



# ELEKTRA

## WOMEN'S CHOIR

creating • exploring • celebrating

Elektra's mandate is *to inspire and lead in the choral art form through excellence in performance and through the creation, exploration, and celebration of women's repertoire.*

### **Chez Nous: Christmas with Elektra 2017**

#### **Listener's Guide**

by Morna Edmundson, Artistic Director

<http://elektra.ca/concerts-events/chez-nous-christmas-with-elektra/>

December 2, 2017 (Dunbar Ryerson United Church, Vancouver)

December 3, 2017 (Highlands United Church, North Vancouver)

Performers:

Elektra Women's Choir

Morna Edmundson, Artistic Director

Stephen Smith, piano

with Vivian Chen, harp

and with the West Vancouver School District Women's Honour Choir, Suzanne Fulton, Artistic Director, Hey-Jung Choi, piano

Welcome! This "Listener's Guide" is meant to give you insight into Elektra's season programming and to make the concert experience richer and more meaningful. I'll be sharing some information on the music we're singing on December 2 and 3, 2017 and the thinking behind the program as a whole. Here you'll also find publisher information and full texts and translations of the works.

To lead off, I'm going to quote from my Listener's Guide to Chez Nous last season, because these observations are still relevant:

"The name of this concert, *Chez Nous: Christmas with Elektra*, translates as "at our house" in French, an expression that is more than a place. "Chez nous" evokes a sense of welcome and warmth. We offer this concert annually, but it is always different. Unlike a theatre company that might mount the same play every Christmas, the combination of music that is sung in Chez Nous is never the same twice. My challenge is to give it the character and experience we want while also making it fresh. It needs to be satisfying/fresh/challenging to both the choir and the audience and, being by Elektra, excellence matters in the choice of music and the way it's sung. After 31 years, Elektra has a library full of scores we've already sung, and we do draw on those but, to fulfil our mandate, I also want to introduce new compositions and arrangements. These are not just heard in the concert venue, but extend out through the Repertoire section of our website to be considered by other conductors around the world. We also record many of the new works, again, extending the impact and sometimes helping an emerging

composer become noticed. I have all of these aspects in mind when putting together a Chez Nous program.

Several years ago, I wrote a list of words that I keep beside me when looking through music that might be included in Chez Nous. The paper is a bit shabby by now, but the words still ring true, reminding me of my goals; to make people feel welcome, to connect them to familiar music, to move them, to surprise them with something new, and to offer even those who have never heard Elektra before a sense of the music we present, and what they might expect from us at other concerts in the year. I know there are people in the audience who don't expect to like a choral concert (bless them for being there!), so I want them to find it more than entertaining, to be glad they came, and glad they invested their time with us, with the rest of the audience, and with the music. My list? Welcome, Joy, Beauty, Participation, Robust, Sombre Reflection, Surprise, Memory, Relevance."

### **Carol Trilogy for women's choir and piano (2017)**

Traditional carols, arr. Laura Hawley

Commissioned by Elektra Women's Choir with assistance from the Diane Loomer

Commissioning Fund for Elektra Women's Choir

Publisher: manuscript

Composer's website: <http://www.laurahawley.ca/>

It's unusual for me to place a commissioned work at the top of a concert, but Laura Hawley's stunning and imaginative suite takes us to some familiar places in a concert which includes, as its centrepiece, Benjamin Britten's 25-minute work, *A Ceremony of Carols*- the latter not familiar seasonal music to most of our listeners.

In music, a "composition" is an original work not based on any musical material that existed before. It may set a text that has been used by other composers. If the music is newly-written and wholly original, it's a composition. In today's concert, the harp solo, the Murphy, Antognini, Bart, Britten and Wedd fall into that category. An "arrangement" sets existing musical material and can also be highly original, although its source material came from someone else. For example, the Winnie Brückner arrangement of *Silent Night* is an original melody (composition) by Austrian musician Franz Grüber (1787-1863) arranged for women's choir in four parts a *cappella* using harmony of Winnie's choosing. It's her arrangement.

The musical source material that Laura Hawley used for the *Carol Trilogy* was three sacred Christmas carols from different parts of the world. In the commissioning process, she suggested specific carols and I signed off on the list before she started work. I specified that I wanted the arrangements to include piano, because I knew, with the Britten, that our wonderful accompanist, Stephen Smith, would not have a lot to do in this concert otherwise! I also knew that Laura is a pianist and would therefore write him something interesting to play. Laura placed the three we chose in a particular sequence to draw the listener into the music in an intentional way. Here's what she had to say about the suite:

### **Noël Bourguignon**

*Many years ago, my mother shared with me a carol in the Reader's Digest Merry Christmas Songbook that neither of us had heard before and that she loved. That carol was the "Burgundian Carol," and I hoped at the time that some day I would set it for choir. The carol appears in English in that songbook, but the book also explains that the original text was French, written by Bernard de La Monnoye and translated to English by Oscar Brand. For many years, I searched for the original text, but to no avail; the best I'd been able to find was a book of*

*French carols that contained the text only, with adaptations from the old French to modern French. Over ten years later, I mentioned my quest to a friend of mine, who became intrigued and who was able to find a scan online of the original music with the first verse of text attached to it!*

*The mood of La Monnoye's text and music, alongside the long search for the elusive original, gave me a great sense of mysticism surrounding this carol. I decided to use the original old French text, which has a unique and rustic sound to it very different from modern French.*

*My setting opens with shimmering chords that express the magic of a manger scene with the animals nearby on bended knee worshipping a tiny baby and keeping the child warm. Around this scene I also imagine the brightness of the Christmas star, and the fluttering of angel wings; and these make appearances in the music as well. For me, the story of Christmas night has so many different emotions in it; the quiet awe of the manger, the exultation of angels, the reverence of the animals in the stable, the great change that had arrived on earth and the divine and inexplicable love that came with it. All of these things were in my mind in setting the Noël Bourguignon.*

### **I. Noël Bourguignon**

*1701, French*

1. Lor qu'an lai saizon qu'ai jaule,  
Au monde Jésus-Chri vin,  
L'âne et le beu l'échaufin  
De lo sôfle dan l'Étaule...  
Que d'âne et de beu je sai,  
Dan ce royaume de Gaule,  
Que d'âne et de beu je sai  
Qui n'an airein pa tan fai!
2. On di que cé pôvre bête  
N'ure pas vu le Pôpon,  
Qu'elle se mire ai genon,  
Humbleman boissan lai tête...  
Que d'âne et de beu je sai,  
Qui po tô se fon de fête,  
Que d'âne et de beu je sai  
Qui n'an airein pa tan fai!
3. Ma le pu beà de l'histoire,  
Ce fu que l'âne et le beu  
Ansin passire tô deu  
Lai neù san maingé ni boire...  
Que d'âne et de beu je sai,  
Couvar de pane et de moire,  
Que d'âne et de beu je sai  
Qui n'an airein pa tan fai!

*Bernard de La Monnoye*

### **Burgundian Carol (English translation)**

*1701, French*

1. *The winter season of the year*  
*When to this world our Lord was born,*  
*The ox and donkey, so they say,*  
*Did keep His holy presence warm.*  
*How many oxen and donkeys now,*  
*If they were there when first He came,*  
*How many oxen and donkeys you know,*  
*At such a time would do the same?*
2. *As soon as to these humble beasts*  
*Appeared our Lord so mild and sweet,*  
*With joy they knelt before His Grace,*  
*And gently kissed His tiny feet.*  
*If we, like oxen and donkeys then,*  
*In spite of all the things we've heard,*  
*Would be like oxen and donkeys then,*  
*We'd hear the truth, believe His word.*
3. *And on that night it has been told*  
*These humble beasts so rough and rude,*  
*Throughout the night of holy birth,*  
*Drank no water, ate no food.*  
*How many oxen and donkeys now,*  
*Dressed in ermine, silk and such,*  
*How many oxen and donkeys you know,*  
*At such a time would do as much?*

*English lyrics by Oscar Brand*

*Source: Reader's Digest Christmas Songbook*

From Morna: As soon as we had this piece in hand, we had to tackle how to pronounce its very unusual language. By 1700, modern French was pretty much in place. Through our friend and language specialist, Elizabeth Brodovitch, I learned more about de La Monnoye (who also wrote the French carol *Patapan*). Turns out he was a very well-educated man who chose to write occasionally in a self-created “patois” dialect to give his poems a more earthy, rustic, and folk-like sound. So, when you hear it, *Burgundian Carol's* language will be unlike any French you have heard! Rather than modernize the pronunciation, we decided to make the assumption that his spellings were part of the intended flavour of the work, and we took them literally as pronunciation guides. My thanks to Elizabeth for this research and for her meticulous written and spoken guides which helped us get on top of this fascinating aspect of this carol!

### ***In dulci jubilo***

About the second movement, Laura writes: *This carol has captured my imagination since I first heard the story of how it came to be. According to folklore, the German mystic Heinrich Seuse penned it after having been led by the hand of an angel into a whole group of angels, who sang this carol as they drew him into a heavenly dance of worship with them.*

*This setting of In dulci jubilo begins with the sound of angel wings in mind, and the piano is the first to introduce the tune, with the altos responding in harmony. In the introductory section, I imagine the dazzling scene of many angels all singing together and the dizzying feeling of being drawn into their song and dance, and this jubilant feeling carries through the whole setting of this bright carol in different ways. Just as the piece begins with angels, the fluttering wings return at the end as the jubilantly mystical experience unwinds and vanishes with wings fluttering off into the night.*

#### **II. In dulci jubilo** 14<sup>th</sup>-century German

1. *In dulci jubilo,*  
nun singet und seid froh!  
Unsers Herzens Wonne  
*leit in praesepio,*  
Und leuchtet als die Sonne  
*matris in gremio*  
*Alpha es et O!*

2. *O Jesu parvule,*  
Nach dir ist mir so weh.  
Tröst mir mein Gemüte,  
*O Puer optime;*  
Durch alle deine Güte,  
*O Princeps Glorïae,*  
*Trahe me post te!*

3. *O Patris caritas!*  
*O Nati lenitas!*  
Wir wärn all' verloren  
*Per nostra criminal;*  
So hat er uns erworben  
*Coelorum gaudia;*  
Eia, warn wir da!

#### **II. In dulci jubilo (English translation)** 14<sup>th</sup>-century German

1. *With sweet jubilation,*  
*Let songs and gladness flow!*  
*All our joy reclineth*  
*in a manger*  
*And like the sun he shineth*  
*in [your] mother's lap*  
*You are Alpha and Omega!*

2. *O infant Jesus*  
*I yearn for thee always!*  
*Comfort me and stay me,*  
*O best of boys*  
*By thy great love I pray thee,*  
*O Prince of Glory,*  
*Draw me after you [to heaven]!*

3. *O love of the Father!*  
*O mercy of the son!*  
*Condemned we had remained*  
*Through our sins*  
*But he for us hath gained*  
*The joys of heaven*  
*In paradise afar,*  
*Where joys unending are.*

4. *Ubi sunt gaudia?*

Nirgends mehr denn da,  
Da die Engel singen  
*Nova cantica,*  
Und die Schellen klingen  
*In Regis curia;*  
Eia, warn wir da!

vv. 1, 2, 4 fourteenth-century  
=v. 3 Valentin Triller (d. 1573)  
(Praetorius, 1607)

4. *Where are joys(?)*

*More deep than heaven's are?*  
*In heaven are angels singing*  
*New songs*  
*In heaven the bells are ringing*  
*In the courts of the King*  
*O that we were there!*

Translation from source editors  
Source: "The shorter New Oxford Book of  
Carols" ed. Keyte, Parrott, & Bartlett

From Morna: *In dulci jubilo* is one of the most popular macaronic carols today, meaning its sung text incorporates more than one language. On the left column above, the Latin lines are in italics. The rest is German. In addition to the sheer beauty and energy of this melody, we have the fun of switching back and forth. I've never studied Latin, but through experiences in choral music, have had many decades of "decoding" and finding links to English words. For example "nova" means "new". Look out if you are playing word games with me - I have a novice's (pun intended) incomplete grasp of many languages and their common roots and am a dangerously good guesser!

**Wexford Carol**

Laura says: *The Wexford Carol has been my favourite Christmas carol since I first heard the gorgeous King's Singers recording of it as a child, and felt, for perhaps the first time with awareness, my facial muscles spontaneously smile by themselves in reaction to so much beauty. Because I have loved this carol so much, it's taken a long time to decide to try to create my own arrangement. In the opening verse of this setting, the tune of the carol isn't placed directly in the foreground of the soundscape as it usually would be. Rather, the first verse is more of a meditation, with a pensive piano introduction followed by expressive blossoming harmonies, and a change in meter that stretches the tune out longer than the original note values. After that, in verse two, we revel in the opportunity to sing this gorgeous carol as it is, in unison. This opens up in the third verse with a double-descant and with the piano as an equal voice with its own independent phrase lengths and tolling bells. The ending of the Wexford Carol brings Carol Trilogy to a close with thoughts ahead to the fulfillment of Christ's coming to earth that Christmas night, which was indeed to "end all strife."*

**III. Wexford Carol**

*12<sup>th</sup>-century English and Irish*

1. Good people all, this Christmastime,  
Consider well and bear in mind  
What our good God for us has done,  
In sending his beloved Son.  
With Mary holy we should pray  
To God with love this Christmas Day;  
In Bethlehem upon that morn  
There was a blessed Messiah born.
2. Near Bethlehem did shepherds keep  
Their flocks of lambs and feeding sheep;  
To whom God's angels did appear,  
Which put the shepherds in great fear.

'Prepare and go', the angels said,  
'To Bethlehem, be not afraid;  
For there you'll find, this happy morn,  
A princely babe, sweet Jesus born,'

3. With thankful heart and joyful mind,  
The shepherds went the babe to find,  
And as God's angel had foretold,  
They did our Saviour Christ behind.  
Within a manger he was laid,  
And by his side the virgin maid,  
Attending on the Lord of life,  
Who came on earth to end all strife.

*English and Irish traditional*

Source: "The Oxford Book of Carols"  
Ed. Dearmer, Vaughan Williams, Shaw

Following the opening suite, I felt it was time for us to meet our harpist, Vivian Chen. I asked her to perform a short solo piece before she joined with the choir, and the fascinating Canadian work *Suite Galactique, opus 39* was her suggestion. This is the second movement, *Hymne au Bon Combat* (Hymn of a Good Combat). The composer, Caroline Lizotte (b. 1969), is herself a harpist. The setting Lizotte describes is as though descending through the stratosphere to a winter scene on earth. I liked the evocative nature of this piece, its sweeping phrases, and its sense of anticipation.

### **Hodie Christus Natus Est (2017)**

Kelly-Marie Murphy

Commissioned by Elektra and Ensemble vocal sénior De La Salle, Centre d'excellence artistique de l'Ontario, De La Salle High School, Ottawa, Conseil scolaire des écoles publiques de l'Ontario, Robert Filion, Conductor

Publisher: manuscript      Composer's website: [www.kellymariemurphy.com](http://www.kellymariemurphy.com)

We come to the second of our two brand new works, the lively and energetic *Hodie Christus Natus Est* (Today Christ is Born) by Ottawa-based composer Kelly-Marie Murphy. This is an original composition that came about because Murphy was having conversations with two choral colleagues about a work with harp for Christmas. In my case, I was looking for a companion piece to her *The Darkest Midnight in December*, which she had written several years ago for Jean Ashworth Bartle and the Toronto Children's Chorus. My original intention was to feature both together in this concert, and then I ran out of space! In Robert Filion's case, he was looking for more opportunities to collaborate with his favorite harpist in Ottawa. Robert and I are friends, so the three-way conversation was a natural! Kelly-Marie generously gave this composition to both choirs as a gift, for which we are extremely grateful.

It's worth noting that the Hawley and Murphy works are part of Elektra's ongoing commitment to creating opportunities for and raising the profile of women composers. Laura will be with us for the Chez Nous concerts in Vancouver and North Vancouver, strengthening her relationship with me and with Elektra, meeting with other conductors, spreading information about her choral works, and making two short videos for YouTube about her compositions and arrangements. There is so much energy worldwide for "righting the ship" of gender imbalance in all aspects of classical music. Composition is a field where there is a particularly tenacious, historical imbalance. The goal is that sometime in the near future, the question of girls and women aspiring to be successful and recognized professional composers will be a non-issue. More information on our Celebrating Women Composers project is here: <http://elektra.ca/outreach/celebrating-women-composers/>

The **West Vancouver School District Women's Honour Choir** is led by Artistic Director Suzanne Fulton, and it is our great pleasure to have them join us for Chez Nous this year. Made up of students from many West Vancouver schools, this group is focused on musical excellence and the development of choral and vocal skills. My dual mandates for Suzanne in their solo set of three works were to "show us who you are" and "include something Christmassy"!

### **A Carol Tapestry (1995)**

Traditional carols, arranged by Mary Lynn Lightfoot

Publisher: The Lorenz Corporation

The "something Christmassy" came to life in this charming arrangement of melodic portions and excerpts from five traditional carols: *In Dulci Jubilo; The Holly and the Ivy; The First Noel; Infant*

*Holy Infant Lowly, and Song of the Crib.* It was a nice bonus that the young singers will have heard a completely different, full arrangement of *In Dulci Jubilo* in Elektra's first set. Choral singers and audiences hear these touchstones of our common singing culture over and over again at Christmas in different forms (and at the shopping mall!). These become part of the fabric of lifelong memories of Christmas.

### **La Mia Stella** (2015)

music and lyrics by Ivo Antognini

Publisher: Alliance Music Publications

From the publisher's website: *La Mia Stella is dedicated to all those that are forced to flee from their homeland in hopes of finding, after long and frightening journeys, a better life. "Nyota yangu" means "My star" in the Swahili language, spoken by tribes of the eastern coast of Africa.* Composer Ivo Antognini is no stranger to Elektra and its audiences. He is the Swiss composer of *O Magnum Mysterium*, first performed by Elektra in 2009's *Chez Nous* concert and subsequently released on our most recent Christmas CD, *Still*.

### **La Mia Stella**

(Swahili) Nyota yangu  
(Italian) Guarda quella stella, disse il mio  
papa,  
Segui la sua luce, lei ti guidera  
In un mondo senza guerre  
dove tu potrai giocare.  
Dai, chiudi gli occhi, bambino mio,  
prova a sognar.

Soffro tanto il freddo, disse il mio papa.  
Stai attento all'onda; presto tornera.  
Chissa quante notti ancora  
noi dovremo aspettar  
Un nuovo mondo, una nuova vita,  
Su questa barca in mezzo al mar,

Ma la mia stella lassu nel ciel  
Presto ci mandera un salvatore per tutti noi,  
E anche per quelli in fondo al mar

Guarda com'e grande, disse il mio papa.  
Tieniti piu forte; non ti prendera  
Come ha fatto con la mamma.  
che riposa in fondo al mar.  
Chiudi la bocca, bambino mio, non respirar.

Vado dalla mamma, disse il mio papa.  
Oramai sei grande; tu rimani qua.  
So che non avrai paura e che presto  
troverai  
Un'altra terra, un altro mondo,  
e un'altra vita comincera.

### **My little star** (English translation)

*My little star  
Look up to that star, my father said.*

*Follow its light, it will lead you  
into a world without wars  
where you will be free to play.  
Come, close your eyes, my son,  
see if you can dream.*

*I am cold, my father said.  
Look out for the wave; it will come back.  
Who knows how many nights  
we will have to wait  
for a new world, a new life,  
in this boat adrift in the sea.*

*But my little star up in the sky  
soon will send a saviour for us all,  
and for those the sea has taken away.*

*See how big the wave is, my father said.  
Hold on tight, it will not sweep you away  
as it did with your mother,  
now asleep on the bottom of the sea.  
Do not open your mouth my son, do not  
breathe.*

*I am going to join your mother, father said.  
You are a big boy now, you can stay.  
I know you won't be afraid and soon you'll  
find  
another land, another world,*

*and another life will begin.*  
Ma cosa fai? Ma dove sei?

*But what are you doing? Where are you?*

Stellina mia, lassu nel cielo...  
fatti vedere, stellina mia  
Fatti trovare lassu nel cielo.

*My little star, up in the sky...  
Let me see you, my little star.  
Let me find you up in the sky.*

Translation by Alessandro Carrera

### **A Blessing (1986)**

Katie Moran Bart

Publisher: Neil A. Kjos Music Company

A familiar Irish poem in a simple, stunning composition beloved of choirs around the world.

### **Singalongs**

#### **It Came Upon the Midnight Clear**

Music: Richard Storrs Willis

Text: Edmund Sears

Arranged by: Susan Edwards

#### **Deck the Hall**

Traditional Welsh carol

Arranged by: Edward Henderson / accompaniment by Stephen Smith

Following the performance of the youth choir, we'll get the audience up on their feet and singing two familiar carols with us. I've always loved *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*. It is connected to aspirations of peace heard in the repeated, closing phrase line of the *Wexford Carol* and as the central theme in Antognini's *La Mia Stella*. The arrangement the choir sings is by Elektra singer, Susan Edwards. Thank you, Susan!

Following intermission, the centrepiece of this concert: one of English composer Benjamin Britten's (1913-1976) most often-performed works, *A Ceremony of Carols*. The scoring for treble choir and harp came about because Britten was preparing to write a harp concerto (which he, sadly for harpists the world over, never did). He was returning in 1942 to England by ship from America. The ship stopped at Halifax, where Britten bought a copy of *The English Galaxy of Shorter Poems*, edited by Gerald Bullett. Medieval poems rich in language and imagery, recently-acquired technical knowledge of the possibilities of the harp, and a monotonous ocean voyage became the creative space in which Britten composed *A Ceremony of Carols*. It was first performed by children. There are many articles about this work online, so I won't go further into musical analysis. But I will say that, in rehearsal and performance, this is one of those masterpieces that stands the test of time: fresh, challenging, and gratifying every time we open the score. Our recording of it is on Elektra's *Chez Nous* CD.



## **A Ceremony of Carols (1942)**

Benjamin Britten

### **1. Procession**

Traditional chant

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

*Today Christ is born;  
today the Saviour has appeared;  
today the Angels sing,  
the Archangels rejoice;  
today the righteous rejoice, saying:  
Glory to God in the highest. Alleluia!*

### **2. Wolcum Yole!**

Anon., 14th century

Wolcum be thou hevenè king, Wolcum Yole!  
Wolcum, born in one morning,  
Wolcum for whom we sall sing!  
Wolcum Thomas marter one,  
Wolcum seintes lefe and dere, Wolcum.  
Wolcum Innocentes every one,  
Wolcum, Twelfth Day both in fere, Wolcum.  
Wolcum be ye, Stevene and Jon,  
Wolcum be ye, good Newe Yere, Wolcum.  
Candelmesse, Quene of bliss,  
Wolcum bothe to more and lesse.  
Wolcum be ye that are here.  
Wocum alle and make good cheer.  
Wolcum alle another yere, Wolcum Yole

### **3. There is no Rose**

Anon 14<sup>th</sup> century

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

For in this rose containèd was  
Heaven and earth in litel space,  
Resmiranda. [*Wonderful thing*]  
By that rose we may well see  
There be one God in persons three,  
Pares forma. [*Of the same form*]

The aungels sungen the shepherds to:  
Gloria in excelsis Deo [Glory to God in the highest].  
Gaudeamus. [*Let us rejoice*]  
Leave we all this werldly mirth,  
And follow we this joyful birth.  
Transeamus. [*Let us go*]

#### **4a. That yongë child**

Anon., 14th century

That yongë child when it gan weep  
With song she lulled him asleep:  
That was so sweet a melody  
It passèd alle minstrelsy.  
The nightingalë sang also:  
Her song is hoarse and nought thereto:  
Whoso attendeth to her song  
And leaveth the first then doth he wrong.

#### **4b. Balulalow**

James, John & Robert Wedderburn, 1561

O my deare hert, my young Jesu sweit  
Prepare thy creddil in my spreit,  
And I sall rock thee to my hert,  
And never mair from thee depart.

But I sall praise thee evermoir  
With sanges sweit unto thy gloir;  
The knees of my hert sall I bow,  
And sing that richt Balulalow!

#### **5. As dew in Aprille**

Anon., c. 1400

I sing of a maiden that is makèles:  
King of all kings to her son she ches.  
He came al so still there is moder was,  
As dew in Aprille that falleth on the grass.  
He came al so still to his moder's bour,  
As dew in Aprille that falleth on the flour.  
He came al so stille there is moder lay,  
As dew in Aprille that falleth on the spray.  
Moder and mayden was never none but she:  
Well may such a lady Goddes moder be.

#### **6. This little Babe**

Robert Southwell (1561? - 1595)

This little Babe so few days  
Is come to rifle Satan's fold;  
All hell doth at his presence quake,

Though he himself for cold do shake;  
For in this weak unarmèd wise  
The gates of hell he will surprise.

With tears he fights and wins the field,  
His naked breast stands for a shield;  
His battering shot are babish cries,  
His arrows looks of weeping eyes,  
His martial ensigns Cold and Need,  
And feeble Flesh his warrior's steed.

His camp is pitchèd in a stall,  
His bulwark but a broken wall;  
The crib his trench, haystalks his stakes;  
Of shepherds he his muster makes;  
And thus, as sure his foe to wound,  
The angels' trumps alarum sound.

My soul, with Christ join thou in flight;  
Stick to the tents that he hath pight.  
Within his crib is surest ward;  
This little Babe will be thy guard.  
If thou wilt foil thy foes with joy,  
Then flit not from this heavenly Boy.

### **7. Interlude** (harp solo)

### **8. In Freezing Winter Night**

Robert Southwell (1561? – 1595)

Behold a silly 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.

This stable is a Prince's court,  
This crib his chair of state;  
The beasts are parcel of his pomp,  
The wooden dish his plate.

The persons in that poor attire  
His royal liveries wear;  
The prince himself is come from heav'n;  
This pomp is prizèd there.

With joy approach, O Christian wight,  
Do homage to thy King.  
And highly praise his humble pomp,  
Which he from Heav'n doth bring.

### **9. Spring Carol**

William Cornish (14? – 1523)

Pleasure it is to hear iwis, the Birdès sing,  
The deer in the dale, the sheep in the vale, the corn springing.  
God's purvayance for sustenance,  
It is for man.  
Then we always to give him praise, And thank him than.

### **10. Adam lay i-bounden**

Anon. 15<sup>th</sup> Century

Deo gracias! [*Praise be to God*]

Adam lay i-bounden, bounden in a bond;  
Four thousand winter thought he not to long.  
Deo gracias!

And all was for an appil, an appil that he took,  
As clerkès finden written in a book.  
Deo gracias!

Ne had the appil takè ben, the appil takè ben  
Ne haddè never our lady a ben hevnè quene.  
Blessèd be the time the appil takè was.  
Therefor we moun singen.  
Deo gracias!

### **11. Recession**

Hodie Christus natus est.

(*same words and music as the Procession*)

Our concluding set starts with Patrick Wedd's *Carol for the Animals*, another work originally written for children's choir, this time for Bruce Pullan, the Vancouver Bach Children's Chorus, and pianist Joyce Maguire. This charming and playful composition picks up on the references in our opening *Noël Bourguignon* of animals present at the birth of Christ and of the angels singing as they did in *In dulci jubilo*. Wedd is an organist, choir director, and composer living in Montreal. From 1975-1986, he was organist and choir director at Christ Church Cathedral, Vancouver, where I sang in his choir, experienced countless gems of the Anglican choral repertoire, improved my sight-reading, met some life-long choral friends, and deeply appreciated Patrick's ability to inspire choristers to make music as soon as they started to work on a piece. Singing Byrd one week and Leighton the next, there is never time in an ambitious Anglican church choir to get buried in the score. It was a significant, early learning experience for me that left a deep impression.

## **Carol for the Animals**

music: Patrick Wedd

text: Alice Carver Cramer

When they told of Jesus' birth,  
Joy of heaven come to earth,  
There were radiant angels singing,  
There were kings their treasure bringing,  
And the star shone afar,  
All the glorious word to tell:  
God with us Emmanuel.

There were simple shepherds too,  
Come this blessed child to view.  
Patient ox and ass and sheep  
joined the Christmas watch to keep,  
Where he lay on the hay,  
All the glorious word to tell:  
God with us Emmanuel.

When God made the creatures all,  
striped and spotted large and small,  
Came the word, that word has stood,  
These my creatures all are good,  
Creeping slug, ladybug,  
All the glorious word to tell:  
God with us Emmanuel.

Come then creatures one and all,  
come for blessings to the stall,  
Hear the heav'nly music ring,  
cats, dogs, monkeys every thing.  
From the whale to the snail,  
all the glorious word to tell:  
God with us Emmanuel.

To close the concert, another Canadian carol arrangement, this time by Erica Phare-Bergh, of the French carol *Noël Nouvelet*. The verses are sung in a new English translation by Erica and her husband Rick Bergh. Suzanne Fulton leads the combined choirs in this rousing arrangement.

Christmas comes anew, O sing we all Noël!  
Glory to God for whom our praises swell!  
Sing we Noël for Christ, the newborn King,  
*Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici* [we here sing "Noël"].

In Bethlehem, they ran and found the Child;  
Joseph adoring, and the mother mild  
And for his head a manger not a bed  
*Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici.*

Soon the kings, led by the brightest star  
Came to Bethlehem from Orient afar.  
Early one morning came to see the Child.  
*Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici.*

This is my God, my Saviour Jesus Christ.  
Who has come to earth to offer sacrifice.  
By his own blood has come to bring us life.  
*Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici*

And then an exquisite *a cappella* arrangement of *Silent Night* by Berlin-based composer, arranger, singer, and director Winnie Brückner. George Laverock introduced me to her music, and some of you might remember her arrangement of *O Jesulein Süß (O Jesus, Sweet Child)* included in *Chez Nous* a couple of years ago. It's on our YouTube channel if you missed it: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XmFNKWveUyY>. Winnie sings in and contributes much of the repertoire for the female vocal quartet Ninime: <http://niniwe.de/?lang=en>.

As we send our listeners on their way, we come back to the desire for peace expressed so poignantly in *The Wexford Carol's* closing line, in *La Mia Stella*, and which we sang together in *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*: the desire for deep and lasting peace.

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

Silent night, holy night.  
Shepherds quake at the sight.  
Glories stream from heaven afar.  
Heavenly hosts sing "alleluia".  
Christ the Saviour is born.

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



Morna Edmundson, Artistic Director  
Elektra Women's Choir