

A WREATH OF WISDOM
Program Order

Wisdom introit	Anne Matlack (b. 1959)
O Thou, who by a star	Freeman Lewis (1780-1859), arr. Wayland Rogers
Cuando el Rey Nimrod (When King Nimrod Leslie Adler, soloist	Sephardic folk song, arr. Matthew Lazar

O where shall wisdom be found? Linda Lancaster, Sarah Frederick, Mariam Bora, Matthew Shurts, John Lamb, solo ensemble	William Boyce (1710-1779)
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Here is the little door	Herbert Howells (1892-1983)
The three kings Laura Kosmich, soloist	Peter Cornelius (1824-1874)
The three kings Mia Hewitt, Barbara Armenti, soloists	Jonathan Dove (b. 1959)

A suite for Christmas (world premiere)	Michael Mendoza (b.1944)
In the beginning	Bill Corson, tenor
Herod the King	
The birth of Jesus	
In a dark stable	Jocelyn Richton, soprano; Larissa Wohl, alto
Mary's night	Bill Corson, P.J. Livesey, tenors; Jabez Van Cleef, bass
They say the same bright angels	

INTERMISSION

Teach me, O Lord	William Byrd (1539-1623)
Linda Fagerstrom, Ken Hess, Joe Keefe, Laura Kosmich, soloists	
All the ends of the world	William Boyce (1710-1779)
Words from two women	Jane Marshall (b.1924)
Annua gaudia	J. David Moore (b.1962)
Ken Hess, John Lamb, soloists	

Chamber Singers

Riveder le stelle (We beheld once again the stars)	Z. Randall Stroepe (b. 1953)
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Tomorrow shall be my dancing day	English carol, arr. David Willcocks (b.1919)
Julia Preseau, soloist	
And I saw a new heaven	Edgar Bainton (1880-1956)
John the Revelator	Traditional gospel blues, arr. Caldwell & Ivory
Ken Hess, piano; Joan O'Donnell, soloist	

Rehearsal Accompanist: Joan Tracy Organist: Chris Hatcher Harp: Merynda Adams
Oboe/English Horn: Nick Gatto Bassoon: Wendy Large Percussion: Joshua Bicknell
Additional percussion: John Lamb, Joe Keefe

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“Christmas is my favorite holiday –
to me it humanizes that which is transcendent.” (Michael D. Mendoza)

By Anne Matlack –

Every holiday concert I try to find a theme within the expected Christmas story that is broader than Christian, that is more than a beautiful story about a baby’s birth, that reaches across cultures and musical eras, and allows us to celebrate our common humanity. Maybe because I’m getting older, the search for true wisdom is what called to me this year. It allows us to explore some female texts, some mystical ideas, as well as contemplate the magi—those exotic Eastern sages who found the divine in the humblest of places. Whether we believe in the Christmas story or not, we can all find hope and healing in the age-old search for peace in a warring world, wisdom in our hearts, and signs of the divine among us.

A part of the Apocrypha, “hidden” or disputed texts, considered by some as Scripture, the book of *Wisdom* is written in the voice of Solomon, but probably by an unknown Greek Jew in the first century B.C. Often poetically, the author seeks to explain how righteous living leads to immortality, and how the foolish who seem to prosper will not escape punishment. The work draws on a long tradition of “wisdom” literature, in which Wisdom (a female noun - Sophia) functions in much the same way as the Holy Spirit in *New Testament* literature, and so acts as a female balance to the male deity. This concept really appealed to me. I wrote my setting of the Wisdom text when the Episcopal Church published its Revised Common Lectionary and I had no chant setting for that day (October 2003).

For God loves nothing so much as the person who lives with wisdom.
For wisdom is a reflection of eternal light
a spotless mirror of the working of God,
and an image of his goodness.
Although she is but one, she can do all things,
and while remaining in her self, she renews all things;
in ev’ry generation she passes into holy souls,
and makes them friends of God and prophets.

For God loves nothing so much as the person who lives with wisdom.
She is more beautiful than the sun,
and excels ev’ry constellation of the stars.
Compared with the light she is found to be superior.
For it is succeeded only by night,
but against wisdom evil does not prevail.
She reaches mightily from one end of the earth to the other,
and she orders all things well.
For God loves nothing so much as the person who lives with wisdom.

John Mason Neale (1818-1866) wrote the hymn “**O Thou, who by a star**” asking that we be granted the same guidance as the magi; that wisdom and purity of heart may be our guide as the star was theirs. The old shape-note tune *Dunlap’s Creek* is attributed to a Pennsylvania surveyor, **Freeman Lewis** (1780-1859). This canonic arrangement is by Kentucky-born composer-singer **Wayland Rogers** who presently teaches at Loyola University in Chicago.

O Thou, who by a star did guide the wise men on their way
until it came and stood beside the place where Jesus lay.
Although by stars Thou dost not lead Thy servants now below,
Thy holy spirit, when they need, will show them how to go.
As yet we know Thee but in part, but still we trust Thy word
that blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see the Lord.

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O Saviour give us then Thy grace to make us pure in heart,
that we may see Thee face to face, hereafter as Thou art.

A star also signified the birth of Abraham ... only his mother needed no star to tell her the “wonderful thing she had.” Arranger and founder/director of Boston’s Zamir Chorale, **Matthew Lazar** is a leading force of the Jewish choral movement in North America today. He provides the following notes: *Cuando el Rey Nimrod belongs to the wonderful musical repertoire of the Sephardim, the Jews who lived in Spain more than five hundred years ago. Both music and lyrics reflect a mingling of Jewish and Christian Spanish elements. The legend surrounding the birth of the father of Judaism is sharply colored by that surrounding the father of Christianity, and the anachronistic depictions of the circumcision ritual and the rejoicing in the “Jewish quarter” are reminiscent of the contemporary paintings of Biblical scenes. The Ladino language is similar to a medieval dialect of Spanish, but is peppered with Hebrew words such as zekhut, mohel, and goel.*

Cuando el rey Nimrod al campo salía,
mirava en el cielo y en la estreyería,
Vido una luz santa en la giudería,
que havía de nacer Avraham avinu.

When King Nimrod went out into the fields,
and looked up at the heavens and at the stars,
he saw a holy light above the Jewish quarter,
a sign that Abraham our father was to be born.

Avraham avinu, padre querido Abraham,
padre bendicho, luz de Yisrael.

our father, beloved father,
blessed father, light of Israel.

La mujer de Terakh quedó preñada,
de día en día el le preguntava.
De qué teneij la cara tan demudada?
Eya savía el bien que tenía.

After Terakh’s wife became pregnant,
he would ask her from time to time:
why do you look so different?
Only she knew what a wonderful thing she had.

Avraham avinu, padre querido Abraham,
padre bendicho, luz de Yisrael.

our father, beloved father,
blessed father, light of Israel.

Saludemos al compadre y
tambien al mohel.
Que por su zekhut mos venga el goel
y ri’hma a todo Yisrael.

Let us greet the godfather and
the circumcisor.
Because of his virtue may the Messiah come
to redeem all of Israel.

Avraham avinu, padre querido Abraham,
padre bendicho, luz de Yisrael.

our father, beloved father,
blessed father, light of Israel.

The text from *Job*, ***O where shall wisdom be found?*** is set in a dramatic, almost Handelian style by English composer **William Boyce**. Boyce began his career as a boy chorister at St. Paul’s and pupil of the organist, Maurice Greene. He succeeded Greene in 1735 as conductor of the annual Festival of the Sons of the Clergy at St. Paul’s -- he wrote at least two anthems for choir and orchestra for this festival -- and as Master of the King's Musick. He wrote many symphonies in an early classical “galant” style. The work combines the new style with a typical old-style “verse anthem,” featuring small groups of soloists that alternate with grand *tutti* sections.

O where shall wisdom be found?
And where is the place of understanding?
Man knoweth not the price thereof;
Neither is it found in the land of the living.

The depth saith, It is not in me;
And the sea saith, It is not with me.

It cannot be gotten for gold,
neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.
No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls:

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for the price of wisdom is above rubies.

Whence then cometh wisdom?
and where is the place of understanding?
seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living.

God understandeth the way thereof,
and He knoweth the place thereof.

For He looketh to the ends of the earth,
And seeth under the whole heav'n;
To make the weight for the winds;
And He weigheth the waters by measure.

When He made a decree for the rain,
and a way for the lightning of the thunder,
then did He see it; and declare it;
He prepared it, yea, and searched it out.

And unto man He said,
Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom;
and to depart from evil is understanding.

Anglican Church composers seem to have a penchant for finding mystical religious poetry and then emphasizing mythical aspects of the Christmas story. **Herbert Howells**, who studied with Stanford, Parry, and Wood, and never strayed from a tonal, yet unique and beautiful style, here sets a poem by G. K. Chesterton's wife, Frances, and dedicates the work to the theologian. *Here is the little door* is one of the *Three Carol Anthems*, exquisite early works written between 1918 and 1920 (which also include *Sing Lullaby* and *A Spotless Rose*).

Here is the little door, lift up the latch, oh lift!
We need not wander more but enter with our gift;
Our gift of finest gold, Gold that was never bought nor sold;
Myrrh to be strewn about his bed; Incense in clouds about his head;
All for the Child that stirs not in his sleep.
But holy slumber holds with ass and sheep.

Bend low about his bed, for each He has a gift;
See how his eyes awake, lift up your hands, O lift!
For gold, He gives a keen-edged sword (Defend with it thy little Lord!)
For incense, smoke of battle red; Myrrh for the honoured happy dead;
Gifts for his children, terrible and sweet,
Touched by such tiny hands and Oh such tiny feet.

The German composer **Peter Cornelius**' early work, *The three kings* became a favorite of English choirs as well, and is often heard in this English translation by H. N. Bate. Cornelius himself wrote the text which sees the kings' arrival through innocent childish eyes. Cornelius wrote almost all of his music for the voice; the child of two actors, he was immersed in theater, opera, and German literature. It was his teacher Liszt who encouraged Cornelius to write sacred music, and suggested that he add the Lutheran Epiphany chorale "How brightly shines the morning star" to this song and thereby provide another layer of reference to the kings.

Three Kings from Persian lands afar
To Jordan follow the pointing star:
And this the quest of the travellers three,
Where the new born King of the Jews may be.

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Full royal gifts they bear for the King;
Gold, incense, myrrh are their offering.

How brightly shines the morning star!
With grace and truth from heav'n afar
Our Jesse tree now bloweth.

The star shines out with a steadfast ray;
The Kings to Bethlehem make their way,
And there in worship they bend the knee,
As Mary's child in her lap they see;
Their royal gifts they show to the King,
Gold, incense, myrrh are their offering.

Of Jacob's stem and David's line,
For Thee, my Bridegroom, King divine,
My soul with love o'erfloweth.

Thou child of man lo, to Bethlehem
The Kings are trav'ling, travel with them!
The star of mercy, the star of grace,
shall lead thy heart to its resting place.

Thy word, Thy word,
Jesu, Jesu,
Inly feeds us, Rightly leads us,

Gold, incense, myrrh thou canst not bring;
Offer thy heart to the infant King,
Offer thy heart!

Life bestowing,
Praise, O praise such love o'erflowing.

Jonathan Dove is best known as a composer of operas and choral music. His operas include the airport-comedy *Flight*, large-scale community-operas in the tradition of Britten, and a television opera. He has also written instrumental music, musical theater and film scores. Dove's choral music includes a song cycle, *The Passing of the Year*; the Bach-inspired *Köthener Messe* for period instruments, and several anthems and carols. Coming from a family of architects, Dove's work has often been associated with buildings. ***The three kings***, commissioned by King's College, Cambridge, was premiered at the famous Lessons and Carols service there on Christmas Eve 2000. The text is by the English writer Dorothy Sayers, and elaborates on the mythical properties of the kings by assigning them each different ages, as well as different gifts.

O balow, balow la lay,
Gifts for a baby King, O.

The first king was very young,
With doleful ballads on his tongue
He came bearing a branch of myrrh
Than which no gall is bitterer,

O balow, balow la lay,
Gifts for a baby King, O.

The second king was a man in prime,
The solemn priest of a solemn time,
With eyes downcast and rev'rent feet
He brought his incense sad and sweet.

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O balow, balow la lay,
Gifts for a baby King, O.

The third king was very old,
Both his hands were full of gold,
Many a gaud and glittering toy,
Baubles brave for a baby boy

O balow, balow la lay,
Gifts for a baby King, O.

Today Harmonium is premiering *A suite for Christmas*, which Harmonium commissioned **Michael D. Mendoza** to compose on text by **Jabez L. Van Cleef**.

Michael D. Mendoza teaches choral music at the College of New Jersey. Dr. Mendoza has over two dozen choral works published, many of which have been sung by All State Choirs throughout the country. He is also a contributing author and composer to the choral textbook series, *Experiencing Choral Music*, a four-level series designed to build music literacy and promote vocal development for all students and voice categories in grades 6-12.

Harmonium's own Jabez L. Van Cleef has written epic-length poetic adaptations of the four *New Testament* gospels, and other experimental liturgical works. His first major work for Harmonium came when the group commissioned New York composer Elliot Z. Levine to write music for *Animalium Cantata* (*Cantata of the Animals*). Harmonium premiered the work in its December 1996 concert, and it has been performed by various choruses numerous times since. Just last season Van Cleef wrote the text for Harmonium's 25th anniversary commission, *There Is No Age*, composed by Edie Hill and premiered by the chorus last June.

Movement 1 is taken from the beginning of *The Song of John*, Van Cleef's verse paraphrase (in common meter) of the gospel of John. Here the body of a god made human is identified with the origin of language and the human ability to perceive and understand the word. Mendoza comments, "When I composed this movement, my idea was to create a work whose mood was amorphous and mysterious. A sense of stability does not begin to appear until the choir makes its entrance, for it is through language (the Word) that the ineffable can be explored."

The text for **Movement 2** is a retelling of the "slaughter of the innocents" (*Matthew 2*).

It is taken from Van Cleef's adaptation of *The Heliand*, which was a Saxon harmony of the Gospels. The original *Heliand* (Heiland in modern high German, meaning Savior) was composed in the ninth century. The anonymous poet was probably commissioned by the Franks to create a version of the gospels which could persuade the Saxons to convert, by blending the story of Jesus with Saxon mythology. This particular movement focuses on the madness of King Herod. Mendoza comments: "The music's angular structure and frenetic mood strive to capture the paranoia of Herod, a Roman puppet who would do anything to protect his base of power, especially from the perceived threat of an infant who would be king, as the concept of king would be understood by Roman authority."

Movements 3 and 5 are taken from *The Song of Matthew* (Chapter 2), Van Cleef's verse paraphrase in iambic pentameter of the gospel of Matthew. The Roman overlords of that time accepted the principle established by Julius Caesar that the emperor of Rome should declare his own divinity, as Ovid asserts in Book XV of the *Metamorphoses*: "In order for the emperor not to have been born of mortal seed, Caesar needed to be made a god." Mendoza comments: "Movement 3 creates a sound-picture of king-worship. Pomp and circumstance

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permeate the atmosphere (with the timpani and finger cymbals) into which another kind of king is born—a humble and gentle king hidden amidst the fanfare. Movement 5 captures the mystery and holiness of the birth of Jesus. It also implies the presence of the three wise men (in the English horn and bassoon accompaniment) who came to worship Him.”

Movement 4 is taken from *The Song of Luke* (Chapter 2), Van Cleef’s verse paraphrase in long meter of the gospel of Luke. This version of the traditional Christmas story emphasizes the essential simplicity of the new dispensation, where authority flows from the lowest and humblest, not from an imagined kingly quality. By implication, the word’s power comes from the common folk, not from the adornments of the court nor the authority vested in legal language by kings or their surrogate priests. So here both the language and the music are unadorned and folk-like.

Movement 6 is a free adaptation of the poem *Friede auf Erden*, by Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, originally set to music by Arnold Schoenberg. Mendoza comments: “The poem is an affirmation of the possibility of justice and peace. It expresses our capacity for hope as symbolized by a vision of bright angels. The movement opens with harp and oboe, representing angels and the formless. When the choir makes its entrance, the singers portend the arrival of the gift of peace and the possibilities brought to the world by Jesus. Within the movement the bassoon plays a quote from the hymn *All Glory, Laud and Honor*.” The poem is dedicated to the victims and survivors of the World Trade Center collapse on September 11, 2001.

1. In the beginning
In the beginning was the Word,
The Word, that was God.
God in the beginning was;
All things through God were made.

Without God was not anything
Made, that yet was made.
God was life, and life was light,
And light all things displayed.

And all of life, that was from light,
Shines in the darkness yet;
And darkness has not overcome
What the light has lit.

2. Herod the King
Herod the King for much carnage had thirst,
He twitched in his dreams of demons accurst -
He dreamed a Child’s head mounted upon a pike -
He dreamed a Child floating in blood like a lake -
But alas! He knew not which child he should kill:
Every one seemed to harbor his vessel of ill!

When Herod awoke, he made it his vow:
To cut off the heads of all boys under two!
So would his shaming thrive and wax well:
Fear not just the one Child, but murder them all!
He feasted on terror fat on the fear
Of fresh childless mothers tearing their hair.
The heave and the horror of noise in the night,
The scream and the scramble in the torch light,
And after the murder the gape of the door,
The drip and the puddle dark on the floor.

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3. The birth of Jesus

Jesus was born in Bethlehem, Judea,
When Herod the Great was king of all that province.

4. In a dark stable

In a dark stable bare and cold,
Mary beheld her first-born son,
In rough cloth wrapped, fold upon fold:
And in this way God's will was done.

Nearby the shepherds watched by night
Out underneath the starlit sky,
A mighty figure cloth'd in light
Appeared before them suddenly.

The glory of the Lord blazed out,
And all the shepherds shook with fright,
But the bright angel said, "Fear not,
Good news to you I bring this night:

Your savior has been born today,
And you will find him in the straw;
Where all the animals now pray,
And where the lowest make the law."

Above there was a heav'nly host
Praising God with a fearsome din,
All glory be to God on high,
And on the earth, let peace begin!"

And when the angels flew away,
The shepherds went and saw the child,
Wrapped in cloth as rough as the hay,
And by his mother gently held.

So ev'ryone they saw, they told
What the angels had said to them:
How all should come to see the child,
And then bow down and worship him.

5. Mary's night

On the night when Mary gave him birth,
Three astrologers came asking at Jerusalem:
Where is the boy-child, King of all the Jews?
We saw a new star rising in the sky;
And come to pay him homage by the star."

6. They say the same bright angels
They say the same bright angels come to hover,
In every place where human bloodlust burns,
And towers fall, and dying breath is spent.
Their calm, bright eyes behold the drifting smoke;
With wings outstretched they come to heal the dust.
Their careworn voices whisper: "Peace On Earth."

O you who sorrow, offer us your hands,
Your deeds of grief, moved by the angels' will,
And you will build a tower of your spirit,
Of truth and justice, love and tolerance;
So now we pray, all people with one voice,
For us and for our children: "Peace On Earth,"

No longer bent and huddled in the dark
Seeking an angel's voice from far on high,

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But armed with perfect love amid the fear,
Each soul will stand its vigil to declare
This message to all people ev'rywhere:
Good Will To All God's Children! Peace On Earth!"

The Chamber Singers open with a beautiful *fauxbourdon* (treble descant above the hymn) setting of **Teach me, O Lord**, a portion of Psalm 119 which asks for wisdom and understanding. **William Byrd**, like Thomas Tallis, a giant of English Renaissance music, was granted a monopoly on music printing by Elizabeth I in 1575. Byrd's works include madrigals and Latin (Catholic) sacred music as well as English church music. The verses (solos) alternate with 5-voice chant settings that vary subtly with the text on each verse, and are infused with inner dance rhythms.

Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes:
and I shall keep it unto the end.
Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law:
yea, I shall keep it with my whole heart.

Make me to go in the path of thy commandments:
for therein is my desire.
Incline my heart unto thy testimonies:
and not unto covetousness.

O turn away mine eyes, lest they behold vanity:
and quicken me in thy way.
O stablish thy word in thy servant:
that I may fear thee.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, and is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

All the ends of the world, a portion of Psalm 22, shows **William Boyce** in a *stile antico*, or old Renaissance style. The anthem drips with scrumptious yearning suspensions and soaring long phrases.

All the ends of the world shall remember themselves and be turned unto the Lord,
and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Him.

Poet, hymnist, and choral composer **Jane Marshall** gives us more female wisdom with **Words from two women**: Mother Teresa and Mechtild of Magdeburg (a celebrated 13th century mystic). Mechtild's conception of the hereafter is believed by many scholars to be the basis of the Hell depicted in Dante's *Divine Comedy*. The texts of these two short motets are laid out homophonically in diatonic, yet surprising, chord progressions. Marshall was for many years on the faculty at Southern Methodist University, and is the author of *Grace, Noted*, a collection of homilies and hymns. Jane and her husband have three children, one of whom, Peter, was my first organ teacher at Yale.

Nurture — Mechtild of Magdeburg

Heal the broken with comforting words of God.
Cheer them gently with earthly joys.
Be merry: laugh with the broken
and carry their secret needs
in the deepest silence of your heart.

The simple path — Mother Teresa

The fruit of silence is prayer.
The fruit of prayer is faith.
The fruit of faith is love.
The fruit of love is service.
The fruit of service is peace.

His website provides the following fascinating bio of **J. David Moore**: *David Moore's works have been performed and recorded by groups all over the world. He has founded and directed two professional a*

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*cappella ensembles: The Village Waytes in Cincinnati, and Dare To Breathe currently in St. Paul, Minnesota. He has designed and presented workshops in songwriting and a cappella singing; collaborated with a class of fourth-graders in writing a song celebrating the life and work of Jimmy Carter which was performed for President Carter; and with a different class of fourth graders in the creation of his first alien-invasion opera. **Annua gaudia** is a contemporary work written in a deliberately medieval style, setting a 12th century Spanish text from the *Codex Calixtinus*, and dedicated to the Rose Ensemble of St. Paul, Minnesota, in which Moore has sung.*

Annua gaudia, Iacobe, debita sunt tibi danda, Organa dulcia conveniencia sunt resonanda.	Fitting sounds of joy, O James, must be raised to you yearly. Sweet sounds of music fit for your feast must sound out.
Et tua celica facta perhennia sunt reseranda. Organa dulcia conveniencia sunt resonanda.	And your heavenly deeds must ever be revealed. Sweet sounds of music fit for your feast must sound out.
Hec quoque splendida secla per omnia sunt memoranda. Organa dulcia conveniencia sunt resonanda.	And these splendors must be remembered throughout the ages. Sweet sounds of music fit for your feast must sound out.
Tam pia, tam bona, tam rata dogmata Organa dulcia conveniencia sunt resonanda.	These good and holy doctrines so fine sunt imitanda. must be followed. Sweet sounds of music fit for your feast must sound out.
Hec sacra commoda, florida, fulgida sunt adamanda. gleaming, Organa dulcia conveniencia sunt resonanda.	These sacred precepts, blossoming, should be adored. Sweet sounds of music fit for your feast must sound out.

Z. Randall Stroepe is director of Choral Studies at the University of Nebraska, Omaha. He is a well-known All-State and festival conductor, and studied composition with Cecil Effinger and Normand Lockwood. His works have sold over a million copies internationally. *Riveder le stelle (We beheld once again the stars)* was commissioned by the American Choral Directors Association in memory of Raymond W. Brock, and premiered in 2004. It takes an inspiring text from Dante's *Divine Comedy* (not sequential in the original). The music depicts the emotional arc of the end of Dante's *Inferno*, which is that we must have the courage to confront our deepest fears in order to find redemption in the vision of the stars. At the pit of hell (in the central part of the work) the most sacred Catholic hymn *Vexilla regis* is parodied. The outer parts of the double-choir work are comforting, and yearning, with more than a touch of Morten Lauridsen chords!

Ma la notte risurge Oramai è da partir, Ché tutto veduto. Ritornar! Vexilla regis prodeunt inferni!	But soon it will be night Now is the time to depart this place For we have seen and experienced it all Return [to paradise]! The wings of hell's monarch are heard nearby!
Ma la notte risurge Salimmo sù, tanto ch' 'i' vidi	But soon it will be night I climbed toward paradise with no thought of looking back
De le cose belle che porta'l Ciel, per un pertugio tondo. Quindi uscimmo a riveder le stelle.	I passed through a small opening And finally saw heaven and the supreme light And beheld once again the stars.

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Tomorrow shall be my dancing day is a traditional English carol in which the manifestation of God's love for the world is depicted as a dance, and the events in the life of Christ are steps in that dance. This version is by Sir **David Willcocks**, Music Director Emeritus of King's College Choir, Cambridge. Willcocks has arranged many carols for the same Lessons and Carols Festival for which Jonathan Dove wrote his *The three kings*.

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 O my love, O 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:

Edgar Leslie Bainton was a British composer who studied with Walford Davies, and was friends with other great English church musicians of his day including William Harris and C.V. Stanford. During the First World War he was a prisoner of war near Berlin, in charge of all the music for the camp. He later taught at Newcastle Conservatory, and then had a second career in Australia. *And I saw a new heaven* is his most famous and enduring anthem, on a transcendent text from *Revelation*.

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth:
For the first heaven and the first earth were passed away;
and there was no more sea.

And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem,
coming down from God out of heaven,
prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying,
Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men,
and he will dwell with them and they shall be his people,
and God himself shall be with them and be their God.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes,
And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying,
neither shall there be any more pain,
for the former things are passed away.

We end our concert with more revelations ... the wisdom of a mystic on the mountain, *John the Revelator*.

Paul Caldwell and **Sean Ivory** have been working together for several years to make fabulous arrangements of spirituals and other multi-cultural music. (Harmonium performed their version of *Go where I send thee* in 2002). They provide the following notes: "Performed in a myriad of arrangements by gospel groups throughout the South, *John the Revelator* seems to have been first recorded between 1927 and 1930 by Blind Willie Johnson: Texan; street corner evangelist; and self-taught master of the slide guitar. A decade later, the piece turned up as a regular staple in the repertoire of Delta Blues legend Son House. Both men authored most of their recorded material, but neither artist claimed *John the Revelator* as his own. Both identified it as traditional. Both Blind Willie Johnson and Son House were practitioners of a charismatic tradition, a religion that used music to lift worshipers into an ecstatic, trance-like state of mind. These periods of holy delirium allowed followers to gain brief glimpses into the world described by John in the book of *Revelation*. More importantly, they offered respite and hope to an African-American population trapped in webs of physical and economic hardship."

A WREATH OF WISDOM Program Notes

O tell me who is that writin'?
John the Revelator, writin' in the book of seven seals.
O tell me what is he writin'?
'bout the Revelation, writin' in the book of seven seals.

When John looked over Calvary's hill,
heard a rumblin' like a chariot wheel.
Well tell us, John, what did you see?
I saw a beast rising from the sea!

Talk to us, John! What's the good news?
The crippled can walk; the dumb are singin' the blues.
Oh John, in the graveyard, whadaya see?
The dead are dancin' all around me.

Tell us: Who is writin'?
Tell us: what he's writin'?
Tell us: why he's writin'?
Time for revelation and for jubilation.

Tell us what you're writin' - read it to us, John!
Well, just tell it in your book, John.
Well, just tell it in your precious book, John.
Well, just tell it in that book of seven seals.

We hope this eclectic variety of music has touched you in your own search for wisdom and transcendence in this busy holiday season. Just as the sages knelt before an infant, we can all aspire to present ourselves equally as fellow humans in search of truth and understanding.