

## A Season's Promise

The towering tree at Rockefeller Center, midnight mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral, Bing Crosby singing *White Christmas*—these are among the core snapshots of an American Christmas. A holiday that fuses the sacred and secular, high-gloss entertainment and deep spiritual meaning, Christmas in the United States is built on longstanding rituals at the same time as new riffs are continually being invented. It has its own distinct identity, and in one of the most culturally diverse societies on the globe, a Christian holiday has risen as the country's most prominent.

The striking array of works conducted by Judith Clurman on this recording open a window onto the many facets of a contemporary Christmas. Most of these compositions were first performed at one of the annual Christmas-tree-lighting ceremonies at Lincoln Center, where Clurman has directed music-making since 1992, and many were commissioned for those events. Clurman has been shaping an up-to-date American version of the English carol tradition, complete with participation by the Muppets from *Sesame Street*. Choruses of children and professionals join hands with Telly Monster and Baby Bear, stand outside one of the country's greatest edifices of high culture, and launch the holiday season.

Christmas has more resonance in the United States than even the Fourth of July, which is odd in a country built on the principle of the separation of church and state. It has become a repository for the customs of other times and lands, an example of the cultural fusions at which Americans are so adept. Among the most beloved emblems of the holiday, its music provides an especially powerful vehicle for the imagination, transporting listeners to candle-lit Gothic cathedrals or snow-filled landscapes. The carols and anthems of Christmas can be American or European, brand-new or very old, and the works on this recording pay tribute to this eclectic ancestry, albeit in quite different ways. Some, such as Wayne Oquin's *Ave Maria* or Ned Rorem's *While All Things Were in Quiet Silence*, have texts drawn from church liturgy and music with clear historic precedents in anthems and motets of the European tradition. Others focus on the holiday's secular mythology, whether the joy of caroling with friends, as in Joan Morris and William Bolcom's *Carol ("Neighbors on this frosty tide")*, or human decency, as in Jennifer Higdon's *Deep in the Night*.

Just like their fellow Americans, the composers represented here approach the holiday from divergent perspectives. Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco was an Italian Jew who immigrated to the United States during World War II and gained a considerable reputation for his film scores. Ned Rorem is a Quaker with a clear sense of his attitude about the sacredness of his church compositions. "Now, God did not give me a talent for church music, he gave me a talent for music," Rorem says. "Nor does his voice necessarily speak through any text I've chosen to musicalize. When I write music on so-called sacred texts it is for the same reason I write music on profane texts: not to make people believe in God, but to make them believe in music. . . . What I seek in the Bible is poetry, not sanctity." Similarly, Stephen Paulus has a non-theological view of the religious texts he sets. "The church has given us a huge musical literature, and you don't have to buy into all the dogma," Paulus stated in a recent interview. "There's something spiritual, in the broadest sense of the term, about hearing a Bach piece. Furthermore, I generally don't pick texts that box you in liturgically."

How did a holiday saturated in Christian mythology gain such prominence in a country that encompasses so many different religions and self-proclaimed nonbelievers? For the earliest settlers, Christmas celebrations were modest and by no means consistently observed. In fact, the eating, dancing, singing, card playing, and gambling central to Christmas in seventeenth-century England ranked high among the traditions rejected by the Puritans. Yet as celebrations of Christmas gained momentum in the New World they were consistently syncretic, drawing from the experiences of settlers from across Europe, and in the years after the Revolution, the observance of the holiday began to serve an important role in building a national identity. A fledgling country rallied vigorously around the notions of rebirth, peace, humanity, and age-old tradition central to the Christmas message.

In 1837, Louisiana became the first state to declare December 25 an official holiday, and other states quickly followed, so that during the Civil War Christmas stepped forward as the foremost American holiday. In a time of national strife and growing industrialization, Christmas provided a refuge where “old and cherished values survived,” in the words of cultural historian Penne L. Restad. “The Christmas that these well-educated and comfortably middle-class or wealthy Americans embraced as a national holiday,” Restad continues, “also reflected a leaning toward ceremonies that imagined simpler times when spirituality and community had once existed.” At the same time, the idea of an “old-fashioned” Christmas took root, generating a sense of deep historical connectedness in a country with a brief history of its own, and various rituals that continue to be celebrated first fell into place. The myth of Saint Nick, albeit with European ancestry, took hold through Clement Clarke Moore’s now-famous “’Twas the Night Before Christmas” of 1823 (originally titled “A Visit from St. Nicholas”), which was circulated during the nineteenth century to ever-wider audiences. Moore apparently based his jolly character on “‘a portly rubicund Dutchman’ who lived near his father’s home in New York.” The exchange of Christmas cards gained popularity in the 1880s; it was especially useful for fostering business ties. And in 1912, New York City put up a community tree, which is believed to have been the first in the nation. Meanwhile, the practice of gift-giving grew ever more prevalent with the rise of commerce.

Through all this, Americans were composing Christmas songs, contributing the kind of hymn-like carols that were also popular in Victorian England. *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear* was written by Edmund Hamilton Sears of Massachusetts (text) and Richard Storrs Willis of New York (music) in 1850; *We Three Kings of Orient Are* by John Henry Hopkins Jr. of Pennsylvania around 1857; *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day* by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in 1863 (Longfellow wrote the text and set it to an existing tune); *Jingle Bells* by John Pierpont (a Unitarian minister from Boston) that same year; and *O Little Town of Bethlehem* by Phillips Brooks in 1867. By the twentieth century, the rise of radio, film, and recordings meant that a popular Christmas song could become a commercial hit. *White Christmas* (1942), written by Irving Berlin, himself a Jewish immigrant, was ubiquitous, as was *Let There Be Peace on Earth*, composed by the husband-and-wife team of Jill Jackson and Sy Miller in 1955. While *White Christmas* evokes an idealized snowy landscape, *Let There Be Peace on Earth* encourages individuals to take responsibility for international cooperation.

The composers featured on this recording, then, write with an awareness of all these traditions, taking part in the ongoing process of adding new layers to holiday rituals. They speak of humanitarian issues as much as they do religious ones, and they bring fresh energy to cultural practices that are continually in flux.

**Wayne Oquin (born 1977). *Ave Maria*.** Composed in 2000. Text from the *Liber antiphonarius*, antiphon for the Fourth Sunday in Advent. Dedicated to Judith Clurman. Premiered with the New York Concert Singers in Brno, Czech Republic, July 9, 2000.

From the initial lining out of chant to the hushed “Amen” at the end, Wayne Oquin’s *Ave Maria* evokes the mystery of an old cathedral, establishing the aura of ancient traditions so basic to an American Christmas. The work migrates seamlessly from D minor to an ecstatic release on A-flat major in the final chord. Like some of its great Renaissance models, this millennial essay in non-imitative counterpoint exploits a lush fabric of intensely chromatic harmonies, offering a contemporary reinvention of a historic tradition.

An emerging composer, Oquin received an undergraduate degree at Southwest Texas State University, where he was honored with a Lyndon Baines Johnson Award for outstanding scholastic achievement. He is currently studying composition with Milton Babbitt and Samuel Adler at The Juilliard School. “I spend most of my energy trying to come to terms with the music of Babbitt,” Oquin says. “I strive with all of my might to internalize both the qualities that make Babbitt’s music unique and the generalities that link it to the rest of the twelve-tone tradition.”

**Ned Rorem (born 1923). *While All Things Were in Quiet Silence (Motet for Christmas)*.** From Rorem’s *Seven Motets for the Church Year*. Composed in 1986. Text from an Episcopalian antiphon of Matins, Christmas I. Commissioned by All Saints Episcopal Church, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, and dedicated to Christopher Kane, Organist-Choirmaster of that parish.

“I do not believe in God. I do believe in poetry,” says Rorem. “God explains the unexplainable and, however cruelly, he soothes. Poets reflect; they do not explain nor do they soothe.” Like the sacred-secular paradoxes so basic to an American Christmas, Rorem’s *While All Things Were in Quiet Silence*, although it was based on a sacred text, appears to be more a reflection on the human condition than an affirmation of a godly presence. The text seems a logical choice for a Quaker like Rorem, with “silence” such an important part of Quaker practice.

While Rorem is best known for his songs, he has also composed a substantial body of choral music. He describes these works as “wanting to be in blocks,” and utilizes a compositional device suggested by his teacher Leo Sowerby, namely “that a piece has to end where it began . . . [or] come reasonably close.” *While All Things Were in Quiet Silence* does both. Written largely in a homophonic texture, with occasional flashes of counterpoint, it falls into four sections, each of which is based on the same melodic idea. Each, however, progresses from one key area to another, and each ends differently. As a result, the piece has a through-composed momentum. Even the final chord shifts gears, flouting an expected resolution on B-flat by moving to a G-major triad—a latter-day spin on a *tierce de Picardie*.

A Pulitzer Prize-winning composer, Rorem studied in Chicago with Sowerby, later working with Rosario Scalero at the Curtis Institute, Aaron Copland at Tanglewood, and Virgil Thomson. Since they began giving concerts in 1988, The New York Concert Singers have performed American and New York premieres of several works by Rorem.

**Ruth Fox Hume (1922–1980) and Paul Hume (born 1915). *The Shepherds and the Kings*.** Composed in 1970. Text and melody by Ruth Fox Hume; harmonization by Paul Hume.

While Oquin harks back to historic Christmas music of the Continent, Ruth and Paul Hume build on another strain of holiday repertoires: that of the English and American carol. Written with a hymn texture, *The Shepherds and the Kings* has four verses, each built of two phrases structured as traditional antecedent-consequences. The third and fourth verses present variations on the melody and harmony of the first, while the second, although loosely shaped on the first, migrates far enough afield to serve as a contrasting “B” section.

Paul Hume was music editor of *The Washington Post* from 1946 to 1982, and Ruth Fox Hume wrote books for adolescents; the two were husband and wife. Early in her career she published murder mysteries under the pen name Alexander Irving. In addition to his work for the *Post*, Paul Hume wrote *Catholic Church Music* (1956). He and his wife co-authored *The Lion of Poland: The Story of Paderewski* (1962) and *The King of Song: The Story of John McCormack* (1964).

**Joan Morris (born 1943) and William Bolcom (born 1938). *Carol (“Neighbors on this frosty tide”)*.** Published in 2000. Text by Kenneth Grahame (from *The Wind in the Willows*) and Arnold Weinstein. Dedicated to Judith Clurman.

Also shaped as a traditional carol with verses, “*Neighbors on this frosty tide*” sports a rollicking rhythm that captures the friendliness of a holiday gathering. This is the Christmas of merriment and mingling, of caroling on the porch next door. The text fuses secular and sacred images yet never utters the word “Jesus” or even “baby.” Instead we hear of Joseph and Mary, a stable, a manger. Then and now meet as Joseph gazes “across the snow,” and neighbors are “led” by a “star from afar.” Bolcom arranged Morris’s melody for Judith Clurman.

The husband-and-wife team of composer-pianist William Bolcom and mezzo-soprano Joan Morris are well-known performers of American popular song, championing repertory ranging from the nineteenth century—most notably in the Nonesuch recording *After the Ball*—to a string of major songwriters from the twentieth. Morris has also premiered and recorded concert works composed by her husband, including his *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* and *Fourth Symphony*. Bolcom won the Pulitzer Prize in 1988 for his *12 New Etudes for Piano*.

**Stephen Paulus (born 1949). *Three Nativity Carols: The Holly and the Ivy, This Endris Night, Wonder Tidings*.** Composed in 1999. Texts: traditional, fifteenth century, fifteenth century. Commissioned by Pat Whitacre in memory of Gene Whitacre for the Dale Warland Singers.

Paulus describes *The Holly and the Ivy* as “crisp and precise in flavor. The harp and oboe are used as catalysts to spur the text onward.” Indeed, he has written a melody and accompaniment that fit the verse structure of this traditional carol text and surrounded them with continually evolving lines in the accompanying instruments. The texts for *This Endris Night* and *Wonder Tidings*, meanwhile, appear in *The Oxford Book of Carols*, establishing their lineage in the British holiday repertory. Paulus’s setting of *This Endris Night* is sumptuous, conjuring up the “mystery of being out in the night,” as he puts it. An occasional conjunction of major and minor enhances the work’s lushness. As the piece progresses, it builds an arc of verses that culminates in “waves of sound,” again quoting Paulus, with the voices rolling forward in continually overlapping lines that seem to echo in a vast space. *Wonder Tidings* returns to the joy of the holiday season.

Based in Minnesota, Stephen Paulus is a prolific composer, with major works for orchestra, chamber ensembles, solo voice, keyboard, and opera. He has received commissions from organizations and artists as diverse as the New York Philharmonic, Doc Severinsen, and the Minnesota Opera. His choral works have had an especially wide following. Judith Clurman has conducted New York premieres of a number of Paulus’s compositions.

**Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895–1968).** *Lo, the Messiah.* Composed in 1943. Text by Lucrezia Tornabuoni de Medici; translation by Lois E. Neupert.

An anthem of praise, at some distance from the tradition of the carol, *Lo, the Messiah* is built around a recurring refrain, set in hymn-like texture. A neoclassicist at heart, Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s surfaces are crisp and his overall shaping linear. Counterpoint abounds.

Born in Florence, Castelnuovo-Tedesco was a pupil of Ildebrando Pizzetti and a member of an early-twentieth-century composer-advocacy society, the Società Italiana di Musica. In the summer of 1939, after having performances of his work canceled in Italy and suspecting it was because of his Jewish heritage, he immigrated to the United States, eventually settling in Hollywood, where he became a noted composer for films and a teacher of such composers as Henry Mancini, André Previn, Nelson Riddle, and John Williams. In 1995, the New York Concert Singers presented a Castelnuovo-Tedesco centennial concert.

**Libby Larsen (born 1950).** *So Blessedly It Sprung.* Composed in 1996. Texts by Adam of St. Victor and from an Old English Marian carol (both from the twelfth century). Commissioned by the Dale Warland Singers.

In describing *So Blessedly It Sprung* Libby Larsen reflects on the motivation behind its mystical, otherworldly evanescence and on the challenges presented by a contemporary Christmas. “I am enormously fascinated by medieval texts and the importance of metaphor to medieval writers,” she says. “To them, the contemplation of a particularly vivid metaphor had two-fold results: It was a way to view the world and it had a profoundly spiritual effect. I am interested in that search for metaphor in our lives. We lack the ability to recognize it; consequently, we take literally much of what we see. *So Blessedly It Sprung* sets two twelfth-century poems. In the second, *Of a Rose*, the metaphor is that Christ is a rose sprung from the branch of Mary. The message is of a miraculous birth in a time of darkness. I was especially drawn to these texts because they suggest the real battle we face in our own commercially driven culture to experience Christmas as a celebration of spiritual rebirth.”

She continues: “I set the Old English text (*Of a Rose*) in seven verses with refrain and interspersed verses of the Latin text (*De Radice Flos Ascendit*). The choral parts flow in a chant-like way, interrupted by ecstatic bursts, sometimes of purely instrumental color. Originally I thought the Latin part would be a lullaby. But the poet, contemplating the metaphor of the rose and branch in the adjoining text, finds himself in a state of ecstasy. Thus these sections become the outbursts, not a lullaby.”

Like Paulus, Libby Larsen is Minnesota-based and highly productive. She wrote *So Blessedly It Sprung* for the Dale Warland Singers. She has been composer-in-residence with the Minnesota Orchestra, the Charlotte Symphony, and the Colorado Symphony, and she is particularly well known for her opera *Frankenstein: The Modern Prometheus* (1990). Judith Clurman and the New York Concert Singers have commissioned works by Larsen and performed an evening of her music at the Lincoln Center Out-of-Doors Festival.

**Virgil Thomson (1896–1989).** *O My Deir Hert*. Composed in 1921, revised in 1978. Text by Martin Luther, translated in 1567.

Set to a text from *The Oxford Book of Carols*, Thomson's *O My Deir Hert* was written in 1921, during his first winter in Paris studying with Nadia Boulanger. The piece responds to the neoclassical climate of the early 1920s and is rooted in Thomson's adolescent experiences at St. Mary's Episcopal in Kansas City as well as his performances of Renaissance music with the Harvard Glee Club, directed by Archibald Davison. As Thomson pointed out in a letter written later in life, "I did not go to [Boulanger's] Wednesday classes, where the students sang sixteenth-century motets, because I [already] knew that repertory extremely well from my experience as a choral singer and conductor." There's nothing modernist here, but rather a student's desire to pay respects to an older style.

Virgil Thomson wrote a substantial body of work for chorus, ranging from the conventional—whether *O My Deir Hert* or *Kyrie Eleison* (1953)—to the experimental, such as *Capital, Capitals*, a work from 1927 that was designed for four men and set to a text by Gertrude Stein. As music critic of the *New York Herald-Tribune* from 1940 to 1954, he contributed some of the most influential assessments of American music-making at mid-century. The New York Concert Singers have previously recorded Thomson's *Hymns from the Old South* and *Four Songs Set to Poems of Thomas Campion*.

**Morten Lauridsen (born 1943).** *O Magnum Mysterium*. Composed in 1994. Text from the responsory following the Fourth Lesson of the Second Nocturn of Matins for Christmas Day. Commissioned by Marshall Rutter in honor of his wife, Terry Knowles. Sung in Latin.

Like Thomson, Lauridsen doffs his hat to Renaissance European styles with *O Magnum Mysterium*, a new setting of a text most famously brought to life in a motet by the sixteenth-century Spanish composer Tomás Luis de Victoria. Similarly dark and mystical, Lauridsen's work avoids the imitative textures of de Victoria, choosing instead a homophonic setting elaborated with long-spun melismas. Lauridsen has written of this text as "beautiful," as an "affirmation of God's grace to the meek and the adoration of the Blessed Virgin." He aims for a "quiet song of profound inner joy."

Lauridsen is composer-in-residence with the Los Angeles Master Chorale, and his choral music is regularly featured by major ensembles around the country. According to the Web page for Choral Consultants (Morton Music in South Dakota), his *O Magnum Mysterium* has had more than two thousand performances around the world since its premiere in 1994 and has been featured on more than two dozen recordings.

**Stephen Paulus.** *Wishes and Candles*. Composed in 1998. Text by Alan and Marilyn Bergman. Dedicated to Judith Clurman and the Lincoln Center Tree Lighting.

Returning to the simplicity of an American carol, Paulus's *Wishes and Candles* sports the kind of frank, catchy melody that could win a place at sing-alongs across the country. It is strophic, with each verse built of a traditional AABA form, and is as reminiscent of Stephen Foster songs as camp-meeting hymns. The work was first performed by *Sesame Street's* Big Bird and Telly Monster, together with Project Youth Chorus (the educational division of The New York Concert Singers, which on this occasion included choruses from the Spence School in New York City and the Clifton T. Barkalow School in New Jersey).

**Philip Lasser (born 1963).** *Sing Christmas!* Composed in 2000. Text by Philip Lasser. Dedicated to Judith Clurman and written for this recording.

*Sing Christmas!* captures the zest and zeal of the holiday season. An eminently accessible piece—both in text and music—its complexities are reserved for the piano accompaniment. Composer Philip Lasser is on the faculty of The Juilliard School. In 1997, his *Prelude and Double Fugue* was premiered by the Seattle Symphony.

**Jennifer Higdon (born 1962).** *Deep in the Night.* Composed in 1997. Commissioned by Terry Knowles and Marshall Rutter for the Philadelphia Singers, directed by David Hayes. Text by Jennifer Higdon.

A reflective work, gently fusing small clusters with open fifths, *Deep in the Night* explores the humanity that lies at the core of Christmas mythology. “This work makes the spiritual statement that we are all guiding angels to each other in our gestures of kindness and thoughtfulness,” Higdon writes. “We are a form of light on a path for those who may be searching.” The work begins in a somewhat static, tonally ambiguous realm. As Higdon puts it, “The music emerges quietly, as if from darkness into light, and creates a sense of fullness through sound, thereby representing the fullness that we feel when we reach out to others. When the poetry attains the realization that we are all angels, the musical lines separate and reach out in different directions. The music closes with a meditative and unified sound.”

Jennifer Higdon, the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, is a freelance composer who also teaches at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. Her works have been performed widely, by the American Composers Orchestra, the Oregon Symphony, the Cincinnati Symphony, and the Dale Warland Singers, among others.

**Thomas Cabaniss (born 1962).** *Behold the Star.* Composed in 1999. Text by Thomas Cabaniss. Written for Project Youth Chorus directed by Judith Clurman, and dedicated to Clurman.

*Behold the Star* embraces the tradition of the carol, both in its verse structure and thoroughgoing tonality. Its frequent short-long rhythms and occasional drones in the accompaniment generate the aura of a festive dance in a cavernous Renaissance hall. The second verse unfolds in buoyant counterpoint. The composer writes, “*Behold the Star* is in 6/8—a round, preceded by a verse. In its original form it was in three parts, for children’s chorus.”

Thomas Cabaniss has served as composer-in-residence for the American Dance Festival’s Young Choreographers and Composers Program. He composed the score for *The Lunch Date*, which won an Academy Award and the Palme d’Or for Best Short Film. In 1998, he received a Drama Desk nomination and Obie Award for his score to *Mamba’s Daughter*. Cabaniss is Director of Education for the New York Philharmonic, and he teaches at The Juilliard School.

**Dave Conner (born 1936).** *A Season’s Promise.* Composed in 1999. Lyrics by Liana and Nicole Guberman (twins born in 1986). Harp arrangement by Susan Jolles.

With its syncopations and close harmonies, *A Season’s Promise* celebrates the jolliness of an American Christmas. First performed at the Lincoln Center Holiday Tree Lighting on 1999, the work was premiered by the *Sesame Street* Muppets Telly Monster, Baby Bear, and Zoe, together with Project Youth Chorus.

*Sesame Street* is home turf for composer Dave Conner, who has been the show’s Associate Music Director since 1978. Previously he served as Music Director for *The Electric Company*.

**Lance Horne (born 1977).** *all together.* Composed in 2000. Text by Philip Littell. Premiered by Project Youth Chorus and the *Sesame Street* Muppets. Dedicated to Judith Clurman.

With its multicultural message, “We are different and the same, all together,” this work closes the recording on a contemporary ecumenical note. Christmas in America today is not only about darkened cathedrals and Old English carols but also the country’s ever-shifting ethnic and racial diversity. The work was originally written for children, and it is easy to imagine a performance by a group of ebullient young voices.

Lance Horne is completing a master’s degree at The Juilliard School. He has studied composition with Milton Babbitt, Philip Lasser, Elaine Broad, and Robert Beaser. A founding member of VIA (Vision Into Art), his works have been performed at the Public Theater, Manhattan Theatre Club, and the Juilliard dance and drama divisions.

Actor, writer, and director Philip Littell has collaborated as a librettist with numerous composers, including André Previn (“A Streetcar Named Desire”), Conrad Susa (“The Dangerous Liaisons”), David Conte, Stephen Hartke, Frank Ticheli, Jake Heggie, and Michael Torke. —*Carol J. Oja*

Carol J. Oja is the author of *Making Music Modern: New York in the 1920s* (Oxford University Press). She is Margaret and David Bottoms Professor of Music and American Studies at the College of William and Mary in Virginia.

### **Ave Maria**

Wayne Oquin

Ave Maria, gratia plena:  
Dominus tecum,  
Benedicta tu in mulieribus,  
Et benedictus fructus ventris tui Jesu.

Sancta Maria, Mater Dei,  
Ora pro nobis peccatoribus,  
Nunc et in hora mortis nostrae, Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace,  
the Lord is with thee,  
Blessed art thou among women,  
And blessed is the fruit of thy womb,  
Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
Pray for us sinners,  
Now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

### **While All Things Were in Quiet Silence**

Ned Rorem

Antiphon of Matins, Christmas I

Part of the cycle *Seven Motets for the Church Year*

While all things were in quiet silence,  
And that night was in the midst of her swift course,  
Thine Almighty Word,  
O Lord, leaped down out of the royal throne.  
Alleluia.

### **The Shepherds and the Kings**

Music and lyrics by Ruth Fox Hume and Paul Hume

Mary, Mary, let us see your baby,  
Oh, how fair His face, how bright His eyes!  
Angels come to bring us tidings  
Of the Babe who in a manger lies.

Kings of earth, we seek the King of heaven,  
Flaming stars will guide us thro' the night.  
Gold and incense, myrrh, the gifts we offer  
To the King of majesty and might!

Mary, Mary, does He have a pillow?  
Take our lamb, so soft and warm his fleece.  
Humble gifts all we have to offer  
To the tiny Prince of peace.

Mary, Mary, years have grown to ages,  
Since that night of mystery and mirth.  
Still you give your Son to be the brother  
Of the great and poor folk of the earth.

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**Carol**

**“Neighbors on this frosty tide”**

Music by Joan Morris and William Bolcom

Words by Kenneth Graham, from “The Wind in the Willows,”  
and Arnold Weinstein

Neighbors on this frosty tide,  
The wind is blowing, there’s snow beside,  
So let us sit by your fireside,  
And joy shall be yours in the morning.

Here we stand in cold and sleet,  
Blowing fingers and stamping feet,  
You by the fire and we in the street,  
And bidding you joy in the morning.

A star from afar has led us on  
And gave us light before the dawn.  
For bliss tomorrow and joy anon,  
And joy for ev’ry morning.

Good Joseph saw across the snow  
The star above the manger low.  
He made a bed for his Mary, so  
That joy would be hers in the morning.

And in the stable where they did dwell,  
Who were the first to sing Noel?  
Donkey and cow, for it befell  
That joy would be theirs in the morning.

So neighbors on this frosty tide,  
The wind is blowing, there’s snow beside,  
So let us sit by your fireside,  
And joy will be yours in the morning.

*Carol* (“Neighbors on this frosty tide”) from “The Wind in the Willows.” Copyright © 2001 by Edward B. Marks  
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## **Three Nativity Carols**

Stephen Paulus

### **I. *The Holly and the Ivy***

(Traditional)

The holly and the ivy,  
When they are both full grown,  
Of all the trees that are in the wood,  
The holly bears the crown.

Chorus:

*The rising of the sun  
And the running of the deer,  
The playing of the merry organ,  
Sweet singing in the choir.*

The holly bears a blossom,  
As white as the lily flower,  
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ,  
To be our sweet Saviour.

(chorus)

The holly bears a berry,  
As red as any blood,  
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ  
To do poor sinners good.

(chorus)

The holly bears a prickle,  
As sharp as any thorn,  
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ  
On Christmas Day in the morn.

The holly bears a bark,  
As bitter as any gall,  
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ  
For to redeem us all.

(chorus)

**II. *This Endris Night***  
(fifteenth century)

This endris night I saw a sight,  
A star as bright as day;  
And ever among, a maiden sung,  
“Lullay, by by, lullay.”

This lovely lady sat and sung,  
And to her child did say:  
“My son, my brother, father, dear,  
Why liest thou in hay?”

The child then spake in his talking  
And to his mother said:  
“Yea, I am known as heaven-king,  
In crib though I be laid.”

“Now sweet son, since thou art king,  
Why art thou laid in stall?  
Then why dost not order thy bedding  
In some great kinges hall?”

“Mary mother, I am thy child,  
Though I be laid in stall;  
For lords and dukes shall worship me,  
And so shall kinges all.”

“And in thy arm thou hold me warm,  
And keep me night and day,  
And if I weep and may not sleep,  
Thou sing, By by, lullay.”

### **III. *Wonder Tidings***

(fifteenth century)

Chorus:

*What tidings bringest thou, messenger,  
Of Christes birth this jolly day?*

A babe is born of high nature.  
The Prince of peace that ever shall be;  
Of heav'n and earth he hath the cure:  
His lordship is eternity:  
Such wonder tidings ye may hear,  
That man is made now Godes peer,  
Whom sin had made but fiendes prey.

(chorus)

A wonder thing is now befall;  
That King that formed star and sun,  
Heaven and earth and angels all,  
Now in mankind is new begun:  
Such wonder tidings ye may hear,  
An infant now of but one year,  
That hath been ever and shall be ay.

(chorus)

That loveliest gan greet her child,  
"Hail, son! Hail, brother! Hail father dear!  
Hail daughter! Hail sister! Hail mother mild!"  
This hailing was of quaint mannere:  
Such wonder tidings ye may hear,  
That hailing was of such good cheer.  
That mannes pain is turned to play.  
A babe is born, alleluia.

## **Lo, the Messiah**

Music by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco

Italian text by Lucrezia Torbanuoni de Medici,

English version by Lois E. Neupert

Lo, the Messiah, the blessed one,  
Him and His mother Maria.  
Oh come ye,  
Oh hosts of heaven,  
In everlasting chorus.  
Oh come ye with joy and feasting  
Unto the Lord of Lords.  
To him without delay  
Come all the pow'rs of heaven.

Lo, the Messiah, the blessed one,  
Him and His mother Maria.  
Oh come ye,  
Ye holy angels,  
Chanting heavenly carols.  
Oh come, all you great multitudes,  
Come with praises to Jesus,  
And sing psalms, psalms of glory  
Replete with sweetest melody.  
Oh come, holy fathers,  
Oh come with joyous feasting  
Oh come, praise Maria,  
The Virgin Queen Maria.

Lo, the Messiah, the blessed one,  
Him and His mother Maria.  
Oh come, ye aged prophets, come  
For you foretold His coming.  
Oh come, let all be joyful,  
Come see that He is born,  
For the Lord has bestowed in us  
A Child, the infant Savior.

The Magi come a long way,  
By a star guided onwards.  
With all their wealth in tribute  
They kneel down on the ground there.  
They find their consolation,  
As they bow to the Savior.  
Lo, the Messiah, the blessed one,  
Him and His mother Maria.

Lo, the Messiah, the blessed one,  
Him and His mother, blessed Maria.

### **So Blessedly It Sprung**

Libby Larsen

*De Radice Flos Ascendit\**

(Adam of St. Victor)

Iesu puer immortalis,	Jesus, immortal child,
Tuus nobis hic natalis	May your birthday
Pacem det et gaudia;	Give us peace and joy here;
Flos et fructus virginalis,	Virginal flower and fruit,
Cuius odor est vitalis,	Whose fragrance is life-giving,
Tibi laus et gloria.	To you be praise and glory.

*Of a Rose\*\**

(A Marian Carol)

Lyth and lystyn, both old and yung,  
How the rose begane to spryng;  
A fayrer rose to owr lekyng  
Sprong ther neurer in kynges lond.

V branchis of that rose ther ben,  
The wych ben both feyer and chene;  
Of a maydyn, Mary, hevyn quene,  
Ovght of hey bosum the branch sprong.

Heed and listen, both old and young,  
How the rose began to spring;  
To our liking, a fairer rose  
Never blossomed in king's land.

There are five branches of that rose  
Which are both fair and lovely;  
Of a maiden, Mary, heaven's queen,  
Out of her bosom the branch sprang.

The first branch was of gret honour;  
That blyssed Mary shuld ber the flour,  
Ther cam an angell ovght hevyn toure  
To breke the develes bond.

The secund branch was gret of myght,  
That sprong upon Christmes nyght;  
The sterre shone and lemeghed bryght,  
That man schuld se it both day and nyght.

The third branch gan sprhng and spread:  
iii kynges than to branch gan led,  
Tho to Owr Lady in hure chyldbéd;  
Into Bethlem that branch sprong ryght.

The fourth branch, it sprong to hell,  
The develes powr for to fell;  
That no sovre therin shuld dwell,  
The branch so blessedfully sprong.

The fifth branch, it was so swote,  
Yt sprong to hevyn, both crophe and rote,  
In every ball to ben owr bott,  
So blessedly yt sprong.

The first branch was of great honor;  
That blessed Mary should bear the flower,  
There came an angel from heaven's tower  
To break the devil's bond.

The second branch was great in might,  
That grew on Christmas night;  
The star shone and gleamed,  
So one could see it day and night.

The third branch began to grow and spread:  
Three kings to the branch it led  
To Our Lady in her childbed;  
That branch sprang straight into Bethlehem.

The fourth branch, it sprang to hell  
To destroy the devil's power;  
So no soul should dwell therein,  
The branch so blessedly sprang.

The fifth branch was so sweet,  
It grew to heaven, both top and root,  
To be our salvation in every trial,  
So blessedly it sprang.

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\*\*from *The Early English Carols*, second edition (revised and enlarged), Robert Leighton Greene, ed. Copyright © 1997 Oxford University Press. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

## **O My Deir Hert**

Music by Virgil Thomson

Text by Martin Luther in 1535;  
translated in 1567

O, my deir hert, young Jesus sweet,  
Prepare thy credil in my spreit,  
And I sall rock thee in my hert,  
And never mair from thee depart.

But I sall praise thee ever mair,  
With sanges sweet unto thy gloir;  
The knees of my hert sall I bow,  
And sing that richt Balulalo.

Praise be to God eternally,  
Whilk gave his only Son for me,  
The angel's joy as for to hear,  
The gracious gift of this New Year.

## **O Magnum Mysterium**

Morten Lauridsen

O magnum mysterium  
Et admirabile sacramentum  
Ut animalia viderent Dominum natum  
Jacentum in preasepio!  
Beata Virgo, cujus viscera meruerunt  
Portare dominum Christum. Alleluia!

O great mystery  
and wondrous sacrament,  
that animals should see the new-born Lord  
Lying in their manger!  
Blessed is the Virgin whose womb was worthy  
To bear the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Alleluia!

## **Wishes and Candles**

Music by Stephen Paulus

Lyrics by Alan & Marilyn Bergman

We have a wish for each candle we light,  
Making the holidays shiny and bright.  
A wish for the children, the young and the old,  
To never go hungry, to never be cold.  
Wishes and candles and love and laughter,  
Mem'ries we'll treasure ever after.  
Fam'lies are gathered with presents to share,  
The best gift of all is that ev'ryone's there.

A wish for the people who walk alone,  
A roof overhead and a bed of their own.  
A candle for those in the need of a friend,  
A hand and a smile by the holiday's end.  
Wishes and candles—they warm the season,  
Hope for a world filled with peace and reason  
Think of the love that is waiting for you,  
When all of our holiday wishes come true.

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**Sing Christmas!**

Music and lyrics by Philip Lasser

Sing o, sing Christmas,  
Sing o, sing Christmas through the night.  
Sing a world of love and of light;  
Sing of joy and of delight.  
Sing o, sing Christmas,  
Sing o, sing Christmas through the night.  
Sing your heart strong,  
Sing your soul deep,  
Sing your love long,  
Let your joy leap.  
Sing o, sing Christmas,  
Sing o, sing Christmas through the night.

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**Deep in the Night**

Music and lyrics by Jennifer Higdon

Deep in the night  
comes the season of love  
A bright star to guide  
a path from above

We walk to embrace  
all of humankind  
To remember what is grace  
and follow this sign

Through the dark do we tread  
by hills, woods, and sea  
And the sound under foot  
is only the breeze

Sure of our path  
we must reach out a hand  
To help those around us  
to make sure they stand

And walk in the light  
which guides us on our path  
Let love surround us  
and ease our heart's task

Let us give our light  
to all who do follow  
As those others would  
who will walk there tomorrow

This season of love  
with full brilliant lights  
Angels we all are  
be guides through the night

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### **Behold the Star**

Music and lyrics by Thomas Cabaniss

#### **VERSE**

Behold the star, wondrous bright,  
Shining down upon the night.  
Listen to its distant song,  
Ringing out that it belongs  
To the anthem that we sing tonight,  
To keep us till the morning light:

#### **ROUND**

Peace on earth, good will towards men;  
Raise all our voices in song again.  
Peace!

Text reprinted by permission. © 2001 Thomas Cabaniss.

### **A Season's Promise**

Music by Dave Conner

Lyrics by Liana and Nicole Guberman

A wide-eyed child, a blustery night,  
The wind blows cold but hearts are light.  
Shimmering frost on the windows aglow,  
It's that special time of year!

When families gather and lovers grow close,  
Enjoying the people they cherish most.  
Sharing the happiest moments we know,  
It's that special time of year!

Spirits are high with thoughts full of joy and good cheer.  
Wishes to all for a peaceful and happy New Year.  
Let's celebrate now that the season is finally here  
Rejoice in the moment! Rejoice in the promise!

The night sky gleams with stars from above,  
And we all dream of peace of love,  
As moonbeams smile on the world below,  
It's that special time of year!

Text reprinted by permission. © 2001 Liana and Nicole Guberman.

**all together**

Music by Lance Horne

Lyrics by Philip Littell

we are different and the same  
    all together all together  
what we want this holiday is  
    winter weather winter weather  
        lots and lots and lots of snow  
        every snowflake perfect: oh!  
we are different and the same  
    all together Christmas day

we are different and the same  
    all together all together  
what we want this holiday is  
    peace forever peace forever  
        every one on earth be friends  
        peace on earth that never ends  
we are different and the same  
    all together Christmas day

deck the world and light the lights  
    all together all together  
light the days and light the nights  
    (and hope we all get lots of presents)  
        Christmas shows us how to live  
        how to love and how to give  
we are different and the same  
    all together Christmas day

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As innovative, gifted, and versatile as their Music Director and founder, conductor Judith Clurman, **The New York Concert Singers** perform as a chamber chorus, full chorus, a cappella group, or quartet. Their appearances range from international concert venues at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center in the Great Performers and Out-of-Doors series, Merkin Hall, and the 92nd Street Y in New York to European tours in the Czech Republic, Austria, and Slovakia under the auspices of Friends of Czech Greenways. They have performed on PBS in the *Live from Lincoln Center* concerts, in a one-hour concert on NBC television, and on NPR, WNYC, WQXR, and Late Show with David Letterman. The Concert Singers have also performed at the annual Lincoln Center Tree Lighting with the *Sesame Street* Muppets. They are the recipients of an ASCAP/Chorus America Award. Some of the most significant modern choral works of our time have been commissioned, performed, and recorded by the ensemble.

Conductor **Judith Clurman** is renowned for her vision, artistry, and versatility. Known predominantly for her vital role as a leader in the field of choral music, she performs regularly with choruses throughout Europe and America. Founder and Director of The New York Concert Singers, she is also Director of Choral Activities for the TodiMusicFest. In addition, she is a member of the faculty at The Juilliard School, where she teaches conducting and directs the Juilliard Choral Union and the Juilliard Opera Chorus, as well as other instrumental and vocal groups. Ms. Clurman's ensembles have appeared at Lincoln Center with the New York Philharmonic, Mostly Mozart, and Great Performers, and at Carnegie Hall with the Orchestra of St. Luke's, the Boston Symphony, the American Composers Orchestra, and the New York Pops. She serves as Music Director and conductor for Lincoln Center's annual Tree Lighting celebration with the *Sesame Street* Muppets. A strong supporter of American music, Ms. Clurman has commissioned and performed works by such major composers as Robert Beaser, William Bolcom, David Diamond, Tania León, Libby Larsen, Stephen Paulus, and Christopher Rouse.

Since 1980, **Melanie Feld** has maintained a career as one of New York's most active freelance oboists. As a member of the Orchestra of Saint Luke's, she was a featured performer in a Rossini Bicentennial Gala telecast in 1992 by *Live from Lincoln Center*; her solo work also includes appearances with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and at the Caramoor Festival. She performs regularly with the Brooklyn Philharmonic, American Composers Orchestra, Opera Orchestra of New York, and the New York Pickup Ensemble (the resident orchestra for Carnegie Hall's P.D.Q. Bach concerts.) Since 1992, she has been a member of the orchestra with the Broadway production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Phantom of the Opera*.

**Susan Jolles** is one of the foremost harpists in the United States. She is principal harpist with the American Composers Orchestra, the New York Chamber Symphony, the Little Orchestra Society, Musica Viva, and the Group for Contemporary Music. She is also an associate member of the Metropolitan Orchestra and a founding member of the Naumburg Award-winning Jubal Trio. Ms. Jolles is a frequent guest artist with such groups as the New Jersey Chamber Music Society, the New York Concert Singers, and the Mohawk Trail Concerts. She is represented by an impressive discography, including performances on two albums that received Grammy Awards: *Ancient Voices of Children* and Dawn Upshaw's first album with the Orchestra of St. Luke's. Susan Jolles is on the faculties of the Manhattan School of Music and the Mannes College of Music.

**Lois Martin**, a native of York, Pennsylvania, began her viola studies with Arthur Lewis at the Peabody Preparatory School. She completed her undergraduate work at the Eastman School of Music, where she was a scholarship student of Francis Tursi. During this time, she was a member of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra. She continued her graduate studies at The Juilliard School under the tutelage of Lillian Fuchs. Ms. Martin is a founding member of the Atlantic String Quartet, and is also a member of the New York Chamber Symphony, Concordia, String Fever, the Salon Chamber Soloists, and the American Chamber Ensemble. Ms. Martin is also on the faculty of the Composers Conference at Wellesley College and has taught at Princeton University.

### **The New York Concert Singers**

#### **Soprano**

Ellen Sisson

Ellen Goff Enriken

Marie Mascari

Marcia Young

Gayla Morgan

Joan Krause

Lori Engle

**Alto**

Nancy Wertsch\*  
Kirsten Sollek-Avella  
Megan Friar  
Elsa Larsson  
Mary Marathe

**Tenor**

Mukund Marathe  
Archie Worley  
Daniel Cucura  
Jonathan Goodman  
Gregory Hostetler  
Martin Doner

**Bass**

Jeffrey Johnson  
Bruce Rameker  
Steven Moore  
Lewis White  
Andrew Martens  
Frank Barr  
Walter Richardson  
\* contractor

**SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY****The New York Concert Singers**

*Divine Grandeur*. New World 80504-2.

*The Mask*. New World 80547-2.

**William Bolcom**

Symphony No. 4, *Session I* for Instrumental Ensemble. Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, Leonard Slatkin conducting. New World 80356-2.

*The Mask*. The New York Concert Singers. New World 80547-2.

*A View from the Bridge*. Chorus and Orchestra of Lyric Opera of Chicago, Dennis Russell Davies conducting. New World 80588-2.

**Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco**

Guitar Concertos Nos. 1 and 2. Concerto for Two Guitars and Orchestra. K. and N. Yamashita, guitars; London Philharmonic Orchestra, Leonard Slatkin conducting. BMG/RCA Red Seal 60355-2-RC.

Piano Concerto. Santiago Rodriguez, piano; Richmond Sinfonia, George Manahan conducting. Elan CD 2222.

*Romancero Gitano*. The New York Concert Singers. New World 80547-2.

**Jennifer Higdon**

*Autumn Music*. Moran Woodwind Quintet. Crystal Records 754.

**Libby Larsen**

*Missa Gaia (Mass for Earth)*. Oregon Repertory Singers. Koch 7279.

Symphony for Orchestra, "Water Music." Minnesota Orchestra, Neville Marriner conducting. Nonesuch 79147.

Symphony No. 3, "Lyric." London Symphony Orchestra, J. Revzen conducting. Koch 7370.

**Morten Lauridsen**

*Ave Maria, Les Chansons des Roses, Lux Aeterna, Mid-Winter Songs.* Los Angeles Master Chorale, P. Salamunovich conducting. RCM 19705.

**Stephen Paulus**

*Meditations of Li Po.* The New York Concert Singers. New World 80504-2.

*Symphony for Strings.* Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Yoel Levi conducting. New World 80363-2.

*Voices.* Pacific Symphony Orchestra, Pacific Chorale, J. Alexander conducting. Albany TROY 182.

**Ned Rorem**

*Choral Music.* Connecticut Choral Arts, R. Coffey conducting. Albany TROY 307.

*Evidence of Things Not Seen.* The New York Festival of Song. New World 80575-2.

*String Symphony.* Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Louis Lane conducting. New World 80353-2.

**Virgil Thomson**

*Four Saints in Three Acts.* Orchestra of Our Time, Joel Thome conducting. Elektra/Nonesuch 79035-2.

*Hymns from the Old South, Four Songs to Poems of Thomas Campion.* The New York Concert Singers. New World 80547-2.

*The Mother of Us All.* Santa Fe Opera, Raymond Leppard conducting. New World 80288-2.

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**A SEASON'S PROMISE  
THE NEW YORK CONCERT SINGERS  
JUDITH CLURMAN, conductor**

**Wayne Oquin** (b. 1977)

1. *Ave Maria* 3:05  
(publ. by Boosey & Hawkes)

**Ned Rorem** (b. 1923)

2. *While All Things Were in Quiet Silence* 2:06  
(publ. by Boosey & Hawkes)

**Ruth Fox Hume** (1922–1980) and **Paul Hume** (b. 1915)

3. *The Shepherds and the Kings* 2:44  
(publ. by Shawnee Press)

**Joan Morris** (b. 1943) and **William Bolcom** (b. 1938)

4. *Carol ("Neighbors on this frosty tide")* 1:40  
(publ. by Edward B. Marks Music Co.)

**Stephen Paulus** (b. 1949)

- Three Nativity Carols*  
(publ. by Paulus Publications)
5. I. *The Holly and the Ivy* 3:48  
6. II. *This Endris Night* 5:11  
7. III. *Wonder Tidings* 3:24

**Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco** (1895–1968)

- (publ. by estate of composer)
8. *Lo, The Messiah* 3:15

**Libby Larsen** (b. 1950)

9. *So Blessedly It Sprung* 8:53  
(publ. by Oxford University Press USA)

**Virgil Thomson** (1896–1989)

10. *O My Dear Heart* 1:54  
(publ. by Virgil Thomson Music (ASCAP)/Subito Music Publ.) (ASCAP)

**Morten Lauridsen** (b. 1943)

11. *O Magnum Mysterium* 5:19  
(publ. by Peermusic Classical)

**Stephen Paulus**

12. *Wishes and Candles* 2:49  
(publ. by Threesome Music Co. and Paulus Publications)

**Philip Lasser** (b. 1963)

13. *Sing Christmas!* 1:58  
(publ. by Rassel Editions)

**Jennifer Higdon** (b. 1962)

14. *Deep in the Night* 6:14  
(publ. by Lawdon Press)

**Thomas Cabaniss** (b. 1962)

15. *Behold the Star* 2:00  
(publ. by Boosey & Hawkes)

**Dave Conner** (b. 1936)

16. *A Season's Promise* 2:15  
(publ. by Boosey & Hawkes)

**Lance Horne** (b. 1977)

17. *all together* 3:08  
(ms)

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