



The King's Singers

Patrick Dunachie / *Countertenor*

Timothy Wayne-Wright / *Countertenor*

Julian Gregory / *Tenor*

Christopher Bruerton / *Baritone*

Christopher Gabbittas / *Baritone*

Jonathan Howard / *Bass*

Saturday Evening, December 10, 2016 at 8:00

Hill Auditorium

Ann Arbor

24th Performance of the 138th Annual Season
Choral/Vocal Series

This evening's supporting sponsors are Ken and Penny Fischer, Tom and Debby McMullen, Old National Bank, and the Susan B. Ullrich Endowment Fund.

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PROGRAM

The King's Singers Christmas Songbook

Traditional, Arr. Philip Lawson

Veni, veni Emmanuel

INTRODUCTION

Orlandus Lassus

Resonet in laudibus

Anonymous

There is no rose of such virtue

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Arr. Jeremy Lubbock

The Crown of Roses

READING

John Betjeman

Christmas

Traditional, Arr. Lawson

Noël Nouvelet

Gustav Holst, Arr. Alexander L'Estrange

In the bleak midwinter

Traditional, Arr. Robert Rice

The First Nowell

READING

Christina Rossetti

Christmas Eve

Traditional, Arr. Keith Roberts

The Holly and the Ivy

Mykola Leontovych, Arr. Roberts

Carol of the Bells

Traditional, Arr. Rice

Ding Dong Merrily on High

READING

From the diary of an unknown soldier

Christmas 1914

Traditional, Arr. John Rutter

Silent Night

Lawson

Lullay my liking

Arvo Pärt

Bogoroditsye Dyevo

Traditional, Arr. L'Estrange

Still, Still, Still

Intermission

Leroy Anderson, Arr. L'Estrange

Sleigh Ride

Felix Bernard and Richard Smith, Arr. L'Estrange

Winter Wonderland

Irving Berlin, Arr. Rice

White Christmas

READING

Ogden Nash

The boy who laughed at Santa Claus

Michael Carr, Tommie Connor, and Jimmy Leach, Arr. L'Estrange

The little boy that Santa Claus forgot

Meredith Wilson, Arr. L'Estrange

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas

John Frederick Coots and Haven Gillespie, Arr. L'Estrange

Santa Claus is coming to town

Hugh Martin and Ralph Blane, Arr. Roberts

Have yourself a merry little Christmas

Walter Rollins, Steve Nelson, and Johnny Marks, Arr. Rice

Frosty vs Rudolph: The Re-Boot

THE KING'S SINGERS CHRISTMAS SONGBOOK

All through the centuries, Christmas has been marked as one of the foremost Christian celebrations; no other festival has inspired so much verse and song, so many festivities and traditions. Something of the diversity and fullness of this celebration is reflected in this program of music for Advent and Christmas. At home in Britain the quintessential Christmas musical celebration is the *Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols* from King's College, Cambridge. The first half of our concert is designed to give a flavor of that King's tradition, which will celebrate its centenary in 2018, as we mark our 50th birthday. This evening's program starts with a work that is based on the traditional Advent antiphon, *Veni, veni Emmanuel*, which is thought to date back to the 12th century. This ancient text, originally set to plainchant, was given its metric tune in the 19th century, and this version was created by Philip Lawson, a former member of the King's Singers.

Orlandus Lassus (1532–1594) was generally acknowledged as the leading composer of his day: the “divine Orlande, prince of musicians,” saw more of his output published than did any of his contemporaries; and that output was vast and varied. His *Resonet in Laudibus* is loosely based on the 15th-century German tune, *Joseph lieber, Joseph mein*. It expresses the joy of Christmas in a positive and bright style. This is one of a series of five-voice motets for Christmastide which Lassus published at different times and which were gathered together by his

sons in the great posthumous *Magnum Opus Musicum* of 1604, the first ever attempt at a “Complete Edition.” *Resonet in laudibus* is surely one of the most popular, although at the same time one of the most rhythmically challenging of Lassus' motets.

There is no rose of such virtue dates from the late Middle Ages. Its earliest surviving source, a manuscript in Trinity College, Cambridge, dates from c. 1420, and it gives no clues as to the identity of the composer. In common with many medieval texts, the words compare the Virgin Mary to a beautiful rose.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–93) composed *The Crown of Roses* in 1883, one of his *Sixteen Songs for Children* (Op. 54), in 1883. His original version set a Russian translation of an 1857 poem by the American poet Henry Stoddard, which was entitled *Roses and Thorns*. Our version, which is sung in English, was arranged by the English composer and arranger Jeremy Lubbock.

Sir John Betjeman (1906–84) was a celebrated English poet and writer, who served as Poet Laureate to Queen Elizabeth II. Despite being a firm traditionalist, he embraced the opportunities of television to bring poetry to the people. His poems present a rather delightful rose-tinted view of England, and this is illustrated well in his poem *Christmas*.

The traditional French carol *Noël/Noûvelet* dates from the late 15th century, and is here presented in another arrangement by Philip Lawson. The text narrates the story of the birth of Jesus, and calls in Christians to celebrate the good news every year.

The English poet Christina Rossetti (1830–94) was the daughter of the Italian painter Gabriele Rossetti, who was living in political exile in London. She is best known for his devotional poetry. Her best-known poem, *In the bleak midwinter*, was set to music by Gustav Holst (1874–1934), and in turn our version of this beautiful carol was arranged for us recently by Alexander L'Estrange.

The First Nowell is a traditional English Christmas Carol first notated in 1823. It is not considered to be an ancient song, but it is thought to have originated in Cornwall in the 18th century. Its tune is unlike most traditional English tune, as the main theme is repeated in the verse, and is used in a slightly varied form in the refrain. This arrangement was made by Robert Rice for our most recent Christmas CD.

Christina Rossetti's poem *Christmas Eve* was published posthumously in 1904 in the same volume as *In the bleak midwinter*. It presents a call to rejoice at Christmas despite the dark and cold of winter. She writes:

*Christmas hath darkness
Brighter than the blazing noon,
Christmas hath a chillness
Warmer than the heat of June.*

The origins of the two traditional Christmas songs, *The Holly and the Ivy* and *Ding Dong merrily on high*, are both rather sketchy. The first is English in origin, and was notated, as were many traditional songs, in the early years of the 20th century. *Ding Dong merrily on high* is probably older, and is thought to have originated in 16th century France, where it

was sung to a Latin text. They both appear on our new Christmas CD, in arrangements by Keith Roberts and Robert Rice, respectively. In between these two songs sits a popular carol composed in 1904 by the Ukrainian composer Mykola Leontovych. The tune is based on a traditional Ukrainian song called *Shchedryk* (which means "bountiful evening"), and the words were penned by Peter Wilhousky.

Christmas 1915 chronicles the unofficial Christmas truces that took place along parts of the frontline trenches during World War I through the eyes of a British Army officer. These had been more widespread in 1914, and by 1916 the senior commanders on both sides had made it clear that such truces were not to be tolerated. For a short time in the life of this British soldier however, the guns went silent, and the soldiers on the other side of "no-man's land" ceased to be enemies.

There is little doubt that Franz Gruber's *Silent Night* is one of the most famous of all Christmas tunes. Gruber (1787–1863) was organist of St. Nicholas' Church in the Austrian town of Oberndorf, and he set words by the church's assistant pastor, Joseph Mohr. There are many myths that have arisen around this song. There is, sadly, no proof that the work was composed at haste on Christmas Eve after the church's organ had broken down. Some even blame mice for the organ's failure. What is known is that on December 24, 1818, this much-loved Christmas song was given its first performance.

Philip Lawson (born 1957) composed his settings of the 15th-century Middle English lyric poem for

the King's Singers. The text imagines a lullaby sung by Mary to the infant Jesus, which forms the refrain of the song. The verses tell of the joy of the birth of Jesus.

For much of his early life the Estonian composer Arvo Pärt (born 1935) lived under the tyranny of dictatorship, mostly under Soviet domination, with a three-year occupation by Germany during the Second World War. After a prolonged struggle with the authorities, Pärt took his chance to emigrate to Vienna in 1980, where his minimalist music came to the attention of a wider public. Over the years Pärt's compositional style has shifted from the rather severe neo-classicism of his early works, through serialism, to the mystic minimalism of his later music. He draws on influences from religion, Gregorian chant, and early European polyphony to create highly atmospheric pieces, employing a self-made compositional technique called *tintinnabuli* — literally the ringing of bells. His work *Bogoroditsye Dyevo* was written for the choir of King's College, Cambridge, and first performed at the *Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols* in 1990.

The first half ends with a traditional Austrian Christmas song *Still, Still, Still*. Thought to originate in Salzburgland, this lullaby sung by Mary to Jesus was first published in Salzburg in 1865 in a collection of songs collated by Maria Vinzenz Süß. Our version was written by Alexander L'Estrange, one of a number of talented arrangers that work with the King's Singers.

Changing the mood, our second half features some of the most popular American Christmas songs of the 20th century. Our recent exploration of the Great American Songbook has given us an appetite to perform some of the great Christmas standards. Following on from the poetry in the first half will be a poem by the American poet Ogden Nash. *The boy who laughed at Santa Claus* is a wonderful example of Nash's light verse. Please sit back and enjoy *The King's Singers Christmas Songbook*.





TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Veni, veni Emmanuel

Veni, veni Emmanuel
Captivum solve Israel
Qui gemit in exilio
Privatus Dei filio
Gaude! Gaude!
Emmanuel Nascetur pro te Israel

Veni o Jesse virgula
Ex hostis tuos ungula
Despectum tuos tartari
Deduc et antro barathri
Gaude...

Veni, veni o Oriens
Solare nos adveniens;
Noctis depelle nebulas
Dirasque noctis tenebras
Gaude...

Veni clavis Davidica
Regna reclude caelica;
Faciter tutum superum
Et claude vias inferum
Gaude...

Resonet in laudibus

Resonet in laudibus
Cum jocundis plausibus
Syon cum fidelibus:
Apparuit, quem genuit Maria.
Sunt impleta, quae predixit
Gabriel. Eia!
Virgo Deum genuit
Quod divina voluit clementia.

Hodie apparuit, in Israel:
Ex Maria Virgine est natus Rex.

Magnum nomen Domini Emmanuel
Quod annuntiatum est per Gabriel, Eia!
Virgo Deum genuit
quod divina voluit clementia.

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, Thou Rod of Jesse's stem,
from ev'ry foe deliver them that trust
Thy mighty power to save,
and give them vict'ry o'er the grave.
Rejoice...

O come, Thou Dayspring from on high,
and cheer us by thy drawing nigh;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night
and death's dark shadow put to flight.
Rejoice...

O come, Thou Key of David, come,
and open wide our heav'nly home,
make safe the way that leads on high,
that we no more have cause to sigh.
Rejoice...

Let praise resound
With joyful applause
In Sion with the faithful:
He has appeared whom Mary bore.
What Gabriel has foretold has been
fulfilled, Yay!
A virgin has born God
As the divine mercy wished.

Today he has appeared in Israel:
From the Virgin Mary a King is born.

Great is the name of the Lord, Emmanuel
As was announced by Gabriel, Yay!
A virgin has borne God
As the divine mercy wished.

There is no rose of such virtue

The Crown of Roses

Noël nouvelet

Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici;
Dévotes gens, crions à Dieu merci!
Chantons Noël pour le roi nouvelet,
Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici!

D'un oiselet après le chant ouïs
Qui aux pasteurs disait:
"Partez ici;
En Bethléem trouverez l'agnelet."
Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici!

En Bethléem Marie et Joseph vis
L'âne et le boeuf, l'enfant couché parmi;
La crèche était au lieu d'un bercelet.
Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici!

L'étoile y vis qui la nuit
éclaircit.
Qui d'Orient dont elle était sortie.
En Bethléem les trois rois conduisant,
Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici!

L'un porte l'or, l'autre le myrrhe aussi,
L'autre l'encens qui faisait bon sentir.
Du Paradis semblait le jardinet Noël
nouvelet, Noël chantons ici!

In the bleak midwinter

The First Nowell

The Holly and the Ivy

Carol of the Bells

Ding Dong Merrily on High

Christmas comes anew, O let us sing Noel!
Glory to God! Now let your praises swell!
Sing we Noel for Christ, the newborn King,
Christmas comes anew, O let us sing Noel!

Then a tiny bird ceased joyous song to say
Unto certain shepherds: "Haste you now
away!
In Bethlehem the newborn Lamb you'll see."
Christmas comes anew, O let us sing Noel!

Angels did say, "O shepherds come and see,
Born in Bethlehem, a blessed Lamb for thee."
Sing we Noel for Christ, the newborn King,
Christmas comes anew, O let us sing Noel!

In the manger bed, the shepherds found
the child;
Joseph was there, and the Mother Mary mild.
Sing we Noel for Christ, the newborn King,
Christmas comes anew, O let us sing Noel!

Soon came the kings from following the star,
Bearing costly gifts from Eastern lands afar.
Sing we Noel for Christ, the newborn King,
Christmas comes anew, O let us sing Noel!

Silent Night

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht,
Alles schläft, einsam wacht.
Nur das traute hochheilige Paar.
Holder Knab' im lockigen Haar,
Schlafe in himmlischer Ruh',
Schlafe in himmlischer Ruh'.

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht,
Hirten erst kundgemacht.
Durch der Engel Hallelujah,
Tönt es laut von Fern und Nah:
Christ, der Retter ist da,
Christ, der Retter ist da.

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht,
Gottes Sohn, o wie lacht.
Lieb' aus deinem göttlichen Mund,
Da uns schlägt die rettende Stund',
Christ, in deiner Geburt,
Christ, in deiner Geburt.

Lullay my liking

Bogoroditsye dyevo

Bogoroditsye Dyevo raduissya
Blagodatnaya
Maria, Gospod Toboyu; Blagoslovyena Tyi
vzhenakh,
i blagoslovyen Plod chryeva Tvoyego,
yako Spassa rodila yessidush
nashikh.

Silent night, holy night,
All is calm, all is bright.
'Round you virgin mother and child,
Holy infant so tender and mild;
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night,
Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heav'nly hosts sing Alleluia;
Christ the Savior is born,
Christ the Savior is born.

Silent night, holy night,
Son of God, love's pure light.
Radiant beams from thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace;
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

Virgin Mother of God Hail, Mary, full of
grace,
The Lord is with you; Blessed are you
among women,
And blessed is the fruit of your womb,
For you gave birth to the savior of our
souls.

Still, Still, Still

Still, still, still,
Mein liebes kindlein still
Die Englein leise fur dich singen,
Und ferne glocken sanft erklingen,
Still, still, still,
Mein liebes kindlein still

Sleep, sleep, sleep,
The infant King is asleep
His peace and stillness all around you
Heavenly rest and calm surround you
Sleep, sleep, sleep,
The infant King is asleep

Still, still, still
The Babe is sleeping still
While angels all above are singing
Peace to all the world He is bringing
Still, still, still
The babe is sleeping still

Schlaf in himmlischer ruh...

Sleigh Ride

Winter Wonderland

White Christmas

The little boy that Santa Claus forgot

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas

Santa Claus is coming to town

Have yourself a merry little Christmas

Frosty vs. Rudolph: The Re-Boot

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UMS ARCHIVES

This evening's performance marks **The King's Singers'** ninth appearance under UMS auspices. The ensemble made its UMS debut in November 1986 at Hill Auditorium and most recently performed under UMS auspices in February 2013 at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church. Mr. Gabbitas makes his third appearance under UMS auspices this evening, following his UMS debut with the King's Singers in October 2005. Mr. Wayne-Wright, Mr. Bruerton, and Mr. Howard make their second UMS appearances this evening following their UMS debuts with the King's Singers in February 2013. UMS welcomes Mr. Dunachie and Mr. Gregory, who make their UMS debuts this evening.

ARTISTS

Acclaimed worldwide for their virtuosity, life-affirming energy, and charm, **The King's Singers** are in global demand. Their work, synonymous with the very best in vocal ensemble performance, appeals to a vast international audience. Performing to hundreds of thousands of people each season, the group tours regularly to Europe, North and South America, Asia, and Australasia. Instantly recognizable for their immaculate intonation, vocal blend, diction, and incisive timing, The King's Singers are consummate entertainers.

The group's repertoire has evolved to become one of the most diverse and compelling imaginable. The King's Singers have commissioned over 200 works, including landmark pieces from leading contemporary composers including Luciano Berio, György Ligeti, Sir James MacMillan, Krzysztof Penderecki, Toru Takemitsu, Sir John Tavener, Gabriela Lena Frank, and Eric Whitacre. They have also commissioned arrangements of everything from jazz standards to pop chart hits, explored medieval motets and Renaissance madrigals, and encouraged young composers to write new scores.

In addition to performing to capacity audiences and creating highly regarded and much-loved recordings, The King's Singers share their artistry through numerous workshops and master classes around the world. In June 2017, the group will host their inaugural US Summer School at DePauw University in Indiana and in July 2017 will return for their third UK Summer School at Royal Holloway (part of the University of London) where they are also Ensemble-in-Residence. Among the work supported by The King's Singers Foundation, A Carol for Christmas is a composition competition that seeks

to encourage young and upcoming composers, giving the winners the chance for their piece to be performed in King's College Chapel (Cambridge, UK).

Double Grammy Award-winning artists, the group was honored in 2009 for its Signum Classics release, *Simple Gifts*, and again in 2012 for their contribution to Eric Whitacre's *Light and Gold* album on Universal/Decca. Recently voted into the Gramophone Hall of Fame, rave reviews and repeated sell-out concerts confirm that The King's Singers remain one of the world's finest vocal ensembles.

TONIGHT'S VICTORS FOR UMS:



Ken and Penny Fischer

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Tom and Debby McMullen

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Old National Bank

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Susan B. Ullrich Endowment Fund

Supporters of this evening's performance by The King's Singers.

MAY WE ALSO RECOMMEND...

- | | |
|------|---|
| 2/10 | Budapest Festival Orchestra |
| 2/19 | Aaron Diehl and Cécile McLorin Salvant: <i>Jelly and George</i> |
| 3/11 | UMS Choral Union and Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra:
Beethoven's <i>Missa Solemnis</i> |

Tickets available at www.ums.org.

ON THE EDUCATION HORIZON...

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1/17 | Penny Stamps Speaker Series: Meredith Monk
(Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty Street, 5:10 pm) |
| 1/21 | Pre-Concert Lecture Series: Exploring Beethoven's String Quartets
(Rackham Amphitheatre, Fourth Floor, 915 E. Washington Street,
7:00 pm) |
| 3/25 | Pre-Concert Lecture Series: Exploring Beethoven's String Quartets
(Michigan League Koessler Room, Third Floor, 911 N. University
Avenue, 7:00 pm) |

Educational events are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.