae: Veni, et illumina sedentem in tenebris et umbra mortis.

O Dawn, splendour of eternal light, and sun of justice: come, and enlighten those who dwell in darkness, and in the shadow of death.

26 O Rex gentium

O Rex gentium, et desideratus earum: lapisque angularis, qui facis utraque unum: Veni, salva hominem, quem de limo formasti.

> O King of the nations, and the one they desired, keystone, who makes both peoples one: come, and save mankind, whom you shaped from the mud.

27 O Emmanuel

O Emmanuel, rex et legifer noster, expectation gentium et Salvator earum: Veni, ad salvandum nos, Domine Deus noster.

> O Emmanuel, our king and lawgiver, the one awaited by the gentiles, and their Saviour: come, and save us, Lord our God.

> > Words: The Great O Antiphons, Sarum Rite

HARRY CHRISTOPHERS stands among today's great champions of choral music. In partnership with The Sixteen, the ensemble he founded almost 40 years ago, he has set benchmark standards for the performance of everything from late medieval polyphony to important new works by contemporary composers. His international influence is supported by more than 150 recordings and has been enhanced by his work as Artistic Director of Boston's Handel and Haydn Society and as guest conductor worldwide.

The Sixteen's soundworld, rich in tonal variety and expressive nuance, reflects Christophers' determination to create a vibrant choral instrument from the blend of adult professional singers. Under his leadership The Sixteen has established its annual Choral Pilgrimage to cathedrals, churches and other UK venues, created the *Sacred Music* series for BBC television, and developed an acclaimed period-instrument orchestra. Highlights of their recent work include an Artist Residency at Wigmore Hall, a large-scale tour of Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610*, and the world premiere of James MacMillan's *Symphony No. 5*, 'Le grand Inconnu'; their future projects, meanwhile, comprise a new series devoted to Purcell and an ongoing survey of Handel's dramatic oratorios.

Harry has served as Artistic Director of the Handel and Haydn Society since 2008. He was also appointed as Principal Guest Conductor of the City of Granada Orchestra in 2008 and has worked as guest conductor with, among others, the London Symphony Orchestra, the BBC Philharmonic, the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra and the Deutsches Kammerphilharmonie. Christophers' extensive commitment to opera has embraced productions for English National Opera and Lisbon Opera and work with the Granada, Buxton and Grange festivals.

He was appointed a CBE in the Queen's 2012 Birthday Honours for his services to music. He is an Honorary Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, as well as the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, and has Honorary Doctorates in Music from the Universities of Leicester, Northumbria, Canterbury Christ Church and Kent.

§ The Sixteen

Whether performing a simple medieval hymn or expressing the complex musical and emotional language of a contemporary choral composition, The Sixteen does so with qualities common to all great ensembles. Tonal



warmth, rhythmic precision and immaculate intonation are clearly essential to the mix. But it is the courage and intensity with which The Sixteen makes music that speak above all to so many people.

The Sixteen gave its first concert in 1979 under the direction of Founder and Conductor Harry Christophers CBE. Their pioneering work since has made a profound impact on the performance of choral music and attracted a large new audience, not least as 'The Voices of Classic FM' and through BBC television's *Sacred Music* series.

The voices and period-instrument players of The Sixteen are at home in over five centuries of music, a breadth reflected in their annual Choral Pilgrimage to Britain's great cathedrals and sacred spaces, regular appearances at the world's leading concert halls, and award-winning recordings for The Sixteen's CORO and other labels.

Recent highlights include the world premiere of James MacMillan's *Symphony No. 5,* 'Le grand Inconnu', commissioned for The Sixteen by the Genesis Foundation, an ambitious ongoing series of Handel oratorios, and a debut tour of China.

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Sixteen

SOPRANO ALTO TENOR BASS Julie Cooper Daniel Collins Jeremy Budd Ben Davies Katy Hill Edward McMullan Joshua Cooter Tim Iones Kirsty Hopkins Elisabeth Paul Mark Dobell Rob Macdonald Alexandra Kidgell Kim Porter George Pooley Stuart Young

Charlotte Mobbs Emilia Morton

RECORDING PRODUCER: Mark Brown

RECORDING ENGINEER: Mike Hatch (Floating Earth)

RECORDED AT: Church of St Augustine, Kilburn, London, 23-25 March 2021 COVER IMAGE: Winter Nocturne (1994) by Konstantin Rodko (1908-95), oil on canvas

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www.thesixteen.com