

University of King's College

Chapel Choir

DIRECTED BY PAUL HALLEY



THE 12 YEARS OF CHRISTMAS

A King's Christmas 2008 – 2019



Welcome from the Director

Dear Friends,

We had been planning on a video recording of this year's performance of "A King's Christmas" (without a live audience) when the new Covid restrictions were put in place and then extended. Our hopes for this venture slowly but surely fizzled as the days wore on. I was driving into Halifax at the end of November for a rehearsal with the choir when I heard the announcement on the radio and realized "A King's Christmas" 2020 was not going to happen, at least not in the way I had expected.

Our backup plan was to choose excerpts from the previous years' concerts and create a video of some of our favourite readings and carols. When we realized that there were twelve concerts to choose from we began work on sequencing the audio files and incorporating new videography for "The Twelve Years of Christmas". It also occurred to me that had we been able to perform "A King's Christmas" this year, it would have been number 13, and so, like that floor number on elevators, we are wisely skipping it.

Deciding what not to put on this video became the challenge – a good problem, I suppose, but one that required hours of critical listening and a rigorous use of the red pen. We decided to omit the two bookends of these concerts, the opening processional and the closing reading and carol which work well live, but not so well on recordings. As many of you know, during the closing sequence the choir come off the stage into the audience while the narrator invites all present to "Touch Hands". At this point the choristers grab the hand of the nearest audience member, a surprise for the uninitiated, and belt out "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing", none of which is seemly behaviour during Covid times.

Since the recordings are live and cannot be edited, you will hear the occasional seasonal cough (you might recognize it as yours or one of your family member's) and a bit of well-projected commentary from a toddler, which Chris Luedecke handled with characteristic aplomb. It turns out that having to listen back to all these performances was a real gift. I came away with a deepened appreciation for all that the choir, with its great band of supporters, has accomplished over the years. And I was rewarded with so many good memories.

In 2008, I had been at King's for a year and felt it was time for the Chapel Choir to spread their wings a bit, head off-campus and present a concert in the friendly acoustics of All Saints Cathedral. As every choral director knows, this would have to be a Christmas concert, in order to garner some attention from the media and therefore generate a reasonably large audience. Thanks to the efforts of a strong team of volunteers, headed up by family and friends, the publicity for the event was exhaustive. I walked into the Cathedral on Sunday December 14th to begin the first performance of "A King's Christmas" and to my great joy and relief saw the place was full! The next day, Stephen Pedersen at the Chronicle Herald wrote a flattering review with the title "A Tradition Is Born". Who was I to argue with that?

Each succeeding year we added performances in Lunenburg, thanks to Barbara Butler, and Wolfville, Truro, Antigonish, and even Saint John NB. At a certain point, I can't remember exactly when, we decided to cut back to one show in Lunenburg and two at the Cathedral. Between the travel expenses, the scheduling of all the venues and the gambling with the weather, we were pushing the envelope. One of our favourite venues was St. Ninian's in Antigonish, due to the magnificence of the acoustics in that building and the hospitality of our hosts. But over the years I had to accept that no matter when we scheduled the Antigonish concert there would be a local blizzard, resulting in a small but grateful audience and arrival back in Halifax in the wee hours of the morning.

I remember a return trip home from a Saint John performance, on one of the coldest December days on record, in a little bus with a defunct heating system. We stopped at a gas station and all the choristers marched into the convenience store and purchased battery-powered foot warmers.

Another heating system that failed at an inopportune time was at All Saints the year we were supposed to have a blizzard in Halifax, but got torrential rain instead. The audience, having soaked up several gallons of freezing cold water, sat in a chilly cathedral for an hour and a half soaking up the sounds and sights, yet still joining in on the hymns with great enthusiasm. Talk about singing lustily and with a good courage!

Each year after our Saturday performance of "A King's Christmas" in Lunenburg, Barbara and Roy invite the choir back to their house for amazing food and drink and serious partying. The choir entertain themselves and their hosts and friends with some delightful carol singing, dancing, improvised skits, and questionable stylings of such Christmas standards as "White Christmas", "Silver Bells", and "O Holy Night". The last has been subjected to the three tenors treatment, the wobbly sopranos treatment, and, best-loved, the cat version in which one of our lay clerks sings the entire thing (remarkably well) meowing as a stray cat might, incorporating sinewy feline moves into the whole disturbing act. At some stage during the proceedings the pianist demands the revellers, all of them, dance, and the party ultimately descends into samba versions of several carols, complete with percussion, requiring a conga line that might never end were it not for the pleas of the bus driver. Speaking of which, I remember the very large bus driver (the bus, not the driver) who, one snowy evening dropped the choir off at the bottom of Barbara and Roy's long driveway, feeling they were safer on foot, and in turning the bus around managed to put half of it in a ditch. That evening's party went on for quite a while.

In listening back to twelve years of "A King's Christmas" I experience such a feeling of gratitude; gratitude for the the choir, all those individual singers through the years who sang with one heart and mind such a range of repertoire, from Hildegard to Halley hymn arrangements; gratitude for the narrators who were so diligent in finding the right readings and presenting them in their own unique voice; gratitude for the College, for the courageous people who built and now maintain our lovely Cathedral and the fine organ, for our patrons, and for all of you, our faithful audience and supporters.

Some of my favourite moments in these concerts are the hymns in which everyone join their voices in one great outpouring of jubilant sound. I chose "In Dulci Jubilo" to end this compilation because I feel proud that our audiences can comfortably sing this tune in its original, less simplified form, while relishing the Latin bits of the text. But I also thought the final line could not have been more appropriate this year – "O that we were there!". O that we were there, indeed. All of us, together again. And we will be. Next year.

Happy Christmas to you all. And if you like what you see and hear on this video, please share it with your family and friends near and far.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'Paul', written in a cursive style.

Paul

THE TWELVE YEARS OF CHRISTMAS

A King's Christmas 2008 – 2019

†

CAROL **Ding Dong! Merrily On High**

1 Ding dong! merrily on high
In heav'n the bells are ringing
Ding dong! verily the sky
Is riv'n with angel singing.
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!

2 E'en so here below, below
Let steeple bells be swungen
And i-o, i-o, i-o
By priest and people sungen.
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!

3 Pray you dutifully prime
Your matin chime, ye ringers;
May you beautifully rime
Your evetime song, ye singers.
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!

Words: G. R. Woodward (1848 – 1934)

Music: 16th cent. French tune;
arr. D. Willcocks (1919 – 2015)

READING **An Early English Blessing**

Anon.

Read by R. Bruce Connelly

CAROLS **I Wonder As I Wander**

1 I wonder as I wander, out under the sky,
How Jesus the Savior did come for to die
For poor on'ry people like you and like I...
I wonder as I wander, out under the sky.

2 When Mary birthed Jesus all in a cow's stall,
Came wise men and farmers and shepherds and all.
But high from God's heaven a star's light did fall,
And the promise of ages it then did recall.

3 If Jesus had wanted for any wee thing,
A star in the sky, or a bird on the wing,
Or all of God's angels in heav'n for to sing,
He surely could have it, for he was the King.

Words: Trad. Appalachian

Music: C. Rütli (b.1949)

The Blessed Son Of God

1 The blessed son of God only
In a crib full poor did lie;
With our poor flesh and our poor blood
Was clothed that everlasting good.

Kyrie eleison.

2 The Lord Christ Jesu, God's son dear,
Was a guest and a stranger here;
Us for to bring from misery,
That we might live eternally.

Kyrie eleison.

3 All this did he for us freely,
For to declare his great mercy;
All Christendom be merry therefore,
And give him thanks for evermore.

Kyrie eleison.

Words: M. Coverdale (1488 – 1569)
(after M. Luther)

Music: R. Vaughan Williams (1872 – 1958)

READING **Amazement At The Incarnation of God**

Read by Dr Roberta Barker

William Drummond of Hawthornden
(1585 – 1649)

CAROLS **Tàladh Chrìosda** (Christ Child's Lullaby)

Solo Trio: Vanessa Halley,
Dominique Saulnier, and Karis Tees
Bodhráns: Henk Fisher & Nick Halley

Also known as Tàladh ar Slànair, this hymn is sung at Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve in the islands of Barra, South Uist and Eriskay in the Outer Hebrides. The words were written by Father Ranald Rankin, and given by him to the children of his congregation in Moidart, when he left for Australia in 1855. The original song has 29 verses, and as with many old Gaelic songs, several variants of the tune exist.

1 Mo ghaol, mo ghràdh is m'eudail thu
M'iunntas ùr is m'èibhneas thu
Mo mhacan àluinn, ceutach thu
Chan fhiù mi fhèin bhi 'd dhàil
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

*My love, my dear, my darling
My new treasure, you are my joy
You are my beautiful, fair son
I am unworthy to be near you
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.*

2 Mo ghaol an t-sùil a sheallas tlàth
Mo ghaol an cridh' tha liont' le gràdh
Ged is leanabh thu gun chàil
Is lìonmhor buaidh tha ort a' fàs.

*My darling of the gentle eyes
My darling whose heart is filled with love
Though you are but a helpless baby
Great victories will be yours.*

3 'S tusa grian gheal an dòchais
Chuireas dorchadas air fògairt
Bheir thu clann-daoin bho staid bhrònaich
Gu naomhachd, soilleireachd is eòlas.

*You are the white sun of hope
Who will banish darkness from us
You will redeem Mankind from sorrow
To sanctity, light and knowledge.*

Words: Father Ranald Rankin, 1855

Music: Trad. Outer Hebrides;
arr. P. Halley (b.1952)

A Hymn Of The Nativity

Soloist: Janelle Lucyk

1 We saw thee in thy balmy nest,
Young dawn of our eternal day;
We saw thine eyes break from the East,
And chase the trembling shades away:
We saw thee, and we blest the sight,
We saw thee by thine own sweet light.

3 No, no, your King's not yet to seek
Where to repose his royal head;
See, see how soon his new-bloom'd cheek
'Twixt mother's breasts is gone to bed.
Sweet choice, said we, no way but so,
Not to lie cold, yet sleep in snow!

2 I saw th' obsequious seraphim
Their rosy fleece of fire bestow,
For well they now can spare their wings,
Since Heaven itself lies here below.
Well done, said I; but are you sure
Your down, so warm, will pass for pure?

4 Welcome to our wond'ring sight,
Eternity shut in a span!
Summer in winter! day in night!
Heaven in earth! and God in man!
Great little one, whose glorious birth
Lifts earth to Heaven, stoops Heaven to earth!

5 To thee, meek Majesty, soft King
Of simple graces and sweet loves!
Each of us his lamb will bring,
Each his pair of silver doves!
At last, in fire of thy fair eyes,
Ourselves become our own best sacrifice!

Words: Richard Crashaw (c.1612 – 49)

Music: K. Leighton (1929 – 88)

READING **Music Ensemble**

Alexander MacLeod (b.1972)

Written for "A King's Christmas 2011" and read by Dr Alexander MacLeod

CAROLS **Alma Redemptoris**

Alma Redemptoris Mater,
quae pervia caeli porta manes,
et stella maris,
succurre cadenti surgere qui curat
populo: Tu quae genuisti, natura mirante,
tuum sanctum Genitorem:
Virgo prius ac posterius,
Gabrielis ab ore sumens illud Ave,
peccatorum miserere.

*Loving Mother of the Redeemer,
who remains the open Gate to Heaven
and Star of the Sea,
help your fallen people who strive to rise:
You who gave birth, amazing nature,
to your sacred Creator:
Virgin prior and following,
taking from the mouth of Gabriel that 'Hail',
have mercy on sinners.*

Words: Hermann of Reichenau (1013 – 1054)

Music: G. P. da Palestrina (c.1525 – 94)

Noël Nouvelet

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

2 L'ange disait: "Pasteurs, partez d'ici,
L'âme en repos et le cœur réjoui;
En Bethléem trouverez l'agnelet."

3 En Bethléem étant tous réunis,
Trouvent l'enfant, Joseph, Marie aussi.
La crèche était au lieu d'un bercelet.

4 Bientôt les rois, par l'étoile éclaircis,
De l'Orient don't ils étaient sortis,
A Bethléem vinrent un matin.

5 Voici mon Dieu, mon sauveur Jésus Christ,
Par qui sera le prodige accompli
De nous sauver par son sang vermeillet!

A new Noel, Noel we sing here,
Devout people, let us shout our thanks to God!
Let us sing Noel for the new King!

The angel said: "Shepherds, come away from here,
the soul at peace, the heart rejoicing;
in Bethlehem you will find the little lamb."

In Bethlehem they all came together.
They found the child, Joseph and Mary as well.
The manger was in place of a cradle.

Soon the kings, led by a shining star,
came out of the East,
arriving one dawn at Bethlehem.

Behold my God, my Saviour Jesus Christ,
who by his great deed and
with his crimson blood will save us.

Words & Music: Trad. French; arr. S. Jackson (b.1948)

READING A 1950s Jewish-American Christmas Story

David Sipress (b.1947)

Read by Canon Dr Gary Thorne

CAROLS What Tidings Bring'st Thou, Messenger?

*What tidings bring'st thou, messenger,
Of Christ's birth this yerès* day?*

1 A babe is born of high nature;
Is Prince of Peace and ever shall be.
Of heaven and earth He hath the cure;*
His Lordship is eternity.

Such wonder tidings ye may hear.
What tidings bring'st thou, messenger?
That man is made now Goddès ferre,*
When sin had made but fiendès prey. R.

3 The maid began to greet her Child,
And said 'Hail Son! Hail Father dear!'
He said, 'Hail mother! Hail maiden mild!'
This greeting was in quaint mannèr;
Such wonder tidings ye may hear.
What tidings bring'st thou, messenger?
Her greeting was in such mannèr,
It turnèd mannès pain to play. R.

*Yerès = year's.

*Cure = care, change.

*Goddès ferre = God's companion.

2 A seemly sight it is to see
The berd* that hath this Babe y-born,
Conceivèd a Lord of high degree,
And maid still, as she was befor;*
Such wonder tidings ye may hear.

What tidings bring'st thou, messenger?
That maid and mother is one y-fere,*
And always lady of high array. R.

4 A wonder thing is now befall;
That Lord that formèd star and sun,
Heaven and earth and angels all,
Now in mankindè is begun;
Such wonder tidings ye may hear.

What tidings bring'st thou, messenger?
A Child that is not of one year,
Ever hath been and shall be aye. R.

*Berd = girl, maiden.

*Befor = before.

*Y-fere = in fere, i.e. together.

Words & Music: Trad. English, 15th cent.

Jesus, Jesus, Rest Your Head

*Jesus, Jesus, rest your head,
You have got a manger bed;
All the evil folk on earth
Sleep in feathers at their birth;
Jesus, Jesus, rest your head,
You have got a manger bed.*

Have you heard about our Jesus? To that manger came then wise men,
Have you heard about his fate? Bringing things from hin and yon
How his mother went to that stable For the mother and the father
On that Christmas Eve so late? And that blessed little son;
Winds were blowing, cows were lowing, Milkmaids left their fields and flocks,
Stars were glowing, glowing, glowing. And sat beside the ass and ox.

*Jesus, Jesus, rest your head, Jesus, Jesus, rest your head,
You have got a manger bed; You have got a manger bed;
All the evil folk on earth All the evil folk on earth
Sleep in feathers at their birth; Sleep in feathers at their birth;
Jesus, Jesus, rest your head, Jesus, Jesus, rest your head,
You have got a manger bed. You have got a manger bed.*

Words & Music: Trad. Appalachian; arr. P. Halley

READING Carol Thomas Merton (1915 – 1968)
Read by Dr Neil Robertson

CAROL Magnificat *Soloists: Hilary Allister & Jen Hall*

My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.
For he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden.
For behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.
For he that is mighty hath magnified me, and holy is his Name.
And his mercy is on them that fear him throughout all generations.
He hath showed strength with his arm;
He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
He hath put down the mighty from their seat,
And hath exalted the humble and meek.
He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away.
He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel,
As he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost:
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Words: Luke 1:46-55

Music: P. Halley

READING Christmas Wishes from E. B. White Elwyn Brooks White (1899 – 1985)
Read by Chris "Old Man" Luedecke

CAROL**The Cherry Tree Carol***Soloist & Banjo:* Chris "Old Man" Luedecke*Percussion:* Henk Fisher & Nick Halley

1 When Joseph was an old man, an old man was he,
He married Virgin Mary, the Queen of Galilee.

2 Oh Joseph and Mary walked through an orchard green
There were berries and cherries, as thick as might be seen.

3 Then Mary spoke to Joseph in a voice meek and mild
"Joseph, gather me some cherries, for I am with child."

4 Then Joseph flew in anger, in anger flew he,
"Let the father of the baby gather cherries for thee!"

5 Then up spoke baby Jesus within his mother's womb,
"Bow down, thou tallest branches, that my mother might have some."

6 Then bowed down the tallest branches unto his mother's hand
Then said Mary, "See, Joseph, I have cherries at command."

7 Then Mary plucked a cherry as red as any blood,
And Mary, she went homeward all with her heavy load.

8 As Joseph was a walking he heard an angel sing,
"This night there shall be born your heavenly king".

Words & Music: Traditional English & American; arr. P. Halley

READING**A Poem For Christmas**

Joseph Brodsky (1940 – 96)

Read by Shelley Thompson

Trans. S. Heaney (1939 – 2013)

CAROL**Lully, Lulla, Lullay***Soloist:* Michaela Coderre

1 O sisters too how may we do,
For to preserve this day,
This poor youngling
for whom we do sing,
by by lully lullay.

2 Herod the king in his raging,
Charged he hath this day,
His men of might
in his own sight,
All young children to slay.

3 That woe is me poor child for thee,
And ever mourn and say,
for thy parting, neither say nor sing,
by by lully lullay.

Words: English, 16th cent.

Music: P. Stopford (b.1977)

READING**When Black & White See Eye To Eye**

Maxine Tynes (1949 – 2011)

Read by Don Connolly

CAROL**Go Tell It On The Mountain**

*Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere;
Go tell it on the mountain,
that Jesus Christ is born!*

1 While shepherds kept their watching
o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens
there shone a holy light. *Refrain*

2 The shepherds feared and trembled
when lo! above the earth
rang out the angel chorus
that hailed our Savior's birth. *Refrain*

3 Down in a lowly manger
the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation
that blessed Christmas morn. *Refrain*

Words: Spiritual, 19th cent.; adapt. John W. Work

Music: Spiritual; arr. P. Halley

HYMN**In Dulci Jubilo***In Dulci Jubilo*

1 *In dulci jubilo*
Let us our homage shew;
Our heart's joy reclineth
In praeseptio
And like a bright star shineth,
Matris in gremio
Alpha es et O.

3 *O Patris caritas,*
O Nati lenitas!
Deeply were we stained
Per nostra crimina;
But thou for us hast gained
Coelorum gaudia.
Qualis gloria!

Translation of the Latin Text:

1 *In dulci jubilo* – In quiet joy
In praeseptio – In a manger
Matris in gremio – In the mother's lap
Alpha es et O – Thou art Alpha and Omega

3 *O Patris caritas* – O love of the Father
O Nati lenitas – O gentleness of the Son
Per nostra crimina – Through our sins
Coelorum gaudia – The joy of heaven
Qualis gloria! – What glory!

Words: H. Suso (c.1295 – 1361); Trans. R. L. Pearsall

2 *O Jesu parvule,*
I yearn for thee alway,
Hear me, I beseech thee,
O Puer optime!
My prayer let it reach thee,
O princeps gloriae!
Trahe me post te!

4 *Ubi sunt gaudia,*
If that they be not there?
There are angels singing
Nova cantica,
There the bells are ringing
In Regis curia.
O that we were there!

2 *O Jesu parvule* – O tiny Jesus
O Puer optime – O best of boys
O princeps gloriae – O prince of glory
Trahe me post te – Draw me after Thee

4 *Ubi sunt gaudia* – Where are joys
Nova cantica – New songs
In Regis curia – In the King's court

Music: 16th cent. German;
arr. P. Halley