



**Robert L. Harris, conductor
Patricia Anderson, harp
Natasha Jones, percussion
Stephen Couch, bass**

presents

CAROLS IN CONCERT

**Thursday, December 2 – 7:30 pm
St. Peter's Episcopal Church**

**Friday, December 3 – 7:30 pm
St. Paul's Episcopal Church**

***I Cantori* – Savannah's premier chamber choir
1991 - 2011**

A Ceremony of Carols (Op. 28)

Benjamin Britten

1. Procession

Today Christ is born; today the Saviour has appeared; today the Angels sing, the Archangels rejoice; today the righteous rejoice, saying: Glory to God in the highest. Alleluia!

2. Wolcum Yole!

Wolcum be thou hevenè king, Wolcum, born in one morning, Wolcum for whom we sall (shall) sing!

Wolcum Thomas marter one, Wolcum seintes (saints) lefe and dere; Wolcum, Innocentes every one, Wolcum Twelfthe Day both infere, Wolcum be ye good Newe Yere, Wolcum! Candelmesse, Quene of bliss, Wolcum bothe to more and lesse. Wolcum be ye that are here, Wolcum Yole, Wolcum alle and make good cheer. Wolcum alle another yere, Wolcum Yole. Wolcum!

3. There is No Rose

There is no rose of such vertu (virtue) As is the rose that bare Jesu. Alleluia. For in this rose conteined was Heaven and Earth in litel space, Res Miranda (marvelous thing. By that Rose we may well see There be one God in persons three, Pares forma (in the parents' image). The angels sungen the shepherds to: Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gaudeamus (let us rejoice), Leave we all this werldly mirth, and follow we this joyful birth. Transeamus (let us go).

4. That yongë child

That yongë child when it gan weep With song she lulled him asleep: That was so sweet a melody It passèd alle minstrelsy. The nightingalë sang also: Her song is hoarse and nought thereto: Whoso attendeth to her song And leaveth the first then doth he wrong.

Senja Peterson, soprano

5. Ballulalow

O my deare hert, young Jesu sweit, Prepare thy credil in my spreit (spirit), And I sall rock thee to my hert. And never mair (more) from thee depart. But I sall praise thee evermoir With sanges sweit unto thy gloir (glory); The knees of my hert sall I bow, And sing that richt Balulalow!

Marie Stark, soprano

5. As dew in Aprille

I sing of a maiden That is makèles (matchless): King of all Kings To her son she ches(chose). He came al so stille There his moder (mother) was, As dew in Aprille That falleth on the grass. He came al so stille To his moder's bour, As dew in Aprille That falleth on the flour. He came al so stille There his moder lay, As dew in Aprille That falleth on the spray. Moder and mayden was never none but she: Well may such a lady Goddes moder be.

6. This little Babe

This little Babe so few days old, Is come to rifle Satan's fold; All hell doth at his presence quake, Though he himself for cold do shake; For in this weak unarmèd wise The gates of hell he will surprise. With tears he fights and wins the field, His naked breast stands for a shield; His battering shot are babish cries, his arrows looks of weeping eyes. His martial ensigns Cold and Need, And feeble flesh his warrior's steed. His camp is pitchèd in a stall, His bulward but a broken wall; The crib his trench, haystalks his stakes; Of shepherds he his muster makes; And thus as sure his foe to wound, The The angels' trumps alarum sound., My soul, with Christ join thou in fight; Stick to the tents that he hath pight (right), Within his crib is surest ward; This little Babe will be thy guard. If thou wilt foil thy foes with joy, then flit not from his heavenly Boy.

7. Interlude (harp solo)

8. In Freezing Winter Night

Behold, a silly tender babe, in freezing winter night, In homely manger trembling lies - Alas, a piteous sight! The inns are full; no man will yield This little pilgrim bed. But forced he is, with silly beasts In crib to shroud his head. The stable is a Prince's court, This crib his chair of State; The beasts are parcel of his pomp, the wooden dish his plate. The person in that poor attire His royal liveries wear; The Prince himself is come from heav'n; This pomp is prizèd there. With joy approach, O Christian wight, Do homage to thy King, And highly praise his humble pomp, wich he from Heav'n doth bring.

Senja Peterson, soprano

Carol Benton, soprano

9. Spring Carol (duet)

Pleasure it is to hear iwis, the Birdès sing, deer in the dale, the sheep in the vale, the corn springing, God's purveyance For sustenance. It is for man. Then we always to him give praise, And thank him than.

Kira White, soprano

Carol Benton, soprano

10. Deo Gracias

Adam lay ibounden (bound) in a bond; Four thousand winter thought he not to long. Deo gracias! And all was for an appil, an appil that he tok, as clerkès finden written in their book. Deo gracias! Ne had the appil takè ben, Ne haddè never our lady A ben hevenè quene. Blessèd be the time That appil take was. There we moun singen. Deoi Gratias!

11. Recessional

Anniversary Carols

Jackson Berkey

1. O Come All Ye Faithful
2. God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen
3. Still, Still Night (Silent Night)
Kira White, soprano
4. Asleep in My Arms (harp)
5. Joy to the World

intermission

6. Jesu, Son Most Sweet and Dear
Carol Benton, soprano
7. The Silent Word (What Child Is This?)
Brian Dean, tenor
8. Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus
9. A Day in a Manger (Away in a Manger)
10. A Day in a Manger (harp)
11. Angels We Have Heard on High
12. Il est Né le Divine Enfant (Bolero!)

personnel

soprano

Carol Benton
Senja Peterson
Lana Marie Stark
Catherine Rogers
Beth White
Kira White

alto

Peggy Breese
Jan Curtis
Kenna Kinsey
Susan McCain
Denise Norman

tenor

Randall Canady
Brian Dean
George Fiddler
Billy Wooten
Grady Zittrauer

bass

Zachary Blaylock
Dan Bolta
Raymond R. Ellis, jr.
Jeff Herrin
Sanford Jones

rehearsal accompanist Leah Hannon

program notes

Ceremony of Carols In 1942 the young English composer Benjamin Britten was in the United States. A pacifist he had such a difficult time in his homeland that he had come to America, but he finally came to the conclusion that his place was at home enduring the privations and dangers of war with his countrymen. He managed to book passage on a freighter and endured the threat of Nazi u-boats as he made his return trip home. During that crossing he composed most of the work which we know as the *Ceremony of Carols*. He had purchased a collection of medieval poetry in Nova Scotia during a stop in his journey and there he found the texts which he was to make famous. It is being performed tonight in its original version for women's voices and harp. While it is heard most often in Britain performed by boy trebles the premier performance was by adult women so we can consider our performance to be in accord with the composer's own intentions.

Anniversary Carols Originally, carols were medieval round dances from France. Participants danced while singing a refrain, then stood still each time the leader sang a stanza. By the 15th century in England, although they still retained their ancient pattern of alternating stanzas and refrain, carols had lost their dance associations and had acquired sacred texts. It was only after the Reformation that they became identified primarily as Christmas songs.

O Come, All Ye Faithful is probably the most popular Christmas hymn in America. Although its origins remained obscure for more than two centuries, this originally Latin hymn can now be attributed with certainty to John Francis Wade (1711-1786) a teacher of music who specialized in copying plainchant for use in chapels and homes of prominent families in France.

God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen has two tune sources. Playford's *English Dancing Master* of 1651; and Dunstan's *Cornish Carol Song Book* of 1929, with references to an 1845 setting. Here the melody is treated as chant to background vocals in stacked 4ths and 5ths that snap against a very angular melody.

Still, Still Night (Silent Night) is known the world over. Its music by Franz Gruber and text by Joseph Mohr have been translated into virtually every language where Christmas is celebrated. As an expression of love and thanks, this setting intentionally emulates, in key and feeling, the wonderful arrangement of *Still, Still, Still* by the composer's mentor, the late Norman Luboff. The arrangement is dedicated to Norman and his wife Gunilla.

Joy to the World is a Christmas hymn familiar to all in spite of its somewhat confusing history. With importance of text as a high priority, this setting makes use of Isaac Watt's words and tune. The third verse words appear at the outset of a modal treatment that is fast overcome by 20th century rhythms and a polymetric combination of ostinato and hymn tune. Word painting occurs as we "repeat the sounding joy" but the "wonders of His Love" eventually surface triumphant.

Jesu, Son Most Sweet and Dear is a centuries-old anonymous English poem. Colin Brumby, Australian composer and educator, found it in an 1866 edition *Political, Religious and Love Poems* collected by F.J. Furniwall of The Early English Text Society, and set it to new music in 1977. Berkey's hauntingly beautiful setting essentially expands the chord progression vocal as a means of supporting the solo line above.

The Silent Word is based on the famous English melody *Greensleeves* and is written in the style of contemporary Estonian composer Arvo Pärt. It distinguishes itself from many settings of the familiar tune by its lilting 5/8 meter coupled with the appearance of a verse in a major key. Also present are all of the

refrain texts originally penned by the English writer, William Chatterton Dix, in his 1865 Christmas carol *What Child is This?*

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus was penned and first published by author Charles Wesley (1707-1788) in a 1744 book of 18 poems: *Hymns for the Nativity of Our Lord*. The melody, *Hyfrodol* ("good cheer") was composed around 1830 by Rowland H. Pritchard, then about twenty years old.

A Day in a Manger is a contemporary setting of the popular carol, *Away in a Manger*. What we now understand as the standard American tune was first offered in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1887 in the collection *Dainty Songs for Little Lads and Lasses (!)* by James R. Murray. Murray thought that he had set a poem by Martin Luther, but such was not the case.

Angels We Have Heard On High comes to us from the French countryside where it emerged anonymously as a *macronic* carol (that is, with a text a *mélange* of Latin and vernacular French) probably in the 1700's called *Les anges dans nos campagnes*. As is the case with all of the *Anniversary Carols*, the text reigns supreme. Often, changes in rhythm or phrase structure are used to convey the punctuation and exact meaning of the strophic text.

Il est né le divin enfant is a traditional French melody with a text which first appeared about 1875. Like many of the other settings in the collection, it is somewhat *macaronic*, having both some of the original French and some English in the setting. Historically, this arrangement also compares nicely with the old Normandy hunting tune's original appearance in 6/8 meter; hence the tambour *bolero* figure seemed immediately appropriate.

Jackson Berkey/RLH