A Ceremony of Britten: Carols, Hymns, and Lullabies

Friday, December 13, 2012 at 8pm
Sunday, December 15, 2012 at 4pm
Immanuel Lutheran Church
Lexington Avenue at 88th Street

A.M.D.G. (Ad majorem Dei gloriam) Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)
- Prayer I
- Rosa Mystica
- Heaven-Haven
- O Deus, ego amo te

A Shepherd’s Carol Benjamin Britten
Francesca Harris, soprano; Dell Kendall, alto;
Robert Thorpe, tenor; Richard Bonsall, bass
The Chamber Chorus

A Wealdon Trio (The Song of the Women) Benjamin Britten
Robin Beckhard, Katherine Leahy, sopranos; Ellen Stark, alto

A Ceremony of Carols Benjamin Britten
- Procession
- Wolcum Yule!
- There is no Rose
- That Yongë Child
- Balubalow
- As Dew in April
- This little Babe
- Interlude
- In Freezing Winter Night
- Spring Carol
- Deo Gracias
- Recessional

Barbara Zucker-Pinchoff, alto
Katherine Leahy, soprano
Laura Klein, soprano; Cindy Brome, alto
Charlotte Levitt, soprano; Ellen Stark, alto
Women’s voices

Fran Duffy, harp

Psaume 121 Darius Milhaud (1892-1974)

Ave Maria Franz Biebl (1906-2001)
Solo group: Richard Bonsall, Nathaniel Granor, Nate Mickelson
Robert Thorpe, Scott Wilson, Mike Landy

I Wonder as I Wander Appalachian Carol, arranged by John Jacob Niles (1892-1980)
Andy James, tenor

Men’s voices
A Hymn to the Virgin

Solo group: Elspeth Strang, Benardica Sculac-Stern, Nina Reiniger, Mary Lou Russell, Jennifer Trahan, Paul Parsekian, John Pinegar, Mike Landy, Tim DeWerff

Carols and Lullabies (Christmas in the Southwest)

Conrad Susa (1935-2013)

Oh, mi Belén
El Desembre Congelat
Alegria
Richard Bonsall, Tim DeWerff, baritones
A la Nanita Nana
Las Posadas
Solo group: Nate Mickelson, Hsin Wang, Robert Marlowe, James Crowell
Campana sobre Campana
En Belén Tocan a Fuego
Robin Beckhard, soprano; Barbara Zucker-Pinchoff, alto;
Robert Thorpe, tenor
El Noi de la Mare
Solo group: Katherine Leahy, Ellen Stark, Scott Wilson, Bendix Anderson
Chiquirriquitin
El Rorro
Fran Duffy, harp; Stephen Benson, guitar;
William Trigg, marimba and vibraphone

Please turn off all phones and other devices during the performance.

Program Notes, Texts and Translations

Benjamin Britten, born on St. Cecilia’s Day, November 22, 1913, was a supremely gifted musician, the foremost English composer of the twentieth century and one of a handful of important composers of the world. Conductor, composer, and pianist, as well as director of a renowned festival, his works for the human voice are an especially important part of his creative output. He started composing at a young age, and one piece we present today was written at age 16.

Since Britten’s accomplishments are well known, I will not list them, but rather mention The New Amsterdam Singers’ own history with his choral works. Not counting those on today’s program, we have sung nine substantial Britten works, most of them a cappella, and several of these we have sung many times (Rejoice in the Lord, Hymn to St. Cecilia, Sacred and Profane). Today we sing five works by Britten, ranging from his most familiar, A Ceremony of Carols, to his most obscure, A.M.D.G.

A.M.D.G. (Ad majorem Dei gloriam)

We begin with A.M.D.G., which stands for Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam, the motto of the Jesuits. The piece has an interesting history. Britten wrote it in 1939 when he and Peter Pears first arrived in the United States. It was intended for Pears and his “Round Table Singers,” who planned to perform it in London. The war intervened. Pears could not return to England, and the seven part songs were not performed. Britten withdrew the work, and gave the opus number to another piece.

One reason the work was not performed for a long time is that the songs are difficult, and several are very difficult indeed. But in 1984 they received first a partial performance and then, months later, a full performance in London by the London Sinfonietta Chorus, who then recorded the piece.

Britten has written music to some of the greatest poets of our time, W.H. Auden, Gerard Manley Hopkins, and Ford Madox Ford. Hopkins wrote the texts for A.M.D.G., which are infused with very personal mysticism. He became a Jesuit priest at age 24, so it is not surprising that his poetry reflects his faith.

Today we sing four of the set of seven. Prayer I is a heart-on-the-sleeve, rhapsodic introduction to the set. Rosa Mystica is longer and more subdued. Britten sets up a “pedal” (a repeated note, in this case an A) in the tenors and basses; that mantra continues for five pages. Then the pedal is given to sopranos and altos, later to altos and tenors. Only after eight pages does Britten abandon the pedal for a new harmony in a series of (rhetorical) questions. Finally the pedal returns, and the piece ends with all voices on the repeated A.

Heaven-Haven is subtitled “A nun takes the veil.” The poem is in the voice of a novice seeking tranquility. Britten sets the first verse for women’s voices alone, and the second for men alone. O Deus, ego amo te takes the form of a passionate choral recitative. He marks it “Presto-senza misure”; the rhythm is totally free and seems as if improvised in response to the urgency of the words. The complex, shifting harmonies are anything but improvised!

Prayer I

Jesu that dost in Mary dwell,
Be in thy servants’ hearts as well,
In the spirit of thy holiness,
In the fullness of thy force and stress,
In the very ways that thy life goes,
And virtues that thy pattern shows;

In the sharing of thy mysteries;
And every power in us that is
Against thy power put under feet
In the Holy Ghost the Paraclete
To the glory of the Father.

Amen
Rosa Mystica

“The Rose is a mystery” – where is it found?
Is it anything true? Does it grow upon ground?
It was made of earth’s mould, but it went from men’s eyes,
And its place is a secret and shut in the skies,
In the Gardens of God, in the daylight divine,
Find me a place by thee, Mother of mine.

But where was it formerly? Which is the spot
That was blest in it once, though now it is not?
It is Galilee’s growth; it grew at God’s will
And broke into bloom upon Nazareth hill.
In the Gardens of God, in the daylight divine,
I shall look on thy loveliness, Mother of mine.

Tell me the name now, tell me its name.
The heart guesses easily: is it the same?
Mary the Virgin, well the heart knows,
She is the Mystery, she is that Rose.
In the Gardens of God, in the daylight divine,
I shall come home to thee, Mother of mine.

Does it smell sweet, too, in that holy place?
Sweet unto God and the sweetness is grace:
The breath of it bathes the great heaven above
In grace that is charity, grace that is love.
To thy breast, to thy glory divine
Draw me by charity, Mother of mine.

Heaven-Haven
A nun takes the veil
I have desired to go
Where springs not fail,
To fields where flies no sharp and sided hail,
And a few lilies blow.

O Deus, Ego Amo Te
O God, I love thee, I love thee –
Not out of hope of heaven for me
Nor fearing not to love and be
In the everlasting burning,
Thou, thou, my Jesus, after me
Didst reach thine arms out dying,
And I have asked to be
Where no storms come,
Where the green swell is in the havens dumb,
And out of the swing of the sea.

And have I thought thee
For my sake sufferest nails, and lance,
Mocked and marred countenance,
Sorrows passing number,
Sweat and care and cumber,
Yea and death, and this for me,
And thou couldst see me sinning:

Then I, why should not I love thee,
Jesu, so much in love with me?
Not for heaven’s sake; not to be
Out of hell by loving thee;
Not for any gains I see;
But just the way that thou didst me
I do love and I will love thee:
What must I love thee, Lord, for then?
For being my king and God.
Amen.

A Shepherd’s Carol

A Shepherd’s Carol is a short, secular piece from 1944 in which Britten starts with a lilting melody which becomes a refrain heard after each verse (for a total of five times). Auden’s poem has four verses, one more nonsensical than the last, and Britten has four solo voices declaim the words in dramatic fashion. Auden had written the poem for a Christmas oratorio called For The Time Being, intended for a BBC radio program called A Poet’s Christmas.

O lift your little pinkie, and touch the winter sky.
Love’s all over the mountains where the beautiful go to die.
If Time were the wicked sheriff, in a horse opera,
I’d pay for riding lessons and take his gun away.
If I were a Valentino, and Fortune were a broad,
I’d hypnotise that iceberg till she kissed me of her own accord.
If I’d stacked up the velvet and my crooked rib were dead,
I’d be breeding white canaries and eating crackers in bed.
But my cuffs are soiled and fraying. The kitchen clock is slow,
and over the Blue Waters the grass grew long ago.

A Wealdon Trio (The Song of the Women)

A Wealdon Trio (The Song of the Women) is one Britten wrote in 1929 at age 16 for women’s trio. This seldom performed work sets a poem by Ford Madox Ford, and is written in working-class dialect. It exhibits an awareness of the poverty behind the scenes in the affluent 1920s, and seems as relevant now as it was then.

When ye’ve got a child ‘ats whist for want of food,
And a grate as grey’s y’r ‘air for want of wood,
An’ y’r man and you ain’t nowise not much good;
Oh – It’s hard work a-Christmassing, Carolling,
Singin’ songs about the Babe what’s born.

When ye’ve ‘eered the bailiff’s ‘and upon the latch,
And ye’ve feeled the rain a-trickling through the thatch,
An’ y’r man can’t git no stones to break ner yit no sheep to watch —
Oh – We’ve got to come a-Christmassing, Carolling,
Singin’ of the Sheperds on that morn.
‘E was a man as poor as us, very near,
An ‘E ad ’is trials and danger,
An I think ’E’ll think of us when ’E sees us singin’ ’ere;
for ’is mother was poor, like us, poor dear,
An she bore Him in a manger.

Oh – It’s warm in the heavens, but it’s cold upon the earth,
And we ain’t no food at table nor no fire upon the hearth;
And it’s bitter hard a-Christmassing, Carolling,
Singin’ songs about our Saviour’s birth;
Singin' songs about the Babe what's born;  
Singin' of the shepherds on that morn.

A Ceremony of Carols  
Britten

Of Britten’s many choral works, his Ceremony of Carols, which sets medieval and Renaissance carol texts to original tunes, is probably his best loved work in this country. The 29-year-old Britten wrote it at sea, on his 1942 voyage home from a three-year stay in America. This piece marks Britten’s return to England in many ways; after setting French, Italian, and American texts, he returned on this ocean voyage to English verse, setting both the English carol texts of this piece, and the poetry of his countryman W.H. Auden (the Hymn to St. Cecilia, which Britten also completed before landfall). More importantly, this Christmas piece marks a musical return to all that was associated with his childhood – bells, boy choirs, modal harmony, and plainsong from the English Church tradition.

Written for treble voices and harp, A Ceremony of Carols is a cycle of twelve movements containing great variety within a broadly unified formal scheme. The processional, recessional, and harp interlude are based on Gregorian chant. Both the joyful second movement and the other third movement are based on bell-like ostinato figures for the harp. In “There is no Rose,” the harp’s constant repetition of C, F, C, F, changes only once, at the word “transeamus” (“we transcend”).

The next three movements are on texts about Mary. An eerie solo recitative comparing Mary’s song to that of the nightingale is followed by the cradle song itself, “Balulalow,” for solo and chorus. The idea of rocking is intensified by alternating 6/8 and 3/4 rhythms and the major-minor tonalities. In “As dew in April,” rhapsodic choral passages frame a gentle middle section in which three voices dovetail to form a two-voice canon.

The first half of the cycle reaches a fiery conclusion with Robert Southwell’s colorful poem, “This little Babe,” in which the baby Jesus is imagined in battle against Satan; warlike verses are set to a driving rhythmic accompaniment. The martial subject is heard first in unison, then as a two-voice canon, and then as a three-voice canon, with the musical entrances piling up like increasing troops joining in wild pursuit.

The “Interlude” (marked andante pastorale), for harp alone, is based on the chant melody of the opening “Hodie,” and is remarkable for its use of a pentatonic scale and a bell-like ostinato similar to the sound of the gamelan orchestras to which Britten had recently been introduced. With its gentle, improvisatory quality, the “Interlude” provides a total contrast to the fiery combustiveness of the previous movement. “In Freezing Winter Night” combines ostinato patterns for harp and alto voices with a canon for sopranos. Harp tremolo and dissonance represent shivering cold; the shadowy beginning and end depict the homely details of Jesus’ birth; a passionate middle section in a new key evokes the princely court imagined at the stable.

The “Spring Carol,” a soprano duet in a lighter mood, provides an example of the many English carols written for other seasons. The fifteenth-century poem “Deo Gracias” (“Adam lay ibounden”) is a delightful bit of medieval philosophy linking the events of the Old and New Testaments (“ne had the appil take ben, ne hadde never our lady a ben hevene quene”). The recessional “Hodie” ends the cycle in symmetrical fashion.

The translations are by Albert Hart and Ulla Dydo.

1. Procession  
Hodie Christus natus est:  
hodie Salvator apparuit:  
hodie in terra canunt angeli:  
lentantur archangeli:  
hodie exulant justi dicentes:  
Gloria in excelsis Deo, Alleluia!

2. Wolcum Yole!  
Wolcum be thou hevene king.  
Wolcum Yole!  
Wolcum born in one morning.  
Wolcum for whom we sall sing!  
Wolcum, Thomas marter one,  
Wolcum seintes lefe and dere,  
Wolcum Innocentes every one,  
Wolcum, Twelfthe Day both in fere,  
Wolcum be ye Stevenes and Jon,  
Wolcum ye, good New Yere.  
Wolcum Yole!

3. There is no Rose  
There is no rose of such vertu  
As is the rose that bare Jesu.  
Alleluia.

4. That Yongë Child  
That yongë child when it gan weep  
With song she lulled him asleap:  
That was so sweet a melody  
It passèd alle minstrelsy.

4b. Balulalow  
O my dere hert, young Jesu sweit,  
Prepare thy credil in my spreit,  
And I sall rock thee to my hert,  
And never mair from thee depart.  
But I sall praise thee evermore!  
With sanges sweit unto thy gloir;

Today Christ is born,  
today the Savior has appeared,  
today on earth angels sing  
and archangels rejoice;  
today the just joyfully exclaim:  
Glory to God on high,  
Alleluia!

Candellesmes, Queene of bliss,  
Wolcum bothe to more and lesse,  
Wolcum be ye that are here,  
Wolcum alle and make good cheer.  
Wolcum alle another yere,  
Wolcum Yole!  
– Anon. 14th century

hevene = heavenly; Thomas marter one = Thomas, first martyr; seintes = saints, lefe = lovable; Innocents = children massacred by Herod; fere = companion

The aungels sungen the shepherds to:  
Gloria in excelsis Deo!  
Gauceamus.

Leave we all this worldly mirth,  
and follow we this joyful birth.  
Transeamus.  
– Anon. 14th century

Res miranda = miracle; pares forma = all of one substance; angels sungen = angels sang; Gauceamus = let us rejoice; Transeamus = let us cross over (transcend)

The nightingale sang also:  
Her song is hoarse and nought thereto:  
Who so attendeth to her song  
And leaveth the first then doth he wrong.  
– Anon. 14th century

gan weep = began to weep  
gan weep = began to weep

The knees of my hert sall I bow,  
and sing that richt Balulalow!  
– James, John, and Robert Wedderburns

sweit = sweet, mair = more, spreit = spirit, sanges = songs, gloir = glory, richt = right and proper
5. As Dew in Aprille
I sing of a maiden
That is makeles:
King of all kings
To her son she ches.
He came al so stille
There his moder was,
As dew in Aprille
That falleth on the grass.

6. This little Babe
This little Babe so few days old
Is come to rife Satan's fold:
All hell doth at his presence quake,
though he himself for cold do shake;
For in this weak unarmed wise
The gates of hell he will surprise.

8.  In Freezing Winter Night
Behold a silly tender babe
In freezing winter night,
In homely manger trembling lies
In freezing winter night,
Behold a silly tender babe
In freezing winter night.

9. Spring Carol
Pleasure it is to hear iwis,
The Birdës sing,
The deer in the dale,
The sheep in the vale,
The corn springing.

10. Deo Gracias
Adam lay ibounden,
bounden in a bond;
Four thousand winter
thought he not to long
And all was for an appil,
an appil that he tok,
As clerkes finden
written in their book.
Ne had the appil takè ben,
The appil takè ben.

11. Recession
Hodie Christus natus est:
hodie Salvator apparuit:
hodie in terra canunt angeli:
laetantur archangeli:
hodie exultant justi dicentes:
Gloria in excelsis Deo,
Alleluia!

Psaume 121

Milhaud

A contemporary of Britten’s, Darius Milhaud was a French composer who also traveled to the United States in 1940. In Paris Milhaud had been a member of the group of composers known as “Les Six.” A prolific composer of nearly 450 works, he was influenced by jazz and often worked in the theater. During the period 1947-1971 he spent alternate years teaching at Mills College in California and at the Paris Conservatoire.

Milhaud’s Psaume 121 was written on commission from the Harvard Glee Club in 1921. He used a French translation of the psalm by his close associate, Paul Claudel, the diplomat/poet. There are some anomalies concerning the text: one bible lists the psalm as number 122. And the English and French versions use different tenses; this can be explained by the Hebrew language, which often does not distinguish between past and future.

Milhaud’s lively setting is for men’s voices, divided into 6 or more parts. The upward scales reflect the psalm text (a group of psalms were known as Songs of Degrees or Songs of Ascents in the Hebrew bible). Near the end there are six measures of murky, bi-tonal writing, which resolve to a sunny major chord by the end.

Je me suis fondu de joie en ces choses
qui m’ont été dites,
Nous avons dans la maison du Seigneur
Nos pieds se sont trop attachés en ces lieux
que te précédent Jérusalem.
Jérusalem qui est édifiée comme une ville
dont la participation est en elle-même
C’est là que sont montées les tribus en triomphe,
Les tribus du Seigneur ont monté

Psalm 121

Walter Ivan Samartsev

I was glad when they said unto me,
Let us go into the house of the Lord.
Our feet shall stand within thy gates,
O Jerusalem.
Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together:
Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord,
Célébration qui est Israel
pour rendre témoignage au Seigneur.

Là ces trônes en une grande assise au
dessus de la demeure de David.
Que votre prière soit la paix qu’il y a
dans Jérusalem!
Et l’abondance à ceux que l’aime
À cause de la demeure du Seigneur
votre Dieu
J’ai cherché le bonheur en Toi.

Unto the testimony of Israel
To give thanks unto the name of the
Lord.
For there are set thrones of judgment,
The thrones of the house of David.
Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
They shall prosper that love thee.
Peace be within thy walls,
And prosperity within thy palaces.
For my brethren and companions’
sake,
I will now say, Peace be within thee.
Because of the house of the Lord our
God
I will seek thy good.

Ave Maria

In his seven-part Ave Maria for male chorus, the 20th-century German
composer Franz Biebl uses double chorus texture. The motet alternates between the
story of the annunciation and incarnation, sung by three soloists, and the Ave
Maria, sung by the four-part chorus with descant provided by the soloists.
The first two solo verses describe the dialogue between Mary and the
Archangel, and the chorus follows each with the first half of the Ave Maria,
praising Mary. Following the last solo, which describes the incarnation, the texture
broadens as the chorus and soloists conclude the Ave Maria, beseeching Mary to
intercede with her son for the sins of the world (“Sancta Maria ... ora pro nobis
peccatoribus ...”). The motet ends with a short Amen which intertwines the chorus
and solo parts, signifying the synthesis of heaven and earth embodied in both the
soloists’ incarnation story and the act of prayer, in which all parts join.

Angelus Domini nuntiavit Mariæ et
concepit de Spiritu sancto.

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus
tecum, benedicta tu in mulieribus et
benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus.
Maria dixit: Ecce ancilla Domini, fiat
mihi secundum verbum tuum.

Et verbum caro factum est et habitavit in
nobis.
Sancta Maria, mater Dei, ora pro nobis
peccatoribus nunc et in hora mortis
nostra: Amen.

I Wonder as I Wander

The singer-composer John Jacob Niles was renowned for collecting folk
music. His arrangement, for men’s voices, of I Wonder as I Wander, an
Appalachian tune, is one of his best.

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.
When Mary birthed Jesus, ’twas in a cow’s stall,
With 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.
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, ’cause He was the King.

A Hymn to the Virgin

We return to Britten with Hymn to the Virgin, a piece sung at his funeral. This
work was written in 1930 when he was 17, and was revised in 1934. It is an
antiphonal and “macaronic” piece in which the full chorus sings in English,
answered by a smaller chorus in Latin, a common practice in medieval hymns.

Of one that is so fair and bright
Velut maris stella,
Brighter than the day is light
Parens et puella:
I cry to thee, thou see to me,
Lady, pray thy son for me
Tam pia
That I may come to thee,
Maria!
All this world was forlorn
Eva peccatrice,
Till our Lord was y-born
De te genetrice
With
Salutis;
The well springeth out of thee
Virtutis
Lady, flow’r of everything,
Rosa sine spina,
thou bare Jesu, Heaven’s King
Gratia divina:
Chosen:
art Perfect.
Carols and Lullabies (Christmas in the Southwest) Susa

Conrad Susa is an American composer who has specialized in opera as well as scores for theater and film. He has received commissions from the San Francisco Opera and Minnesota Opera Company, among others. He is on the faculty of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

When Susa was asked to write a companion piece to Britten’s Ceremony of Carols, he felt he had been asked to “write a hit”. He delayed for some years until a friend showed him a collection of traditional Spanish carols. He wrote:

“Excited, I juggled them around to form a narrative. I noted their many connections to Renaissance music along with their homey, artful simplicity. Finally, the overriding image of a Southwestern piñata party for the new baby led me to add guitar and marimba to Britten’s harp…”

For Carols and Lullabies Susa has included two texts in Catalan and eight in Spanish. He has specified his preference for using North American Spanish pronunciation like Mexican or Puerto Rican, rather than classic European Spanish. The “narrative” takes us from Mary and Joseph’s journey, to the poetic idea of spring in winter, to lullabies, scenes at the manger, bells ringing in honor of the birth, fires lit in celebration, gifts, and more lullabies.

I. ¡Oh mi Belén! (Vizcaya, Spain)
¡Oh mi Belén!
Llegó tu hora bien amada.
La luz que irradiás sin cesar
Es como un faro que nos guía
En nuestra ruta, noche y día.
¡Oh mi Belén!

II. El Desembre Congelat (Catalonia)
El desembre congelat, confús es retira.
Abril de flors coronat, tot el món admira.
Quan en un jardi d’amor neix una divina flor;
D’una rosa bella, fecunda y poncella.
El primer Pare causà la nit tenebrosa.
Que a tot el món afuscà la vista penosa;
Mes en una mitja nit, brilla el sol que n’és eixit.
D’una bella aurora
Que el cel enamora.
El més de maig ha florit, sense ser encara.
Un lliri blanc y polit, de fragrancia rara.
Que per tot el món se sent, de Llevant fins a Ponent.
Tota sa dulçura
I olor, amb ventura.

Oh, my Bethlehem!
Your well-beloved hour has arrived!
The light you shine unceasingly
Is like a beacon that guides us
On our way, night and day.
Oh my Bethlehem!

In frozen December, confusion itself retreats
It is like April, crowned with flowers, admired by all,
When, in a garden of love, a divine flower is born
Of a beautiful, fruitful, budding rose.

The first Father caused the dark night.
Which for everyone obscures painful sight.
But one midnight, the sun shines without ceasing
From a beautiful dawn
With which the heavens fall in love.
The month of May has flowered,
without it being May.
A lily white and gentle, of rare fragrance
Which everyone senses, from East to West,
All its sweetness
And bouquet, with great good fortune.

I. ¡Oh mi Belén! (Vizcaya, Spain)

III. Alegria (Puerto Rico)
¿Alegria, alegria, alegria,
A rurru, niño chiquito, ya está arrulladito el niño.
¿Quieres que te adore todos los pastores?
¿Quieres que te adoren todos los pastores?

IV. A la Nanita Nana (Spain)
¿Quiere que se cueste, mi bien, de las pajas?
¿Quiere que se cueste, mi bien, de las pajas?

V. Las Posadas (Spain)
¿Quiere que te adoren todos los pastores?
¿Quiere que te adoren todos los pastores?

Towards Bethlehem
Mary and her loving husband set off
Bringing along an all-powerful God.

Joy, joy, joy,
Joy, joy and pleasure!
That the Virgin goes
With her husband towards Bethlehem.

Just as soon as they arrived in Bethlehem
They asked around for lodgings
But no one wanted to put them up
Because they looked so poor.

Joy, joy, joy,
Joy, joy and pleasure!
That the Virgin goes
With her husband towards Bethlehem.

On seeing them pass by,
The little birds of the forest
Were singing them melodies
With their harmonious trills.

Joy, joy, joy,
Joy, joy and pleasure!
That the Virgin goes
With her husband towards Bethlehem.

My Jesus is tired, blessed may he be.
Little fountain, you run clear and resonant
Nightingale, in the forest, singing, you weep
Hush while the cradle is rocked.

V. The Lodgings
Shall I take you from the straw, my treasure?
Shall all the shepherds come adore you?
Coo coo, little child, the child has fallen asleep.
My dear Father, my God and Lord,
who gladly suffered the harshness of the cold.
Coo coo, little child, the child has fallen to sleep.
VI. Campana sobre Campana (Andalusia, Spain)

¡Campana sobre campana,
Y sobre campana una!
Asómate a la ventana,
Y verse al Niño en la cuna.

Belén, campanas de Belén
Que los ángeles tocan
¿Qué nueva me traéis?
Recogido tu rebaño,
¿Adónde vas pastorcito?
Voy a llevar al portal
Requesón, manteca y vino.
Si aún las estrellas alumbran,
¿Pastor, dónde quieres ir?
Voy al portal en caso el Niño
Con Él me dejo dormir.

VII. En Belén Tocan a Fuego (Castilla, Spain)

En Belén tocan a fuego
Del portal salen las llamas.
Porque dicen que ha nacido El Redentor
De las almas.
Brincan y bailan los peces en el río,
Brincan y bailan de ver a Dios nacido.
En un portal de Belén
Nació un clavel encarnado
Que por redimir el mundo se ha vuelto
Lirio morado.
La Virgen lava pañales
Y los tiende en el romero.
Los pajarillos cantaban y el agua se iba riendo.

VIII. El Noi de la Mare (Catalonia)

¿Qué li darem a n’el Noi de la Mare?
¿Qué li darem que li sápiga bon?
Li darem panses en unes balances,
Li darem figues en un paneró.
¿Qué li darem a n’el Noi de la Mare?
¿Qué li darem a l’hermos Infantó?

Panses i figues i nuez i olives,
Panses i figues i mel i mató.

IX. Chiquiriquitin (Andalusia, Spain)

¡Chiquiriquitin!
Metidito entre pajas:
¡Ay del chiquiriquitin!
Queridito del alma.
Entre el buey y la mula Dios ha nacido,
Y en un pobre pesebre le han recogido.

X. El Rorro (Mexico)

A la rurru, niño chiquito.
Duérmete ya, mi Jesucito.
Del elefante hasta el mosquito
Guarden silencio, no le hagan ruido.
Noche venturoso, noche de alegría.
Bendita la dulce, divina María.
Coros celestiales, con su dulce acento,
Canten la ventura de este nacimiento.

Upcoming NAS Concerts

Calamity and Consolation: From Darkness to Light
A timeless requiem and a new classic from Finland
Friday, March 7, 2014 at 8 p.m., Sunday, March 9, 2014 at 4 p.m.
The Church of the Holy Trinity, 316 East 88th Street

Full Fathom Five: Shakespeare in Song
Composers from many lands in love with the bard
Thursday, May 22, 2014 at 8 p.m.
Saint Ignatius of Antioch Episcopal Church
552 West End Avenue at 87th Street
NEW AMSTERDAM SINGERS is incorporated as a nonprofit charitable organization under the laws of the State of New York. Contributions are tax-deductible. Dues and ticket sales meet only half of our annual expenses. Donations of any size are gratefully accepted and should be mailed to New Amsterdam Singers, Inc., Box 373, Cathedral Station, New York, NY 10025. A copy of our latest annual report is available upon written request.

NAS Restricted Endowment Fund

At the conclusion of our thirtieth-anniversary capital campaign, NAS established a restricted endowment fund to help provide a steady source of income and stability in future years. Thanks to the generosity of more than a hundred donors, we achieved a sizable beginning principal balance. Additional gifts by check, stock transfer, or bequest are most welcome.

NAS Online

Visit our home page, www.nasingers.org, for the latest chorus news. The site includes a 35th anniversary compilation of the many commissions and premieres that New Amsterdam Singers has been proud to present. (Click on “repertoire.”) For a selective chronology, click on “history.” You can even hear us sing when you click on “listen.”

For updates on our concerts, tours, and benefits, photo galleries of chorus events, alumni news, and a look back at highlights of the past 45 years, “like” us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter.

facebook.com/NewAmsterdamSingers
twitter.com/nasingers

THE NEW AMSTERDAM SINGERS

Sopranos
Kimberly Allan
Robin D. Beckhard
Julia Bradley
Joanne Hubbard Cossa*
Dana Boocock Crowell**
Elizabeth Enenbach**
Francesca A. Harris**
Azadeh Hadim
Laura Klein
Dana Kramer
Alyssa Lafosse
Katherine E. Leaby*
Jaime Leifer
Charlotte Levitt
Andrea Olejar*
Megan E. O’Neil
Judith Pott*
Mary Lou Russell
Bernardica T. Sculac Sterb
Elspeth Strang
Jennifer Trahan
Ilona van Tuinen**

Tenors
Max Blum
Michael Goldner
Nathaniel Granor*
André Guthman
Andy James
Robert J. Marlowe
Paul A. Meyers
Nate Mickelson
David Moroney**

Altos
Amanda Ball
Gabi Barton*
Elizabeth K. Basile**

Basses
Richard Abel
Bendix Anderson*
Richard Bonsall*
Joseph J. Brooks
James P. Crowell*
Timothy DeWerff*
Jethro Eisenstein
Scott Gillam
Philip Holmgren**
Steve Holtje
Michael Scott Landy
Michael Milton
Robert H. Palmer
Ray Scheindlin**
Michael Zimmerman
*Chamber Chorus
**Chamber Chorus only

About the Artists

The New Amsterdam Singers, now in its forty-sixth year, is known for the breadth and variety of its repertoire. Specializing in a cappella and double chorus works, the chorus sings music ranging from the 16th century through contemporary pieces, including many it has commissioned. Recent world premiers include compositions by Jacob Avshalomov, Behzad Ranjbaran, Alla Borzova, Alexander Dmitriev, Charles Fussell, Katherine Hoover, Paul Alan Levi and Ronald Perera. New York City premiers include works by Adolphus Hailstork, Matthew Harris, Kirke Mechem and Daniel Pinkham, and more than twenty others.

NAS has performed with the New York Philharmonic under Leonard Bernstein, at Alice Tully Hall as a guest of Clarion Concerts, and with the American-Russian Youth Orchestra under Leon Botstein at Tanglewood and Carnegie Hall. In 1999, NAS appeared with Anonymous Four and the Concordia Orchestra in Richard Einhorn’s Voices of Light at Avery Fisher Hall, under Marin Alsop. In 2006 NAS performed Voices of Light at the Winter Garden of the World Financial Center, with Anonymous Four and the Ensemble Sospeso under David Hattner, for broadcast on WNYC’s “New Sounds.”

NAS appears internationally under Ms. Longstreth’s direction. The chorus has sung at the Irakleion Festival in Greece; the Granada Festival in Spain; the International Choral Festival at Miedzyzdroje, Poland; the Festival of the Algarve in Portugal; Les Chorégies d’Orange in France; and the Llangollen International
Musical Eisteddfod in Wales. More recently the chorus appeared in Turkey, Scandinavia, Croatia, Spain, Russia and the Baltics, and Argentina and Uruguay. In 2010 NAS was pleased to receive permission from the State and Treasury Departments to tour Cuba on a cultural visa. In 2013 NAS performed in South Africa.

CLARA LONGSTRETH has conducted New Amsterdam Singers since its formation in 1968. She has served on the faculty of Rutgers University, where she conducted the Voorhees Choir of Douglas College. A student of conductor G. Wallace Woodworth at Harvard University, Ms. Longstreth trained for her master’s degree at the Juilliard School under Richard Westenburg. Further study included work with Amy Kaiser and Semyon Bychkov at the Mannes College of Music, and with Helmuth Rilling at the Oregon Bach Festival.

In 1997, Ms. Longstreth guest-conducted the Limón Dance Company in performance with NAS and the Riverside Choir. In 2000 she conducted NAS and the Mannes College Orchestra in the folk opera Down in the Valley during Symphony Space’s “Wall to Wall Kurt Weill” program. In 2005 she conducted the Park Avenue Chamber Symphony in a joint performance with NAS of Paul Alan Levi’s Mark Twain Suite. She is a frequent guest conductor at the annual Messiah Sing-In at Avery Fisher Hall and at the summer sings of the West Village Chorale, the New York Choral Society and other choruses. In February 2006 Ms. Longstreth presented a lecture-demonstration on “Adventures in Programming” at the Eastern Division Convention of the American Choral Directors Association. In 2007 she was engaged to serve as consultant on contemporary music to Hunter High School under a new program funded by the New York State Music Fund. In 2009 she received an Alumnae Recognition Award from Radcliffe College for her founding and longevity of direction of New Amsterdam Singers.

Ms. Longstreth has served as adjudicator of choral festivals, conducted the Riverdale Country School choral groups for many years, and conducted the Juilliard Chorus and Orchestra at Alice Tully Hall. Of Ms. Longstreth’s programs, Allan Kozinn wrote in the New York Times: “When a director takes up the challenge of building a cohesive program around a broad theme, we are reminded that programming can be an art.”

MAX BLUM received his Master’s degree in Choral Conducting at the Yale School of Music, where he studied with Masaaki Suzuki, Marguerite Brooks, and Jeffrey Douma. In 2011 he taught and directed a Chinese middle school choir in Xinning, China, and led performances at cathedrals and concert halls across Europe, including an Ensembles at the Berliner Dom, as the Assistant Conductor of the Yale Glee Club. He is Adjunct Professor of Choral Music at Quinnipiac University.

PEN YING FANG studied with Paul Hoffmann and Barbara Gonzalez-Palmer, earning a BM and MM in Piano, at Rutgers University. Ms. Fang has accompanied many prominent artists in master classes, including Keith Underwood, Mary Glennie, Brian Macintosh, and Christopher Arneson. In 2007 she played at the Florence Voice Seminar in Florence, Italy. Currently she serves as a staff accompanist at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey, and teaches piano students in the central New Jersey area.

Perucussionist WILLIAM TRIGG has appeared many times with NAS over the years. He has premiered solo works by Babbitt, Bouchard, Dlugoszewski, Kupferman, & Shaye, and was solo marimbist in the New York City Ballet’s premiere production of Michael Torke’s “Echo.”. He is member of the Brooklyn Philharmonic and the Car Music Project, and was a founding member of the Manhattan Marimba Quartet and the PULSE Percussion Ensemble. He has performed and recorded with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Steve Reich & Musicians, the Philip Glass Ensemble, the San Francisco Symphony, the Group for Contemporary Music, New York Virtuosi, American Composers Orchestra, the Orchestra of St. Luke’s, and numerous others. He has premiered over 100 solo, chamber, and orchestral works. He is on the faculty of The College of New Jersey.

Guitarist STEPHEN BENSON is comfortable in a variety of musical settings from jazz and classical music to rock, blues, rhythm and blues, Broadway, bluegrass and klezmer music. He has performed and or recorded with people as diverse as Phoebe Snow, John Sebastian, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Natalie Cole, Jessica Simpson and Nick Lachey, the New York Philharmonic, the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. The Philadelphia Orchestra, the Orchestra of St. Lukes and the American Symphony Orchestra. He has been a regular performer at the Grand Canyon Music Festival and has performed at the Carnival of Venice. He currently performs on Broadway in the orchestra pits of The Lion King, Chicago and Annie. He is on the jazz faculty at Montclair State University.

FRAN DUFFY is Principal Harp of the Wheeling and Allentown Symphony Orchestras and the Hudson Valley Philharmonic. She has performed with the New York Philharmonic, the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, the Albany Symphony and the Hartford Symphony under conductors including Keith Lockhart, Kurt Masur, Charles Dutoit, and Lorin Maazel. She is an active free-lancer in the NY Metropolitan area, playing Broadway shows such as Mel Brooks’ The Producers, Beauty and the Beast, The Fantasticks and the Radio City Music Hall Christmas Spectacular. Ms. Duffy has toured the USA with the River City Brass Band in addition to performing with the Charleston Symphony and in the New York City area as a bass trombonist. She has been on the faculty of the Brevard Music Center in North Carolina.

NAS CDs

NAS released its 40th Anniversary 2-CD set, a compilation of best-loved live performances. The double album includes almost 2½ hours of music and sells for just $20. The collection includes 24 selections, dating from our Merkin Concert Hall debut in May 1983. Composers represented include J. S. Bach, Schein, Schütz, Haydn, Schubert, Dvořák, Brahms, Byrd, Copland, Joplin, Poulenc, Frank Martin, Britten, Paul Alan Levi, Matthew Harris, Ronald Perera and Irving Fine.

NAS also has available our second commercial compact disc, Island of Hope, featuring 20th-century American choral music. It includes works by Leonard Bernstein, Ricky Ian Gordon, Paul Alan Levi, Ronald Perera and Randall Thompson. Our first CD, American Journey, released in 1993, also focuses on American composers, among them Samuel Barber, Matthew Harris, Charles Ives and Halsey Stevens. Both appear on the Albany Records label. Both of these CDs are available for $15 each at our concerts.

NAS CDs can also be obtained by mail from New Amsterdam Singers, P.O. Box 373, New York, NY 10025. Please add $3 for shipping and handling on mail orders. Tapes and CDs of selected NAS performances are also available.
The New Amsterdam Singers gratefully acknowledges those who have helped make today’s program possible (2012-2013).

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Malcolm & Carolyn Wiener

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Dan & Rae Emmett
Forest Laboratories, Inc.
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Dr. Attallah Kappas
Hannah Kerwin
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Elizabeth Basile
Robin D. Beckhard
Joseph Brooks
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Margaret & Barry Bryan
Gilman Burke
Jethro Eisenstein & Stefany Gordon
Stacy Farley & Peter Davoren
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