



Program Notes

by Anne Matlack

Welcome to our celebration of French music. If you are wondering what is it that makes French music so, well, French, there's a charm and an interesting combination of the pastoral and the sophisticated in much of this music that will both delight and inform your taste.

We open with a wonderful Renaissance tune by **Claude Goudimel** that is still used today for this Advent hymn, *Comfort, comfort*. Goudimel, like Le Jeune, was a most important Reformation composer of Psalm settings in French. The long and short notes of music were set strictly to long and short syllables of the language, resulting in more rhythmic vitality than one would think could come from such a strict form. I love this arrangement by **John Ferguson** of St. Olaf College, with its charming instrumental ritornello.

"Comfort, comfort now my people; Tell of peace!" So says our God.
Comfort those who sit in darkness Mourning under sorrow's load.
To God's people now proclaim That God's pardon waits for them!
Tell them that their war is over; God will reign in peace forever!

For the herald's voice is crying In the desert far and near,
Calling us to true repentance, Since the Kingdom now is here.
Oh, that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God a way!
Let the valleys rise to meet him, And the hills bow down to greet him!

Straight shall be what long was crooked, And the rougher places plain!
Let your hearts be true and humble, As befits his holy reign!
For the glory of the Lord Now on earth is shed abroad,
And all flesh shall see the token That God's word is never broken.

Bénissez-nous reminds us that not all French sacred music is Catholic. Currently France has the largest Jewish population in Western and Central Europe, around 600,000. The Jews in France are in the majority Sephardic (descendants of Spanish and Mediterranean Jews), unlike in the USA, which is about 90% Ashkenazic (descendants of German and Eastern European Jews). This song, which originated in the Jewish community in the Bayonne area of France, is based on an old and popular Sephardic tune. It is sung in both Hebrew and French. **Stephen Cohen**, currently the President of Sharim v'Sharot Choir in central New Jersey, has arranged and written a variety of choral and instrumental works. Dr. Cohen is a chemist and technical writer as well as a professional Hebrew and English



calligrapher. He explains “It is a song I originally found, about 15 years ago, in Judith Kaplan Eisenstein’s compendium on the history of Jewish music, and was very taken with the melody and provenance. The tune for *Bénissez-nous* is closely related to other Sephardic tunes, such as *Bendigamos*. I personally enjoy discovering unusual and lesser-known gems, and introducing them to Jewish choirs.”

Bénissez nous, Dieu du lumière,
éloignez de nous les malheurs,
et sur notre famille entière
étendez vos saintes faveurs.
Hodu l’Adonai ki tov,
Ki l’olam chasdo.

Bless us, God of light,
Remove from us misfortune,
And upon our entire family
bestow your holy favors.
Praise our God for [God is] good,
For everlasting [is God’s] kindness.

Francis Poulenc was a child of Paris, and a mixture of eclectic influences. His cosmopolitan, cultured mother taught him piano beginning at age 5, while his provincial father was a devout Roman Catholic. His mother and uncle hosted actors and artists at their apartment, and took him to concerts and galleries in the vibrant cultural life of the early twentieth century Paris of Debussy, Ravel, Stravinsky, Proust, Picasso and Diaghilev. His summers were spent in the suburb of Nogent-sur-Marne, where he heard the wild accordion music of river boats and cafés with which he later sought to infuse his own music. His musical training began with the Spanish pianist Ricardi Vines who introduced him to Satie, the surrealist Jean Cocteau, and Stravinsky. By the time he was 17, he became part of an avant-garde group of young composers dubbed “Les Six”—Poulenc, Auric, Durey, Honegger, Milhaud and Tailleferre—who rebelled against the grandiosity of Wagner and the vagueness of Impressionism. They sought clarity and more emotional restraint, and celebrated the primitive, the everyday, and self-mockery. James Reel of the *Arizona Daily Star* has a wonderful website called *The Timid Soul’s Guide to Classical Music* in which he states, “Poulenc and his circle hit the 1920s classical music scene with the same biting, nihilistic force with which the punk rock movement slammed into popular music in the 1970s.”

As Poulenc developed his largely self-taught style into a full-blown career, he was influenced by the neoclassic works of Stravinsky, the Dadaism of Satie, the surreal poets Apollinaire, Cocteau, and Éluard, and such contrasting influences as Schubert’s *Winterreise* (as he accompanied the baritone Pierre Bernac). Says Reel, “as his career progressed, Poulenc did retain his taste for tart harmonies and unexpected turns of phrase. But he also developed a fondness for traditional French qualities of grace, charm, and light melodiousness.”

A huge turning point in Poulenc’s life came in the summer of 1936: while he was vacationing in Uzerche, news reached him that his close friend, musician Pierre-Octave Ferroud, has been killed in a car accident. Severely shaken, he drove to a pilgrimage site at Rocamour, a place his father had told him of. The statue of the Black Virgin here had such a profound emotional and spiritual



impact that he found himself returning to the faith of his childhood, and began work that night on his *Litanies à la vierge noir*, a work of “country devotion.” For the rest of his life, Poulenc espoused and was inspired by his rediscovered religious fervor. The *Messe en Sol Majeur (Mass in G)* was begun in 1937 and dedicated to his father, who had been dead for 20 years.

The *Mass in G* is one of the most complex and original a cappella works of the twentieth century. It is a *Missa brevis* (no Credo). Poulenc’s style is largely syllabic, with little counterpoint, has great rhythmic vitality, his typical interplay of major and minor, and a blend of harshness and sweetness.

The opening *Kyrie* Poulenc himself called “savage.” After the striking opening melody, the work is mostly chordal, with a short imitative section in the *Christe*, a return of the dotted rhythmic *Kyrie* theme, and a quiet ending.

I. Kyrie

Kyrie eleison	Lord have mercy on us.
Christe eleison	Christ have mercy on us.
Kyrie eleison	Lord have mercy on us.

The *Gloria* is dramatic and animated, with interplay between various voice parts that creates a polychoral texture. The *Qui tollis* staccato bass part is whimsical and satirical but then builds to a joyous and majestic conclusion of praise.

II. Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo et in terra	Glory to God in the highest and on earth,
pax hominibus bonae voluntatis	peace to people of good will.
Laudamus te	We praise you.
Benedicimus te	We bless you.
Adoramus te	We worship you.
Glorificamus te	We glorify you.
Gratias agimus tibi	We give thanks to you
propter magnam gloriam tuam	for your great glory.
Domine Deus	Lord God,
Rex coelestis	Heavenly king,
Deus Pater omnipotens	God the father almighty.
Domine Fili unigenite Jesu Christe	The only son of the Lord, Jesus Christ.

Domine Deus Agnus Dei	Lord God, lamb of God,
Filius Patris	Son of the father
qui tollis peccata mundi	who takes away the sins of the world,
miserere nobis	have mercy on us,
suscipe deprecationem nostram	receive our prayer.

Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris	You, who sit at the right hand of the father,
miserere nobis	have mercy on us.
Quoniam tu solus Sanctus	For you alone are holy.
Tu solus Dominus	You alone are the Lord.



Tu solus Altissimus
Jesu Christe cum Sancto Spiritu
In gloria Dei Patris Amen

You alone are the most high,
Jesus Christ, with the holy spirit,
in the glory of God the father. Amen.

The *Sanctus* is a vocal carillon, making reference to the joyful ringing of *Sanctus* bells at this point in a mass. Dynamic contrasts are playful, and finally build to a grand *Hosanna*, dissonant in a jazzy kind of way.

III. Sanctus

Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth
Pleni sunt coeli et terra
Pleni sunt coeli gloria tua
Hosanna in excelsis

Holy Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full,
heaven is full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

The *Benedictus* is very soft throughout (I have chosen to perform this with a semichorus), beginning with a gorgeous C major chord, but quickly straying into far-off tonal regions, leading back to the full *Hosanna*, with added rhythmic pulses.

IV. Benedictus

Benedictus qui venit
in nomine Domini
Hosanna in excelsis

Blessed are those who come
in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

The *Agnus Dei* is austere in its solo and unison lines, and the simplest in its G major/G minor tonality. The final solo, marked *Sans aucune nuance*, perhaps proves how much the composer values the pure and simple, stripped of any excess.

V. Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei
Qui tollis peccata mundi
Miserere nobis
Agnus Dei
Qui tollis peccata mundi
Dona nobis pacem

Lamb of God
who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God
who takes away the sins of the world,
give us peace.

The Charpentier *Christmas cantata*, which is being presented as a sort of sorbet between the two Poulenc sets, is a delightful mini-cantata that captures the best of the French Baroque composer in microcosm. A favorite of Louis XIV, **Marc-Antoine Charpentier** was overshadowed by his contemporary, Lully, on the secular front, and so devoted himself to sacred music. He held prominent church jobs at the Jesuit Chapel in Paris, the convent of Port-Royal, and Sainte-Chapelle. His best known work today is his large scale *Messe de Minuit (Midnight Mass)*, but he wrote numerous shorter cantatas and oratorios of no less merit. *In nativitatem Domini/canticum* shows Charpentier's melodic gifts in a typical combination of solo, trio, chorus and instruments. Imitative and chordal sections alternate, and text-painting describes trumpets (*tubae*), clapping (*plaudent*), and mountains (*montes*). The final section includes some striking dissonances en route to a majestic conclusion.



Quem vidistis pastores,
dicite, annuntiate nobis
in terris quis apparuit?
Natum vidimus, natum ex virgine.

Whom did you see, shepherds,
speak, tell us
who has appeared on earth?
We saw the birth, born of a virgin.

Parvulum qui natus est nobis.
Filius qui datus est nobis,
natum vidimus, natum ex virgine,
et chorus Angelorum collaudantes eum.

For a child is born to us,
a son is given to us,
we saw the birth, born of a virgin,
and choirs of angels praising him.

Notum fecit Dominus salutare suum.
Revelavit in terra
justitiam suam.
Psalite Domino
in cithara et voce psalmi,
in tubis ductilibus
et voce tubae corneae,
Flumina plaudent manu,
Montes exsultent a conspectu ejus.
Quoniam venit salvare terram.

The Lord has declared his salvation.
He has revealed [to us] on earth
signs of his righteousness.
Praise the Lord
with the harp, with psalms,
With trumpets
and with shawms.
The rivers shall clap their hands,
the mountains rejoice in his presence.
For he comes to save the earth.

Poulenc's *Four Christmas Motets* juxtapose well with Renaissance and Baroque music, seeming almost to have been written in the fifteenth century rather than the twentieth. They were written in 1952. They are much less dark than the Mass and Lenten motets of the late 1930s, showing an exuberant, childlike innocence in celebration of the Nativity.

O magnum mysterium, on a text that dates back to Gregorian chant, describes the parallel between the humblest of all—the animals at the manger—and the Virgin's body, as the babe is "the word made flesh." Poulenc's mysterious, intimate music uses descending melodies to depict the birth of God in a manger.

O magnum mysterium,
et admirabile sacramentum,
ut animalia viderent Dominum natum,
jacentem in praesepe.
Beata Virgo cujus viscera
meruerunt portare Dominum Christum.

O great mystery
and wondrous sacrament,
that animals should see the new-born Lord
lying in a manger.
Blessed is the Virgin whose womb was worthy
to bear the Lord Christ.

Quem vidistis pastores dicite evokes a mood of breathless excitement, and uses contrasting dynamics and the technique of humming.

Quem vidistis, pastores?
dicite, annuntiate nobis,
in terris quis apparuit?

Whom did you see, shepherds,
speak, tell us
who has appeared on earth?

Natum vidimus,
et chorus Angelorum
collaudantes Dominum.

We saw the birth,
and choirs of angels
praising God.



Dicite quidnam vidistis?
et annuntiate Christi Nativitatem.

Tell us, what have you seen?
And proclaim the birth of Christ.

Videntes stellam also evokes the text in a very original manner, with the star hovering above in an ethereal pianississimo chord without basses, and a bending and bowing figure that depicts the wise men stooping to enter the stable.

Videntes stellam Magi,
gavisi sunt gaudio magno:
et intrantes domum,
obtulerunt Domino aurum,
thus et myrrham.

Seeing the star, the Magi
rejoiced with great joy,
and entering the house
they offered to the Lord gold,
frankincense, and myrrh.

Hodie Christus natus est is the most melismatic, madrigalian and purely joyful of the four.

Hodie Christus natus est.
Hodie Salvator apparuit.
Hodie in terra canunt Angeli,
Laetantur Archangeli.
Hodie exsultant iusti dicentes.
Gloria in excelsis Deo, alleluia

Today Christ is born.
Today the Savior has appeared.
Today the angels sing on earth,
the archangels rejoice.
Today the righteous rejoice, saying
Gloria to God in the highest, alleluia

Despite the many influences cited above, the most striking thing about Poulenc's music is that it sounds like no other composer. Once you've experienced the astonishing expressivity of this music you will always recognize Poulenc as unique.

The art of sacred polyphony developed in the twelfth century in France and radiated to other parts of Europe. The most influential school centered around the composers Leonin and Perotin who were choirmasters at the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, and became known with their anonymous contemporaries as the **Notre Dame School**. Chant would alternate with composed two- and three-part writing in this style. Our 3-minute history of Medieval music as presented by the Chamber Singers begins with *Beata viscera*, a monophonic conductus (processional song) composed to Latin lyric poetry. I have the women singing this devotion to the Virgin which expresses a similar sentiment as the text of *O Magnum Mysterium*.

Chorus

Beata viscera, Marie virginis,
Cujus ad ubera, rex magni nominis.

Blessed womb of the Virgin Mary
To whose breasts (comes) a king of great renown.

Verse

Veste sub altera vim celans numinis,
Dictavit federa Dei et hominis.
O mira novitas et novum gaudium,
Matris integritas post purperium.

Concealing the power of his divinity,
He has spoken the peace of God and man.
O amazing wonder and joy,
The mother, having born a child, remains a virgin.



Next, demonstrating early polyphony, a fragment of chant **Domino (Lord)**, is set to rhythm, over which a faster-moving tenor line is freely composed.

The three-part motet **Alle, psallite**, also uses a chant-based cantus-firmus over which two equal parts alternate in canonic interplay known as *Stimmtausch*. The text is troped (added) right into the middle of the word “halleluja.”

Alle, psallite cum luya,	Halle - (sing with) - lujah,
Alle, concrepando psallite cum luya,	Halle - (sing very loud with) - lujah,
Alle, corde voto Deo toto psallite	Halle - (sing with hearts wholly given to
cum luya,	God with) - lujah.
Alleluya.	Hallelujah.

Pierre de la Rue was a prolific and influential composer of the Burgundian School, the only one of his generation never to travel to Italy, and so may be considered untaintedly Northern. He wrote masses and motets similar in style to Josquin. The delicate **O salutaris hostia** is exquisite in its simplicity and sweet harmonies.

O salutaris hostia,	O victim and salvation
Quae coeli pandis ostium,	who opens wide the gate of heaven,
Bella premunt hostilia,	we are oppressed by savage wars.
Da robur, fer auxilium.	Give us your strength, bring us your aid.

Uni trinoque Domino,	To God, three in one,
Sit sempiterna gloria:	be everlasting glory,
Qui vitam sine termino	who life without end
Nobis donet in patria	may give to us in heaven.

Donald Patriquin is an award-winning Canadian composer, organist, choral conductor and teacher, who after completing a biology degree, decided to pursue a career in music with studies at McGill, where he later taught from 1965-1996. Many of his compositions use or arrange folk elements, as in his best-known *Six Songs of Early Canada*. We perform the second and third of three **Noëls anciens**. Patriquin provides the following notes:

The *Noëls anciens* are a form of popular literature, spiritual songs of the Nativity which date back to the medieval Mystery plays and still come to life at Christmastime in Quebec and France. They depict, in often picturesque detail, and without the least concern for authenticity, the customs of the time and the various events connected with the Nativity Story. The language is colorful and humorous, displaying a peasant-like frankness and hearty earthiness.

Quelle est cette odeur agréable begins with a hurdy-gurdy like accompaniment.

Quelle est cette odeur agréable	What is this pleasant fragrance,
Bergers, qui ravit tous nos sens?	Shepherds, which delights our senses?



S'exhale-t-il rien de semblable?
Au milieu des fleurs du printemps?

Is nothing similar breathed
amidst the flowers of spring?

Mais quelle éclatante lumière
Dans la nuit vient frapper nos yeux!
L'astre du jour, dans sa carrière,
Fût-il jamais si radieux?

But what bursting light
comes in the night to strike our eyes!
The star of daytime, in its course,
was it ever so radiant?

Ne craignez rien, peuple fidèle
Écoutez l'ange du Seigneur.
Il vous annonce une nouvelle
Qui va vous combler de bonheur;

Fear nothing, faithful people,
hear the angel of the Lord.
He brings you news
that will fill you with joy.

A Bethléem dans une crèche
Il vient de vous naître un Sauveur;
Allons, que rien ne vous empêche
D'adorer votre Rédempteur.

In Bethlehem, in a manger,
there is born to you a saviour.
Go, let nothing prevent you
from worshiping your redeemer.

Dieu tout puissant, gloire éternelle
Vous soit rendue jusqu'aux cieux:
Que la paix soit universelle,
Que la grâce abonde en tous lieux.
Dieu tout puissant, gloire éternelle
Vous soit rendue jusqu'aux cieux

God almighty, eternal glory
be rendered to you in heaven,
that peace may be universal,
that grace may abound everywhere.
God almighty, eternal glory
be rendered to you in heaven.

Tous les bourgeois de Châtres exploits the relationship between the rhymes in the tale and the popular refrains of “la, la, don, don,” as well as depicting the ringing of bells, and the effect of hearty drinking on singing!

Tous les bourgeois de Châtres
Et ceux de Monthléry
Menèrent grande joie
Cette journée ici,

All the villagers of Châtres
and those of Monthléry
displayed great joy
on this day,

Que naquit Jésus Christ
de la Vierge Marie,
Pres le boeuf et l'ânon,
Entre lesquels coucha,
En une bergerie.

That Jesus Christ was born
of the Virgin Mary,
near the ox and the ass
between which he lay
in a stable.

Des anges de lumière
ont chanté divers tons
Aux bergers et bergères
de cette région.
Qui gardaient leurs moutons
Paissant sur la prairie,
Disant que le mignon,
Était né près de là,
Jésus le fruit de vie.

Angels of light
sang in many keys
to the shepherds and shepherdesses
of this region
who were guarding their sheep
grazing in the meadow,
saying that the dear child
was born nearby,
Jesus, the fruit of life.



Ils prennent leur houlettes
avec empressement,
Leurs hautbois, leurs musettes
Et s'en vont promptement
Tout droit à Saint Clément
A travers la montagne,
Etant tous réjouis, ravis,
D'aller voir cette enfant,
Naissant, Joseph et sa compagne.

They took their crooks
with haste,
Their oboes, their bagpipes,
and promptly went
straight to Saint Clément
across the mountain.
They were all rejoicing, delighted
to go to see this new-born child,
Joseph, and his companion.

De Saint-Germain la bande
vint en procession
Et traversa la lande
pour trouver L'Enfanson,
Ayant ouï le son
Et la douce harmonie
Que faisaient les pasteurs Chanteurs,
Lesquels n'étaient pas las,
De faire symphonie.

From Saint-Germain a band
came in a procession
and crossed the land
to find the infant son,
having heard the sound
and the sweet harmony
made by the singing shepherds
who were not tired
of making music.

Messire Jean, vicaire
de l'église d'Eglis
Fit porter, pour mieux braire,
Du vin de son logis,
Messieurs les écoliers
Toute cette nuitée,
Se sont mis à crier, chanter,
ut re mi fa sol la,
A gorge déployée.

Reverend John, the vicar
of the church in Eglis
brought, the better to celebrate,
some wine from the rectory.
The master schoolboys
all through the night
were shouting and singing
do re mi fa sol la,
in full-voiced harmony.

Or prions tous Marie,
Et Jésus son cher fils,
Qu'il nous donne la vie,
La sus en Paradis;
Après qu'aurons vécu
en ce mortel repaire,
Qu'ils nous veuillent garder
D'aller Tous en Enfer l'à bas,
En tourment et misere.

So pray we all to Mary
and Jesus, her dear son,
That he give us life
above, in paradise.
That after having lived
in this mortal abode,
we might be saved
from going to hell below
in torment and misery.

Robert Sund is an accomplished Swedish conductor, second bass, and composer who studied with Eric Ericsson. He teaches conducting at the Academy of Music in Stockholm and conducts the award-winning men's chorus, Orphei Drangar. His setting of the French-Canadian children's playsong, *Alouette*, exploits many styles from madrigal to jazz, Romantic to mini-fugue.

Alouette, gentille Alouette,
Alouette, je te plumerai.
Je te plumerai la tête.

Lark, lovely lark,
lark, I am going to pluck you.
I am going to pluck your head.



Je te plumerai la tête.
Et la tête. Et la tête.
Alouette. Alouette.

I am going to pluck your head.
And the head, and the head.
Lark, lark!

... Et la bouche.

... and the mouth.

... Et le nez.

... and the nose.

... Et les yeux.

... and the eyes.

Alouette, gentille Alouette,
Alouette, je te plumerai.
Alouette.

Lark, lovely lark,
lark, I am going to pluck you.
Lark!

The next three pieces celebrate the Romantic French expression, beginning with a war-horse known to many church choirs in English as *Praise Ye the Lord* from **Camille Saint-Saëns' *Christmas Oratorio***, written in 1858 when the composer was just 23. The work pays homage intentionally to J. S. Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* in style. Saint-Saëns' music is very French in its proportions, clarity of expression and elegant lines. His talent even as a young composer earned him the admiration of Gounod, Berlioz and Liszt, who hailed him as the world's greatest organist. Fauré was among his pupils at The Church of the Madeleine in Paris.

Tollite hostias,
et adorate Dominum
in atrio sancto ejus.

Praise the Lord of hosts,
and adore God
in his holy place.

Laetentur coeli,
et exultet terra a facie Domini
quoniam venit. Alleluia.

Let the heavens rejoice,
and exult, all the earth, before the Lord
that he has come. Alleluia.

The opposite of neoclassical restraint could be considered **Hector Berlioz**, who wrote almost everything on a grand scale and in an envelope-pushing, flamboyant style. Even his choral works, including *Op.25 L'Enfance du Christ* (1854), are unusual in some way. The work is a trilogy, part symphony, part oratorio, part opera, unusual in that it traces the story of the child Jesus, after the nativity and follows the family's flight into Egypt. This famous ***Shepherd's Farewell*** comes in Part Two, and was actually passed off by Berlioz as a rediscovered 17th-century gem (not true)—fooling them all. A woman in the audience at the first performance remarked "Monsieur Berlioz could never write anything as charming as that."

Thou must leave thy lowly dwelling, The humble crib, the stable bare,
Babe, all mortal babes excelling, Content our earthly lot to share,
Loving father, loving mother, Shelter thee with tender care!

Blessed Jesus, we implore thee With humble love and holy fear,
In the land that lies before thee, Forget not us who linger here!
May the shepherd's lowly calling, Ever to thy heart be dear!
Blest are ye beyond all measure, Thou happy father, mother mild!



Guard ye well your heav'nly treasure, The Prince of Peace, the Holy Child!
God go with you, God protect you, Guide you safely through the wild!

Cantate Music Press have provided the following helpful notes:

Hymne de Noël is one of the very few individual works for SATB by **Léo Delibes**. Nowadays it is the ballets and operas of Delibes that attract attention, but his solo songs and choral pieces, although fewer in number, are no less charming. In them Delibes combines elegance, lyricism and poise with the imaginative and colorful use of the forces at his disposal. The part songs reflect the increased interest in choirs that flourished in the nineteenth century. In many locations, excellence in choral singing was a matter of great civic pride, and compositions and festivals were established to help promote the choral movement. *Hymne de Noël* won a medal in the Ville de Paris competition for choral compositions in the year of its publication (1865).

Voici donc l'heure
ou le Sauveur du monde
Nous apparut sous
les traits d'un enfant;
Ou du péché
perçant la nuit profonde
L'amour divin
rayonna triomphant.

Now is the time
when the Saviour of the world
appeared among us
in the guise of a child.
When sin
was piercing the dark night,
divine love
shone out triumphant.

Dans cette crèche
enveloppé de langes
Qui le prendrait
cet humble nouveau né,
Pour le Seigneur
des hommes et des anges?
D'aucun éclat
son front n'est couronné.

In his manger
wrapped in swaddling clothes,
who would take
this humble new-born babe
for the Lord
of men and of angels?
No glory
crowns his forehead.

Tel il voulut
se montrer à la terre
Roi dépouillé
pour régner par l'amour.
Seigneur et maître
il se fait notre frère
Et les petits
seront toute sa cour.

This is how he wanted
to reveal himself to the world:
a king without royal robes,
to reign by love.
Lord and master, [yet]
he makes himself our brother,
and little children
will be his only courtiers.

Nous l'adorons
bien heureux qui l'adore
Qui dès l'enfance
y trouva son bonheur,
Et qui vieillard
à genoux prie encore
Devant la crèche
ou naquit le Seigneur.

We adore him;
blessed is he who adores him.
[Blessed is he] Who in his infancy
found his happiness there,
and who in old age
kneels again in prayer
before the manger
of our new-born Lord..



French carols have appealed to many wonderful arrangers, including America's great lady of choral music, **Alice Parker**. The founder and artistic director of Melodious Accord, a graduate of the Juilliard School, and Smith College, Alice is well-known for her musical arrangements for the Robert Shaw Chorale, and has composed a wide variety of musical compositions. Her music is frequently heard, and well-received, at conferences and conventions. Parker was honored at the 2000 American Guild of Organists Convention in Seattle as a Distinguished Composer, an honor bestowed to a different composer every two years to increase awareness of outstanding composers in the U.S. writing for the organ and choral fields. Her version of *Il est né* captures the innocent joy of the original carol and the dance-like rhythms of the instruments cited.

(Sonnez, résonnez)

(Sound, resound)

Il est né, le divin Enfant;
Jouez, hautbois, résonnez, musettes;
Il est né, le divin Enfant;
Chantons tous son avènement.

He is born, the divine child.
Play, oboes, sound, bagpipes.
He is born, the divine child,
We all sing of his advent.

Depuis plus de quatre mille ans
Nous le promettaient les prophètes,
Depuis plus de quatre mille ans
Nous attendions cet heureux temps.

For more than four thousand years,
as promised by the prophets,
for more than four thousand years
we have waited for this happy time.

Il est né ...

He is born ...

Ah, qu'il est beau! Qu'il est charmant!
Ah, que ces grâces sont parfaites!
Ah, qu'il est beau! Qu'il est charmant!
Qu'il es doux, ce divin Enfant!

Ah, he is beautiful, he is charming!
How perfect are his graces!
Ah, he is beautiful, he is charming!
He is sweet, the divine child!

Il est né ...

He is born ...

Une étable est son logement,
Un peu de paille est sa couchette,
Une étable est son logement,
Pour un Dieu quel abaissement!

A stable is his lodging,
A little hay is his bed,
A stable is his lodging,
For a God, what humiliation!

Il est né ...

He is born ...

Il veut nos coeurs, il les attend,
Il vient en faire la conquête;
Il veut nos coeurs, il les attend,
Qu'ils soient à lui dès ce moment!

He wants our hearts, he awaits them,
he comes to conquer them,
he wants our hearts, he awaits them,
that they may be his from this moment!

Il est né ...

He is born ...

O Jésus! O Roi tout puissant!
Tout petit enfant que vous êtes,
O Jésus! O Roi tout puissant!
Règnez sur nous entièrement.

O Jesus, O all powerful king!
Though you are a tiny baby,
O Jesus, O all powerful king,
Reign over us in every way.

Il est né ...

He is born ...



Our arrangement of *Patapan* has been sung by Harmonium carolers for too many years to remember where it came from! The instrumental interludes were written for this concert by Anne Matlack, inspired by John Ferguson's arrangement of *Comfort, comfort*.

Guillio, prends ton tambourin,
toi prends ta flûte Robin;
Au son de ces instruments.
Turelurelu, patapatapan,
Au son de ces instruments,
Je dirai Noël gaiement.

Willie, take your little drum,
you take your flute, Robin.
To the sound of these instruments,
turelurelu, patapatapan,
to the sound of these instruments
I will merrily speak of Christmas.

Willie, take your little drum, with your whistle Robin come!
When we hear the fife and drum, Turelurelu, patapatapan,
When you hear the fife and drum Christmas should be frolicsome.

Thus the men of olden days loved the King of kings to praise:
When they hear the fife and drum, Turelurelu, patapatapan,
When they hear the fife and drum sure our children round they come!

God and man are now become more at one than fife and drum,
When you hear the fife and drum, Turelurelu, patapatapan,
When you hear the fife and drum, dance and make the village hum!

Stephen Hatfield is another of the best choral arrangers alive today. A native of Canada's Pacific Coast, he has lived most of his life in the rain forests of Vancouver Island, where his father is blood brother to the legendary Kwaguitl chief Jimmy Sewid. He is a recognized leader in multiculturalism and musical folklore, an interest which informs many of his compositions. His lilting, gentle version of this Provençal carol, *Un flambeau, Jeannette, Isabelle*, written for the Amabile Youth Chorus in 2002 brings out the lullaby aspect of the song. He provides the following information:

To the best of my knowledge, the tune I've used in this arrangement was first linked to Christmas in the 1856 edition of Seguin's *Recueil de noëls compose en langue Provençal*, although it started life as a drinking song, which was originally part of the stage music Charpentier wrote for Moliere's *Le medecin malgre lui*. Torches are an important Christmas tradition in Provençal, where they construct model Christmas villages complete with a vivid cast of model villagers who were often caricatures of the local people. I like to think of the children in the carol running to see the newly finished Christmas village, but as their imaginations catch fire from the torchlight, they slip back in time to another dark evening filled with magical light.

Un flambeau, Jeannette, Isabelle,
un flambeau, courons au berceau.
C'est Jésus. Bons gens du village,
le Christ est né; Marie appelle.
Ah, ah. Que la mère est belle.
Ah, que l'enfant est beau.

Bring a torch, Jeannette, Isabelle,
bring a torch, let's run to the cradle.
It is Jesus. Good folk of the village,
the Christ is born. Mary is calling.
Ah, ah. How beautiful is the mother .
Ah, how fine is the child.



Doucement dans l'étable close.	Softly now, in the closed-up stable.
Doucement, venez un moment.	Softly now, come here a moment.
Approchez. Que Jésus est charmant.	Come closer. How charming Jesus is.
Comme il est blanc, comme il est rose.	How pale he is, how pink he is.
Do, do, que l'enfant repose.	Hush, hush, how peaceful is the child.
Do, do, qu'il rit en dormant.	Hush, hush, how he smiles in his sleep.

Cary Ratcliff provided the following notes for his *Three Folk Carols*, which were originally written for children's voices and have only recently been published for SATB:

Three Folk Carols was commissioned for the Bach Children's Chorus of Rochester, New York, Karla Krogstad, Director, with a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts. It was premiered in December of 2000, in original languages, with the original accompaniment of hammer dulcimer, flute, oboe, cello and harp, at Hochstein Performance Hall.

Cary Ratcliff, a left-handed native of California, lives and works in Rochester, New York. His scores of commissioned choral works range from the large oratorio *Ode to Common Things* on poems of Pablo Neruda, to the unorthodox *Requiem Eric Wolterstorff in memoriam*, to works for children's chorus. He has served on both the Conducting and Composition faculties at Eastman, teaching orchestration and choral writing, and conducting numerous concerts with the Musica Nova Ensemble and Graduate Chamber Orchestra. Composer-in-Residence at the Strasenburgh Planetarium for several years, he subsequently created a decade of orchestral soundtracks for the Einstein Planetarium at Smithsonian's Air and Space Museum. He has produced several albums of Christmas music with folklorists Mitzie Collins and Roxanne Zeigler. He plays orchestral piano with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, and is Music Director at Bethany Presbyterian Church.

Noël nouvelet's words first appear around the time of Columbus' 1492 voyage, though the melody was not noted till hundreds of years later. "Nouvelet" and "noël" are both related to the French word for "news." It's possible that the word "nouvelet" is a shortening of "nouvel ans," New Year, at which time carols were most frequently sung. By the 16th century, "noël" had come to mean "Christmas song." So the title proclaims a new Noël, sung to the "roi nouvelet," the newborn king. The composer has fashioned elaborations and new interlude elements for the tune.

Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici.	It is a new Christmas, sing Noel.
Dévotes gens, crions a Dieu merci!	Faithful people, give thanks to God!
Chantons Noël pour le roi nouvelet.	Sing Noel for the new-born king.
Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici.	It is a new Christmas, sing Noel.

L'ange disait: Pasteurs, partez d'ici, l'âme en repos et le coeur réjoui:	The angel said: "Shepherds, depart, your spirit calm and your heart rejoicing.
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En Bethléem trouverez l'agnelet.
Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici.

In Bethlehem find the little lamb.
It is a new Christmas, sing Noel.

L'ange disait:
Noël nouvelet, Noël,
Noël, Noël nouvelet. (repeat)
Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici.

The angel said:
"It is a new Christmas, Noel,
Noel, a new Christmas." (repeat)
It is a new Christmas, sing Noel.

En Bethléem étant tous réunis,
trouvent l'enfant, Joseph, Marie aussi.
La crèche était au lieu d'un bercelet.
Noël, Noël chantons ici. (repeat)

They gathered in Bethlehem
and found the infant, Joseph, and Mary.
A manger was his cradle.
Noel, sing Noel. (repeat)

Chantons pour le roi nouvelet,
le roi nouvelet. (repeat)

Sing for the new-born king,
the new-born king. (repeat)

Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici.
Dévotes gens, crions a Dieu merci!
Chantons Noël pour le roi nouvelet.
Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici.

It is a new Christmas, sing Noel.
Faithful people, give thanks to God!
Sing Noel for the new-born king.
It is a new Christmas, sing Noel.

Noël, Noël nouvelet. (repeat)
Chantons ici, Noël.

Noel, a new Christmas. (repeat)
Sing Noel.

Les anges dans nos campagnes may be a fairly recent folk carol; its earliest appearance in print is 1842. The verses contain a dialogue between the shepherds and others, presumably villagers of Bethlehem. An audience or congregation may wish to join in on the well-known Latin refrain of *Gloria*...

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Glory to God in the highest.

Les anges dans nos campagnes
ont entonné l'hymne des cieux;
et l'écho de nos montagnes
redit ce chant mélodieux.

The angels in our fields
sang the anthem of the skies;
And the echo from the mountains
repeats the melodius song.

Gloria ...

Glory ...

Bergers, pour qui cette fete?
Quel est l'objet de tous ces chants?
Quel vainquer, quelle conquete
mérite ces cris triomphants?

Shepherds, why this jubilee?
What is it of which you sing?
What victory, what conquest
deserves these triumphant cries?

Gloria ...

Glory ...

Ils annoncent la naissance
du libérateur d'Israel,
et, pleins de reconnaissance,
chantent en ce jour solennel:

They announce the birth
of the saviour of Israel,
and, full of gratitude,
sing on this solemn day.

Gloria ...

Glory ...



Bergers, loin de vos retraites
unissez vous a leurs concerts
et que vos tendres musettes
fassent retentir dans les airs;

Gloria ...

Les anges dans nos campagnes
ont entonné l'hymne des cieux;
et l'écho de nos montagnes
redit ce chant mélodieux.

Shepherds, far from your shelters,
join their concert
and cause your soft bagpipes
to resound in the air.

Glory ...

The angels in our fields
sang the anthem of the skies;
And the echo from the mountains
repeats the melodius song.

Colla Voce Music has provided the following information on our finale:

In the 1970s, Louisiana music teachers and folksong collectors **Jeanne and Robert C. Gilmore** compiled two books of Louisiana folk songs: *Chantez, La Louisiane!* and *Chantez, Encore!* The Gilmores spent many years working with teachers and children, reintroducing the French language and culture into Louisiana schools. **Ton thé** is actually a well-known French tongue-twister which translates as *Your tea? Has it removed your cough?* The Gilmores composed a simple melody based on the major scale and included it in *Chantez, Encore!* This selection is arranged for SATB chorus and two pianos by **Susan Brumfield**, Associate Professor of Music Education at Texas Tech University.

Ton thé at'il ôté ta toux?

Your tea? Has it removed your cough?



*Harmonium gives special thanks to
Jerilyn Herbert, founding member, who donated the
Harmonium pencils you received today
and to
Carole Hyunh, New Providence High School French
teacher, for her French coaching and translation.*

*The best of the season to you and yours
from Harmonium!*