



Goodness and Light

December 11 & 12, 2021

Nunc Dimittis

Jennifer Holak, Matthew Onigman

Gustav Holst (1874-1934)

From *Songs of Sweet Accord* TTBB

Innocent Sounds

Captain Kidd

More Love

Contrite Heart *David Thomson, Ken Short*

93rd Psalm

Donald St. Pierre (b. 1951)

From *A Ceremony of Carols* SSA

Wolcum Yole!

There is no rose

Balulalow *Rachel Clark*

This Little Babe

Deo gratias

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

Dobar večer

trad. Croatian

Prayer Before Sleep

Sid Robinovitch (b. 1946)

Mi Y'malel

Sarah Riskind (b. 1987)

Silent Night/What You Gonna Name
that Pretty Little Baby

Rodrigo Vega

Kevin P. Johnson (b. 1961)

O Come, Emmanuel

Elaine Hagenberg (b. 1979)

Winter Wind

Brandon Williams

INTERMISSION

Angelus ad pastores ait

O Oriens

I Sing of a Maiden

CHAMBER SINGERS

Raphaella Aleotti (c. 1570-1646)

Melissa Dunphy (b. 1980)

Alison Willis (b. 1971)

Goodness and Light WORLD PREMIERE Martin Sedek (b. 1985)
Procession
The Message
Holly *Caitlin Schafer, Holland Jancaitis*
Together
Pine
Mercy *Caitlin Schafer, Holland Jancaitis, Emilie Bishop*
Rejoice! *Emilie Bishop, Caitlin Schafer*
A Good Diffused
Recession

Instrumentalists

Harp: Merynda Adams Cello: Michael Holak
Piano: David Davis Violin: Danielle Sinclair

It is so exciting to return to singing, even with the mitigating steps we are still taking to remain safe: masking, shorter rehearsals, and so forth. Since we started out by splitting into sectionals (SSAA/TTBB) for much of rehearsal, it made sense to do two works for that voicing, and the Holst piece leapt out at me as a piece that has a complete dialogue between upper and lower voices. It also gives us a chance to celebrate both a composer of great choral canon and a work of his which is slightly neglected.

Gustav Theodore Holst was an English composer, arranger, and teacher best known for his orchestral suite *The Planets*. To choral musicians, he is known for his work in the English folksong revival and his Anglican church anthems and carols, although he composed in many genres. Influences include Wagner, Strauss, Ravel, Stanford, and early music.

British Classical Music blogspot (<http://landofflostcontent.blogspot.com/2015/04/gustav-holst-nunc-dimittis-for-eight.html>) explains:

This work was composed at the request of the then director of music at Westminster Cathedral, Richard Terry (1864-1938). It was first performed on Easter Sunday, 4 April 1915 and then promptly forgotten. According to Imogen Holst (Holst, 1974) the original holograph had been lost; however there was a part-autograph score which enabled her to reconstruct the work. It was given its first modern performance by the BBC Northern Singers under Stephen Wilkinson on Tuesday, 11 June 1974 during the Aldeburgh Festival in Framlington Church. The work was published by Novello in 1979... The interesting feature of Holst's *Nunc Dimittis* is the dichotomy of styles that the composer has utilised. Michael Short (Short, 1990) has noted how the work 'begins with a typically Holstian build-up of intervals, producing a sustained resonant chord...' [C minor 13th]. However, the style then changes to one of pure Renaissance with traditional chordal, unison, and contrapuntal passages. There is an antiphonal exchange between male and

female voices. This surely reflects the composer's deep attachment to the music of William Byrd, John Sheppard and the Italian Palestrina.

Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine,
secundum verbum tuum in pace.
Quia viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum
Quod parasti ante faciem
omnium populorum.
Lumen ad revelationem gentium,
et gloriam plebis tuae Israel.

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace:
according to thy word.
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
Which thou hast prepared
before the face of all people.
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles,
and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

Gloria Patri, et Filio,
et Spiritui Sancto.
Sicut erat,
nunc, et semper,
et in sæcula sæculorum.
Amen.

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

With the opportunity to once again work with our wonderful harpist, Merynda Adams, and the time spent in sectionals, I began to search for a tenor and bass piece to pair with Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols*. Alan Harler, retired music director of the Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, pointed me to this wonderful and underperformed work by **Donald St. Pierre**, *Songs of Sweet Accord*, which they had commissioned for the very same purpose in 1996. Mr. St. Pierre served on the faculty of the Curtis Institute of Music at the time. He was associated with the Skylight Opera Theatre as music director from 1978 to 1990. He was keyboard player of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra until 1978. In 1986 he served as chorus master at the Vienna State Opera for Leonard Bernstein's *Quiet Place* (recorded by DGG and conducted by the composer). As a recital accompanist, Mr. St. Pierre has appeared at such venues as New York's Lincoln Center, London's Wigmore Hall, and Paris's Théâtre du Châtelet, as well as at the Tanglewood, Santa Fe Chamber Music, Bowdoin, Bard, and Grand Teton music festivals. He is one of the contributing composers to the *AIDS Quilt Songbook*, published by Boosey & Hawkes and recorded on the Harmonia Mundi label.

St. Pierre provided these somewhat tongue-in-cheek program notes for the premiere:

This work was written in the summer and fall of 1996 for the Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia (Alan Harler, conductor) as an adult male counterpart to Benjamin Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols*. All resemblances between it and the Britten are purely intentional. When performed as designed, the composer requests that *Songs* precede *Ceremony* so that the uninformed in the audience may presume Britten was influenced by him.

Songs of Sweet Accord is a cycle of settings of American folk-hymns. A 'cycle' because it tells a story of sorts. 'Settings' because I prefer that word to one like 'arrangements.' I

think it conjures up a jeweler's task: cutting and polishing something given and placing it where one hopes its inherent beauty is more readily apparent.

The texts and tunes are drawn from our extraordinary musical heritage. I use the word 'extraordinary' advisedly. When I was younger, I was led to believe that there really wasn't any American music before 1910 or so. Often that was qualified by adding the word 'serious': there wasn't any serious American music before 1910 or so. The idea was that music could (and should) be divided into two categories: Serious (sometimes called 'cultivated') and Popular ('vernacular'). One's task was to keep them separate, appreciate the serious and disdain the popular. Evidence for serious music in our country would've been the founding of the Puritan Philharmonic Orchestra some hundreds of years ago. Since there was no PPO, there was no music. And yet they sang.

Now I think some distinction can be useful. For music, one might borrow from Horace's *Art of Poetry* (if you're old enough, you'll remember that music is a genre of poetry.) The aim of the poet is to delight or to instruct, or to do both. There's a wonderful letter Mozart wrote to his father. He talks about what he has just finished composing, pointing out what will please the amateurs (delight) and the connoisseurs (instruct). Child of the Enlightenment that Mozart was, Horace was in the air for him, and he took as a natural goal the blending of delight and instruction in his work. I find thinking along those lines far more useful than thinking about seriousness or popularity.

Just as I think the aesthetic is a primary part of being human, so do I think the spiritual is. The texts for *Songs of Sweet Accord* are in a sequence moving from the establishment of music as a good, through unreflecting enthusiasm, doubt, petition, and grace. I avoided seasonal texts, and hope to avoid sectarian ones, looking for those it seemed to me anyone thoughtful might enjoy contemplating.

We are performing five movements: the robust *Innocent Sounds* (text by Charles Wesley), the mournful *Captain Kidd*, the *a cappella More Love, Contrite Heart*, and the *93rd Psalm*, with its canonic echos in the baritone.

Innocent Sounds

Enlisted in the cause of sin,
Why should a good be evil?
Music alas! too long has been
Press'd to obey the devil.
Drunken or lewd or light the lay
Flows to the soul's undoing,
Widen'd and strew'd with flowers the way,
Down to eternal ruin.

Who, on the part of God, will rise
Innocent sounds recover;
Fly on the prey, and seize the prize,
Plunder the carnal lover:

Strip him of ev'ry moving strain,
Of ev'ry melting measure;
Music in virtue's cause retain,
Risk the holy pleasure.

Then let us in his praises join,
Triumph in his salvation,
Glory ascribe to love divine,
Worship and adoration.
Heaven already is begun,
Opened to each believer,
Only believe, and still sing on,
Heaven is ours forever.

Captain Kidd

Through all the world below
God is seen all around,
Search hills and valleys through,
There he's found.
The growing of the corn,
The lily and the thorn,
The pleasant and forlorn,
All declare, God is there;
In meadows drest in green,
There he's seen.

See springing waters rise,
Fountains flow, rivers run;
The mist that veils the sky
Hides the sun;
Then down the rain doth pour,
The ocean it doth roar,
And beat upon the shore,
And all praise in their ways,
The God who ne'er declines
His designs.

The sun with all his rays
Speaks of God as he flies;
The comet in her blaze,
God she cries.
The shining of the stars,
The moon when she appears,
His awful name declares;
See them fly through the sky,
And join the solemn sound

All around.

More Love

More love, more love;
The heavens are blessing
Thee angels are calling,
O Zion, more love.

If ye love not each other
In daily communion,
How can ye love God,
Whom ye have not seen?

Contrite Heart

O thou whose tender mercy hears
Contrition's¹ humble sigh,
Whose hand indulgent wipes the tear
From ev'ry weeping eye.

See, low before thy throne of grace,
A wretch'd wand'rer mourn,
Hast thou not bid me seek thy face?
Hast thou not said- return?

O shine on this benighted heart,
With beams of mercy shine;
And let thy healing voice impart
A taste of joys divine.

Thy presence only can bestow
Delights which never cloy²;
Be this my comfort here below,
And my eternal joy.

1- remorse

2- fill to excess

93rd Psalm

Grace! 'tis a charming sound,
Harmonious to the ear;
Heav'n with the echo shall resound,
And all the earth shall hear.

Grace first contrived the way
To save rebellious man;
And all the steps that grace display,
Which drew the wondrous plan.

Grace taught my wand'ring feet
To tread the heav'nly road;
And new supplies each hour I meet,
While pressing on to God.

Benjamin Britten, England's greatest 20th century composer, is especially known for his vocal works and for choosing unusual texts. He wrote in all genres, small to large, from the exquisite anthem *Hymn to the Virgin* to the massive forces of the *War Requiem*. He took a great interest in writing music for children and amateur performers, including the opera *Noye's Fludde* and the song collection *Friday Afternoons*. He often composed with particular performers in mind such as his personal and professional partner, the tenor Peter Pears.

A Ceremony of Carols, Op. 28, was composed in 1942 during the 29-year-old Britten's sea voyage from the United States to England. During the trip, the ship stopped in Halifax, Nova Scotia, where Britten purchased a book of medieval poetry, *The English Galaxy of Shorter Poems*, edited by Gerald Bullett, mostly in Middle English, with some Latin and Early Modern English. The original scoring is for three-part treble chorus, solo voices, and harp, and although it was later published as an SATB piece, I remain a purist about the integrity of the original textures. We are performing five of my favorite movements (out of 11): **Wolcum Yole!**, a sprightly welcome to the season; the meditative **There is no rose**, alluding to the Virgin birth; the lullaby **Balulalow**; **This Little Babe**, the exciting canonic battle between good (a little baby) and evil (with lots of military imagery and chances to sing the word "hell") (poem by Robert Southwell); and concluding with the blessing **Deo gratias**, with the text that makes reference to redemption from the original sin of Adam.

Wolcum Yole!

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

Wolcum be ye, Stevene and Jon,
Wolcum, Innocentes every one,
Wolcum, Thomas marter one,
Wolcum be ye, good Newe Yere,
Wolcum, Twelfth Day both in fere¹,
Wolcum, seintes lefe and dare,²
Wolcum Yole, Wolcum Yole, Wolcum!

Candelmesse, Quene of Bliss,
Wolcum bothe to more and lesse.
Wolcum, Wolcum,
Wolcum be ye that are here, Wolcum Yole,
Wolcum alle and make good cheer.

Wolcum alle another yere,
Wolcum Yole. Wolcum!

1- fear

2- 'Welcome, Saints left and dear'

There is no rose

There is no rose of such vertu
As is the rose that bare Jesu.
Alleluia, Alleluia,
For in this rose containèd was
Heaven and earth in litel space,
*Res miranda*¹, *Res miranda*.

By that rose we may well see
There be one God in persons three,
*Pares forma*², *pares forma*.
The aungels sungen the shepherds to:
Gloria in excelsis, gloria in excelsis Deo!
*Gaudeamus*³, *gaudeamus*.

Leave we all this werldly mirth,
and follow we this joyful birth.
*Transeamus*⁴, *Transeamus, Transeamus*.
Alleluia,
Res miranda, Pares forma, Gaudeamus,
Transeamus.

1- 'Miraculous thing'

2- 'Created in the Parent's image'

3- 'We rejoice'

4- 'We cross over to heaven'

Balulalow

O my deare hert, young Jesu sweit,
Prepare thy creddil in my spreit,
And I sall rock thee to my hert,
And never mair from thee depart.

But I sall praise thee evermoir
with sangës sweit unto thy gloir;
The knees of my hert sall I bow,
And sing that richt Balulalow!¹

1- 'And sing the right Lullaby'

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 wise¹
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,²
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 bulwark 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 angels' trumps alarum sound.

My soul, with Christ join thou in fight;
Stick to the tents that he hath pight³.
Within his crib is surest ward;⁴
This little Babe will be thy guard.
If thou wilt foil thy foes with joy;
Then flit not from this heavenly Boy!

1- guise

2- 'His shots are his cries'

3- pitched

4- 'Within his crib is sure protection'

Deo gracias

*Deo gracias!*¹ *Deo gracias!*

Adam lay i-bounden, bounden in a bond;
Four thousand winter thought he not too long.

Deo gracias! *Deo gracias!*

And all was for an appil, an appil that he tok,
As clerkès finden² written in their book.

Deo gracias! *Deo gracias!*

Ne had the appil takè ben, the appil takè ben
Ne haddè never our lady a ben hevenè quene.

Blessèd be the time that appil takè was.
Therefore we moun singen.³
Deo gracias!

1- 'Thanks be to God'

2- find

3- 'Therefore we must sing'

(A note: Donald St. Pierre's work, *A Ceremony of Carols* and *Goodness and Light* were all composed with processional and recessional included, but in an abundance of pandemic caution, we are eschewing walking through the audience while singing. For the first two pieces, I have omitted those movements, as lovely as they are, and in Sedek's work, we will sing in place.)

Whenever we go on tour, we like to learn some music of our host country. *Dobar večer*, a traditional folk song from Zagorje, Croatia, seems particularly appropriate right now as it wishes everyone good health!

Dobar večer, dobri ljudi.
Da bi nam svi zdravi bili
U ovoj novoj godini.
Da bili bi u radosti,
Da bi nam svi zdravi bili.

Good evening, good people.
We all want you to be healthy
in this new year.
We want you to be joyful,
we all want you to be healthy.

Dobar ti večer gospodar.
Došlo je novo ljeto k'vam.
Da bi vam polje rodilo,
Pšeničku zarku davalo.
Da bi nam svi zdravi bili.

Good evening to you, sir.
The new year has arrived.
We wish you bountiful fields,
giving bright wheat.
We all want you to be healthy.

Da bi vam gore rodile,
To rujno vince davale.
Djevojke mi darujemo,
Čriljenim ljepim venčekom.
Dječake mi darujemo,
Čriljenim ljepim bušpanom.
Da bi nam svi zdravi bili.

We wish you bountiful hills,
giving you red wine.
We give to the girls
a beautiful red wreath.
We give to the boys
a beautiful red flower.
We all want you to be healthy.

Sid Robinovitch studied briefly at Indiana University and then received his doctorate from the University of Illinois—in communications, rather than music—and proceeded to teach social sciences at York University in Toronto. Since 1977, however, he has devoted himself to music, specifically to composition, after studying with Samuel Dolin at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. *Prayer Before Sleep* is the sixth movement of the *Talmud Suite*, commissioned by Toronto's Elmer Eisler Singers. Robinovitch provides the following notes on the work:

The Talmud is a vast corpus of law, commentaries, legend, and philosophy...and simultaneously a work of art that goes beyond legislation and its practical application. It also occasionally contains short poems--prayers designed for synagogue use, private devotions, and so forth. The music is solely a response to an ancient and still very much living tradition through the heart and mind of a modern reader. This movement is grouped among the prayers to be recited at home before retiring at night.

Baruch atah Adonai
Eloheinu melech ha-olam.
Hamapil chevlei sheina
al einai,
Ut'numah al afapai.

Exalted are Thou, O my Lord
Who art God and King of the World.
Who weighs down my eyes
with gentle bonds of sleep,
And refreshes my tired spirit with slumber.

Vihi ratson milfanecha,
Adonai Elohai Velohei Avotai,
Shetashkiveini l'shalom
V'ta-amideini l'shalom.

May ever it be Thy will,
Lord my God, and God of all my fathers,
To lay me down in untroubled peace
And raise me up in peace once more.

V'al y'vahaluni rayonai
Vachalomot ra-im,
V'harhorim ra-im—
U-t'hi mitati shleima l'fanecha.

Do not let dark imaginings disturb me
With thoughts of sin and despair,
O heal my fear and my suffering—
May my bed be enclosed in Thy care.

V'ha-er einai
Pen ishan hamavet.
Ki atah hame-ir
L'ishon bat-ayin.
Baruch atah Adonai,
Hame-ir la-olam kulo
Bichvodo.

Give light unto my eyes
Lest the sleep of death o'ertake me.
For 'tis Thou who breathes life
Into man's slumb'ring soul.
Exalted art Thou, O Lord,
Who illuminates all the world
With His Glory.

Previously based in Seattle, conductor and composer **Sarah Riskind** is the director of choral activities at Eureka College in central Illinois and the music director of the Baroque Artists of Champaign Urbana. Among her original works are Jewish and Judeo-Christian music, secular pieces with improvisatory elements, and frequent settings with string obbligato parts such as *Mi Y'malel*. She says, "The traditional version is a well-known and popular Hanukkah song. This original setting gives it a new melody and Klezmer-inspired accompaniment. Because of repeated melodies, doublings, and a canonical section, it is fairly economical with material."

Mi y'malel g'vurot Yisrael,
otan mi yimneh?
Hen b'chol dor yakum hagibor
goel ha'am.

Who can recount the heroism of Israel,
who can count them?
In every age, a hero or sage
shall come to our aid.

Sh'ma! Bayamim hahem
baz'man hazeh,

Hark! In those days
and in our time,

Makkabi moshiah ufodeh. a Maccabee to rescue us arrives.
Uv'yameinu kol am Yisrael And in our days, all of Israel
yitached yakum le'higael! shall stand united and be redeemed.

Dr. Kevin Phillip Johnson is an associate professor of music and chair of the music department at Spelman College. As a tenured professor, Johnson teaches choral conducting, music theory, and music technology, and has stood as the director of the world-renowned Spelman College Glee Club for nearly 20 years. After earning both his bachelor's and master's degrees from California State University, Los Angeles, Johnson went on to receive his doctoral degree from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music. He has served as the director of music at various churches, providing choral workshops and retreats for music educators and churches for over 30 years. "Doc" Kevin Johnson is an active clinician and working composer, specializing in spirituals and sacred text. He serves as the minister of music at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church in Atlanta. The composer explains, "*Silent Night/What You Gonna Name that Pretty Little Baby* was composed combining traditional SATB choir with Jubilee Quartet. This was in honor of my father, Willie T. Johnson, founder and lead singer of the Golden Gate Quartet of the 1930s and 40s." It also begins and ends by quoting another iconic (secular) Christmas song which I am sure you will recognize. <https://soundcloud.com/doctorkj>

Silent night, holy night,
All is calm, all is bright!
Round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant so tender.

Oh Mary, what ya gonna name that pretty little baby?
Glory to the newborn king!
Some call Him wonder,
I think I'll say: "Emmanuel."
They're takin' Him on their shoulder
and makin' Him their gov'ner.
Peace on the earth and goodwill to all men!

Christ the Savior is born.

Elaine Hagenberg's compositions have been performed by universities, community choirs, schools, and church choirs throughout the United States and abroad. Her music has been featured at All-State festivals, national and regional American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) conferences, the National Youth Choir at Carnegie Hall, the Melbourne International Choral Festival, and the International Children's Choir Festivals in Canterbury and London. With over forty commissioned works, she has composed new music for the ACDA Women's Choir Consortium, colleges and universities, community choirs, and churches. She is currently composer-in-residence of the Des Moines Choral Society. *O Come, Emmanuel* sets the traditional text for the first two verses (J. M. Neale 1818-1866) and Henry Sloane Coffin's (1877-

1954) more universal translation of verse three. The long lines and beautiful cello obbligato make it a satisfying song of longing for goodness and light. <https://www.elainehagenberg.com/>

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.

O come thou Dayspring come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine Advent here,
And drive away the shades of night,
And pierce the clouds and bring us light!

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Desire of nations, bind
All people in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife and quarrels cease,
And fill the world with Heaven's peace.

Dr. Brandon Williams is an assistant professor of choral music and choral music education at Rutgers. He conducts the Rutgers Voorhees Choir (Carnegie Hall 2019, NJACDA 2020) and teaches a variety of undergraduate and graduate courses related to choral music education. Dr. Williams appears frequently as a guest conductor, clinician, and presenter throughout the country. As a secondary vocal music educator, Dr. Williams amassed a decade of middle and high school teaching experience in St. Louis, MO, where he also served as a conductor with the St. Louis Symphony IN UNISON Chorus and the St. Louis Children's Choirs, and on the voice faculty at Maryville University. Dr. Williams holds degrees from Western Illinois University, the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and Michigan State University. He also serves as the Women's /SSAA Choir Repertoire and Resources Chair on the New Jersey ACDA board.

Winter Wind sets the Shakespeare text from "As You Like it" with an exciting driving piano part to show off our new accompanist! The composer tells me the work drew inspiration from two art songs, Schubert's "Gretchen am Spinnrade" and Quilter's "Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind."

Blow, thou winter wind.
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude.
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.
Heigh-ho! sing, heigh-ho! unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:
Then, heigh-ho, the holly!
This life is most jolly.

Freeze, thou bitter sky,
That dost not bite so nigh
As benefits¹ forgot:
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remembered not.

1- good deeds

Raphaella Aleotti (c. 1570-after 1646) was an Italian organist, prioress, and composer. She was born in Argenta, Ferrara, and lived for much of her life in the Augustinian Convent of San Vito, which was famed for its music. She began to play the organ in 1593 and went on to become director of vocal and instrumental ensembles and ultimately prioress. Contemporary accounts of musical performances in the convent under her supervision are full of praise and adulation. Under her direction the nuns of San Vito performed for Pope Clement VIII and Margaret of Austria. Her madrigals and motets were widely celebrated, although most are now lost. She also wrote for much of her life under the pseudonym ‘Rafaele’ Aleotti, a deliberate use of the masculine equivalent of her own name. --Henry Websdale and Eleanor Burke, *Multitude of Voyces*, Vol. 1.
<https://www.multitudeofvoyces.co.uk/>

Angelus ad pastores ait is a sprightly five-part motet with a challenging syncopated “Alleluia” section.

Angelus ad pastores ait:
“annuncio vobis gaudium magnum,
quia natus est vobis hodie Salvator.”
Alleluia.

The angel said to the shepherds:
“I bring you tidings of great joy,
for the Savior has been born to you today.”
Alleluia.

Born and raised in Australia, **Melissa Dunphy** immigrated to the United States in 2003 and has since become an award-winning and acclaimed composer specializing in vocal, political, and theatrical music. She first came to national attention in 2009 when her large-scale choral work *The Gonzales Cantata* was on MSNBC’s *The Rachel Maddow Show*. Her choral work *What do you think I fought for at Omaha Beach?* won the Simon Carrington Chamber Singers Composition Competition and has been performed nationally by ensembles including GRAMMY Award-winning Chanticleer, Cantus, and the St. Louis Chamber Chorus, and will be performed by Harmonium in June. Dunphy has served as composer-in-residence for the Immaculata Symphony Orchestra, Volti Choral Arts Lab, Volti Choral Institute, and the St. Louis Chamber Chorus. Dunphy has a PhD in music composition from the University of Pennsylvania. She currently teaches composition at Rutgers University and is also active in Philadelphia as a sound and lighting designer, actor, theater owner, and podcaster (*The Boghouse*). *O Oriens* is a setting of one of the O Antiphons, quoting and then developing the actual ancient chant. It was commissioned by the Choral Arts Society of Philadelphia.

From the composer:

When I was asked to set one of the O Antiphons, I knew the one I wanted to choose was "O Oriens" because of its universality. While my setting uses the traditional plainsong setting as its backbone, I hear the text as relevant far beyond its liturgical purpose; it becomes a plaintive call for light in the form of love, knowledge, and peace both in the world and within each of us personally, particularly for those of us who have suffered from depression or grief. <https://www.melissadunphy.com/>

O Oriens,
splendor lucis aeternae,
et sol justitiae:
veni, et illumina sedentes in tenebris,
et umbra mortis.

O Morning Star,
splendor of light eternal
and sun of righteousness:
Come and enlighten those who dwell in darkness
and the shadow of death.

Alison Willis is an award-winning composer whose works have been performed and broadcast internationally. She finds particular inspiration in historical sources and social issues and enjoys working collaboratively with both young people and adults. She is an experienced organist, pianist, folk musician, and musical director, enjoys composing music for theater, and is a trustee of the Martin Read Foundation, supporting young composers.

(<http://www.alisonwillis.com/about.html>). Aficionados of *A Ceremony of Carols* will recognize the 15th-century text in *I Sing of A Maiden* as one also set by Britten.

I sing of a Maiden
she is matchless.
King of all kings,
for her son she chose.

He came as still
where his mother was,
as dew in April
that falls on the grass.

He came as still
to his mother's bow'r,
as dew in April
that falls on the flow'r.

He came as still
as his mother lay,
as dew in April
that falls on the spray.

Mother and maiden,
there was never ever

never one but she.
Well may such a lady
God's mother be.

Polish-American composer and conductor **Martin Sedek** is an award-winning voice in the world of choral and orchestral music, educated at Berklee College of Music (B.M.), Montclair State University (M.M.), and Rutgers University (Ph.D.). Martin is composer-in-residence for Harmonium Choral Society & The Baldwin Festival Chorus of NYC, and is the music director/conductor of Choral Art Society of NJ and associate conductor of The Masterwork Chorus. Currently, he is director of music & arts at Keio Academy of New York, and director of music at St. Bernard's Episcopal Church in Bernardsville, NJ. From 2011 to 2020, Dr. Sedek was assistant conductor for the MSU Chorale and visiting professor of music theory at Montclair State University's Cali School of Music. Martin's concert music has been commissioned and performed throughout the U.S., Europe, and Africa; his works are published by Ovation Music Publishing and Hal Leonard. <https://www.martinsedek.com/>

Harmonium has been performing Martin's music since he was a high school composer, and he now serves an important role as mentor to our High School Choral Composition Contest, about to celebrate its 25th anniversary. (The first several entrants receive individual coaching from Martin.) This commission is sponsored by both Harmonium Choral Society and the Composer's Guild of New Jersey. The premiere had to wait a year, and we are so thrilled to bring it to you now.

Of *Goodness and Light*, the composer explains:

The main thing I tried to focus on when writing was the overarching concept of a meditation: an intentional focusing on one particular idea, in this case goodness; keeping that sensation alive throughout the whole work was key for me to maintain the solemnity I was after in terms of making it a proper "ceremony." The challenge therein is writing music that is varied and colorful enough to be interesting and engaging, while not losing that grounded feeling of reflection. Just as goodness itself takes infinite forms, music does also, and there is a deep well of connection there from which to draw. While goodness towards one another, towards ourselves, our Earth, is a joyous goal very much worth celebrating, there isn't any pomp and fanfare in this work - it's a more honest look at where we are, and lives very much in its time: we acknowledge our craving for common goodness, but also recognize its absence in the places we seek it most. When you meditate on an idea, it is brought to life and refreshed, and this work is meant to shine a spotlight on this facet of the holiday season so easily taken for granted.

The first movement introduces a main theme in unison chorus and in the universal language of Latin telling the creation of humankind in the divine image, and the anchoring key of C major, which will begin and end the cantata, no matter how far it strays.

Procession

Creavit Deus hominem
ad imaginem suam;
Et viditque Deus quæ fecerat,
Et erant valde bona.

God created humankind
in his own image;
God looked upon what he created,
and it was good.

— *Genesis 1:27*

The second movement continues the theme of unity.

The Message

A time for reflection and perspective.
We retell the story of weary travelers,
A star, shepherds, Magi;
The message to care for the sick,
For the hungry, for the downtrodden,
To love one another.
The message that says we have to be
Our brother's keepers, our sister's keepers;
To reach out to each other,
forgive each other,
To let the light of our good deeds
shine for all.

It's a message of unity
It's a message of decency
It's a message of hope
It's a message we all need.

There's so much more that unites us
than divides us.

— *Remarks by President Obama
at the Lighting of the National Christmas Tree
Dec. 1, 2016*

The third movement (in the key of A-flat) introduces soloists and a folk-song-like theme for the lovely poem "Love and Friendship", with baritone and mezzo solos in dialogue.

Holly

Love is like the wild rose-briar,
Friendship like the holly-tree,
The holly is dark when the rose-briar blooms
But which will bloom most constantly?
The wild-rose briar is sweet in spring,
Its summer blossoms scent the air;
Yet wait till winter comes again

And who will call the wild-briar fair?
Then scorn the silly rose-wreath now
And deck thee with the holly's sheen,
That when December blights thy brow
He may still leave thy garland green.

— *Emily Bronte*

The rollicking fourth movement has the feel of a drinking song. Don't be insulted by the use of the word "fellow" which derives from the Old English *feolaga*, meaning "one who shares something," and is etymologically not gendered (thanks to Sonya Sutton AAM Journal 11/2021).

Together

A glass is good, a lass is good,
And a pipe to smoke in cold weather,
And the world is good and the people are good,
And we're all good fellows together.

— *John O'Keefe*

May good humor preside
when good fellows meet,
And reason prescribe when
'tis time to retreat.
Here's to us that are here,
to you that are there,
And rest of us everywhere
— Here's to all the world,
For fear some darn fool may take offense.

— *anon.*

The composer himself wrote the text for the meditative, nostalgic fifth movement, which celebrates domestic love and traditions at the holiday table.

Pine

She was once a tall proud tree
solid pine —
Taken from the wood, now to be
An heirloom, through homes and decades
For all who dine and study and weep
over her knotted grain

She was once a tall proud tree
Her roots so deep, her shade so wide
Now around her sits a family
Year after year, at both heads, both sides

It would appear that few agree

On even a bit of anything
But what is holy in a holiday
If only the silverware and glasses sing?

She was once a tall proud tree
Now her soul reaches achingly
For an earth too far below
to quench her thirst and quell her sorrow

So we build around her a well
of love and song and joy and good
and she drinks.

— *M. Sedek*

The sixth movement reminds me of “This Little Babe” with its driving rhythms and the reference to the eternal battle between dark and light, sin and mercy. It then concludes with recitative-like solos and a benediction from the choir: “sweet music plays through weeping willows.”

Mercy

When man from Paradise was driven,
And thorns around his pathway sprung,
Sweet Mercy wandering there from heaven
Upon those thorns bright roses flung.

And thus, as evils sprung to light,
And spread, like weeds, their poisons wide,
Fresh healing plants came blooming bright,
And stood, to check them, side by side.

And now, though Eden blooms afar,
And man is exiled from its bowers,
Still mercy steals through bolt and bar,
And brings away its choicest flowers.

Thus joy is linked with every woe
Each cup of ill its pleasure brings;
The rose is crushed, but then, you know,
The sweeter fragrance from it springs.

And mercy gilds with stars the night;
Sweet music plays through weeping willows.

— *Samuel Griswold Goodrich*

The seventh movement is a joyful medley of carols and holiday song texts from several cultures, focusing on rejoicing in the anticipation of the gift of light that these celebrations have in

common, and drawing us back to the text of the second movement: “there’s so much more that unites us than divides us.”

Rejoice!

O come, O come, Emmanuel...

—*trad.*

Baruch Atah Adonai Elohenu
Melech haolam
asher kideshanu bemitzvotav
vetzivanu
lehadlik ner Chanukah.

Blessed are You, Lord our God,
King of the universe,
who has sanctified us with His commandments,
and commanded us to kindle
the Chanukah light.

— *First blessing of the Menorah*

Ringling, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day.

— *HW Longfellow*

Om Jai Lakshmi mata
Dhoop Deep phal meva
Maiya Ma sweekaar karo
Gyaan prakaash karo Ma
Moha agyaan haro
Om Jai Lakshmi Mata

Victory to mother Lakshmi:
Mother, accept incense and light,
Mother, please accept;
Make my intelligence bright.
Kill passion and ignorance.
Victory to mother Lakshmi.

—*Diwali hymn, trad.*

All out of darkness, we have light,
which made the angels sing this night.

— *Sussex Carol, trad.*

He will bring us goodness and light.

— *'Do You Hear What I Hear?', trad.*

The eighth movement is a setting of one of my favorite poems. It begins simply with a pedal C in the harp, and then builds and builds. The C finally moves to a D (up higher) at the point in the poem “so to live is heaven” and then continues to reach through E-flat, references to E, yearning, building textures and a triumphal B-flat cadence, which ultimately brings us back to the source of creation, C major, and leads without pause into the final movement’s denouement of “Peace on Earth.”

A Good Diffused

Oh, may I join the choir invisible,
live in pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
For miserable aims that end with self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,

And with their mild persistence urge men's search
To vaster issues. So to live is heaven:
To make undying music in the world,
Breathing a beauteous order that controls
With growing sway the growing life of man.

And shaped it forth before the multitude,
Divinely human, raising worship so
To higher reverence more mixed with love, —
May I reach that purest heaven, — be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony,
Enkindle generous ardor, feed pure love,
Beget the smiles that have no cruelty,
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,
And in diffusion ever more intense!
So shall I join the choir invisible
Whose music is the gladness of the world.

— *Mary Evans (as George Eliot)*

Recession

“The Gift of Goodness is ours to give.”

— *anon.*

Creavit Deus hominem	God created humankind
ad imaginem suam;	in his own image;
Et viditque Deus quæ fecerat,	God looked upon what he created,
Et erant valde bona.	and it was good.

— *Genesis 1:27*

Peace on Earth, goodwill toward all.

— *Luke 2:14*

Merynda Adams has been described by the *Newark Star-Ledger* as “having played the harp with color and great facility,” and a *NY Times* review stated: “Those four Irish tunes, delicately accompanied...by harpist Merynda Adams, were the highlight of the night.” Performances have taken her to London, France, Belgium, The Netherlands, Canada, Puerto Rico and throughout the United States appearing in Carnegie Hall, Avery Fisher Hall, off-Broadway in “The Fantasticks,” St. Patrick’s Cathedral, the Celtic Woman tour and for Eddie Murphy, Andrea Bocelli, and Beverly Sills. She has performed with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, New York Grand Opera, New Philharmonic, Lyrica Chamber Music, Northeastern Philharmonic, Colonial Symphony, Westfield Symphony, NJ Festival Orchestra and Lake Placid Symphonietta, as well as weekly at Chilton Medical Center. Ms. Adams is a 1994 winner of the Artists International Competition and the Goldblatt Award. She holds a bachelor's degree in Harp Performance from the Manhattan School of Music, has studied at the Hilversums Conservatorium in the Netherlands, and performed in masterclasses in Paris and Nice. Her teachers have included Kathleen Bride, Erika Waardenburg, and Gloria Agostini. She is often heard in area churches,

including the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart, Newark and frequently collaborates with violinist Christopher Collins Lee. Their CD "Romantic Duos" was released in 2011. She has also accompanied renowned soprano Aprile Millo in recitals in New York, Delaware, Toronto, and London. Founder of Chamber Music for Charity, Ms. Adams is thrilled to be able to combine her love of chamber music with the desire to help others acquire basic needs of food and housing. Chamber Music for Charity, in its fifth season, continued its outreach with online performances this past year. In addition to performing, she has given workshops for The Virginia Harp Center and Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, UK. <http://www.merynda.com/>

David Davis holds a bachelors and masters of music in piano performance from Rutgers University, where he studied with Samuel Dilworth-Leslie. After graduation, he pursued further piano studies with Albert and Miyoko Lotto of the Juilliard School. He still loves practicing solo piano repertoire. He also enjoys playing jazz and continues to aspire to develop his skills as an improviser. A major portion of Dave's musical career consists of serving in many different capacities as an accompanist for instrumentalists, vocalists, dance, theatrical productions, community choruses, and religious services, as well as a private piano instructor. Currently, he plays for services at Temple Sinai in Summit, Community Congregational Church in Short Hills, and Oheb Shalom Congregation in South Orange. He is also a staff accompanist for the Kent Place School in Summit. This is Dave's first concert with Harmonium and we are happy to have him!