

# A HOLIDAY TRADITION

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The North Shore Choral Society  
Donald Chen, conductor

“Saint Nicolas”  
Benjamin Britten

Mark Eldred  
Tenor



Seasonal  
Delights

Sunday, December 7, 2003 2:30 PM  
Saints Faith, Hope & Charity Church  
191 Linden Street, Winnetka



THE NSCS IS SUPPORTED IN PART BY THE ILLINOIS ARTS COUNCIL

# PROGRAM

SAINT NICOLAS ..... Benjamin Britten (1913—1976)  
Mark Eldred, *Nicolas*

- |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| I. INTRODUCTION                               | VI. NICOLAS FROM PRISON             |
| II. THE BIRTH OF NICOLAS                      | VII. NICOLAS AND THE PICKLED BOYS   |
| III. NICOLAS DEVOTES HIMSELF TO GOD           | VIII. HIS PIETY AND MARVELOUS WORKS |
| IV. HE JOURNEYS TO PALESTINE                  | IX. THE DEATH OF NICOLAS            |
| V. NICOLAS COMES TO MYRA AND IS CHOSEN BISHOP |                                     |

## *Intermission*

HODIE from *A Ceremony of Carols* ..... Benjamin Britten  
ONCE IN ROYAL DAVID'S CITY ..... Henry J. Gauntlett (1805-1876)  
O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL ..... Thomas Helmore (1811-1890)  
LO, HOW A ROSE E'ER BLOOMING ..... arr. Michael Praetorius (1571-1621)



A BOY WAS BORN ..... Benjamin Britten  
ALLELUIA ..... Randall Thompson (1899—1984)  
CAROL, WITH LULLABY ..... Phillis Margaret Tate (1911—1987)



SALVATOR MUNDI ..... William Mathias (1934—1992)  
SUSANNI                      CHRISTE, REDEMPTOR OMNIUM                      WELCOME, YULE



*The audience is invited to sing along in the following carols:*

DING DONG MERRILY ON HIGH ..... arr. Charles Wood (1866-1926)  
ON THIS DAY ..... arr. Gustav Holst (1874-1934)  
O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL ..... arr. John F. Wade (1711-1786)  
JOY TO THE WORLD ..... George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

SAINT NICOLAS..... Benjamin Britten

I. INTRODUCTION

Our eyes are blinded  
by the holiness you bear.  
The bishop's robe, the mitre,  
and the cross of gold.  
Obscure the simple man within the Saint.  
Strip off your glory, Nicolas! and speak!

*[Nicolas]*

*Across the tremendous bridge  
of sixteen hundred years,  
I come to stand in worship with you,  
As I stood among my faithful  
congregation long ago.  
All who knelt beside me then are gone.  
Their name is dust,  
their tombs are grass and clay,  
Yet still their shining seed of faith  
survives in you!  
It weathers time, it springs again in you!  
With you it stands like forest oak  
Or withers with the grasses under foot.  
Preserve the living Faith  
for which your fathers fought!  
For Faith was won  
by centuries of sacrifice,  
And many martyrs died  
that you might worship God.*

Help us, Lord! to find the hidden road  
That leads from love to greater love,  
From faith to greater faith.  
Strengthen us, O Lord!  
Screw up our strength  
to serve Thee with simplicity.

II. THE BIRTH OF NICOLAS

Nicolas was born in answer to prayer,  
And leaping from his mother's womb  
he cried –  
*[the boy Nicolas] GOD BE GLORIFIED!*

Swaddling bands and crib awaited him there,  
But Nicolas clapped both his hands and  
cried –  
*[the boy Nicolas] GOD BE GLORIFIED!*

Innocent and joyful, naked and fair,  
He came in pride on earth to abide –  
*[the boy Nicolas] GOD BE GLORIFIED!*

Water rippled Welcome!  
in the bathtub by his side,  
He dived in open-eyed, he swam, he cried –  
*[the boy Nicolas] GOD BE GLORIFIED!*

When he went to Church at Christmastide,  
He climbed up to the font to be baptized.  
GOD BE GLORIFIED!

Pilgrims came to kneel and pray by his side,  
He grew in grace,  
his name was sanctified.  
*[the boy Nicolas] GOD BE GLORIFIED!*

Nicolas grew in innocence and pride,  
His glory spread a rainbow  
round the countryside,  
“Nicolas will be a Saint!”  
the neighbors cried.  
*[Nicolas] GOD BE GLORIFIED!*

[Note: the part of *the boy Nicolas* is sung by  
Bruce Scavuzzo]

### III. NICOLAS DEVOTES HIMSELF TO GOD

*[Nicolas] My parents died. All too soon  
I left the tranquil beauty of their home,  
And knew the wider world of man.  
Poor man!*

*I found him solitary, racked by doubt:  
Born, bred, doomed to die.  
In everlasting fear of everlasting death:  
The foolish toy of time,  
the darling of decay –  
Hopeless, faithless, defying God.  
Heart-sick, in hope to mask*

*the twisted face of poverty,  
I sold my lands to feed the poor.  
I gave my goods to charity.  
But Love demanded more.  
Heart-sick, I cast away all things that  
could distract my mind  
From full devotion to His will;  
I thrust my happiness behind.  
But Love desired more still.  
Heart-sick, I called on God  
to purge my angry soul,  
To be my only master, friend and guide.  
I begged for sweet humility.  
And Love was satisfied.*

### IV. HE JOURNEYS TO PALESTINE

Nicolas sailed for Palestine  
across the sunlit seas.  
The South-West Wind blew soft and fair,  
Seagulls hovered through the air  
And spices scented the breeze.

Everyone felt that land was near,  
all dangers now were past,  
Except for one who knelt in prayer.  
Fingers clasped and head quite bare,  
Alone by the mizzenmast.

The sailors jeered at Nicolas,  
who paid them no regard,  
Until the hour of sunset came  
When up he stood and stopped their game  
Of staking coins on cards.

Nicolas spoke and prophesied  
a tempest far ahead.  
The sailors scorned such words of fear,  
Since sky and stars shone bright and clear,  
So 'Non-sense!' they all said.

Darkness was soon on top of them,  
but still the South Wind blew.  
The Captain went below to sleep,  
and left the helmsman there to keep  
His course with one of the crew.

Nicolas swore he'd punish them  
for mocking at the Lord  
The wind arose, the thunder roared,  
Lightning split the waves that poured  
In wild cascades on board.

Water-spouts rose in majesty  
until the ship was tossed  
Abaft, aback, astern, abeam,  
Lit by the lightning's livid gleam  
And all aboard cried 'Lost!'

Lightning hisses through the night,  
Blinding sight with living light!  
Ah! Spare us! Man the pumps! Axes! Ah!

Winds and tempests howl their cry  
Of battle through the raging sky!  
Spare us! Lifeboats! Lower away!  
Waves repeat their angry roar  
Fall and spring again once more.  
Ah! Shorten sail! Reef her! Heave her to!  
Let her run before the wind!  
Shorten sail! Reef her!

Thunder rends the sky asunder  
With its savage shout of wonder!  
Ah!

Pray to God!  
Kneel and pray!  
Lightning, Thunder, Tempest, Ocean  
Praise their God with voice and motion.

Nicolas waited patiently  
till they were on their knees  
Then down he knelt in thankfulness  
Begging God their ship to bless  
And make the storm to cease.

*[Nicolas] O God! we are all weak,  
sinful, foolish men.  
We pray from fear and from necessity at  
death, in sickness or private loss.  
Without the prick of fear our conscience  
sleeps, forgetful of Thy Grace.  
Help us, O God to see more clearly.  
Tame our stubborn hearts.  
Teach us to ask for less and offer more in  
gratitude to Thee.  
Pity our simplicity, for we are truly  
pitiable in Thy sight.  
Amen.*

*[Nicolas] The winds and waves  
lay down to rest.  
The sky was clear and calm.  
The ship sailed onward without harm  
And all creation sang a psalm of loving  
thankfulness.  
Beneath the stars the sailors slept,  
exhausted by their fear,  
While I knelt down for love of God on high  
And saw his angels in the sky smile down  
at me, and wept.*

V. **NICOLAS COMES TO MYRA  
AND IS CHOSEN BISHOP**  
Come, stranger sent from God!  
Come, man of God!  
Stand foremost in our Church and serve  
this diocese  
As Bishop Nicolas, our shield, our  
strength, our peace!

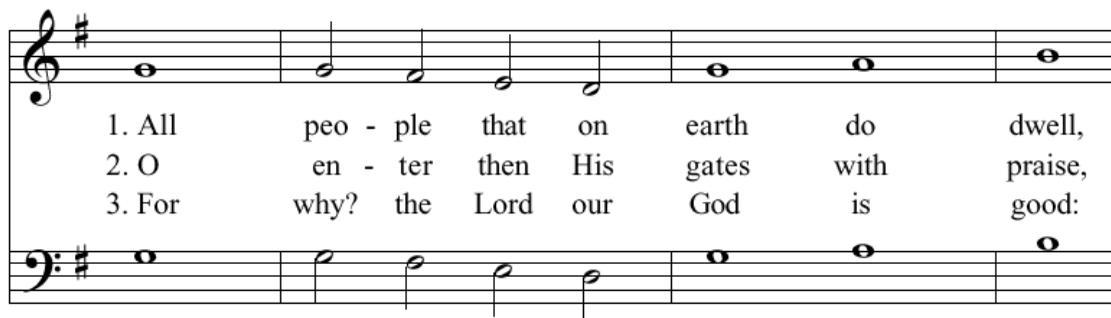
*[Nicolas] I, Nicolas,  
Bishop of Myra and its diocese,  
shall with the unfailing grace of God,  
defend his faithful servants,  
comfort the widow and fatherless,  
and fulfil his will for this most blessed  
church.*

Amen! Amen!  
Place the mitre on your head  
to show your mastery of men.  
Take the golden robe that covers you  
with Christ's authority.  
Wear the fine dalmatic  
woven with the cross of faith.  
Bear the crozier as a staff and comfort  
to your flock.  
Set the ring upon your hand,  
in sacramental sign,  
in sign of wedlock with thy God.

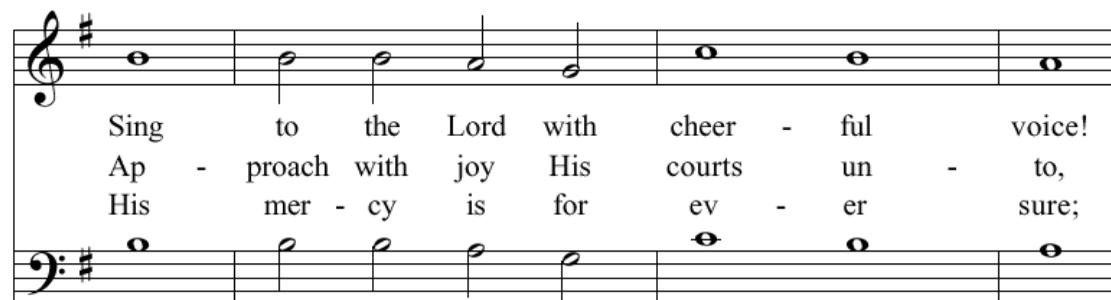
Serve the faith and spurn his enemies!

*[Note: The audience is invited to  
join in singing the following  
hymn tune:]*

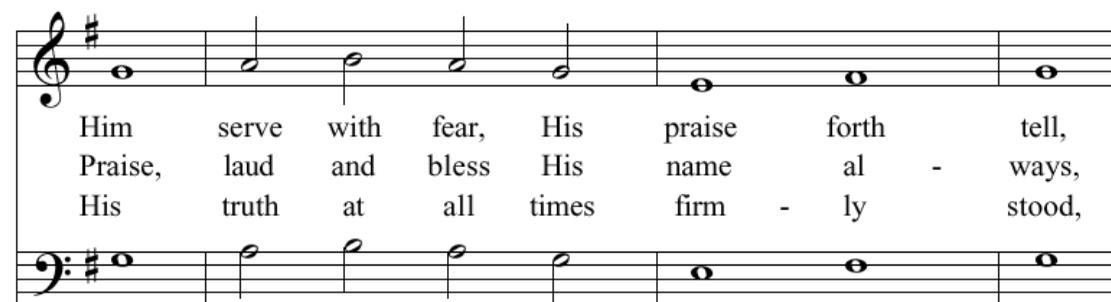
CHOIR AND CONGREGATION:



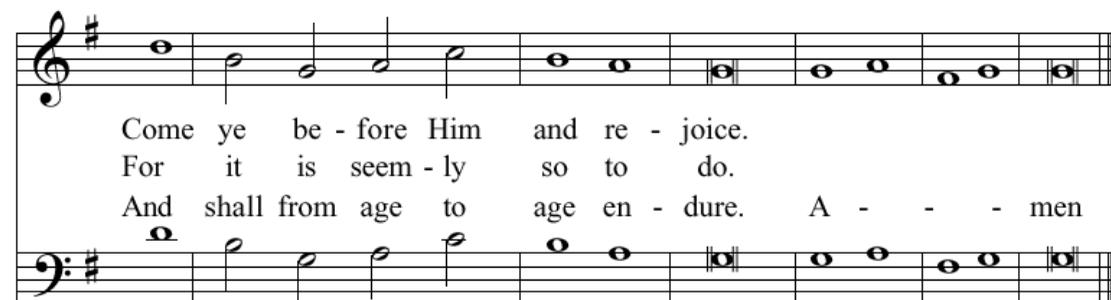
1. All peo - ple that on earth do dwell,  
2. O en - ter then His gates with praise,  
3. For why? the Lord our God is good:



Sing to the Lord with cheer - ful voice!  
Ap - proach with joy His courts un - to,  
His mer - cy is for ev - er sure;



Him serve with fear, His praise forth tell,  
Praise, laud and bless His name al - ways,  
His truth at all times firm - ly stood,



Come ye be - fore Him and re - jice.  
For it is seem - ly so to do.  
And shall from age to age en - dure. A - - - men

## VI. NICOLAS FROM PRISON

*[Nicolas] Persecution sprang upon our  
Church and stilled its voice.  
Eight barren years it stifled under Roman  
rule:  
And I lay bound, condemned to celebrate  
my lonely sacrament with prison  
bread,  
While wolves ran loose among my flock.  
O man! the world is set for you as for a  
king!  
Paradise is yours in loveliness.  
The stars shine down for you, for you the  
angels sing,  
Yet you prefer your wilderness.  
You hug the rack of self, embrace the lash  
of sin,  
Pour your treasures out to bribe distress.  
You build your temples fair without and  
foul within:  
You cultivate your wilderness.  
Yet Christ is yours, Yours! For you he  
lived and died.  
God in mercy gave his Son to bless you  
all, to bring you life  
And Him you crucified to desecrate your  
wilderness.  
Turn, turn, turn away from sin!  
Ah! bow down your hard and stubborn  
hearts!  
Confess, confess, confess yourselves to  
Him in penitence,  
And humbly vow your lives to Him, to  
Holiness.*

## VII. NICOLAS AND THE PICKLED BOYS

Famine tracks us down the lanes  
Hunger holds our horses' reins,  
Winter heaps the road with snow,  
O we have far to go.

Starving beggars howl their cry,  
Snarl to see us spurring by  
Times are bad and travel slow,  
O we have far to go.

We mourn our boys, our missing sons,  
We sorrow for three little ones.  
Timothy, Mark and John are gone!

Landlord take this piece of gold!  
Bring us food before the cold  
Make our pangs of hunger grow  
O we have far to go.

Day by day we seek to find  
Some trace of them but oh! unkind!  
Timothy, Mark and John are gone!

Let us share this dish of meat!  
Come, my friends, sit down and eat!  
Join us, Bishop, for we know  
That you have far to go!

Mary meek and Mother mild  
Who lost thy Jesus as a child  
Our Timothy, Mark and John are gone!

Come! your Grace, don't eat so slow!  
Take some meat...

*[Nicolas] O do not taste!  
O do not feed on sin!  
But haste to save three souls in need!  
Their mothers' cry is sad and weak,  
Within these walls they lie  
whom mothers sadly seek:  
Timothy, Mark, and John,  
put your fleshly garments on!  
Come from dark oblivion! Come!*

See! See! three boys spring back to life,  
Who slaughtered by the butcher's knife,  
Lay salted down! and entering,  
Hand in hand they stand and sing  
Alleluia to their King!  
Alleluia!!

#### **VIII. HIS PIETY AND MARVELLOUS WORKS**

For forty years our Nicolas,  
Our Prince of men, our shepherd and  
Our gentle guide, walked by our side.  
We turned to him at birth and death,  
In time of famine and distress,  
In all our grief, to bring relief.

He led us from the valleys to  
The pleasant hills of grace.  
He fought to fold us in from mortal sin.  
O! he was prodigal of love!  
A spendthrift in devotion to us all,  
And blessed as he caressed.  
We keep his memory alive  
In legends that our children  
And their children's children treasure still.

A captive at the heathen court  
Wept sorely all alone.  
"O Nicolas is here, my son!  
and he will bring you home!"

"Fill, fill my sack with corn," he said,  
"We die from lack of food!"  
and from that single sack he fed  
A hungry multitude.

Three daughters of a nobleman  
Were doomed to shameful sin,  
Till our good Bishop ransomed them  
By throwing purses in.

The gates were barred,  
the black flag flew,  
Three men knelt by the block  
But Nicolas burst in like flame,  
And stayed the axe's shock!

"O help us, good Nicolas!  
Our ship is full of foam!"  
He walked across the waves to them  
And led them safely home.

He sat among the Bishops who  
Were summoned to Nicaea:  
Then rising with the wrath of God  
Boxed Arius's ear.

He threatened Constantine the Great  
With bell and book and ban,  
Till Constantine confessed his sins  
Like any common man!

Let the legends that we tell,  
Praise him with our prayers as well.

We keep his memory alive  
In legends that our children and  
Their children's children treasure still.

**IX. THE DEATH OF NICOLAS**

*[Nicolas]*

*DEATH, I hear thy summons and I come  
In haste, for my short life is done;  
And O! my soul is faint with love,  
For Him who waits for me above.*

*[Nicolas]*

*LORD I come to life, to final birth.  
I leave the misery of earth,  
For light, by thy eternal grace,  
Where I shall greet thee face to face.*

*[Nicolas]*

*CHRIST, receive my soul with tenderness,  
For in my last of life I bless  
Thy name, Who lived and died for me,  
And dying, yield my soul to Thee.*

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant  
depart in peace,  
according to thy word.  
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation  
Which thou has prepared  
before the face of all people  
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles  
And to be the glory of thy people Israel.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,  
And to the Holy Ghost.  
As it was in the beginning, is now,  
and ever shall be,  
World without end. Amen.

God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform.  
He plants His footsteps in the sea,  
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines  
Of never failing skill  
He treasures up his bright designs,  
And works his sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,  
The clouds ye so much dread  
Are big with mercy, and shall break  
In blessings on your head.

Amen!

 *Intermission* 

## **HODIE** from *A Ceremony of Carols*

Hodie Christus natus est:  
hodie Salvator apparuit:  
hodie in terra canunt angeli,  
laetantur archangeli:  
hodie exsultant iusti dicentes:  
gloria in excelsis Deo, Alleluia.

*Today Christ is born:  
today the Saviour has appeared:  
today the angels sing on earth,  
the archangels rejoice:  
today the just are triumphant, saying:  
“Glory to God in the highest, Alleluia.”*

## **ONCE IN ROYAL DAVID’S CITY ..** text by Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1895)

Once in royal David’s city  
stood a lowly cattle shed,  
where a mother laid her baby  
in a manger for his bed:

Mary was that mother mild,  
Jesus Christ her little child.

## **O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL .....**text trans. by John M. Neale (1818-1866)

O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear.

O come, Thou Wisdom from on high,  
Who orderest all things mightily;  
To us the path of knowledge show,  
And teach us in her ways to go. *Refrain*

*Refrain:*  
Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to thee,  
O Israel.

O come, O come, great Lord of might,  
Who to Thy tribes on Sinai’s height  
In ancient times once gave the law  
In cloud and majesty and awe. *Refrain*

## **Lo, HOW A ROSE E’ER BLOOMING .....** text trans. Theodore Baker (1851-1934)

Lo, how a rose e’er blooming,  
From tender stem hath sprung!  
Of Jesse’s lineage coming  
By faithful prophets sung  
It came, a floweret bright,  
Amid the cold of winter,  
When half spent was the night.

Isaiah, ‘twas foretold it,  
The rose I have in mind.  
With Mary, we behold it,  
The Virgin Mother kind.  
To show God’s love aright,  
She bore to men a Savior,  
When half spent was the night.

A great and mighty wonder,  
a full and holy cure!  
The Virgin bears the Infant  
with virgin-honor pure:  
Repeat the hymn again!  
“To God on high be glory,  
and peace on earth to men.”

**A BOY WAS BORN** ..... text trans. by Percy Dearmer (1867-1936)

A Boy was born in Bethlehem  
Rejoice for that, Jerusalem! Alleluya.

He let himself a servant be,  
That all mankind he might set free: Alleluya.

Then praise the Word of God who came  
To dwell within a human frame: Alleluya.

**CAROL, WITH LULLABY** ..... text adapted by Phillis Tate

Lulla, lulla, lulla,  
lulla, lullaby.  
My sweet little baby,  
what meanest thou to cry?  
A King is born, they say,  
which King a king would kill;  
Oh woful, heavy day,  
when wretches have their will.

And shepherds heard the song  
which angels bright did sing,  
All giving glory unto God,  
for coming of this King,  
Which must be made away,  
King Herod would him kill.  
Oh woful, heavy day,  
when wretches have their will.

And thou shalt live and reign,  
who was in a manger laid,  
As all the prophets prophesy,  
as sybils have foresaid;  
Whom caitiffs ne'er betray,  
whom tyrants none can kill;  
Oh joyful, happy day,  
when wretches want their will.

## SALVATOR MUNDI

### SUSANNI

A little child there is y-born,  
Eia, eia susanni, susanni, susanni.  
And he sprang out of Jesse's thorn,  
To save us all that were forlorn,  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Now Jesus is the child's name,  
Eia, eia susanni, susanni, susanni.  
And Mary mild she is his dame,  
And so our sorrow is turned to game,  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

It fell upon the high midnight,  
Eia, eia susanni, susanni, susanni.  
The stars they shone both fair and  
bright,  
The angels sang with all their might.  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Three Kings came with their presents,  
Of myrrh and gold and frankincense,  
As clerks sing in their sequence,  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, luia.

Now sit we down upon our knee,  
Eia, eia susanni, susanni, susanni.  
And pray we to the Trinity,  
Our help and succour for to be,  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

### CHRISTE, REDEMPTOR OMNIUM

Into this world now is come  
*Christe, redemptor omnium.*

O worthy Lord and most of might,  
*Eterne Rex Altissime,*  
Thee to honour me thinketh right,  
*Iam lucis orto sidere.*

Into this world now is come  
*Christe, redemptor omnium.*

As thou art Lord of worthiness,  
*Conditor alme siderum,*  
All us to bring out of darkness,  
*Christe, redemptor omnium.*

With beams clear of righteousness,  
*Aurora lucis rutilat;*  
In joy thereof with all gladness,  
*Vox clara, ecce, intonate.*

Into this world now is come  
*Christe, redemptor omnium.*

Now glorious Lord and worthy  
King,

*Jesu, Salvator saeculi,*  
Grant us thy bliss everlasting,  
*Summi Iorgitor primii.*

Into this world now is come  
*Christe, redemptor omnium.*

## WELCOME, YULE

Welcome, Yule, in glad array,  
In worship of this holiday.

Welcome be thou, Heaven's King,  
Welcome, yborn on this morning,  
Welcome to thee now will we sing;  
Welcome Yule, forever and aye.

Welcome be thou, Mary mild,  
Welcome be thou and thy child,  
From the fiend thou us shield;  
Welcome Yule, forever and aye.

Welcome be thou, good New Year,  
Welcome the twelve days before.  
Welcome be ye that all be here;  
Welcome Yule, forever and aye.

Welcome be ye, Lord and Lady,  
Welcome be all this company;  
For Yulès love now makès merry!  
Welcome Yule, forever and aye.

Welcome be thou, Heaven's King,  
Welcome, yborn on this morning,  
Welcome to thee now will we sing;  
Welcome Yule, forever and aye.

Welcome, Yule. Noel!

## DING DONG MERRILY ON HIGH

text by GR Woodward (1848-1934)

1. *(All)*

Ding dong! merrily on high,  
In heav'n the bells are ringing:  
Ding dong! verily the sky  
Is riv'n with angel singing.

Gloria,  
Hosanna in excelsis!

2. *(All)*

E'en so here below, below,  
Let steeple bells be swungen,  
And "Io, io, io!"  
By priest and people sungen.

Gloria,  
Hosanna in excelsis!

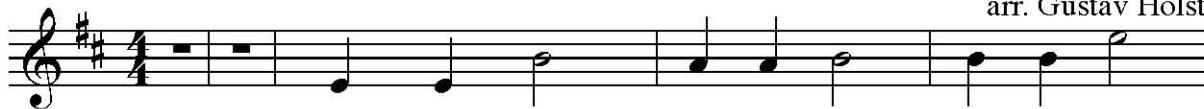
3. *(All)*

Pray you, dutifully prime  
Your matin chime, ye ringers;  
May you beautifully rime  
Your evetime song, ye singers.

Gloria,  
Hosanna in excelsis!  
Gloria,  
Hosanna in excelsis!

# On this Day Earth Shall Ring

arr. Gustav Holst



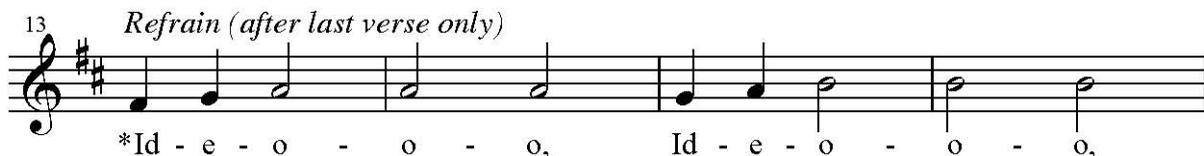
1. On this day earth shall ring With the song  
2. His the doom, ours the mirth; When He came  
3. God's bright star, o'er His head, Wise men three  
4. On this day an - gels sing; With their song



chil - dren sing To the Lord, Christ our King,  
down to earth Beth - le - hem saw His birth;  
to Him led, Kneel - ing low by His bed,  
earth shall ring, Prais - ing Christ, heav - en's King,



Born on earth to save us; Him the Fa - ther gave us.  
Ox and ass be - side him From the cold would hide Him.  
Lay their gifts be - fore Him, Praise Him and a - dore Him.  
Born on earth to save us; Peace and love He gave us.



13 *Refrain (after last verse only)*

\*Id - e - o - o - o, Id - e - o - o - o,



Id - e - o glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o!

\*Therefore, glory to God in the highest.

## O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL

arr. John F. Wade (1711-1786)

1. (*Chorus*)

*Adeste, fideles,*

*Laeti triumphantes,*

*Venite, venite in Bethlehem.*

*Natum videte*

*Regem angelorum.*

*Venite adoremus,*

*Venite adoremus,*

*Venite adoremus,*

*Dominum.*

2. (*All*)

Sing, choirs of angels,

sing in exultation;

Sing, all ye citizens

of heaven above!

Glory to God,

in the highest;

*Refrain:*

O come, let us adore Him,

O come, let us adore Him,

O come, let us adore Him,

Christ the Lord.

3. (*All*)

Yea, Lord, we greet thee,

Born this happy morning;

Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n;

Word of the Father,

Now in flesh appearing;

*Refrain*

## JOY TO THE WORLD

text by Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

1. (*All*)

Joy to the world!

The Lord is come:

let earth receive her King!

Let every heart

prepare him room,

and heaven and nature sing.

and heaven and nature sing.

and heaven,

and heaven and nature sing.

2. (*All*)

Joy to the earth!

the Saviour reigns:

let men their songs employ,

while fields and floods,

rocks, hills and plains

repeat the sounding joy.

repeat the sounding joy.

repeat,

repeat the sounding joy.

3. (*All*)

He rules the world

with truth and grace,

and makes the nations prove

the glories of

his righteousness

and wonders of his love.

and wonders of his love.

and wonders,

wonders of his love.

**PROGRAM NOTES** by Donald Draganski

*“At Christmas play, and make good cheer,  
For Christmas comes but once a year.”*

Thomas Tusser, 1580

The earliest reference to carol singing at Christmastime dates from 1020. On Christmas Eve of that year, according to one Theodoric, twelve revelers gathered at the Church of St. Magnus in Saxony and proceeded to dance and sing in the churchyard. When the priest asked the group to stop their “profanations” they refused and the overly pious father invoked the wrath of the Lord upon them. The merry-makers discovered that they could not break out of the circle, and thus they danced for one full year, neither drinking nor sleeping, until the curse was lifted the following Christmas Eve.

Nowadays singing and merrymaking at Christmas have happily triumphed over these earlier dour dicta (with some backsliding during the Puritan ascendancy), and our midwinter festivities would be bleak indeed without the singing and conviviality that lie at the very heart of the holidays.

\*\*\*\*\*

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976) wrote his first cantata, *Saint Nicolas*, for the centenary celebrations of Lancing College, England, in 1948. With a craftsman’s practical eye trained on the resources available for the occasion, he scored the work for a four-part chorus of boys, a girls’ school chorus, and an instrumental ensemble drawn from the student body. *The Golden Legend*, a thirteenth century collection of legends and lives of the saints, provides the story on which the text is based. This St. Nicolas is quite different from the Santa Claus into which he evolved, but they both share the same propensity for gift-giving.

The INTRODUCTION tells how the saint miraculously appears to a congregation assembled on his feast day. The chorus pleads with the saint to tell his story. THE BIRTH OF NICOLAS describes his baptism, while in the next section, NICOLAS DEVOTES HIMSELF TO GOD, the saint expresses his shock at the miseries of mankind. HE JOURNEYS TO PALESTINE is a vivid tone-painting of his pilgrimage by sea and the violent storm which he quells. NICOLAS COMES TO MYRA AND IS CHOSEN BISHOP features an elaborate chorus as he receives his episcopal staff. This section closes with the congregation joining the chorus in the singing of Old Hundredth.

NICOLAS FROM PRISON depicts an agitated saint as he speculates on the Roman persecution of the Christians. NICOLAS AND THE PICKLED BOYS, the most noteworthy section of this cantata, relates the story of three mothers who mourn their missing sons. The boys have been killed, pickled in brine, and are to be sold as meat to the hungry. (Shades of Sweeney Todd?) The saint, discovering the boys' predicament, calls them back to life and his prayers are accompanied by an exuberant "Alleluia." The next section, HIS PIETY AND MARVELOUS WORKS, relates several additional legends associated with Nicolas, including the famous story of the three poverty-stricken daughters who are saved from a life of prostitution by Nicolas's timely gift of gold for their marriage dowry. The cantata closes with THE DEATH OF NICOLAS, a prayerful Nunc Dimittis to the accompaniment of bells.

The North Shore Choral Society has performed Britten's *Saint Nicolas* on several occasions, most recently in November 1994.

\*\*\*\*\*

The other piece by Britten on today's program, *A Boy was born*, for unaccompanied mixed chorus, represents one of Britten's earliest successes. Written when the composer was only twenty-one, it was broadcast with great success over the BBC in 1934, as it heralded the arrival of a bright new star on the English musical scene. The text is adapted from the German hymn "Ein Kind geboren zu Bethlehem," perhaps better known by the Latin, "Puer natus." The entire work consists of the hymn followed by six variations. Today's concert presents only the hymn.

\*\*\*\*\*

Randall Thompson (1899-1984), often referred to as the dean of American choral composers, received his schooling at Harvard and received his doctorate from the University of Rochester School of Music. During his long and distinguished career he taught at a number of institutions, including Wellesley College, the University of California, the Curtis Institute of Music, the University of Virginia, Princeton University, and finally at his alma mater, Harvard. He always felt that composing and teaching were equally important in his pursuit of music as a vocation.

He wrote his *Alleluia* for the opening exercises of the Berkshire Music Center near Lenox, Massachusetts, and there it received its first performance in July 1940. NSCS last performed this lively and popular work in 1992.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Welsh composer William Mathias (1934-1992) studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London and eventually assumed the post of Professor of Music at the University College of Bangor in Wales. Although his musical output encompasses a wide variety of forms, his principal concentration has been on choral music, no doubt influenced by the rich tradition of choral singing among his Welsh countrymen. He died all too soon in his 58th year.

Mathias wrote his *Salvator Mundi* as a commission for the Cheltenham Ladies' College in association with the Welsh Arts Council. First performed in 1982, it is scored for women's voices, with a small instrumental ensemble with a piano duet at its core — including some instrumentation as Britten's *St. Nicolas*. All the poems that make up the text are concerned with the Nativity and most are drawn from anonymous sources. However, the second and third movements derive from a manuscript dated 1492 (housed at Cambridge University Library). The manuscript consists of some 270 carols and lyrics relating to Christmas. It was assembled by James Ryman (fl. 1476), a Franciscan friar at Canterbury.

\*\*\*\*\*

Phyllis Margaret Tate (1911-1987) was already composing at an early age, although, like so many other composers, she subsequently destroyed most of her juvenalia. She studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London and enjoyed her first public success in 1947 with a sonata for clarinet and cello. Throughout her professional career she always tried to direct her art to as wide an audience as possible, as evidenced by the large number of her works designed for both amateurs and children.

*Carol, with Lullaby*, for mixed chorus and piano, was originally included in a collection of carols published by Oxford in 1961; since then the piece has taken on an independent life of its own among choirs throughout the English-speaking world. The words were adapted by the composer from the 15th century Coventry Carol, which relates the slaying of the innocents by King Herod.

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Donald Draganski was born in Chicago and received his Bachelor's degree in music from DePaul University where he studied composition privately with the late Alexander Tcherepnin. He is now retired, after having served as Music Librarian at Roosevelt University for twenty-five years. He holds the chair of first bassoonist with the Evanston Symphony Orchestra and is also composer-in-residence for the Pilgrim Chamber Players. His musical compositions include works in all forms, vocal and instrumental, including his *Geometry of Music*, a choral piece written in 1985 to mark the 50th anniversary of the North Shore Choral Society. He has been writing program notes for the Society since 1980.

## BIOGRAPHIES

**Mark Eldred**, tenor, made his Orchestra Hall and Carnegie Hall debuts during the 2001-2002 season singing the role of the Shepherd in Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by Daniel Barenboim. The following season Mr. Eldred returned to Orchestra Hall singing the role of the Spirit of the Masque in a scene from Britten's opera *Gloriana* with Chicago Symphony Singers, the new 24 voice ensemble conducted by Duain Wolfe. As a student at University of Iowa, Mr. Eldred sang Tonio in Donizetti's *La fille du regiment*, Nemorino in Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*, Monostatos in Mozart's *Magic Flute* and Beppe in Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*. Notable Chicago area performances include tenor soloist in Rachmaninoff's *Vespers* at University of Chicago and the title role in Sir Arthur Sullivan's opera *Ivanhoe* with the Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Company in Hyde Park. On December 14, 2003, Mr. Eldred will perform the parts of Evangelist and tenor soloist in Cantatas IV and V of Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* at Music Institute of Chicago.

**Bruce Scavuzzo**, age 13, started singing in the third grade at St. Michael's Choir School in Toronto, Canada and, since August of 2000, has sung in the St. Luke's Choir of Men and Boys, Evanston, under the direction of Richard Webster and Eric Budzynski. He participated in the choir's tour this past summer when it was the choir in residence at Rochester Cathedral, Christ Church, Oxford and St. Paul's Cathedral, London. The choir also sang at the American Cathedral in Paris. In November of this year Bruce sang the part of the Youth in Ars Viva Symphony Orchestra and Chicago Master Singers' production of Mendelssohn's *Elijah* under the direction of Alan Heatherington.

**Donald Chen**, Associate Professor of Music and Resident Conductor at Chicago College of Performing Arts (CCPA), Roosevelt University, is a graduate of the Juilliard School and University of Iowa, from which he earned the degree Doctor of Musical Arts in Orchestral Conducting. He has been on the conducting faculty of Mount Holyoke College (Massachusetts) and Webster University (St. Louis). While in St. Louis, he served as Music Director and Conductor of the Bach Society of St. Louis and Chorus Master of the internationally acclaimed Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. In addition to his duties at CCPA, he has been Music Director and Conductor of North Shore Choral Society since 1984 and has served in the same capacity with Skokie Valley Symphony Orchestra. His guest conducting engagements have included the Promenade Family Concerts of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, St. Louis Philharmonic Orchestra, various community orchestras in the greater Chicago area, and All-State and All-District high school orchestras in Illinois, Wisconsin, and Nebraska. His conducting teachers have included James Dixon, Abraham Kaplan, John Nelson, and Dennis Russell Davies.

**Sharon Rich Peterson** served as accompanist for the North Shore Choral Society from 1979 to 1989, and has given several benefit concerts for the organization. She returned in 1994 after living in Norway for 5 years where she was accompanist at the Royal Academy of Music in Oslo and developed a specialty in Scandinavian Piano Repertoire. Ms. Peterson is a graduate of North Park College and Northwestern University. She has accompanied the Lyric Opera Chorus and has been Music Director of the Lyric Opera Center for American Artist's touring production of *The Magic Flute*. She accompanies Chicago Symphony Chorus including the Chicago Symphony Singers, its resident ensemble, and is staff accompanist at Roosevelt University. Ms. Peterson is also organist at North Park Covenant Church and North Park Theological Seminary.

## INSTRUMENTALISTS

### VIOLIN I

Thomas Yang,  
*concertmaster*  
Jeri-Lou Zike  
Jeff Yang  
Jody Livo

### VIOLIN II

Irene Radetzky  
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Andrea Tolzman  
Nell Flanders

### VIOLA

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Ben Wedge  
Michael Hall

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A permanent Memorial Fund has been established to honor the memory of David Dynes Larson, Music Director of the North Shore Choral Society from 1973 to 1984. Donations and memorial gifts to this fund are to be used for activities that improve the performance and musicianship of the North Shore Choral Society.

Margaret Larson has made a contribution to the David Dynes Larson Memorial Fund this season.



## The North Shore Choral Society

The North Shore Choral Society, member of the Chicago Dance & Music Alliance and the Illinois Arts Alliance, is a community chorus which has served this area for over sixty-five years, giving many hundreds of nonprofessional singers the opportunity to perform choral masterworks, both old and new. The North Shore Choral Society succeeded the Winnetka Choral Society which was extant in 1932. Over the years, talented conductors and devoted singers have maintained the Society as a distinguished musical force in our community. We have recently updated our mission statement:

**The North Shore Choral Society explores, studies, and performs a wide range of choral music for the enrichment and enjoyment of its singers and audiences.**

The February 29, 2004 concert will include three 20<sup>th</sup> century works: Vincent Persichetti's *Winter Cantata*, John Rutter's *Requiem* and Leonard Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*. The season's final concert on May 23 will pair Mozart's *Requiem* with the Chicago premiere of *Pax Vobis* by our own Choral Society member Karl Kroeger. This season's remaining concerts are at 3pm at the Parish Church of Saint Luke, 939 Hinman, Evanston, IL.

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