



MARY BEEKMAN
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Musica Sacra
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DEAR FRIENDS,

Welcome and happy holidays! We are so pleased you chose to join us tonight for a beautiful program of Christmas music old and new drawn from the rich diversity of American musical traditions.

Musica Sacra continues to offer a livestream of our concerts this season. If you enjoyed tonight's performance, you can invite friends to listen to the recording, which will continue to be available following the performance. Please spread the word!

If you are still shopping for last-minute holiday gifts or would like to add to your own collection, in the lobby following the concert we will be offering Musica Sacra's five acclaimed CDs: *Song of Songs*; *Love, Lust and Laudations*; *Piteous Beauty*; *Baltic Inspirations*; and *Welcome Yule!* Our recordings are also available for download in MP3 format on our website, www.musicasacra.org.

We hope you will join us for our remaining concerts this season. For our next concert, we will be led by guest conductor Lorraine Fitzmaurice on March 11th, 2023 in a program to be announced. In May of 2023, we will present *Double Takes: One Text, Two Perspectives*, presenting pieces by Lauridsen, Barber, Hailstork, and Rautavaara, among others.

As always, our work is supported by generous contributions from our donors. If you enjoyed today's performance, please consider making a tax deductible year-end donation to Musica Sacra either at the ticket table in the lobby or on our website, www.musicasacra.org.

We hope you enjoy tonight's performance, and we look forward to seeing you again in the New Year!

Sincerely,
David Halstead, President

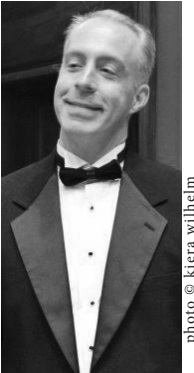


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Musica Sacra is funded in part by the Massachusetts Cultural Council and by the Inavale Foundation.

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We wish to thank Mitch Hay and Barb Lemmel, Terry Halco, and Harvard-Epworth Methodist Church, Cambridge; Peter Sykes and First Church Congregational, Cambridge; Holbrook Robinson for his excellent photography; Katell Guellec, Lorraine Fitzmaurice, and all of the Boston Cares volunteers; Michael Borum and Anne Chalmers for creating the visual representations of our sound; Brian Middleton for his time and meticulous attention to our program book; and to all the additional dedicated volunteers who get everything done season after season.

An American Christmas

MUSICA SACRA

Mary Beekman, *Artistic Director*

Terry Halco, *Accompanist*

Saturday, December 10, 2022, 7:00 pm

First Church, Congregational, Cambridge, Massachusetts

Please silence your phones and devices.

Please hold applause until ✨ between pieces.

GUARDIAN OWL (*Nativity Madrigals, No. 1*) Daniel Pinkham (1923–2006)

✨

THERE IS NO ROSE Kevin Siegfried (born 1969)

MAGNIFICAT Caleb Burhans (born 1980)

✨

AWAY IN A MANGER William Kirkpatrick (1838–1921), arr. Ola Gjeilo (born 1978)

Emma Azelborn, *mezzo*

OH, PO' LITTLE JESUS Negro spiritual, arr. Willis Lawrence James (1900–1966)

Emily Nydam, *mezzo*

✨

A CHRISTMAS CAROL Charles Ives (1874–1954)

JESUS, JESUS, REST YOUR HEAD Appalachian folk carol, arr. Salli Terri (1922–1996)

Emily Nydam, *mezzo*

✨

SHERBURNE (*WHILE SHEPHERDS WATCHED*) Daniel Read (1757–1836)

RISE UP SHEPHERD AND FOLLOW Negro spiritual, arr. Jay Rogers (born 1949)

✨

MORNING STAR

Robert Lowry (1874–1954)

GET UP! SAID MARY (Nativity Madrigals, No. 2)

Daniel Pinkham

WHAT DID THE BABY GIVE THE KINGS? (Nativity Madrigals, No. 3)

Daniel Pinkham

★

I WONDER AS I WANDER

Appalachian folk carol, arr. John Jacob Niles (1892–1980) and Lewis Henry Horton

Bjorn Poonen, tenor

HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS BY SEA (Nativity Madrigals, No. 4)

Daniel Pinkham

★

HOLY DAY HOLLY CAROL

Cornish carol, arr. Channing Lefebvre (1895–1967)

CHRISTMAS EVE

Terry Halco (born 1958)

DECK THE HALLS (IN 7/8)

Traditional Welsh carol, arr. James McKelvy

AFTER (Nativity Madrigals, No. 5)

Daniel Pinkham

★

BEHOLD THAT STAR

Negro spiritual, arr. H.T. Burleigh (1866–1949))

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

From a choral repertoire spanning five centuries, Musica Sacra performs works both familiar and rare, with a crisp passion that awakens the listener to yearnings and joys, sorrows and delights—all that defines and inspires the best in human lives.

Since 1959, Musica Sacra has been performing choral music with the highest standards of musical excellence and a sound that has been called “breathtaking” and “uncommonly fresh and direct.” Mary Beekman, Artistic Director since 1979, continues to thrill Musica Sacra’s singers and audiences with a unique, varied, and engaging repertoire.

Musica Sacra is a non-profit organization funded by the generous donations of its supporters and in part by grants from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and the Inavale Foundation.

MARY BEEKMAN holds a BA in music from Harvard University and an MM from the New England Conservatory of Music, where she focused on Baroque Performance Practice. She has directed the Harvard-Radcliffe Graduate Chorale, the Concord Madrigals, Chorus pro Musica, and, as Interim Choirmaster, the Harvard University Choir. Her teachers include John

Ferris, Donald Teeters, Lorna Cooke deVaron, and Richard Pittman, and she has worked with Robert Shaw, Robert Fountain, Anton Armstrong, and Andre Thomas. In addition to her work with Musica Sacra, she is the Music Director of the Belmont Open Sings and on the faculty of the Powers Music School. Musica Sacra’s performance of Lassus’ *Cum essem parvulus* under her direction was selected for the *Norton Anthology of Music*.

TERRY HALCO is active as an accompanist, organist and singer in the Boston area. He received his musical training at Baldwin-Wallace College in Ohio and the New England Conservatory. Mr. Halco is the accompanist for Chorus pro Musica and the choruses of the University of Massachusetts Boston. He is currently Director of Music at Harvard-Epworth Methodist Church in Cambridge, and has been the Music Director at Payson Park Church in Belmont, First Presbyterian Church in Brookline, and Christ Lutheran Church in Belmont. He has been the accompanist for the Emerson College Chorale and the Simmons College Chorale, with which he toured England and Puerto Rico. He has also performed with the Tanglewood Festival Chorus and Capella Alamire.

Join the Musica Sacra family and assist us in our pursuit of creating rapturous music for all! Your gift will be used to help Musica Sacra build on its sixty-year tradition of choral excellence: to cover costs of soloists and orchestra, secure additional concert venues, and help defray operating costs.

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After the taming, after the manger moment,
 The baby, the bowing down, the gifts,
 The gathering round for one last look—
 Thereafter, when kings go home
 And shepherds tend again their flocks
 And stars resume their usual course,
 Oh then let creatures leave according to their kind,
 Lion fierce and serpent fanged
 And boar a brute undaunted
 By that stable pause:
 The wild of world natural still,
 Still a glory like a birth.

✱

BEHOLD THAT STAR · *Traditional Negro spiritual, from the collection of Thomas W. Talley (1870-1952)*

Refrain:

Behold that star!
 Behold that star up yonder!
 Behold that star!
 It is the star of Bethlehem.

There was no room found in the inn,
It is the star of Bethlehem,
 For Him who was born free from sin,
It is the star of Bethlehem.

Refrain

The wise men came on from the East.
It is the star of Bethlehem.
 To worship Him, the Prince of Peace,
It is the star of Bethlehem.

Refrain

A song broke forth upon the night,
It is the star of Bethlehem,
 From angel hosts all robed in white,
It is the star of Bethlehem,

Refrain

Glory to God, world without end,
It is the star of Bethlehem,
 And peace on earth, good will to men.
It is the star of Bethlehem,

Refrain

Musica Sacra happily presents tonight’s concert of all-American holiday music. Our country’s musical traditions draw from many different sources, some of them older than the nation itself. Tonight’s program reflects the diversity of the communities that have come to live here (willingly or unwillingly) over the centuries. The order of tonight’s program generally follows the Christmas story as told in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke and then ends with carols in celebration of our modern-day observance of the holiday.

We open the program with the first of Daniel Pinkham’s set of five *Nativity Madrigals*. Pinkham is one of our country’s national treasures, and Massachusetts should be particularly proud to have nurtured, educated and employed him for over eighty years. Though born in Lynn, Pinkham lived in Cambridge for his entire career. I have performed many of Dan’s works over the years, including a *Magnificat* he wrote especially for us, but I find the *Nativity Madrigals* to be his most endearing and moving work, due to Dan’s talent for both picking and setting these affective texts by the Cambridge poet Norma Farber, herself a classically trained singer. Each of Farber’s texts considers the events of Jesus’ birth from a different perspective. In all five, Pinkham uses the natural cadence of speech in his settings: you will hear faster tempos to illustrate passion—*don’t push or pinch or shove for a better view*; declarative homophony* for assertive statements—I *live here*; *I have a right to know what’s new*; and the use of phrases broken up with long pauses to convey tenderness—*just say your name with love when I ask, who are you?*—or internal rumination. In the first madrigal, we immediately know the identity of the narrator as an owl in the stable by Dan’s isolation of the word *who* on a descend-

ing glissando* of a fifth; the bird acts as major-domo for those entering the stable to see Jesus. Dan captures musically the visitors’, and by proxy our, successive emotions of fear and disconnection through forte* dynamics and harmonic dissonance, as well as the owl’s calm assuaging and matter-of-fact managing of the visitors.

In the second madrigal, written from Mary’s perspective, Farber and Pinkham explore the possible implications of the verse in chapter two of Luke: “But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.” The insight by Farber that Mary would be unappreciative of the wise men’s gifts is brilliant, as is Dan’s setting of her words: *Go now, all of you. Let me raise him/ as one among others, a regular/ boy. Thanks for your praise/ and what you say about a star. I mean, these first few days:/ don’t make me look too far.* The harmonies limning the first half of the text are major, implying the simple joys common to all in a normal childhood. Pinkham writes an expansive melisma on the word *star* to signify the brilliance of the star that led the kings to the stable. The phrase *too far*, which ends the piece, follows a hesitant line by all four voices singing in unison; the final minor chord portends Jesus’ brutal death. Pinkham contrasts this wonderfully with his musical expression of Mary’s exasperation with which the piece begins; he does this through the use of pauses in the music and the cadence of the rhythms implicit in the words of the text.

In the third piece, concerning not the gifts of the wise men to Jesus but His gifts to them, Pinkham’s music captures the desperation of the drowning man and the ebullience of *a laugh, like rising sun/ before the day has quite begun*. In the fourth madrigal, a novel

consideration of the effect of Christ's birth on the creatures of the sea, Pinkham's ungainly intervals and harmonies provide a musical representation of the awkward locomotion of sea creatures like the crab and starfish. To illustrate the crabs' climbing the shale, he sets a stepwise line spanning two and a half octaves, passing from the lowest range of the basses to the highest range of the sopranos. He also provides a wonderful touch in setting the phrase *and listened for word from Bethlehem*; from the extended chord in the men's voices on the word *listened*, one easily imagines the sea creatures craning their respective necks to better hear the distant news. In the final poem, Pinkham captures musically the letdown that follows the Christmas euphoria as Farber describes the departure of the various visitors. Pinkham's harmonies and rhythms then capture the ferocity of the animals and the glorious majesty of the everyday world in this aftermath.

Pinkham knows the way to make the human voice sound its best, as you can hear in the final chords of the last two pieces in this set. He knows exactly in which tessitura* each voice sounds most vibrant and the optimal disposition* of the voices to make the final chord easy to tune and to resonate. As such his music both showcases the best in choral sound and powerfully speaks to the emotions, making it among the most rewarding to sing and to share within the choral repertory.

Both the Siegfried and the Burhans have texts pertaining to Mary. Kevin Siegfried, a faculty member of the Boston Conservatory at Berklee here in Boston, set the oft-used medieval paean to the Virgin, *There is no rose*. Like many before him, most notably Britten in his Ceremony of Carols, he used the strophic text to create verses very similar to each other. In Siegfried's case, they feature minor rhythmic changes to the very irregular rhythmic structure. Despite that irregularity, however, the ebb and flow of each line cre-

ates a wonderful sense of rocking that calls to mind Mary rocking her baby. Caleb Burhans, a resident of New York City, created a mesmerizing setting of the *Magnificat*, Mary's song of social justice recited to her cousin Elizabeth during her pregnancy. He achieves this hypnotic effect by using a very simple accompaniment of arpeggiated* chords in which often only one note of the chord will change at a time, resulting in incremental changes in the harmony. (This listener was not surprised to learn that another one of Burhans' works was performed at that vanguard of minimalism Steve Reich's 70th birthday celebration.) Burhans often uses one of the women's three parts alone to reflect the solitary speaker, but he does allow all the voices to work together for dramatic and descriptive effect. Thus, the initial solo line *My soul doth magnify the Lord* becomes a duet to represent the word *magnify*. In the phrase *for he that is mighty hath magnified me*, Burhans repeats the initially low alto line and expands it by then having the three parts sing it in a very high tessitura.* In other places he will have one voice with the text on a melodic line, while the other voices create atmosphere by truncating parts of it or having them sing glissandos* down various intervals. The minor tonality* of the accompaniment and melody give way to a glorious major tonality in his setting of the Doxology* to end the piece.

Two other works on tonight's program are original works with no preceding carol melody. Charles Ives, who lived in Hartford and held a day job selling insurance, wrote *A Christmas Carol* in an uncharacteristically tonal format; most of his other compositions were extremely atonal long before atonality* became a common compositional strategy. The 6/8 meter, common in lullabies—think of Brahms' familiar one—underscores God's presence on Christmas day as an infant. Ives gives his piece a strophic form like the poem it sets, and the only dissonance within the entire piece emphasizes the baby's tragic end necessitating his birth.

CHRISTMAS EVE · Robert Hillyer (1895-1961)

The snow lies crisp beneath the stars,
On roofs and on the ground;
Late footsteps crunch along the paths,
There is no other sound.

So cold it is, the roadside trees
Snap in the rigid frost,
A dreadful night to think on them,
The homeless and the lost.

The dead sleep sheltered in the tomb,
The rich drink in the hall;
The Virgin and the Holy Child
Lie shivering in a stall.

DECK THE HALLS (IN 7/8) · Thomas Oliphant (1799-1873)

Deck the halls with boughs of holly,
Fa la la la la la la la la.
'Tis the season to be jolly,
Fa la la la la la la la la.
Don we now our gay apparel,
Fa la la la la la la la la.
Troll the ancient Yuletide carol,
Fa la la la la la la la la.

See the blazing Yule before us,
Fa la la la la la la la la.
Strike the harp and join the chorus,
Fa la la la la la la la la.
Follow me in merry measure,
Fa la la la la la la la la.
While I tell of yuletide treasure,
Fa la la la la la la la la.

Fast away the old year passes,
Fa la la la la la la la la.
Hail the new, ye lads and lasses,
Fa la la la la la la la la.
Sing we joyous all together,
Fa la la la la la la la la.
Heedless of the wind and weather,
Fa la la la la la la la la.

HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS BY SEA (*Nativity Madrigals, No. 4*) ·
Norma Farber

Fish of the sea couldn't come—not over dry ground.
They loitered in sight of the Holy Land,
And listened for word from Bethlehem.
Close as they dared, whales swam, trying not to cough.
Dolphins surmounted the valuts of surf.
Starfish hushed the spitting foam.
Deep denizens left their gloom for the surface, this once.
The shallows uncovered half their fins.
Freshwater gills left lake and stream.
Crabs took a chance or a whim to climb the shale.
They hustled back when they heard of Him.
They took the word to the tide—which was going out.
Minnow told plaice, plaice told pout.
Hear all about it! Hear all about it!
News! they cried.



HOLY DAY HOLLY CAROL · *Traditional Cornish carol*

Now the holly bears a berry as white as the milk,
And Mary bore Jesus who was wrapped up in silk.

Refrain:

And Mary bore Jesus Christ our savior for to be,
And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly.
Holly, holly!
And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly.

Now the holly bears a berry as green as the grass,
And Mary bore Jesus who died on the cross.

Refrain

Now the holly bears a berry as black as the coal,
And Mary bore Jesus who died for us all.

Refrain

Now the holly bears a berry, as blood as it red,
And Mary bore Jesus who rose from the dead.

Refrain

We are extremely lucky to have Terry Halco as the accompanist for Musica Sacra. Aside from being an accomplished keyboard player, he has also written some wonderful music, a piece of which we perform this evening: Christmas Eve. The tonal opening describing the snowy evening includes atmospheric music that evokes footsteps by interspersing short note values with pauses. This comforting tonality gives way to a section that becomes increasingly dissonant, however: first as the bitter cold is described, and then with the revelation of its effect on *the homeless and the lost*; Halco depicts this last word with melismas* that intertwine among the voices as though trying to find their way in vain. As the poem alludes to the relative comfort of *the dead* and *the rich*, the music works its way back to reprising the opening material in reference to the presence of Jesus and his mother, such that one thinks it will end with this comforting image. But, as two of the homeless and lost, they lie *shivering*, a word Halco sets apart and expresses with evocative music. Unlike the poem, however, in which they remain in that state *in a stall*, Halco uses the setting of this final phrase to allow the harmony to migrate from its predominant key of A flat major to a transcendent B flat major final chord; being a whole step higher than the rest of the piece, this might refer to Jesus' ultimate resurrection and its ability to grant the same for those who believe in him.

Also present on tonight's program are settings of traditional carols by contemporary composers, one such being *Away in a manger*. Many of us know three melodies to this carol; all were composed by nineteenth-century Americans, although the melody used by Ola Gjeilo was the work of an Irish immigrant. William Kirkpatrick, a devout Methodist, participated in the camp meetings that characterized the first Great Awakening in America. He published over one hundred major works in addition to hymns and seasonal anthems. Gjeilo, who emigrated from Finland to study at Juilliard, may have chosen this particular

melody as an immigrant himself. In any event it is a wonderfully tranquil setting for solo voice and wordless vocal accompaniment. As with Burhans's work, the harmonies shift incrementally through the predominant practice of one voice moving at a time. Because the voices sing together, however, the moving voices result in shifting clusters of sound reminiscent of those in the setting of *Es ist ein Ros entsprungen* by the Swedish composer Jan Sandström, a work Musica Sacra has performed a few times over the years. Only in the third and final verse does Gjeilo change the texture; his use of the sopranos singing the melody without any accompaniment alludes to the narration changing from the description of the birth to the personal prayer of the narrator on behalf of all of us.

Channing Lefebvre, originally from Baltimore, served as music director and organist at Trinity Church Wall Street, in New York City and directed choruses throughout the metropolitan area. He set the Cornish carol *Holy Day Holly Carol* with music as jolly as the melody. The first three stanzas showcase the melody—first in solo voice, then in homophony* and then in the tenor voice with others accompanying. In the final verse, however, Lefebvre tosses each of the four individual phrases of the stanza among the voices, resulting in a dense counterpoint.*

James McKelvy did a fun take on the Welsh carol *Deck the halls* by putting it in a 7/8 meter, turning a staid 4/4 meter into an uneven rhythm of groupings of 2 and 3. The irregularity is further accentuated by his sometimes creating rhythmic groupings of 2+2+3 and sometimes of 3+2+2.

Aside from works newly composed or arranged by Americans, we also include selections from the trove of American music from the traditions of the folk song, both African and Appalachian, and of shape note singing. There are three Negro spirituals on tonight's program. Willis Laurence James, a graduate

of Morehouse College, taught and directed the glee club at Spellman College for over 30 years. However, it was at his first teaching job in Louisiana that he started to collect folk songs with a focus on those sung around the levees of the Mississippi River; one might presume that *Oh, Po' Little Jesus* was one of these. His extensive knowledge of the spiritual led him to lecture at the Newport Jazz Festival and also at Tanglewood. Jay Rogers, an alumnus of Harvard College and of Musica Sacra, set *Rise Up Shepherd and Follow*. And H.T. Burleigh, a renowned baritone of his time, was the first Black composer to arrange spirituals in the style of classical Western music, bringing them into the Western compositional canon.** You can hear this in our selection of *Behold that star*; in addition to the orchestration for organ, he used no transliterations of black dialect. Born in Erie, Pennsylvania, Burleigh attended the National Conservatory of Music in New York City on a scholarship arranged by the mother of composer Edward McDowell. To make ends meet he also worked as a janitor at the conservatory, singing while he worked; when Antonin Dvořák, the conservatory's director, first heard him, he pronounced spirituals to be the future of American classical music, and subsequently used them in his New World Symphony.

A word about the use of Black dialect in tonight's program. André Thomas, the emeritus director of choral activities at Florida State University and a diligent scholar of the use of language in the spiritual, came full circle from having rejected the transliterations of dialect to embracing them. In his 2007 book, *Way over in Beulah lan': understanding and performing the Negro Spiritual*, he likens use of dialect in spirituals to the use of German Latin in the performance of Mozart masses, making the point that just as Mozart envisioned them performed that way, so should we hear spirituals in their original language. His reasoning is shared by Anton Armstrong, long the director of St. Olaf's Choir: "we have to recognize that certain

sounds common in the English language are absent in many of the African dialects. This is especially true in the dialects of the West African tribes from which many of the slaves were drawn and brought to this country." Both Armstrong and Thomas recommend using the dialect as transliterated by the composer, as well as leaving off final "r" in words ending in "er"; changing initial "th" sounds to "d"; and changing the ending "ing" to "in."

John Jacob Niles transcribed Appalachian folk tunes from an early age, preceding and greatly influencing the American folk music revival championed by Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie 20 years later. While Niles is known to many choral aficionados for his arrangement of Appalachian folk music in general and *I wonder as I wander* specifically, Salli Terri is less well known. A solo singer who also sang and toured with the Roger Wagner Chorale, she had an appreciation for all music, as evidenced by her remarks in a newspaper interview:

I don't like words or phrases like "longhair" or "the classics" or "pops" or "easy listening"...they are "dividing lines"; words which reinforce and perpetuate outmoded narrow prejudices instead of sweeping them aside. To me, the whole world of music is so wide and deep and exciting that there just never will be enough hours in a day or days in a week to let me hear and sing and soak up all the marvelous things available...

Certainly she bequeathed us a gem in her arrangement of the Appalachian carol *Jesus, Jesus, rest your head*. She treats the melody sometimes as a solo voice with unvoiced choral accompaniment, sometimes as treble voices accompanied by the lower parts, and sometimes as male voices in a lower register. This treatment along with her distinctive and lovely harmonic accompaniment to this strophic piece keep it consistently indrawing and affective.

WHAT DID THE BABY GIVE THE KINGS? (*Nativity Madrigals, No. 3*) · Norma Farber

What did the baby give the Kings? Three things:

Firstly, a promise, as of ev'ry birth that freshens earth,
Like dawn which hints anew
That what was dreamed may yet come true.

Then hope, as when you're thrown a rope
On nearly drowning in a tidal wave.
This gift as well the baby gave.

Lastly a laugh like rising sun
Before the day has quite begun,
So still a mirth, a note
So quiet in the throat of morning,
Kings could only guess
At all its shining tunefulness.

Amazed, as monarchs are
Who bring their royal wealth from far,
The Kings turned back with gifts so rare, so right,
They hovered in the homeward air like earthly light.

✱

I WONDER AS I WANDER · *Traditional Appalachian carol*

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 blessed promise of the 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, surely could have had it, 'cause he was King.

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.

RISE UP SHEPHERD AND FOLLOW · *Traditional Negro spiritual*

There's a star in the east on Christmas morn,
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.
It'll lead to the place where the Savior's born,
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.
Leave your sheep and leave your lambs,
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.
Leave your ewes and leave your lambs,
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.
Follow, follow,
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.
Follow the star of Bethlehem,
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.

If you take good heed to the angels' words,
Rise up, shepherd, and follow,
You'll forget your flocks, you'll forget your herds,
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.
Leave your sheep and leave your lambs,
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.
Leave your ewes and leave your lambs,
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.
Follow, follow,
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.
Follow the star of Bethlehem,
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.

✦

MORNING STAR · *Anonymous translation of German hymn by Philipp Nicolai (1556-1608)*

How splendid shines the morning star,
God's gracious light from darkness far,
The root of Jesse blessed.

Thou David's son of Jacob's stem,
My bridgeroom, king, and wondrous Lamb,
Thou hast my heart possessed.

Sweetly, friendly, O Thou handsome,
Precious ransom, full of graces,
Set and kept in heav'nly places.

GET UP! SAID MARY (*Nativity Madrigals, No. 2*) · *Norma Farber*

Get up! said Mary to the three grown men on their knees.
And since her child was newly born, they rose,
Somewhat stiff, to please the serious mother,
Who was shooing off assorted nosy animals,
(*Shoo! shoo!*) that sniffed her infant's toes.
Sh! (with severity)—it's too much commotion for so small a thing.
Let him breathe. Don't touch! Oh what a frightening stableful!

Go now, all of you. Let me raise him
As one among others, a regular boy.
Thanks for your praise, and what you say about a star.
I mean, these first few days: don't make me look too far.

We include two examples of shape note singing, so known because of the different shapes given to notes on the staff to facilitate sight-reading by the singer. Perhaps the best-known composer in this genre is William Billings of colonial Boston, whose harmonies sound open and hollow from the lack of thirds in many of the chords. From the 19th century on, however, shape-note music flourished particularly in the South. Many shape note groups gather today to sing music from tunebooks such as *The Sacred Harp*, first published in 1844, as well as modern-day compositions in that style. We perform Sherburne tonight as it would be done in those circles, by singing through the piece first in solfege* “on the shapes”

and then with the words. Sometimes the authorship of the hymn is unknown, but in these two that is not the case. In fact, Lowry also wrote the well-known hymn tune *Shall we gather at the river*.

I hope that tonight's concert has given you a taste of the variety among our streams of American musical traditions. Through it we celebrate not only the holiday season, but also the rich diversity within our country.

MARY BEEKMAN
Artistic Director

A note about performing Negro spirituals

When preparing this concert, Musica Sacra discussed the question of whether or not it was appropriate, as a mostly white ensemble, to perform Negro spirituals. On the one hand, Negro spirituals are an integral part of the American musical tradition and it felt deeply wrong to perform *An American Christmas* without including them. On the other hand, we are conscious of the cultural and historical context in which Black musical traditions have frequently been appropriated and overwritten by non-Black artists.

We were inspired by a segment on WGBH about the chorus at the United Parish in Brookline that chose to make donations to a Boston organization, the Hamilton-Garrett Center for Music & Arts, whenever they performed Negro spirituals. Their idea was that the music they performed was drawn from the traditions of enslaved people who were never compensated for their work, and while this wrong could not be rectified, they could support an organization whose mission it was to promote Black artists in their own community.

Musica Sacra elected to make our own donation to the Hamilton-Garrett Center for Music & Arts, which we invite you to learn more about on their website (hamiltongarrett.org) and consider in your own year-end giving.

Glossary of terms

arpeggio: a melody made up of the notes in a chord played in succession rather than simultaneously. The adjectival form is arpeggiated.

atonality: the absence of any tonality* around which to structure the music. There may be another structure, such as that of Schönberg's 12 tone system, or no structure.

counterpoint: the interplay of polyphonic* lines. Contrapuntal is the adjectival form.

diatonic: an adjective used to describe a major or minor scale.

disposition: the proximity of the choral parts to each other in the chord. A wide disposition will have singers at the outer edges of their range, providing the widest possible intervals between them, while a close disposition will have them in that part of their range allowing them to be closest to each other.

Doxology: a Christian coda to the end of every psalm recited in a Christian liturgy, in which the three parts of the Trinity are praised *as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

dynamic: the quality of loudness or softness to music.

forte: a loud dynamic*, from the Italian 'strong'.

glissando: sliding through an interval rather than proceeding by step. Trombones provide a wonderful example of glissando.

homophony: a musical texture in which all voices move at the same time to provide the harmonic movement. Hymns and chorales are illustrations of homophonic texture.

inversion: a musical mirror of a melody. For example, if the melody goes up a step, the inversion descends a step.

melisma: a melody on a single syllable.

meter: The meter determines the emphasis of certain beats within the music. A waltz or our national anthem has a triple meter, while America the Beautiful has a duple meter.

piano: a soft dynamic.*

solfege: the practice of assigning different syllables to each note. Most people don't necessarily know that they know it, but many of us are familiar with the song Do re mi from The Sound of Music in which Maria teaches its principles to her charges.

tessitura: the placement of vocal sound in a particular range. The soprano tessitura is higher than that of the alto, the alto higher than the tenor, and the tenor higher than the bass. Within each vocal part there is a range, and a voice may also be high or low in its range and therefore its tessitura.

tonality: the major or minor diatonic scale upon which harmonies are built. A minor key will often sound 'sad' to the listener, while a major key will sound 'happy.' Our national anthem is based on a major scale, while the Beatles' *Eleanor Rigby* has a minor tonality. A diatonic scale is the basis of the harmonies we are used to hearing in Western music, consisting of the arrangement of five whole steps and two half steps. The particular placement of the half steps in the sequence of intervals of a second determines whether it is major or minor.

triad: a chord of two consecutive intervals of thirds vertically stacked to form a fifth. A major triad stacks a minor third on a major third, while a minor triad stacks a major third on a minor third; in both instances the outer notes of the two triads form a perfect fifth.

JESUS, JESUS, REST YOUR HEAD · *Traditional Appalachian carol*

You have got a manger bed!

Jesus, Jesus rest Your head.
You have got a manger bed.
All the evil folk on earth
Sleep in feathers at their birth.

Jesus, Jesus, rest Your head,
You have got a manger bed.

Have you heard about our Jesus?
Have you heard about His fate?
How His mother went to that stable
On that Christmas Eve so late?

Winds were blowin', cows were lowin',
Stars were glowin', glowin', glowin',

Jesus, Jesus, rest Your head.
You have got a manger bed.

To that manger came three wise men,
Bringin' gifts from hin and yon
For the mother and the father,
And the blessed little Son.
Shepherds left their fields and flocks
And sat beside the ass and ox.

Jesus, Jesus, rest Your head,
You have got a manger bed.

★

WHILE SHEPHERDS WATCHED (SHERBURNE) · *Nahum Tate (1652-1715) and Nicholas Brady (1659-1726)*

While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down
And glory shone around.

All glory be to God on high,
And to the earth be peace.
Good will henceforth from heav'n to all
Begin and never cease.

OH, PO' LITTLE JESUS · *Traditional Negro spiritual*

Oh, po' little Jesus,
Dis worl' goan to break yo' heart,
Dere'll be no place to lay yo' head, my Lord,
Oh, po' little Jesus.

Oh, Mary she de mother,
Oh, Mary she bow down an' cry,
Foh dere's no place to lay His head, my Lord!
Oh, po' little Jesus.

Come down, all you holy angels!
Sing roun' him wid yo' golden harps,
Foh some day He goan die to save dis worl', my Lord!
Oh, po' little Jesus.



A CHRISTMAS CAROL · *Anonymous*

Little star of Bethlehem!
Do we see thee now?
Do we see thee shining o'er the tall trees?

Little child of Bethlehem!
Do we hear Thee in our hearts?
Hear the angels singing:
Peace on earth, goodwill to all, Noel!

O'er the cradle of a King,
Hear the angels sing:
In excelsis gloria, gloria!

From His Father's home on high,
Lo! For us He came to die;
Hear the angels sing:
Venite adoremus Dominum.

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TEXTS

GUARDIAN OWL (*Nativity Madrigals, No. 1*) · Norma Farber (1909–1984)

Company coming by night,
Who are you? Whoo?
I live here. I have a right to know what's new.
Have you come in fear, in flight?
Is the hang of your life askew?
Then welcome, come so far, so much ado.
I guard the stable a star is pointing to.
Enter, the door's ajar, to fit the fullest of you.
Go in, I'll check you off. You're overdue.
Don't push or pinch or shove for a better view.
Just say your name with love when I ask, who are you? Whoo?

✱

THERE IS NO ROSE · *Anonymous 15th century*

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

For in this rose contained was
Heaven and earth in little space.
Res miranda.

By that rose we may well see
There be One God in Persons Three.
Pares forma.

The angels sung the shepherds to,
“Gloria in excelsis Deo.”
Gaudeamus.

Then leave we all this worldly mirth
And follow we this joyous birth.
Alleluia.

MAGNIFICAT · *From the Gospel of Luke*

My soul doth magnify the Lord,
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.
For he hath regarded: the lowliness of his handmaiden:
For behold, from henceforth: all generations shall call me blessed.
For he that is mighty hath magnified me: and holy is his Name.
And his mercy is on them that fear him: throughout all generations.
He hath shewed strength with his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
He hath put down the mighty from their seat: and hath exalted the humble and meek.
He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent empty away.
He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel:
As he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Spirit;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

✱

AWAY IN A MANGER · *William J. Kirkpatrick (1838–1921)*

Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the poor Baby wakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask thee to stay
Close by me forever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
And take us to heaven to live with Thee there.