A Chanticleer Christmas

WHEN: WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2018
VENUE: MEMORIAL CHURCH

7:30 PM

Photo by Lisa Kohler
Program

A CHANTICLEER CHRISTMAS

Cortez Mitchell, Gerrod Pagenkopf*, Kory Reid
Alan Reinhardt, Logan Shields, Adam Ward, countertenor
Brian Hinman*, Matthew Mazzola, Andrew Van Allsburg, tenor
Andy Berry*, Zachary Burgess, Matthew Knickman, baritone and bass

William Fred Scott, Music Director

I.

Corde natus ex parentis Plainsong
Surge, illuminae Jerusalem Francesco Corteccia (1502–1571)
Surge, illuminae Jerusalem Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525–1594)

II.

Angelus ad pastores ait Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck (1562–1621)
Quem vidistis, pastores dicite Francis Poulenc (1899–1963)
Quem vidistis, pastores? Orlando di Lasso (1532–1594)
D’où viens-tu, bergère? Trad. Canadian, arr. Mark Sirett
Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella Trad. French, arr. Alice Parker and Robert Shaw

III.

Nesciens mater Jean Mouton (1459–1522)
O Maria super foeminas Orazio Vecchi (1550–1605)
Ave regina coelorum Jacob Regnart (1540–1599)

IV.

Here, mid the Ass and Oxen Mild Trad. French, arr. Parker/Shaw
O magnum mysterium+ Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548–1611)
Behold, a Simple, Tender Babe Peter Bloesch (b. 1963)

World Premier performances

V.

Hacia Belén va un borrico Trad. Spanish, arr. Parker/Shaw
Staffan var en stalledräng Jaakko Mäntyjärvi (b. 1963)
Commissioned in 2016 by Gayle and Timothy Ober,
Allegro Fund of The Saint Paul Foundation, in honor of their 35th wedding anniversary.

Chanticleer Trad. English, arr. Philip Wilder
¡Llega la Navidad! Ramón Díaz (1901–1976), arr. Juan Tony Guzmán

—INTERMISSION—
VI.

Ave Maria+  Franz Biebl (1906–2001)
Bogoróditse Dyévo, ráduisya  Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873–1943)

VII.

A selection of popular carols to be chosen from…

Up! Good Christen Folk  Trad. English, arr. George Ratcliffe Woodward
O Tannenbaum  Trad. German, arr. Jim Clements
Es steht ein’ Lind’ im Himmelreich  Trad. German, arr. Woodward
Jesus Christ the Apple Tree  Elizabeth Poston (1905–1987)
The Holly and the Ivy  Trad. English, arr. Henry Walford Davies
Lo, How a Rose e’er Blooming  Michael Praetorius (1571–1621), arr. Parker/Shaw
All ‘round de Glory Manger  Trad. Spiritual, arr. Leonard De Paur
Pat-a-pan  Trad. Burgundian, arr. David Conte
The Boar’s Head Carol  Trad. English, arr. Parker/Shaw
What Child is This?  Trad. English, arr. Fenno Heath
Silent Night  Franz Gruber, arr. Michael McGlynn
Christmas Spiritual Medley+  Trad. Spirituals, arr. Joseph H. Jennings
   Rise up Shepherd and Follow
   Behold that Star
   Sweet Little Baby Jesus Boy
   What Month Was Jesus Born In?
   Children, Go Where I Send Thee,
   Go Tell It on the Mountain

*Andy Berry occupies The Eric Alatorre Chair given by Peggy Skornia.
Brian Hinman occupies the Tenor Chair, given by an Anonymous Donor.
Gerrod Pagenkopf occupies The Ning G. Mercer Chair for the Preservation of the Chanticleer Legacy,
given by Ning and Stephen Mercer.

+These works have been recorded by Chanticleer and are available online at www.chanticleer.org

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Photography and recording of any kind are not permitted. Thank you.
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Gregorian Chant, named after Pope Gregory I (d.604), is the term applied to the vast repertoire of liturgical plainsong assembled over the course of several hundred years, roughly 700–1300 A.D. There are almost 3,000 extant chants in the Gregorian repertoire, with texts specific to each day of the liturgical year in the Roman Catholic Church. The text for *Corde natus ex parentis*, or “Of the Father’s love begotten,” is taken from the *Hymnus omnis horae* ("Hymn for every hour"), a 37-stanza poem found in the *Cathemerinon*, a collection of hymns by Aurelius Clemens Prudentius (348–c.410).

Parts of this text were used in the rites of York and Hereford, during Christmastide for festivals of the Blessed Virgin.

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**Corde natus ex parentis**: Plainchant

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O beatus ortus ille,
Virgo cum puerpera
Edidit nostram salutem,
Feta Sancto Spiritu,
Et puer redemptor orbis
Os sacratum protulit.
O that birth forever blessed,
When the virgin, full of grace
By the Holy Ghost conceiving,
Bare the Savior of our race;
And the Babe, the world’s redeemer,
First revealed His sacred face.
Evermore and evermore.

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Te senes et te iuventus,
Parvulorum te chorus,
Psallat altitudo caeli,
Psallit omnes angeli,
Nulla linguarum silescat,
Vox et omnis consonet.
This is He whom seers in old time
Chanted of with one accord;
Whom the voices of the prophets
Promised in their faithful word;
Now He shines, the long expected,
Let creation praise its Lord,
Evermore and evermore.

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Ecce, quem vates vetustis
Concinebant saeculis,
Quem prophetarum fideles
Paginae spoponderant,
Emicat promissus olim;
Cuncta conlaudent eum.
This he whom seers in old time
Chanted of with one accord;
Whom the voices of the prophets
Promised in their faithful word;
Now He shines, the long expected,
Let creation praise its Lord,
Evermore and evermore.

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One of countless Renaissance composers who have fallen into relative musical obscurity over the last few centuries, Francesco Corteccia was, during his own lifetime, one of the best known of the early madrigalists, as well as the most prominent musician in Florence during the reign of Duke Cosimo I de' Medici. A native Florentine, Corteccia began his musical career as a choirboy at the Baptistry of San Giovanni, years later gaining a chaplaincy there, then entering indirectly into the employ of the Medici as both chaplain and organist at the church of San Lorenzo, the Medici family church. Eventually he attained the post of maestro di cappella, a position he would retain for the rest of his life. He composed both sacred and secular pieces, including a large body of work specifically for the stage, which was unusual for a composer prior to the development of opera. So popular were his early madrigals that three volumes were published in the 1540s. His sacred music, which includes a set of Lamentations, would not see publication until the last years of his life, due in no small part to the composer's own copious revisions and reworkings, as well as liturgical modifications mandated by the Council of Trent. Neither an important innovator nor an enormously prolific composer, Corteccia did, however, compose in every genre of the time, and his knowledge and experience as choir director and supplier of theatrical music enabled him to compose music that was as effective on stage as it was useful in church.

Corteccia's Surge, illuminare Jerusalem takes its text from the book of Isaiah, and appears in his book of motets for five voices, Cantorum liber primus, published at the very end of his life in 1571. Here is a motet written by a composer who knew and strictly obeyed the rules of counterpoint. The opening interval of the rising (!) fifth is imitated in every voice, a polyphonic gesture which perfectly imitates the command, "Arise, shine..." Although most of the motet is composed of strictly imitated passages at precise canon intervals, Corteccia includes occasional homophonic passages, notably in the form of duets and trios on the text "et gloria Domini" ("and the glory of the Lord"). The final section of the motet is comprised of a repeated overlapping motif, seemingly tumbling over itself, giving the effect of the excited susurration of a crowd spreading the good news.

Surge, illuminare, Jerusalem, Arise, shine O Jerusalem;
quia venit lumen tuum, for thy light is come,
et gloria Domini super te orta est. and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina was born in the town from which he took his name. He was maestro di capella at St. Peter's in Rome from 1551–1554 and again from 1571 until his death in 1594. At a moment in musical history in which the church fathers were beginning to decry too much description (ornamentation) and flair (harmonic invention), Palestrina stuck to a musical style which was based on seriousness and sobriety. His "strict" style of Renaissance counterpoint has been held up as a pedagogical model by students of nearly every succeeding generation. Palestrina achieved a mastery of contrapuntal techniques, meticulous voice-leading, and refined treatment of dissonance now universally idealized as the "Palestrina style." This is not to say that Palestrina's music is inexpressive or occasionally daring. In fact, there is a personal and deeply emotional core to all of his sacred works. He wrote in the prima prattica style, codified by the treatises of Zarlino, which prioritized the polyphonic form and structure over text.

Palestrina's impressive double choir antiphonal motet, Surge, illuminare Jerusalem, was composed in 1575 for the Feast of the Epiphany. Unlike the opening upward interval in Corteccia's setting of the same text, Palestrina embodies "Surge" ("Arise!") with ascending scales, instantly creating a mood of excited anticipation. Differentiating double choir music from eight-voice polyphony, Palestrina uses blocks of sound to seamlessly blend strict polyphony (as at the onset of the piece) with homophony (at the words "et gloria Domini"). Palestrina's skill with which he uses this seamless flow is perfectly exemplified at the text "et gloria eius," which he first sets in alternating choirs, then all eight voices melding into a final contrapuntal flourish. This technique, as with so much of Palestrina's music, came to define the double-choir style in the late 16th century.
Surge, illuminare, Jerusalem, 
quia venit lumen tuum, 
et gloria Domini super te orta est. 
Quia ecce tenebrae operient terram 
et caligo populos. 
Super te autem orietur Dominus 
et gloria eius in te videbitur.

Arise, shine O Jerusalem; 
for thy light is come, 
and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. 
For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, 
and gross darkness the people: 
but the Lord shall arise upon thee, 
and his glory shall be seen upon thee.

Angelus ad pastores ait: Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck (1562–1621)

Known as the “Orpheus of Amsterdam,” Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck spent his entire life in Amsterdam, never gone for longer than a few days at a time. The last and most important composer of the musically rich “golden era” of the Netherlands, Sweelinck was also a virtuoso organist and one of the most influential and sought-after teachers of his time. Sweelinck’s gifts as a teacher are an essential part of his importance in music history: the founders of the so-called north German organ school of the 17th century (culminating in Bach) were among his pupils. Although Sweelinck never traveled as far as Italy like his Flemish predecessors, he was clearly conversant with the Renaissance motet style. His surviving vocal music comprises 244 works, among them 39 motets and 153 psalm settings. The sacred vocal compositions were not written to serve a liturgical function, and his largest collection, a polyphonic psalter set to French texts, was probably intended for private use among members of the local Catholic bourgeoisie who had a preference for the French language. By contrast, the Cantiones sacrae, published in 1619, takes texts mainly from the Catholic Latin liturgy and employs some of the latest musical techniques of the time, including chromaticism, harmonic and ornamental counterpoint, and sometimes a separate instrumental bass line, which would become a standard element for music of the Baroque.

The Christmas motet Angelus ad pastores ait, which takes its text from the book of Luke, is scored for five voices and represents a fine example of Sweelinck’s genius. The initial imitative entrances feature a descending figure representing the message of the heavenly angel coming down to the shepherds. The triple meter of the announcement is presented with all voices together, while the “great joy” (“gaudium magnum”) features the quickest notes of the piece. As with many of the motets in Cantiones sacrae, Sweelinck adds a very imitative and ecstatic lengthy coda on the word “Alleluia.” It is amazing to consider that Sweelinck never studied outside of Amsterdam, yet his music rivals that of his European contemporaries.

Angelus ad pastores ait: 
annuntio vobis gaudium magnum, 
quia natus est vobis hodie Salvator mundi. 
Alleluia.

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

Quem vidistis, pastores dicite: Francis Poulenc (1899–1963)

The American composer Ned Rorem had this to say about Francis Poulenc: “He is among the magic few.” It has become obvious that, of the many French composers of the twentieth century, Poulenc is indeed one of the magic few whose music has endured and has perhaps become even more popular since his death. Even now his musical gifts—melodic simplicity, a harmonic palette that juxtaposes the stained-glass colors of the cathedral against the earthier tones of the boulevard and le jazz hot, rhythmic squareness and ultimate sincerity—appeal to the first-time listener as well as to the musicologist of long standing. Especially in Poulenc’s religious motets, there is nothing intimidating or fierce, except to the singers and players themselves who must navigate his technically challenging style yet at the same time convey messages of intense devotion while making the performance appear effortless.

Poulenc’s Quatre Motets pour le temps de Noël, of which Quem vidistis, pastores dicite is the second, date from 1951 and 1952. These settings of Latin verses for the season, for four-voice mixed choir in chordal style, are enriched by Poulenc’s characteristic lyricism and harmonic inventiveness to evoke both the serenity and the jubilation of Christmas. “Quem vidistis” evokes an
open-air mood of breathless excitement, the melody often in octaves and usually accompanied by humming. Poulenc freely repeats portions of the fragmented text, always adding a countermelody or changing the texture. A more insistent middle section gives way to a return of the initial melody, a five-voice texture that serves as the most lush repetition of the text.


Whom did you see, shepherds, say, tell us: who has appeared on earth? The new-born we saw and choirs of angels praising the Lord. Say, what did you see? And tell us of Christ's nativity.

Quem vidistis, pastores?: Orlando di Lasso (1532–1594)

To his contemporaries, he was the "Prince of Music," the "King of Musicians," the "Divine Orlando." We speak of Orlando di Lasso, born in the French-speaking province of Hainault in present-day Belgium in 1532. Today it is clear that di Lasso's compositional voice is recognized as one of the great ones of his time. It was, however, his singing voice that got him abducted no fewer than three times during his childhood. His teens were spent in southern Italy and Rome, where he became choirmaster of the basilica of St. John Lateran in 1551, a position which would be held by Palestrina following his departure in 1554. By 1556 he had entered the service of the Bavarian court at Munich, and there he remained until his death in 1594, working not only as court composer but also in equal demand as a singer. It was in Munich that di Lasso was visited by Andrea Gabrieli, who was impressed enough with the court to remain for at least a year. Di Lasso took charge of the ducal chapel in 1563, and, based on a number of Magnificat settings, it seems the duke had a preference to celebrate Vespers in a solemn fashion. The flood of published editions—both authorized and not—of di Lasso's music during this time established him as the most popular composer in Europe, and in 1574 he was made a Knight of the Golden Spur by Pope Gregory XIII.

A responsory at Matins (the morning service) for Christmas Day, Quem vidistis, pastores? is scored for five voices and was first published in his Cantiones aliquot quinque vocum (1569). As in many of di Lasso's motets, one of the most noteworthy features is the frequent use of concise, boldly delineated motifs to open each new phrase of the text, a technique also employed in the previous motet by Sweelinck. Each head motif is repeated in almost strict imitative polyphony in every voice; triadic arpeggios overtake the texture at “annunciate,” almost demanding the shepherds to recount what they have seen. At the text “collaudantes Dominum” ("Praising the Lord"), di Lasso switches to triple meter and homophony so that we can more easily hear all the angels together praising God. The motet continues with a closing “Alleluia,” which di Lasso extends by repeating the music almost verbatim, merely switching the two soprano lines.

Quem vidistis, pastores, dicite, annuntiate nobis, in terris quis apparuit? Natum vidimus et choros angelorum collaudantes Dominum, Alleluia.

D'où viens-tu, bergère?: Trad. Canadian, arr. Mark Sirett

One of the most popular lullaby carols in the francophone world, D'où viens-tu, bergère? takes the form of a dialogue between inquisitive villagers and a young shepherd girl who has just returned from the manger. Sirett's setting aims to capture the increasing curiosity that the villagers must have felt as, one by one, pieces of the miracle are revealed to them. The opening invokes the gentle serenity of the Christ-child, while subsequent verses depict the excited murmurings of the crowd and their changes in mood.

Conductor, composer, pianist and organist, Mark Sirett (b. 1952) is the founding Artistic Director of the award-winning Cantabile Choirs of Kingston, Ontario, Canada. A native of Kingston, he holds both masters and doctoral degrees in choral...
conducting and pedagogy from the University of Iowa. Dr. Sirett has taught at the University of Alberta, University of Western Ontario and Queen's University. Commissions have included works for the National Youth Choir of Canada, the Amabile Youth Singers, Ottawa Regional Youth Choir, Elora Festival Singers, University of Iowa, and the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir.

D'où viens-tu, bergère, d'où viens-tu?
Je viens de l'étable de m'y promener,
J'ai vu un miracle ce soir arriver.

Where do you come from, shepherdess?
I've come from the stable, where a star shone bright,
There I saw a miracle which arrived this night.

Qu'as-tu vu bergère, Qu'as-tu vu?
J'ai vu dans la crèche un petit enfant
Sur la paille fraîche mis bien tendrement.

What did you see, shepherdess? What did you see?
I saw a tiny newborn child in the manger
On the fresh straw placed tenderly.

Est-il beau bergère, Est-il beau?
Plus beau que la lune, plus que le soleil
Jamais dans le monde on vit son pareil.

Is he handsome, shepherdess? Is he handsome?
More handsome than the moon, more than the sun
Never in the world has anyone seen such.

Rien de plus bergère, rien de plus?
Ya trois anges, descendus du ciel,
Chantant les louanges du Père éternel.

Anything else, shepherdess? Anything else?
There were three angels, descended from heaven,
Singing praises to the Father eternal.

Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella: Trad. French, arr. Alice Parker and Robert Shaw

What we know of today as the melody of Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella (In French, “Un flambeau, Jeannette, Isabelle”) is almost certainly based on a drinking song composed by Marc-Antoine Charpentier, to be performed as incidental music for Molière’s Le médecin malgré lui (1666). The original French text by Émile Blémont, based on a 17th century Provençal carol, first appeared with this melody in Noëls français (1901), a collection of French carols transcribed and harmonized by musicologist and composer, Julien Tiersot. Two shepherdesses, Jeannette and Isabella, excited at finding the baby in the stable, are urged to bring torches. Torches remain a Christmas tradition in Provençal, where children dress up as shepherds and milkmaids, carrying torches and candles to Midnight Mass while singing this carol.

Bring a torch, Jeannette, Isabella.
Bring a torch, come hurry and run.
It is Jesus, good folk of the village,
Christ is born, and Mary’s calling:
Ah! Ah! Beautiful is the Mother,
Ah! Ah! Beautiful is the Child!

It is wrong when the baby is sleeping,
It is wrong to speak so loud;
Silence now, as you come near the cradle,
Lest you awaken little Jesus,
Ah! Ah! Beautiful is the Mother,
Ah! Ah! Beautiful is the Child

Skies are glowing, the heavens are cloudless,
Bright the path to the manger bed.
Hasten, all who would see little Jesus,
Shining bright as yonder star,
Ah! Ah! Beautiful is the Mother,
Ah! Ah! Beautiful is the Child!
Jean Mouton was born near Samer in northern France. After holding various positions at churches in Nesle, Amiens, and Grenoble, he joined the chapel of the French court, serving Queen Anne of Brittany, wife of Louis XII. In 1509, Queen Anne helped him to obtain a position as canon at St. André in Grenoble, a post he held in absentia while collecting the income from a benefice conferred to him in 1510. Mouton remained in the service of the French court for the rest of his life. A contemporary of Josquin Desprez, he is considered one of the most influential composers of motets of the early sixteenth century. Mouton’s surviving works include more than one hundred motets, fifteen masses, and over twenty chansons.

A setting of an antiphon for the Octave of the Nativity (January 1), *Nesciens mater* first appeared in the Medici Codex of 1518, an illuminated manuscript collection of motets. This collection was reputedly copied (by hand) under Mouton’s direction as a wedding gift for Lorenzo de Medici and his young French bride. In the motet, the circumstances of Mary’s role in the birth of Jesus are highlighted by a smooth, flowing eight-voice polyphony which is produced by four voices (the tenor part based on a chant melody) imitating the others at four beats’ distance and a fifth higher. So strict is this quadruple canon, that only the four “leading” voices appear in the manuscript, the others being deduced from them. The result is an exquisite undulating tapestry of sonorous beauty.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Nesciens mater virgo virum peperit} & \quad \text{Without knowing a man, the Virgin Mother bore} \\
\text{sine dolore Salvatorem saeculorum} & \quad \text{without pain, the eternal Savior,} \\
\text{Ipsum regem angelorum.} & \quad \text{Himself the King of Angels.} \\
\text{sola virgo lactabat, ubere de caelo pleno.} & \quad \text{She alone suckled with heavenly plenty.}
\end{align*}
\]

Modena-born composer Orazio Vecchi was one of the Italian Renaissance’s most gifted writers. Vecchi received his ecclesiastical education from the Benedictines of San Pietro in Modena, and his musical training from the monk Salvatore Essenga; by 1577, Vecchi had taken his holy orders. Early musical appointments as *maestro di capella* came from cathedrals in Salò, Reggio nell’Emilia, and Parma, but, citing financial responsibilities, Vecchi returned to Modena in 1593. In 1598 Duke Cesare d’Este heard a mass by Vecchi and was so impressed that in the same year he appointed Vecchi *maestro di corte* at Modena, a post Vecchi would hold until his death in 1605. Vecchi’s legacy rests largely on his secular compositions; he was a prolific creator of countless madrigals and canzonettas—light, entertaining music for small groups of singers. So popular were these canzonettas that composers across Europe set his tunes in their own languages. Vecchi was also renowned for his madrigal comedies: a series of solos, duets, poetry, and music woven together into a full evening’s entertainment. This new musical form was a direct precursor to the development of opera (Vecchi did, in fact, attend a performance of Jacopo Peri’s *Euridice*, one of the first true operas).

As prolific and celebrated as Vecchi was in the world of secular music, he devoted his life to composing music for the church. His impressive output includes masses, a Magnificat, three volumes of motets, as well as a volume of Lamentations. The text of *O Maria super foeminas*, which celebrates the nativity of the Virgin Mary, is a set of excerpted phrases from a sermon attributed to St. Austin of Canterbury (d. 605). As in many of his motets, Vecchi uses several compositional styles, often juxtaposing the “sacred” techniques of previous musical eras with secular contemporary ones of the late 16th century. Set for five voices, “O Maria super foeminas” begins with a single melodic motif, directly imitated by all other voices; what makes Vecchi’s style different, however, is that each voice takes on its own melodic shape after this initial imitation. This combination “imitative–freeform” counterpoint is followed by a reverential, more homophonic section on the text “O insignis gratia” (“O distinguished grace”). Vecchi uses fauxbourdon (a compositional style of over a century earlier) in the bottom three voices to paint the text “Quae dum fide dedit humiliter” (“Which yielded humble faith”). The result of these varying styles is a highly devotional piece with an extraordinary sense of drama, movement and variety.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{O Maria super foeminas benedicta,} & \quad \text{O Mary, blessed above all women,} \\
\text{O foelix obedientia} & \quad \text{O happy obedience,} \\
\text{O insignis gratia} & \quad \text{O distinguished grace} \\
\text{Quae dum fide dedit humiliter} & \quad \text{Which yielded humble faith,} \\
\text{Coeli opificem in se corporavit.} & \quad \text{And embodied in her Him who madest the heavens.}
\end{align*}
\]
Another of the wave of Franco-Flemish composers to overtake the musical landscape of Europe in the 16th century, Jacob Regnart was born in Douai in Northern France, one of five musical brothers. His name first appears on Habsburg household lists in 1560 as a chorister in the Prague Hofkapelle (Court Chapel) of Archduke Maximilian II, although Regnart himself claimed to have been employed as early as 1557; regardless of when he began working for them, Regnart would spend the entirety of his adult musical life in the employ of the Habsburgs. It was in the 1570s that his immensely popular volumes of three-voice *Teutsche Lieder* (German songs) appeared; they sold very well and were reprinted several times. By the 1580s, his popularity as a composer was so great that none other than Orlando di Lasso recommended Regnart for *Kapellmeister* to the Saxon court at Dresden (Regnart would turn down the appointment). In 1582, however, Regnart did accept a position as vice-*Kapellmeister* at the court in Innsbruck. Under Regnart’s direction, the music at the Innsbruck court was reorganized and considerably raised in standard; in particular, musicians from the Netherlands and Italy were imported. He was made a noble in 1596; that same year, he left Innsbruck for Prague, serving as vice-*Kapellmeister* under Philippe de Monte until his death in 1599. Regnart’s works were regularly anthologized well into the 17th century, and his music was held in high regard by such theorists as Michael Praetorius.

Because of the popularity of his secular *Teutsche Lieder*, Regnart’s sacred works have generally received far less attention, yet they form the greater part of his extant music. His five-voice setting of *Ave regina coelorum* appeared in his earliest published volume of sacred music in 1575. A slight alteration of the more common Marian antiphon, the motet opens with an upward moving head motive, directly imitated in all five parts. The dense imitation thins very rarely, often only at the onset of new text. Midway through the motet, Regnart cleverly inserts the recognizable “Ave Maria” chant into the texture, first in the bass voice, then in the soprano. Upward motion (perhaps aural imagery of our prayers rising to heaven) dominates the texture until the final stanza, where descending scales, notably in the bottom two voices, remind Mary of the “fidelium” (“faithful”) down on Earth. Regnart seems to have been particularly drawn to this alternate text, as he would set it again for four voices in his *Mariale* (1588), a collection of intensely devotional Catholic motets and one of the most notable musical products of the Counter-Reformation.

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One of the oldest known French carols, the melody of *Here, mid the Ass and Oxen Mild* (In French, “Entre le bœuf et l’âne gris”) dates from as early as the 13th century. A “modern” harmonized version, titled “Le sommeil de l’enfant Jésus” first appeared in *Collection de chœurs*, a 10-volume compendium of choral music composed and compiled by Belgian composer and musicologist François-Auguste Gevaert in the late 19th century. The text was eventually translated into English by Episcopal Canon Charles Winfred Douglas and appeared in the 1940 Episcopal Hymnal. The presence of the ox and ass is significant in that both were mentioned centuries before Christ’s birth in Isaiah’s prophecy: “The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib.” Certainly, oxen could have been the occupants of the stable in which Mary and Joseph lodged, and the ass would have carried the pregnant mother from Nazareth to Bethlehem. This simple lullaby arranged by Alice Parker and Robert Shaw is scored for soprano soloist and accompanying chorus.
Here, mid the ass and oxen mild,
Sleep, sleep, sleep my little Child,
Thousand seraphim, thousand cherubim
Come from Heav’n above to guard the Lord of Love.

Here, where sweet flow’rs their fragrance bring,
Sleep, sleep, sleep my little King,
Thousand seraphim, thousand cherubim
Come from Heav’n above to guard the Lord of Love.

Here, where the shepherds’ search is done,
Sleep, sleep, sleep my little son,
Thousand seraphim, thousand cherubim
Come from Heav’n above to guard the Lord of Love.

O magnum mysterium: Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548–1611)

Unquestionably the most famous composer of the Spanish Renaissance, Tomás Luis de Victoria was born in Ávila, his earliest musical training as a boy chorister at Ávila Cathedral. In 1565 (after his voice had changed), Victoria received a grant from Philip II to attend the German College in Rome to continue his studies, particularly in singing. The revered Italian composer Palestrina was chapel master at the nearby Seminario Romano, and—though we don’t know whether Victoria studied with him—it is most probable that Victoria knew him. After completing his training, Victoria held a variety of overlapping musical positions in Rome: singer, organist, teacher, and composer, and was even ordained a priest in 1575. He returned to Spain in 1587 as chaplain and chapel master to Dowager Empress Maria at the Convent of the Barefoot Nuns of St. Clare in Madrid, serving the Dowager for 17 years, until her death, and remaining at the convent until his own death in 1611. Victoria’s many compositions, comprised exclusively of sacred works, brought him a great deal of fame during his lifetime—due in no small part to his ability to publish lavish volumes of his music in Venice.

The justly famous motet, *O magnum mysterium* (O great mystery) sets a sublime text from Christmas Vespers. Victoria’s use of serenely interwoven polyphony at the opening bars leads to a hushed chordal declamation at the words “O beata Virgo” (“O Blessed Virgin”). An extended “Alleluia” section, first in triple meter, then in duple, concludes the motet.

O magnum mysterium et admirabile sacramentum,
ut animalia viderent Dominum natum jacentem in praesepio.
O beata Virgo, cujus viscera meruerunt portare Dominum Christum.
Alleluia!

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

Behold, a Simple, Tender Babe: Peter Bloesch (b. 1963)

With music described as “fresh,” “haunting” and “inspirational,” award-winning composer Peter Bloesch enjoys a career ranging from orchestral film scores to *a cappella* choral works. The son of choral conductor Richard Bloesch, who taught choral conducting and literature at the University of Iowa for 40 years, Peter grew up surrounded by choral music. Bloesch studied composition, orchestration, and film scoring in the University of Southern California’s prestigious “Scoring for Motion Pictures and Television” program. His compositional style combines his classical-music training with his film-music experience to create music that is both well-crafted and emotionally powerful. Bloesch has received in-depth training in pops-arranging from some of the greatest arrangers in Hollywood, and has worked with several legendary film composers, including Jerry Goldsmith and Henry Mancini. Bloesch was the recipient of the competitive Pete Carpenter Fellowship award
from the BMI Foundation, an honor given once a year to the most promising young film composer. He has received many commissions to compose music for innovative groups, such as Red Cedar Chamber Music, a critically acclaimed chamber ensemble. Although this touching setting was not composed specifically for Chanticleer, we are very happy to be giving the world-premier performances in these concerts.

Robert Southwell, whose poetry was the inspiration for Bloesch, was one of the great poets in the England of Shakespeare, Spenser and Sir Philip Sidney. Jesuit-educated, Southwell wrote more often in Latin than in English, was an outspoken Roman Catholic during those turbulent times in which religious freedom was hardly the norm; in fact, his last major prose work was called *An Humble Supplication*, addressed directly to Queen Elizabeth I and pleading for clemency on behalf of persecuted Catholics. The great English poet of a time closer to our own, C. S. Lewis, had this to say about Southwell: “His work sometimes recalls the past, sometimes anticipates the immediate future which he was unconsciously helping to create, and often seems to belong to no period at all.” All of Southwell’s poetry is religious in theme, timeless in its beauty, elegant in style and bathed in love and kindness.

Behold, a simple, tender babe,
In freezing winter night,
In homely manger trembling lies:
    Alas! A piteous sight.

The inns are full; no man will yield
    This little Pilgrim bed;
But forced He is with silly beasts
In crib to shroud his head.

Despise Him not for lying there;
    First what He is inquire:
An orient pearl is often found
    In depth of dirty mire.

Weigh not His crib, His wooden dish,
    Nor scorn His poor abode;
Weigh not His Mother’s poor attire,
    Nor Joseph’s simple robe.

This stable is a Prince’s court,
    The crib His chair of state,
The beasts are parcel on His pomp,
    The wooden dish His plate;

The persons in that poor attire
    His royal liv’ries wear;
The Prince Himself is come from heav’n,
    This pomp is prized there.

With joy approach, O Christian soul,
    Do homage to the King;
And highly praise His humble pomp,
    Which He from heaven doth bring.
Without a doubt, the *villancico* was the musical form most likely to bridge the gap between the “serious” music heard in the imposing cathedrals of, say, Ávila, Burgos, Granada or Madrid, and the “popular” ditties sung along the streets, in cafés, public squares and schools. The simplicity of the *villancico* made it easy to learn, easy to repeat and easy to like. Short stanzas alternate with a refrain which is occasionally nonsensical and the narrative is quickly told. Although the *villancico* probably derived from the earlier love-songs of the Medieval troubadours, by the 17th century the form was most often heard at Christmas. It is no wonder that Robert Shaw and Alice Parker were drawn to this simple song, *Hacia Belén va un borrico* (which probably originated as a children’s Christmas carol in Andalucía) because of its delightful tune and whimsical story. The text has appeared in several guises (sometimes the animal referred to is “una burra,” instead of “un borrico,” and one or two of the words seem to be so regional as to be untranslatable) but the charm of the fable of the ox who ate the pilgrim’s hat has endured for centuries. To a little child, the chocolate the donkey was carrying was certainly as important and worthy a gift as any amount of gold, frankincense or myrrh.

Hacia Belén va un borrico: Trad. Spanish, arr. Parker/Shaw

A donkey is going to Bethlehem

(All day long I’ve been mending patches.)

loaded with chocolate.

It carries its chocolate pot,

(All day long I’ve been mending patches,

Sew one on, take another one off.)

its little wooden whisk, and its stove.

Mary, Mary come running here,

for somebody’s eating all the chocolate!

In the Bethlehem manger,

young thieves came in,

while the Child was in the cradle,

they took his swaddling clothes.

Mary, Mary come running here,

for they’re taking his swaddling clothes;

Mary, Mary come flying here,

for they’re taking his swaddling clothes!

Wearing a straw hat,

a Galician arrives at the manger.

While he was adoring the Child,

the ox ate the hat.

Mary, Mary come running here,

for the ox is eating the hat.

Mary, Mary come flying here,

comfort the Galician who is crying here.

Staffan var en stalledräng: Jaakko Mäntyjärvi (b. 1963)

Jaakko Mäntyjärvi is a Finnish translator and composer, also an active semi-professional musician involved mostly in choral singing. Thus, most of his output consists of choral works, some 100 of which have been published to date. He describes himself as an eclectic traditionalist. From 2000 to 2005 he was composer-in-residence of the Tapiola Chamber Choir, and he has also taught a course in the history of choral music at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki. Over the years, the music of Mäntyjärvi has had an honored place in Chanticleer’s repertoire: *Die Stimme des Kindes*, the eerie *Canticum Calamitatis Maritimae*, and his setting of Longfellow’s poem, *The Tide Rises, the Tide Falls*, quickly became audience favorites.
Mäntyjärvi’s typical harmonic palette, with its frequent use of diminished chords and dark sonorities, is hardly recognizable in this simple setting of the Swedish carol *Staffan var en stalledräng*. Instead, the composer creates atmosphere by an almost constant drone (open fifths in the bass part) and rhythmic ostinato (describing the steady hoofbeat of St. Stephen’s dapple-grey horse). Each verse is thirty-six bars in length and the refrain always begins with a slight holding back of the tempo. The contours of the Swedish language are made clear, as Mäntyjärvi breaks down his musical sentences into groupings of four-, five- and even nine-bar lengths. The composer’s deep appreciation for the pre-dawn mystery of the narrative is shown in the gentle alternation of major and minor modes. He writes,

“Staffan var en stalledräng” (“Stephen was a stable boy”) is based on an English and Nordic legend claiming that the first Christian martyr, St Stephen, was a stable boy in King Herod’s household. In its most extensive form, the song has four sections: Stephen caring for the horses; Stephen riding out hunting; Stephen seeing the star of Bethlehem that foretells the birth of Jesus to King Herod; and a concluding section generically about the Christmas feast, unconnected to Stephen himself. The text in this setting is a hybrid, taken from three different versions of the song; it omits the King Herod scene entirely for conciseness. The melody draws on the traditional Swedish tune of the song but takes some liberties and incorporates scraps of tunes from the Piae Cantiones collection as well.

Staffan var en stalledräng,
—håll dig väl, fålen min!
han vattna’ sina fålar fem.
—all för den ljusa stjärna.

Ingen dager synes än, synes än!
Men stjärnorna på himmelen de blänka.

Två de voro röda,
de tjänte väl sin föda.
Två de voro vita,
de var varandra lika.
Den femte han var apelgrå,
den rider Staffan själv uppå!

Innan tuppen galit har,
han i stallet redan var.
Hastigt lägges sadeln på,
ninan solen månd’ uppgå.

Skinnpäls och mössa,
hundar och bössa.

Framme han till skogen var,
innan någon vaknat har.
I den fula vargens spar
fort och oförskräckt han går.
Staffan lade ulven ner,
och nu finns vargen inte mer.

Staffan red till källarknut,
där han var van få ölet ut.
Nu är eld uti vår spis,
Julegröt och julegris.
Uppå julen, broder Knut,
som på visan gör han slut.
—Hjälp Gud och Sancte Staffan!

Stephen was a stable boy,
—he watered his horses five.
—all for the shining star.

No dawn is yet seen!
But the stars sparkle in the sky.

Two of them were red,
they earned their keep well.
Two of them were white,
they were alike each other.
The fifth—he was dapple-grey,
that one Stephen rides himself!

Before the rooster has crowed,
he already was in the stable.
Quickly the saddle is put on,
before the sunrise.
Leather coat and cap,
dogs and rifle.

He reached the forest
before anyone had woken.
On the trail of the ugly wolf
bold and fearless he goes.
Stephen brought down the wolf,
and now the wolf is no more.

Stephen rode to the cellar vault,
where he was used to draw the ale.
Now there’s a fire in our hearth,
Christmas gruel and Christmas pork.
After Christmas, Brother Knut
brings the song to an end.*
—Help us God and Saint Stephen!

* St. Knut’s day (January 13) marks the end of the Christmas season in Sweden and Finland.
Founding member Rob Bell recalls the casual nature in which the name “Chanticleer” became ours, saying it might have been as simple as one of the early singers saying, “Isn’t there something in Chaucer?” Indeed “The Nun’s Priest’s Tale” from Geoffrey Chaucer’s immense Canterbury Tales refers to a “clear-singing rooster” and, although the eight (then ten, now twelve) men of Chanticleer may not want to think of themselves as roosters, clear singing and all that goes with it has always been a part of our makeup—our DNA, one might say. This particular poem about the clear-singing rooster appeared in a collection of poems by one William Austin, a lawyer at Lincoln’s Inn in the times of Charles I. Austin’s widow published this Christmas carol in a collection of her husband’s prayers and poems in 1635, a year after his death. The connection between Chaucer’s tale of the rooster and the fox may be more pertinent to us than to Christmas. Shakespeare (a contemporary of Austin, by the way) made the seasonal connection more obvious in these lines from Hamlet:

Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long.

In his thirteen-year association (from 1990 until 2003) with Chanticleer, Philip Wilder performed in more than 1,000 concerts worldwide, sang on fourteen recordings, and was the founding director of Chanticleer’s education program. In that capacity he implemented programs for music students in San Francisco and across America and became a well-known spokesman for the ensemble. In a professional musical career known for its vitality and variety, Wilder has worked at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington D.C., the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y., and for seven years at 21C Media Group in New York City. He currently serves as Executive Director of the New Century Chamber Orchestra, one of San Francisco’s premier chamber ensembles and one of the world’s few conductor-less string orchestras. Wilder’s setting of Chanticleer follows the outlines of a typical Anglican hymn with its sturdy melody, clear architecture and radiant harmonies. For the ending, marked “with a big finish!” by the composer, the chorus is divided into eight parts with additional solos for soprano and tenor

All this night shrill Chanticleer,
Day’s proclaiming trumpeter,
Claps his wings and loudly cries,
"Mortals, mortals wake and rise!"
See a wonder heav’n is under,
From the earth is risen a Sun,
Shines all night, though day be done.

Wake, oh earth, wake ev’rything!
Wake and hear the Joy I bring;
Wake and joy; for all this night
Heav’n and ev’ry twinkling light,
All amazing, still stand gazing,
Angels, powers, and all that be.
Wake and joy this Sun to see.

Hail, o Sun, o blessed light
Sent into the world by night!
Let thy rays and heav’nly powers
Shine in these dark souls of ours;
For most duly thou art truly
God and man, we do confess:

Hail, O Sun of Righteousness!
¡Llega la Navidad!: Ramón Díaz (1901–1976), arr. Juan Tony Guzmán

¡Llega la Navidad! is a villancico, a Latin-American style Christmas carol, in the style of merengue, the Dominican national dance. Not only on the Iberian peninsula, but in the “New World” as well, the theatrical energy of movement contributed to the happiness and vigor with which Christmas was celebrated. Although some ultra-conservative pedants found the inclusion of dance rhythms in such a solemn occasion as too arousing, the great Italian theorist (frankly, he was more than a little pedantic himself) Pietro Cerone, defended the joy expressed through the villancico with these words: “I would not like to say villancicos are bad things, for they are received in all Spanish churches and, were it not for them, it would not be possible to reach the appropriate heights of solemn celebration. There are some people so lacking in piety that they attend church but once a year, and miss all the Masses of Obligation, because they are too lazy to get up out of bed. But let it be known that there will always be villancicos, and there is no one more devout in the whole place, none more vigilant than these people, for there is no church, oratory or shrine that they will not visit, nor do they mind getting up in the middle of the night in the freezing cold, just to hear them.” It is hard to imagine anyone sleeping through the vigorous rhythms or the happy joy of this island carol, brought to life by Díaz and Guzmán. With the simplest of means—plain, four-part harmonies, and a few percussion instruments added for good measure—composer and arranger have been able to create a vibrant sense of anticipation and rejoicing.

¡Llega la Navidad!  Christmas is coming!

El Niño Jesús nos trae
la tan deseada paz.  
Cantémos le agradecidos
y Él nos bendecirá.

Los Santos Reyes de Oriente
con su buena voluntad,
nos darán felices Pascuas
y una alegre Navidad.

Venid, vamos, que en Belén
ha nacido un Niño
para nuestro bien.

Alabemos la bondad
del Rey de los hombres
que nos trae la paz.

¡Llega la Navidad!  Christmas is coming!

Ave Maria: Franz Biebl (1906–2001)

German composer and arranger Franz Biebl studied music at the Humanistic Gymnasium in Amberg, and received Master of Music degrees in composition and choral conducting at the State Music Academy in Munich. Biebl was employed as the choral music consultant to the Bavarian State Radio, where he worked relentlessly to fill the station’s archives with popular choral music, listening to and encouraging small choral groups all over Germany. As a composer, Biebl strove to expand the German folk-song repertoire, composing hundreds of arrangements for all types of choral ensembles.

Biebl’s setting of the Marian antiphon Ave Maria exploits the richly sonorous possibilities of double-chorus writing for men’s voices. The familiar Ave Maria text is sung by a four-voice choir and answered by a trio of soloists. Between each of the sung “verses” of text, a soloist chants a shorter bit of scripture. The devotional quality of the text, which commemorates the
Incarnation, and the rich chordal sonorities of Biebl's music create a satisfying blend of medieval chant and warm, 20th century harmonies. The version we sing in these concerts, as well as two other editions for mixed chorus, has been published by Hinshaw Music of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, under the Chanticleer Choral Series label.

Angelus Domini nuntiavit Mariae et concepit de Spiritu sancto.

The angel of the Lord made his annunciation to Mary and she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum; benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui Jesus.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.

Maria dixit: Ecce ancilla Domini; fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum.

Mary said, “Behold the servant of the Lord; let it be unto me according to Your word.”

Et verbum caro factum est et habitavit in nobis.

And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

Sancta Maria, mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus. Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.

Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners. Holy Mary, pray for us now and at the hour or our death. Amen.

Bogoróditse Dyévo, ráduisya: Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873–1943)

While mostly recognized and remembered for his virtuosic piano masterworks, notably the four piano concertos, and his beloved Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Russian composer Sergei Rachmaninoff was also a prolific composer of works for the human voice. His output in this lesser celebrated genre included six operas, eleven choral works and a host of art songs for solo voice and piano.

His Bogoróditse Dyévo, ráduisya (loosely translated as “Ave Maria”) is the sixth and most beloved movement of a monumental sacred work entitled, All-Night Vigil, Op. 37 (commonly—though incorrectly—referred to simply as Vespers). Not only was this epic composition one of Rachmaninoff’s personal favorites, it was and remains widely-considered to be the greatest musical achievement of the Russian Orthodox Church. While the church at the time actually required of its composers that liturgical chant be an audible and recognizable influence on any sacred work, “Bogoróditse Dyévo, ráduisya” is so heavily based on chant that Rachmaninoff himself referred to it as a conscious counterfeit. In a single hearing alone, a listener can quite easily lock on to the haunting plainsong. First expressed in a traditional homophonic and even pedestrian texture, the tune later transcends into a soaring, ethereal, and almost descant-like middle section, finally giving way to an emotional climax, boasting a passion so immense that is unmistakably Russian.

Богородице Дево, радуйся,
Bogoróditse Dyévo, ráduisya,
Rejoice, virgin mother of God,

Благодатная Марие, Господь с тобою.
Благословена ты в женах, и благословен плод чрева твоего.
Blagodátnaya Maríye, Gospód s tobóyu.
Blagoslovena ty v zhenákh, i blagosloven plod chryéva tvoyevó.
Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, for you have borne the Savior of our souls.
Anglican priest and scholar George Ratcliffe Woodward (1848–1934) was one of the great forces for change in church music in the beginning of the 20th century. He was unique in combining musical and linguistic talents of a high order: his “17th century” harmonizations of hymn-tunes, for example, are often indistinguishable from the real thing, and he refused to replace feminine endings with masculine in his translations, thereby adapting the tune to match. His collaborations with composer Charles Wood resulted in several hymn-books, including Songs of Syon (1904), a unique hymn-book that was intended for use in Anglican churches, but also served as a model for hymn compilations for decades to come.

*Up! Good Christen Folk* included in Woodward and Wood’s The Cowley Carol Book, is one of several English carols that are rettextings (or contrafacta) of medieval Latin hymns preserved in the Scandinavian publication *Piae Cantiones* of 1582. In 1910 Woodward produced his own edition of *Piae Cantiones*, with scholarly commentary, and he was foremost among those who translated and retexted the catchier tunes to create “new” carols. His setting of “Up! Good Christen Folk,” which opens with a joyful outburst of bell peals, is a retexting of “O quam mundum, quam jocundum,” a setting of the opening of Psalm 133: “Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”

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Up! Good Christen folk, and listen
How the merry church bells ring,
And from steeple bid good people
Come adore the newborn King:

Tell the story how from glory
God came down at Christmastide,
Bringing gladness, chasing sadness,
Show’ring blessings far and wide,

Born of mother, blest o’er other,
*Ex Maria Virgine*, [of the Virgin Mary]
In a stable (‘tis no fable),
Christus natus hodie. [Christ is born today]
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*O Tannenbaum*: Trad. German, arr. Jim Clements

The symbol of the evergreen tree was too strongly rooted in the old European religions to be entirely eradicated with the coming of Christianity. The church tolerated these ancient symbols of the winter solstice and assimilated them as Christian symbols of the renewal of life at Christ’s birth. Many Germans devoutly believed that Martin Luther himself invented the Christmas tree; in reality, the custom seems to have evolved in late medieval Rhineland, the Christmas tree being a symbolic descendent of the Tree of Life in the mystery plays. With the rise of German nationalism in the 19th century, the Christmas tree became universally popular, and was seen as a symbol of all that was best in the old Germanic Christmas tradition. *O Tannenbaum*, which literally translates to “O fir tree,” is a combination of the tune from an old German folksong “Es lebe hoch der Zimmermannsgeselle” ("Long live the carpenter's apprentice"), and words penned in 1824 by Ernst Anschütz, a Leipzig schoolmaster, based on a 16th century Silesian folk song by Melchior Franck, “Ach Tannenbaum.”

Jim Clements (b. 1983) is a British choral composer, arranger, orchestrator, and singer. He studied music at Manchester University where he established and directed close-harmony groups and began his association with the a cappella group VOCES8. He has written for numerous world-famous artists, including Tom Jones, The King's Singers, and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra.
O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum,  
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree  
du verkörperst unsern Weinachtstraum!  
You embody our Christmas dream!  

O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum,  
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree  
wie treu sind deine Blätter!  
How lovely are your branches!  
Du grünst nicht nur zur Sommerzeit,  
You're green not only in summertime,  
Nein auch im Winter, wenn es schneit.  
But also in winter, when it snows.  

O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum,  
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree  
wie treu sind deine Blätter!  
How lovely are your branches!  
Du kannst mir sehr gefallen!  
What happiness befalls me!  

O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum!  
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree!  
Dein Kleid will mich was lehren:  
Your visage wants to teach us:  
Die Hoffnung und Beständigkeit  
Your hope and permanence  
Gibt Trost und Kraft zu jeder Zeit.  
Give comfort and strength at all times.  

O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum!  
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree!  
Das soll dein Kleid mich lehren.  
Your visage wants to teach us.

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Es steht ein' Lind' im Himmelreich: Trad. German, arr. Woodward

Another of Woodward's "new" English carols, *Es steht ein' Lind' im Himmelreich* emerged from the ancient Volksballade (or folk ballad) "Es steht ein' Lind' in jenem Tal" ("There is a Linden tree in the valley") that dates back to at least the 14th century and is known as the Liebesprobe (The test of love). As a spiritual transformation, it became associated with the Annunciation, and the tune first appeared with a sacred text as early as 1430 in Heinrich Laufenberg's manuscript collection Geistliche Lieder.

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<th>German</th>
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| Es steht ein' Lind' im Himmelreich  
Der blühen alle Äste,  
Und Engel singen allzugleich,  
Maria sei die Beste.  
In heaven there stood a linden tree,  
And every branch was filled with blooms.  
The angels sang one to another  
"The bloom which Mary bears will be the best."|
| Es kam ein Bote klar und rein  
Her auf diese Erde,  
Ging zur verschloss'nen Tür herein  
Mit englischer Gebärde:  
So a messenger, quick and pure, was sent  
From heaven on high to lowly Earth.  
He went straightway to a door all latched  
And said these words of greeting:|
| "Gegrüsset seist du, Maria,  
Du Krone aller Frauen.  
Du sollst ein Kind gebären ja  
Und jungfräulich drauf trauen."  
"Blessed art thou, oh Mary,  
You are the Queen of all women.  
You are to bear a little child  
Even though you are still a virgin."|
| "Wie kann ich gebär'n ein Kindelein  
Und eine Jungfrau heissen?  
Niemand begeht das Herz e mein;  
Das sollst du mir beweisen!"  
"But how can I bear a little one  
And still be called a maiden?  
No man has even looked at me,  
Perhaps you can explain it." |
A highly respected editor of English folk songs and hymns, composer Elizabeth Poston received her musical education at the Royal Academy of Music. She served on the music staff of the BBC and wrote several film scores, including one for a 1970 film version of Howard’s End. (In fact, she lived in the house that was the subject of the E.M. Forster novel.) Her strong affinity for the Elizabethan period shows in her own composition of hymns, such as Jesus Christ the Apple Tree, which employs an anonymous 18th century text from New England. The tune is one of fresh simplicity and melodic fluency, greatly resembling a folk song, and it is harmonized in an appealingly archaic style. The melody is constructed in such a way that it may be overlapped, in the manner of a round.

Jesus Christ the Apple Tree: Elizabeth Poston (1905–1987)

A traditional English Christmas carol, The Holly and the Ivy is another lively example of early European traditions assimilated into Christianity, as holly and ivy were pagan fertility symbols which also have been Christmas decorations of choice in the church since the fifteenth century. Evidence exists that singing contests were held between men and women in ancient England, during which men praised holly for its masculine traits while women exalted ivy for its feminine virtues. The resolution between the two was under the mistletoe. These three plants happen to be the most prominent green plants in the British native woodland during wintertime.

Lo, How a Rose e’er Blooming: Michael Praetorius (1571–1621), arr. Parker/Shaw

The German text of Lo, How a Rose e’er Blooming (In German, “Est ist ein Ros entsprungen”) comes to us from the late 16th century. We can thank Michael Praetorius for his 1609 harmonization, which has been—and continues to be—the chief model for those who wish to set their own colorful soundscape to the famous tune. In fact, the tune was so popular at the cusp of the 17th century that the Germans were devoting their time to procreating additional verses. Rumor has it that some twenty-three verses exist. This Parker/Shaw classic uses only two verses to create a simple and elegant four-part carol that juxtaposes the warm joy of the miraculous birth against the cold austerity of the simple manger scene. As for the Virgin Mary herself, scripture tells us that she is the tender root from which the “spotless rose” has come. The poem draws upon biblical imagery that pictures the newborn Christ growing forth from the “stem of Jesse” (the father of King David), as foretold in Isaiah 11. In metaphorical writings of the Middle Ages, the patriarchal figure of Jesse was often depicted as a rose bush.
It has been twenty years since the death of Leonard de Paur (1914–1998), considered by singers, conductors and even critics, to be one of the great figures in American choral music. At his death in 1998, the New York Times obituary stated that between 1947 and 1968 he had conducted more than 2,300 performances with a succession of groups beginning with the legendary de Paur Infantry Chorus, a group he formed from an Army Air Force show called “Winged Victory.” The de Paur Infantry Chorus was made up of 35 “singing veterans” and its repertoire included international folk songs, calypso, African-American spirituals, work songs and military songs. It became one of the most frequently sought-after performing groups and de Paur’s name synonymous with nobility of sound, precision of attack, dynamic clarity and courageous programming. Of course, this was not the only reason for his long career or distinguished reputation. From 1936 to 1939 de Paur was music director of the WPA-sponsored Federal Negro Theatre, which produced an all-black production of Macbeth directed by the young actor Orson Welles. De Paur prepared the choirs for the first recording of Virgil Thomson’s Four Saints in Three Acts and the 1964 recording of Gershwin’s Porgy and Bess, which starred Leontyne Price and William Warfield. At the time of his death, he had been director of community relations for Lincoln Center for almost two decades.

All ‘round de Glory Manger is a well-known African-American spiritual. Scored in typical glee-club style, it features an ensemble of tenors and basses, divided into four parts and singing in close harmony. For many seasons the men of the Morehouse College Glee Club sang this spiritual in the annual Atlanta Symphony “Christmas with Robert Shaw” concerts. In fact, it was one of the pieces that Mr. Shaw insisted on hearing, year after year. The rhythmic verve of the arrangement, especially as it contrasts with the reflective beauty of the tenor solo in the middle of the work, never failed to move audiences.

Pat-a-pan: Trad. Burgundian, arr. David Conte

Unlike many carols that date from as early as the Middle Ages, Pat-a-pan, also known as “Guillô, pran ton tamborin!” (“Willy, bring your little drum”) first appeared in Noei bourguignon (Bourgignon Christmas), a 1701 collection of Christmas carols in traditional Burgundian dialect composed by French poet, lawyer, and critic, Bernard de La Monnoye (1641–1728). Guillô (Guillaume or Willy) and Robin are stock characters in Provençal carols; they bring food to the manger in “Allons, bergers, partons tous,” and, like Jeannette and Isabella in “Un flambeau,” are perhaps being used to suggest the idea of the entire village community. The onomatopoeic nature of the text lends itself well to musical setting, the “pat-a-pat-a-pan” ostinato imitating the drum, and the “tu-re-lu-re-lu” flourish imitating the pipe. Pipe and drum were used frequently for dancing throughout the Middle Ages, and continue to accompany folk dancing in Provence today.

David Conte (b. 1955) is Professor of Composition and Conductor of the Conservatory Chorus at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. He has received commissions from Chanticleer, the San Francisco Symphony Chorus, the Dayton, Oakland, and Stockton Symphonies, the American Guild of Organists, Sonoma City Opera and the Gerbode Foundation, among others. A Fulbright Scholar in Paris with Nadia Boulanger, a Ralph Vaughan Williams Fellow and an Aspen Music Festival Conducting Fellow, Conte earned his Bachelor’s degree from Bowling Green State University, where he studied with Ruth Ingelfield and Wallace DePue, and his Master’s and Doctoral degrees from Cornell University, where he studied with Karel Husa, Robert Palmer, Steven Stucky and Thomas Sokol. In 1982, Conte worked with Aaron Copland preparing a study of the composer’s sketches.

The Boar’s Head Carol: Trad. English, arr. Parker/Shaw

Boar’s head feasts were particularly popular at Christmas: in Edward II’s time, the open season for boar-hunting ran from Christmas to Candlemas (in early February). Their origin was probably the Norse custom of sacrificing a boar to the goddess of fertility, Freyja, at her midwinter feast, a custom that persisted in Northern England and became a staple dish in meals for the nobility. The words of The Boar’s Head Carol first appeared as early as 1521 in Wynkyn de Worde’s Christmasse Carilles, although the carol may date back even earlier, to a tale of a Queen’s College student who, attacked by a wild boar on Christmas Day, saved himself by forcing a volume of Aristotle down the unfortunate creature’s throat, dragging it back to Queen’s, where it was
roasted and served for dinner with great ceremony. Traditionally sung by men, the text is macaronic—combining more than one language—and is both celebratory and earthy. Although the wild boar has been extinct since the 17th century, choristers at Queen's College still perform "The Boar's Head Carol" in solemn procession every year at Christmastime.

The boar's head in hand bear I,
Bedecked with bays and rosemary,
And I pray you, my masters, be merry,
*Quot estis in convivio.* [All that are at the feast]
*Caput apri defero, reddens laudes Domino.*
[I bring in the boar's head, giving thanks to the Lord.]
The boar’s head, as I understand,
Is the rarest dish in all the land,
Which thus bedecked with a gay garland,
Let us *servire cantico.* [Serve with a song]
*Caput apri defero, reddens laudes Domino.*

Our steward hath provided this
In honour of the King of Bliss,
Which on this day to be served is
*In Reginensi Altrio.* [In the Queen's Hall]
*Caput apri defero, reddens laudes Domino.*

**What Child is this?:** Trad. English, arr. Fenno Heath

In its 105-year history the Yale Glee Club has been the musical home to numbers of distinguished composers, singers, educators and amateurs. For almost forty of those years, there was hardly a more perfect representative than its distinguished conductor, Fenno Heath (1926–2008). In fact, few conductors of college glee clubs ever achieved the international reputation and status that Heath enjoyed. (The only close rivals might have been Iva Dee Hiatt at Smith College or Harvard's venerable Archibald T. Davison.) Heath was a "Yale Man" through and through. A native of Virginia, Heath graduated from Yale with the Class of 1950, his undergraduate schooling having been interrupted by a stint in the Army in World War II. The following year he received his Bachelor of Music degree and the year after that, a Master's degree from the Yale School of Music. Never venturing far from his adopted home of New Haven, Heath conducted the Yale Glee Club from 1953 until his retirement in 1992. As an undergraduate, he had sung with the famed a cappella groups The Spizzwinks and the Whiffenpoofs, but it was as a choral conductor and arranger that he made his greatest impact on literally hundreds of students.

Heath's compositional style ranged from very traditional arrangements to what in the 1950s might have been considered quite progressive. He had been a student of Quincy Porter and Paul Hindemith at Yale and so his harmonic writing is sometimes exotic, but never too aggressive. Heath's choice of texts generally leaned toward Holy Scripture, poems from New England poets such as Emily Dickinson, or English folksongs. With a work as famous as *What Child is This?* the good professor was careful not to assault the listeners' ears too frequently with strange chord progressions or quirky rhythmic twists. It could be said that Heath's arrangement, for four-part male chorus and a baritone solo, actually sticks close to its very old-English roots. Only one note (a D-natural instead of a D-sharp) in the modal melodic curvature of that well-known tune "Greensleeves" might strike us as false; otherwise, everything is in order. The one or two surprising modulations encourage us to listen with fresh ears to one of the most truly familiar carols of all time.
Silent Night: Franz Gruber, arr. Michael McGlynn

The story of the creation of *Silent Night* has become almost as much a part of Christmas lore as St. Nicholas or the Christmas Tree. While the true history of the song may not be as miraculous as is often recounted, the tender and touching melody by Franz Gruber (1787–1863), paired with Joseph Mohr’s (1792–1848) simple and evocative text, has become something miraculous for the way it conveys a universal sense of the Christmas spirit to people all over the world. Of the original six verses, three are presented in this version, by Irish composer and conductor, Michael McGlynn. McGlynn is best known as director and founder of the world-renowned Irish choral group, Anúna. His compositional style reflects that unique and ancient culture, combining contemporary, traditional, and ancient musical elements. Incidentally, McGlynn’s arrangement was one of the carols featured in the 2001 CD, “Christmas with Chanticleer, featuring special guest Dawn Upshaw.”

Christmas Spiritual Medley: Trad. Spirituals, arr. Joseph H. Jennings

Christmas is an amalgamation of hundreds of years of cross-cultural traditions, both sacred and secular, including those of the slave community in the American South. The holiday provided the slaves with a break from daily labors as well as special freedoms, including the opportunity to visit family and friends and to partake in recreational and social activities. Music was always an important part of the celebration. The human story of Christmas—a King born in a lowly stable among poor shepherds—inspired many songs for slaves who themselves knew lowliness and poverty. After the slaves’ emancipation, Christmas became even more festive, celebrating the birth of Christ, the coming of the New Year, and their new lives as free men and women.

In 2014, Music Director Emeritus Joseph H. Jennings was the first recipient of Chorus America’s Brazeal Wayne Dennard Award acknowledging his contribution to the African-American choral tradition. During his 25-year tenure as singer and music director with Chanticleer, his gospel and spiritual arrangements became part of Chanticleer’s identity and were appreciated by worldwide audiences. This medley is an example of his remarkable ability to inject the vocal freedom inherent in the Southern Baptist tradition into the structure of classical music.