

## CHRISTMAS with THE SINGERS

St George's, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne  
16 December 2023, 7 pm

### PROGRAMME

#### The Singers

conductor Donald Halliday  
with special guests

#### The Magnolia Consort

David Blazey, Alice Brunton, Harriet Gilfillan and Dian Underwood

James Clark Northumbrian pipes

### PART ONE

1. INTRODUCTION & SAFETY INFORMATION  
(from St George's)

2. **Es is ein ros' entsprungen**

Harm. Michael Praetorius (1571 – 1621)  
Trans. Theodore Baker (1894)

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming  
from tender stem hath sprung!  
Of Jesse's lineage coming  
as seers of old have sung.  
It came, a blossom bright,  
amid the cold of winter,  
when half spent was the night.

O flower, whose fragrance tender  
with sweetness fills the air,  
dispel in glorious splendor  
the darkness everywhere;  
true man, yet very God,  
from sin and death now save us,  
and share our every load.

3. **Gaelic Air: O' Luaidh**  
(O my dearest darling)  
played by James Clark

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4. **Adam lay ybounden**

Words: anon 15 Century  
Music by Boris Ord (1897 – 1961)

Adam lay ybounden, bounden in a bond;  
Four thousand winter, thought he not too long.  
And all was for an apple, an apple that he took,  
As clerkes finden written in their book.  
Ne had the apple taken been, the apple taken  
been,

Ne had never our lady, abeen heavene queen.  
Blessed be the time that apple taken was  
Therefore we moun singen deo gracias!

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5. **The Linden Tree**

Words: anon 15 Century  
Music by Bernard Hughes (b. 1974)

There stood in heav'n a linden tree,  
But though 'twas honey laden.  
All angels cried 'No bloom shall be  
like that of one fair maiden.'

Sped Gabriel on wingéd feet,  
And passed through bolted portals.  
In Nazareth a maid to greet,  
blest o'er all other mortals.

'Hail Mary!' quoth that angel mild,  
'Of womankind the fairest:  
The Virgin ay shall thou be styled,  
a babe although thou bearest.'

'So be it!' God's handmaiden cried,  
'According to thy telling.'  
Whereon the angel sweetly hied  
up homeward to his dwelling.

This tidings filled his mates with glee:  
'Twas passed from one to other,  
That 'twas Mary, and none but she,  
and God would call her Mother.

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6. **Instrumental set**

played by James Clark

- How can thou gan away and leave me
- The tree of sycamore gap

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7. **The tree of life**

Words c. 1761, attributed to Rev. Richard Hutchins  
Music by Paul Ritchie

The tree of life my soul hath seen  
Laden with fruit and always green  
The trees of nature fruitless be  
Compared with Christ the Apple Tree

His beauty doth all things excel  
By faith I know but ne'er can tell

The glory which I now can see  
In Jesus Christ the Apple Tree

For happiness I long have sought  
And pleasure dearly I have brought  
I missed of all but now I see  
'Tis found in Christ the Apple Tree

I'm weary with my former toil  
Here I will sit and rest a while  
Under the shadow I will be  
Of Jesus Christ the Apple Tree

This fruit doth make my soul to thrive  
It keeps my dying faith alive  
Which makes my soul in haste to be  
with Jesus Christ the apple tree

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8. **The Holly and the Ivy**

*Words: trad. English*

*Music arr. H. Walford Davies (1869 – 1941)*

The holly and the ivy, when they are both full grown,  
Of all the trees that are in the wood,  
the holly bears the crown.

O, the rising of the sun, and the running of the deer,  
The playing of the merry organ,  
Sweet singing in the choir ...

The holly bears a blossom as white as any flower ..  
The holly bears a berry as red as any blood ..  
The holly bears a prickle as sharp as any thorn ..  
The holly bears a bark as bitt'r as any gall ..

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9. **An earthly tree a heavenly fruit**

*Words: from Songs of sundrie natures, 1589*

*Music: William Byrd (c. 1539 – 1623)*

An earthly tree a heavenly fruit it bear,  
A case of clay contained a crown immortal  
A crown of crowns, a King whose cost and care  
Redeemed poor man, whose race before was thrall  
To death, to doom, to pains of everlasting,  
By His sweet death, scorns, stripes, and often fasting.

A star above the stars, a sun of light,  
Whose blessed beams this wretched earth bespread  
With hope of heaven and of God's Son the sight,  
Which in our flesh and sinful soul lay dead.  
O faith, O hope, O joys renowned for ever,  
O lively life that deathless shall persever.

Then let us sing the lullabys of sleep  
To this sweet babe, born to awake us all  
From drowsy sin that made old Adam weep,  
And by his fault gave to mankind the fall.  
For lo! this day, the birth day, day of days,  
Summons our songs to give Him laud and praise.

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10. **Puer natus est nobis**

For viol consort

*Music: William Byrd*

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11. **The Angel Gabriel**

Words anon. 13/14th cent.

Music by Steve Locks

The Angel Gabriel from God  
Was sent to Galilee  
Unto a Virgin fair and dear  
Whose name was called Mary:  
And when the Angel thither came,  
He fell down on his knee,  
And looking up in the Virgin's face  
He said "All hail, Mary."

*Then sing we all, both great and small,  
Noel! Noel! Noel!  
We may rejoice to hear the voice  
Of the Angel Gabriel.*

Mary anon looked him upon,  
And said, "Sir, what are ye?  
I marvel much at these tidings  
Which thou hast brought to me.  
Married I am to an old man,  
As the lot fell unto me;  
Therefore I pray, depart away.  
For I stand in doubt of thee."

"Mary," he said, "be not afraid,  
But do believe in me:  
The power of the Holy Ghost  
Shall overshadow thee;  
Thou shalt conceive without any grief,  
As the Lord told unto me;  
God's own dear Son from Heaven shall come  
And shall be born of thee.

This came to pass as God's will was,  
Even as the Angel told.  
About midnight an Angel bright  
Came to the shepherds' fold,

And told them then both where and when  
Born was the child our Lord,  
And all along this was their song—  
“All Glory be given to God.”

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12. Carol for All

**We wish you a Merry Christmas**

*West Country traditional*

We wish you a Merry Christmas (x3)  
and a Happy New Year.

*REFRAIN*

*Good tidings we bring to you and your kin,  
We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.*

O bring us a figgy pudding (x3)  
and a cup of good cheer.

*REFRAIN*

And we won't go until we get some (x3)  
so bring some out here.

*REFRAIN*

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**INTERVAL:** 20 minutes

*Mulled wine and mince pies will be served at the back of the church. Many thanks to the Friends of St George's for providing this.*

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**PART TWO**

13. Carol for all

**The Sycamore Tree Carol**

*traditional*

1. As I sat under a sycamore tree,  
a sycamore tree, a sycamore tree,  
I looked me out upon the sea,  
*A Christmas day in the morning.*

2. I saw three ships a-sailing there,  
a-sailing there, a-sailing there,  
The Virgin Mary and Christ they bear,  
*A Christmas day in the morning.*

3. He did whistle, and she did sing,  
she did sing, she did sing,  
And all the bells on earth did ring.  
*A Christmas day in the morning .*

4. And now we hope to taste your cheer,  
taste your cheer, taste your cheer,

And wish you all a Happy New Year,  
*A Christmas day in the morning.*

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14. **Verbum Caro factus est**

*Six part motet, sung in Latin*

*Music: Hans Leo Hassler (1564 – 1612)*

The Word was made flesh,  
and dwelt among us,  
and we beheld his glory,  
the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,  
full of grace and truth.

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15. **Instrumental set**

Border Set played on the border pipes by James Clark

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16. **There is a flower**

Words by John Audelay (15th century)

Music by John Rutter (b. 1945)

Soprano soloist: Lindsay Nicholls

There is a flow'r sprung of a tree,  
The root thereof is callèd Jesse,  
A flow'r of price;  
There is none such in paradise.

This flow'r is fair and fresh of hue,  
It fadeth never, but ever is new;  
The blessed branch this flow'r on grew  
Was Mary mild that bare Jesu,  
A flow'r of grace; Against all sorrow it is solace... ....

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17. **Music for Viol Consort by William Byrd**

Pavan Sir William Petre  
Hodie Christus natus est

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18. **Stars**

*Words Sara Teasdale [1884 – 1933]*

*Music Ēriks Ešenvalds [b. 1977]*

Alone in the night on a dark hill  
With pines around me spicy and still  
And a heaven full of stars over my head  
White and topaz and misty red;

Myriads with beating hearts of fire  
The aeons cannot vex or tire;  
Up the dome of heaven like a great hill

I watch them marching stately and still  
And I know that I am honoured to be witness of so  
much majesty

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19. **In the bleak mid-winter**

*Words: Christina Rossetti*

*Music Gustav Holst arr. Alexander L'Estrange*

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,  
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;  
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,  
In the bleak midwinter, long, ago.

Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him, nor earth sustain;  
Heaven and earth shall flee away when He comes to  
reign.

In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed  
The Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there,  
Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;  
But His mother only, in her maiden bliss,  
Worshipped the beloved with a kiss.

What can I give him, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would give a lamb;  
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;  
Yet what I can I give Him, give my heart.

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20. Carol for All

**On Christmas Night**

*The Sussex Carol, English traditional*

*Words on separate sheet*

On Christmas night all Christians sing,  
To hear the news the angels bring. (x2)  
News of great joy, news of great mirth,  
News of our merciful King's birth.

Then why should men on earth be sad,  
Since our Redeemer made us glad  
When from our sin He set us free,  
All for to gain our liberty.

All out of darkness we have light  
Which made the angels sing this night (x2).

“Glory to God and peace to men,  
Now and for evermore. Amen.”

Thank you so much for supporting this concert. All The Singers wish you a joyous Christmas and a very happy 2024. Many thanks to all at St George's for their generous help and support, and, in particular, to the Friends of St George's.

**THE MAGNOLIA CONSORT OF VIOLS**

The Magnolia Consort is part of a community of North East viol players who meet regularly to play music for two to six players and also participate in larger-scale workshops and performances with singers and other instrumentalists.

**JAMES CLARK**

James, who makes and plays small pipes, grew up in County Durham. He started playing the pipes 10 years ago and is self-taught, learning by spending time with musicians from the folk music scene. His playing has been highly influenced by the pipers he has met and by border pipe manuscripts from the 18th century. The music is characterised by an 8 note scale and the tunes were often highly ornamented. James has learned from pipe makers and is now a professional pipe maker himself. His second set tonight will be on a set of border pipes he recently built.

**THE SINGERS ([singers.org.uk](http://singers.org.uk))**

The Singers is a chamber choir of around twenty-four mixed voices based in Newcastle. Singers come mainly from Newcastle and Northumberland but others travel considerable distances to participate. The choir rehearses one monthly in Newcastle.

Future events include singing for the Epiphany Service in Durham Cathedral on 6 January 2024 and a choral residency in York Minster 6 – 8 April 2024.

**Sopranos**

Helen Barber, Miriam Cummins, Suzanne Longley, Rachel Lyons, Lindsey Nicholls, Frances Skinner, Charlotte Treglown

**Altos**

Pamela Cummins, Alice Gilmore, Ann Hill, Lisa McMaster, Elize Petrovska, Alison Rudd, Alice Ward

**Tenors**

Chris Hunwick, Martin Lay, Philip Mountain

**Basses**

Matthew Dunford, Richard Kerr, Steve Locks, Alex Moon, Chris Tradgett

**Conductor**

Donald Halliday

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**END**