

Ostinato's Christmas Concert

5th December 2010

Hodie for Ostinato; Jan Wagner of Beechworth, has accompanied Ostinato at its concerts since its inaugural performance. In appreciation and love of the choir, she has written this joyous welcome to Christmas for us to 'sing-in' the festive season.

Once In Royal David's City; was written by the English poet [Cecil Frances Alexander](#) and published in 1848. It was set to music by the English organist [Henry John Gauntlett](#) in 1849. The arrangement we are singing is by the English organist Arthur Henry Mann (1850-1929).

A Babe is Born ; Gustav Holst (1874-1934) was born in Cheltenham, UK. He began composing while at Cheltenham Grammar School and spent two months at Oxford learning counterpoint before being sent to London to study composition under Stanford at the Royal College of Music. He was Director of Music at St. Paul's Girls' School in Hammersmith from 1905 'til his death. Probably his most well known work, is *The Planets* (1914-16)

Away in a Manger; William J. Kirkpatrick (1838 –1921) was born in [Duncannon, Pennsylvania](#). He was a versatile musician playing the [cello](#), [fife](#), [flute](#), [organ](#), and [violin](#). First published in 1885 in Philadelphia, this is one of the most popular carols. This arrangement is by David Willcocks

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht

Silent Night; (*Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht*) The [lyrics](#) were written by the [Austrian](#) priest Father [Joseph Mohr](#) (1792-1848) and the melody by the Austrian headmaster [Franz Xaver Gruber](#) (1787-1863). In 1819, [John Freeman Young](#) (second Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Florida) published the English translation that is the one most frequently sung. The version of the melody that is generally sung today differs slightly (particularly in the final strain) from Gruber's original, which was a sprightly, dance-like tune in 6/8, as opposed to the slow, meditative lullaby version generally sung these days.

A Cradle Hymn (hush my dear be still); Douglas Brooks-Davies, an Englishman born in Wimbledon, in 1942, is a freelance author/editor and composer who plays recorders, viola and flute. He formerly sang counter-tenor in church choirs.

Angels From the Realms of Glory; Thomas Reginald Jacques (1894 -1969) was an [English](#) [choral](#) and [orchestral conductor](#). He collaborated with [David Willcocks](#) in compiling the popular first volume of [Carols for Choirs](#) (1961), which incorporates several of his better known arrangements, including this setting of the words of J. Montgomery.

Ding Dong! Merrily on High; 16th c. French tune harmonized by Charles Wood (1866 - 1926) an [Irish composer](#) and teacher. In 1883 he became one of fifty inaugural class members of the [Royal College of Music](#), studying composition, [horn](#) and [piano](#). Charles Wood also co-edited three books of [carols](#) and was co-founder (in 1904) of the [Irish Folk Song Society](#).

God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen; trad. English arranged by (Sir) David Willcocks (1919) a renowned British choral conductor, organist, and composer. He is particularly known for his choral arrangements of Christmas carols. They are published in the five Carols for Choirs anthologies (1961–1987), edited by Willcocks with Reginald Jacques and John Rutter. He is currently Music Director Emeritus of King's College Choir, and an Honorary Fellow of King's College, Cambridge.

Good King Wenceslas; This Boxing Day carol is an arrangement by Reginald Jacques of a tune from *Piae Cantiones* (*Devout ecclesiastical and school songs of the old bishops*) a collection of late [medieval Latin songs](#) compiled by the Finn, [Jacobus Finno](#) and published in 1582, with words by J.M. Neale (1818-1866). Neale is best known as a hymn writer and translator, having translated many ancient and mediaeval hymns from Latin and Greek.

Chanson Joyeuse de Noel; François-Auguste Gevaert (1828-1908) was a Belgian composer. In 1874 he was appointed head of the [Brussels Conservatory](#). Though a successful composer he was happier as a teacher, historian, writer and lecturer on music. His compositions include about a dozen operas, cantatas for national occasions, songs and other works. His chief service to music, however, was as an educator.

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing; written by [Charles Wesley](#) it first appeared in *Hymns and Sacred Poems* in 1739 but was altered by [George Whitefield](#), Wesley's co-worker. In 1855, English musician [William H. Cummings](#) adapted [Felix Mendelssohn's](#) (1809-1847) music to fit the lyrics. This arrangement has the [William H. Cummings](#) harmonization of the Mendelssohn tune for the first two verses with a [soprano descant](#) and a [last verse harmonization](#) for the organ by Sir [David Willcocks](#).

Summer Carol; words of Gillian on Bertouch set to music by Stefan Karpinić, an Australian composer living in Tasmania where he is currently teaching at the Tasmanian Polytechnic. He plays tenor Saxophone either with the Derwent Valley Concert Band or a "function" band called the Terrazzo Brothers.

Christmas Day; the words of John Wheeler set by William G. James (1892-1977) an Australian pianist who gave up a distinguished concert career to become one of the pioneers of music broadcasting in Australia. He was the first federal director of music for the ABC (1931–1957). Under his direction the ABC formed orchestras in each state. He is best known for his Australian Christmas Carols, although his compositions include many works for voice, choir, and piano.

I Saw Three Ships; an English traditional carol arranged by David Willcocks, it dates back to the 1600s in England. It is often considered a child's song due to its repetition and joyous nature, but the lyrics often leave people wondering. Are the ships the "Ships of the Desert", camels, carrying the three wise men?

O Little Town of Bethlehem; an American Episcopal Bishop, [Phillips Brooks](#) (1835-1893), wrote this poem in 1868 after visiting Bethlehem. His organist, [Lewis Redner](#), added the music which is used most often for this carol in the [United States](#). In the United Kingdom and Australia, the traditional English tune "Forest Green", arranged by [Ralph Vaughan Williams](#), is the one most often used. We sing it here with a descant written by Thomas Armstrong (1898-1994)

Villagers All; David Greagg born in Perth in 1954, is a Melbourne mathematician, choir master, music arranger, author and registered wizard. He has taken the words of Kenneth Grahame (*Wind in the Willows*) and set them for this Christmas song.

Past Three a Clock; the words by [George Ratcliffe Woodward](#) (1848–1934) are set to the traditional tune "London Waits" harmonized by Charles Wood (1866 – 1926) It is a [Christmas carol](#) loosely based on the traditional cry of the city night watchman. Woodward added lines to the traditional refrain in a style characteristic of his delight in archaic poetry. It was first published in *The Cambridge Carol Book* in 1924.

The First Nowell; (sometimes *The First Noel* or just *Noel*) is a traditional [English Christmas carol](#), most likely from the 18th century. In its current form it is of [Cornish](#) origin. It was first published in *Christmas Carols Ancient and Modern* (1823) arranged, edited and with extra lyrics, written by [Davies Gilbert](#). The melody is unusual among English folk melodies in that the refrain merely repeats the melody of the verse. It is thought to be a corruption of an earlier melody sung in a [church gallery](#) setting. The word *Nowell* comes from the [French](#) word [Noël](#) meaning "Christmas", from the [Latin](#) word *natalis* ("[birth](#)").

The Holly and the Ivy; is an English traditional [Christmas carol](#) first published by the musicologist [Cecil Sharp](#) (1859-1924) and arranged here by Reginald Jacques. Holly and ivy have been used for church decoration at Christmas, when little else is green or with fruit, since at least the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Deck the Hall; the tune is that of an old [Welsh](#) air, first found in a musical manuscript by Welsh harpist [John Parry Ddall](#) (c. 1710–1782), but possibly from the 16th century. In the eighteenth century the tune spread widely, with Mozart using it in a piano and violin concerto and, later, Haydn in the song "New Year's Night. Originally, [carols](#) were dances, not songs. The connection with dancing is made explicit in the English lyrics by the phrase "follow me in merry measure" as "measure" in this context, is a synonym for dance. The first English version appeared in *The Franklin Square Song Collection*, edited by J.P.McCaskey in 1881.

A New Year Carol; born in Kiev, Ukraine, Paul T. Stetsenko studied at Kiev Conservatory. In 1990 he moved to the US and continued his studies at New York's esteemed Juilliard School majoring in Organ Performance. Dr. Stetsenko is currently Director of Music Ministries at [Westminster Presbyterian Church](#) in Alexandria, Virginia.

A Merry Christmas; a 16th c English carol from the West country, arranged in 1935, by Arthur Warrell a 19th/20th c English organist. Its origin lies in the English tradition where wealthy people of the community gave Christmas treats such as 'figgy puddings' that were very much like modern day [Christmas puddings](#), to the carol singers on Christmas Eve. It is one of the few traditional carols that makes mention of the [New Year](#) celebration.

While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks By Night; the words by Nahum Tate (1652-1715) appeared in Tate and [Nicholas Brady](#)'s 1700 supplement to their [New Version of the Psalms of David](#) of 1696. It was the only Christmas hymn authorized to be sung by the [Anglican Church](#); before 1700 only the Psalms of David were permitted to be sung. This well known music came, originally, from [Este](#)'s Psalter, the *Whole Book of Psalmes*, from 1592 and was arranged by [William Henry Monk](#) sometime before 1874.

O Come, All Ye Faithful (*Adeste Fideles*); the text, originally written in Latin (*Adeste Fideles*), was intended to be a hymn. It is attributed to John Wade, an Englishman of the 1600s. The music was probably composed by fellow Englishman John Reading in the early 1700s and was arranged by David Willcocks in 1961. It was first published in a collection known as "Cantus Diversi" in 1751. In 1841 Rev. Frederick Oakley is reputed to have worked on the familiar translation of O Come All Ye Faithful, which replaced the older Latin lyrics.