

# CHRISTMAS NIGHT

## Carols of the Nativity

The Cambridge Singers | City of London Sinfonia

Conducted by John Rutter



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**T**he theme of this album is the birth of Christ, reflected in the words and music of twenty-two carols spanning more than six centuries. Some of these carols have long been widely known and loved; others have become so thanks to the annual Christmas Eve Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols at King's College, Cambridge; a few are newly written. But all of them focus on the central event of the Christmas story – the birth at Bethlehem – and on the characters in that story: the angels, the shepherds, the wise men, and the mother with her child.

### The Cambridge Singers

**Sopranos:** Caroline Ashton, Donna Deam, Diana Hawker, Ruth Holton, Celia Jackson, Marcelle Mace, Simone Mace, Jo Maggs, Mary Mure, Nancy-Jane Rucker, Clare Wallace  
**Altos:** Nicola Barber, Phyllida Hancock, Mary Hitch, Nicola-Jane Kemp, Melanie Marshall, Caroline Trevor

**Tenors:** Andrew Gant, Paul Gordon, Mark Padmore, Philip Sheffield, Angus Smith, Colin Stewart, David Watson

**Basses:** Gerald Finley, Charles Gibbs, Robert Graham-Campbell, Nicholas Jones, Jamie Mure, Charles Pott, Benjamin Thompson, Russell Watson

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Total playing time: 63' 45"

Note: Words credits are given at the end of each text.

- 1 **In dulci jubilo** (3' 15")  
German traditional carol, arranged by R. L. Pearsall
- 2 **Adam lay ybounden** (1' 09")  
Boris Ord
- 3 **Christmas Night** (4' 02")  
French 16th-century tune, arranged by John Rutter
- 4 **Once, as I remember** (2' 30")  
Italian 17th-century carol, arranged by Charles Wood
- 5 **A spotless Rose** (2' 46")  
Herbert Howells  
Baritone solo: Nicholas Sears
- 6 **In the bleak mid-winter** (4' 35")  
Harold Darke
- 7 **There is a flower** (4' 05")  
John Rutter  
Soprano solo: Ruth Holton
- 8 **The Cherry Tree Carol** (1' 50")  
English traditional carol, arranged by David Willcocks
- 9 **I wonder as I wander** (2' 53")  
Appalachian carol, collected by J. J. Niles  
arranged by John Rutter  
Baritone solo: Gerald Finley
- 10 **Candlelight Carol** (4' 07")  
John Rutter

- 11 **O Tannenbaum** (2' 00")  
German traditional carol, arranged by John Rutter
- 12 **Tomorrow shall be my dancing day** (1' 58")  
English traditional carol, arranged by David Willcocks
- 13 **A virgin most pure** (2' 40")  
English traditional carol, arranged by Charles Wood
- 14 **I sing of a maiden** (2' 56")  
Patrick Hadley
- 15 **Lute-book lullaby** (2' 07")  
William Ballet, arranged by Geoffrey Shaw
- 16 **The three kings** (2' 19")  
Peter Cornelius, arranged by Ivor Atkins  
Baritone solo: Nicholas Sears
- 17 **Myn lyking** (2' 38")  
R. R. Terry
- 18 **O little one sweet** (3' 17")  
Samuel Scheidt, harmonized by J. S. Bach
- 19 **All my heart this night rejoices** (2' 14")  
J. G. Ebeling
- 20 **I saw a maiden** (2' 54")  
Basque Noël, arranged by Edgar Pettman
- 21 **Away in a manger** (2' 15")  
W. J. Kirkpatrick, arranged by John Rutter
- 22 **Nativity carol** (4' 22")  
John Rutter

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## 1 In dulci jubilo

According to legend, angels sang this carol to Heinrich Suso, the fourteenth-century German mystic. It quickly became popular, appearing in many collections including Babst's *Gesangbuch* of 1545 (Luther's hymnal) and *Piae Cantiones*, the Scandinavian hymnal of 1582 that is the source of a number of fine carols and hymns. R. L. Pearsall, who made this classic choral arrangement in 1838 for the choral society in Karlsruhe, was an amateur composer and antiquarian who lived in Germany and Switzerland for much of his life.

In dulci jubilo  
Let us our homage shew;  
Our heart's joy reclineth  
In praesepio  
And like a bright star shineth  
Matris in gremio.  
Alpha es et O!  
Alpha es et O!

O Patris caritas.  
O Nati lenitas!  
Deeply were we stained  
Per nostra crimina;  
But thou hast for us gained  
Caelorum gaudia.  
O that we were there!  
O that we were there!

O Jesu parvule  
I yearn for thee alway!  
Hear me, I beseech thee,  
O Puer optime!  
My prayer let it reach thee,  
O Princeps gloriae!  
Trahe me post te!  
Trahe me post te!

Ubi sunt gaudia,  
If that they be not there?  
There are angels singing  
Nova cantica,  
And there the bells are ringing  
In Regis curia;  
O that we were there!  
O that we were there!

*14th-century German carol,  
translated and arranged by R. L. Pearsall (1795–1856)*

## 2 Adam lay ybounden

This striking fifteenth-century lyric has attracted several composers, among them Peter Warlock and Benjamin Britten. Boris Ord, the composer of the setting sung here, was

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organist of King's College, Cambridge from 1929 to 1957.

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  
A-been heavené queen.

Blessed be the time  
That apple taken was,  
Therefore we moun singen,  
Deo gracias!

*Words: 15th century*

*Music: Boris Ord (1897–1961)*

### 3 Christmas Night

Arbeau's *Orchésographie* of 1588 is a French treatise on dancing containing a number of attractive tunes, one of which (the *Branle de l'official*) has become universally popular as the carol *Ding dong! merrily on high*. The melody of *Christmas Night* (the *Branle de Poitou* in Arbeau's treatise) has also been used in Peter Warlock's *Capriol Suite* for string orchestra. The words were specially written for this melody.

Softly through the winter's darkness shines a light,  
Clear and still in Bethlehem on Christmas Night  
Round the stable where a virgin mother mild  
Watches over Jesus Christ the holy child.

Shepherds kneel in adoration by his bed;  
Seraphim in glory hover round his head.  
Wise men, guided by the leading of a star,  
Bring him gifts of precious treasure from afar.

Choirs of angels sing to greet his wondrous birth:

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Christ our Lord in human form comes down to earth.  
'Glory to God in highest heav'n' their joyful strain.  
'Peace on earth, goodwill to men' the glad refrain.

Lullaby! the child lies sleeping: sing lullaby!  
Safe in Mary's tender keeping: sing lullaby!  
Guardian angels keep their watch till break of day;  
Lullaby! sweet Jesus sleeps among the hay.

Alleluia! let the earth rejoice today!  
Christ is born to take our sins and guilt away.  
Praise the Lord who sent him down from heav'n above;  
Holy infant, born of God the Father's love.

*Words: John Rutter*

*Melody from Arbeau's 'Orchésographie' (1588)*

*arranged by John Rutter*

### 4 Once, as I remember

This rare and beautiful carol was first published in an Italian collection of 1689 called *Corona di sacre canzoni o laude spirituali*, where its melody line was given with an Italian text (*Antururù*). In 1920 it was included in *An Italian Carol Book* (one of several important collections edited by Charles Wood and G. R. Woodward) in a four-voiced version by Wood with a new text by Woodward.

Once, as I remember,  
At the time of Yule,  
After mid-December,  
When it bloweth cool,  
I o'erheard a Mother  
Was a-singing 'Sweet Jesu,  
La-lullay lu, lullay lalü.'

Near as man was able,  
On my knee fell I,  
In the Bethlem stable  
Where the babe did lie,  
And the Virgin mother  
Was a-singing 'Sweet Jesu,  
La-lullay lu, lullay lalu.'

Ox and ass around him,  
Courtier-like, did stand;  
Fair white linen bound him,  
Spun by Mary's hand,  
While the Virgin mother  
Was a-singing 'Sweet Jesu,  
La-lullay lu, lullay lalu.'

### 5 A spotless Rose

According to its composer, this 'carol-anthem' was written at a single sitting, on 22 October 1919. It remains one of the best-loved and most characteristic examples of his style: sensitive, melodically fluent, harmonically rich and subtle, and of an exquisite choral sonority.

A spotless Rose is blowing,  
Sprung from a tender root,  
Of ancient seers' foreshowing,  
Of Jesse promised fruit;  
Its fairest bud unfolds to light  
Amid the cold, cold winter,  
And in the dark midnight.

Ev'r among and o'er us  
Angel quire 'gan sing  
Antiphons in chorus  
To the new-born King.  
Then the Virgin mother  
Fell a-singing 'Sweet Jesu,  
La-lullay lu, lullay lalu.'

*Words: G. R. Woodward (1848–1934)*

*Music: Italian 17th-century carol  
arranged by Charles Wood (1866–1926)*

The Rose which I am singing,  
Whereof Isaiah said,  
Is from its sweet root springing  
In Mary, purest Maid;  
For, through our God's great love and  
    might,  
The blessed Babe she bare us  
In a cold, cold winter's night.

*(The second verse is repeated.)*

*Words: 14th century  
Music: Herbert Howells (1892–1983)*

### 6 In the bleak mid-winter

Harold Darke was a London organist and composer. *In the bleak mid-winter*, perhaps his best-known composition, was written in 1911 and virtually forgotten until the early 1960s, when it was included in the King's College Christmas Eve service by Sir David Willcocks. The public response was immediate and unprecedented, and the carol has enjoyed widespread and uninterrupted popularity ever since.

In the bleak mid-winter  
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 mid-winter  
Long ago.

Our God, Heav'n cannot hold him,  
Nor earth sustain;  
Heav'n and earth shall flee away  
When he comes to reign;  
In the bleak mid-winter  
A stable-place sufficed  
The Lord God Almighty  
Jesus Christ.

Enough for him, whom cherubim  
Worship night and day.  
A breastful of milk  
And a mangerful of hay;  
Enough for him, whom angels  
Fall down before.  
The ox and ass and camel  
Which adore.

What can I give him,  
Poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd  
I would bring a lamb.  
If I were a Wise Man  
I would do my part—  
Yet what I can I give him,  
Give my heart.

*Words: Christina Rossetti (1830–94)*

*Music: Harold Darke (1888–1976)*

### 7 There is a flower

The text of this carol is one of many early English lyrics that have been set to music by recent British composers; its author was a Shropshire monk of the early fifteenth century who was both deaf and blind. The poem's imagery is of a Jesse tree, often depicted in

medieval painting and stained glass. The music was written in 1985 at the invitation of Dr George Guest, director of the choir of St John's College, Cambridge.

*There is a flower sprung of a tree,  
The root thereof is called Jesse,  
A flower of price;  
There is none such in paradise.*

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

The seed hereof was Goddes sand\*,  
That God himself sowed with his hand,  
In Nazareth that holy land,  
Amidst her arbour a maiden found;  
This blessed flower  
Sprang never but in Mary's bower.

When Gabriel this maid did meet  
With 'Ave Maria' he did her greet;  
Between them two this flower was set  
And safe was kept, no man should wit.  
Till on a day  
In Bethlem it could spread and spray.

\*sand = gift †bed = bud

When that fair flower began to spread,  
And his sweet blossom began to bed†,  
Then rich and poor of every land  
They marvelled how this flower might  
spread,  
Till kinges three  
That blessed flower came to see.

Angels there came from heaven's tower,  
To look upon this freshele flower,  
How fair he was in his colour,  
And how sweet in his savour,  
And to behold  
How such a flower might spring in gold.

*(The refrain is repeated.)*

*Words: John Audelay (15th century)  
Music: John Rutter*

## 8 The Cherry Tree Carol

This carol was published, in differing versions, in many nineteenth-century English collections. In some of these Joseph responds to Mary's request with the words 'Let him pluck thee a cherry/That brought thee now with child.' After the tree miraculously bows down. Joseph repents of his unkind aspersion. Sir David Willcocks, whose setting of this carol dates from 1969, was organist of King's College, Cambridge (a post that includes the directorship of the world-famous choir of sixteen boy choristers and fourteen men) from 1957 to 1974.

Joseph was an old man,  
And an old man was he,  
When he married Mary  
In the land of Galilee.

And as they were walking  
Through an orchard so good,  
Where were cherries and berries  
As red as any blood.

O then bespoke Mary,  
With words both meek and mild.  
'Pluck me one cherry, Joseph,  
For that I am with child.'

'Go to the tree then, Mary,  
And it shall bow to thee;  
And you shall gather cherries  
By one, by two, by three.'

Then bowed down the highest tree  
Unto our Lady's hand;  
'See,' Mary cried, 'see, Joseph,  
I have cherries at command.'

'O eat your cherries, Mary,  
O eat your cherries now;  
O eat your cherries, Mary,  
That grow upon the bough.'

Then Mary plucked a cherry,  
As red as any blood,  
Then Mary went she homewards  
All with her heavy load.

*English traditional carol, arranged by  
David Willcocks*

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**9 I wonder as I wander**

The musical folklorist and singer John Jacob Niles collected this haunting carol in the Appalachian mountains in the 1930s. It was first published in his collection *Songs of the Hill Folk* and soon became widely known in North America, both from Niles's own solo performances and in choral arrangements. More recently it has gained a place in the English carol repertory; the present setting, for unaccompanied choir with baritone solo, dates from 1981.

I wonder as I wander out under the sky,  
How Jesus, the Saviour, did come for to die.  
For poor ornery people like you and like I;  
I wonder as I wander out under the sky.

When Mary birthed Jesus, 'twas in a cows' stall,  
With wise-men and farmers and shepherds and all.  
But high from God's heaven a star's light did fall,  
And the promise of 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 heaven to sing,  
He surely could have had it, 'cause he was the King.

*(The first verse is repeated.)*

*Appalachian carol collected by John Jacob Niles  
arranged by John Rutter  
(by permission of G. Schirmer Ltd. London)*

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**10 Candlelight carol**

This was written in response to a commission from the Church of the Assumption, Pittsburgh, in 1984. Originally for organ, the accompaniment was later scored by the composer for flute, oboe, harp, and strings, in which version it is performed here.

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How do you capture the wind on the water?  
How do you count all the stars in the sky?  
How can you measure the love of a mother,  
Or how can you write down a baby's first cry?

*Candlelight, angel light, firelight and starglow  
Shine on his cradle till breaking of dawn.  
Gloria, gloria in excelsis Deo!  
Angels are singing; the Christ child is born.*

Shepherds and wise men will kneel and adore him.  
Seraphim round him their vigil will keep;  
Nations proclaim him their Lord and their Saviour.  
But Mary will hold him and sing him to sleep.

Find him at Bethlehem laid in a manger:  
Christ our Redeemer asleep in the hay.  
Godhead incarnate and hope of salvation;  
A child with his mother that first Christmas Day.

*Words and music: John Rutter*

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**11 O Tannenbaum**

The Christmas tree stands as a symbol of life in the midst of winter, and light in the midst of darkness, a reminder of the significance of the Nativity. Like the Christmas tree custom itself, this carol is of nineteenth-century German origin but now known all over the world.

O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum,  
How faithfully you blossom!  
Through summer's heat and winter's chill  
Your leaves are green and blooming still.  
O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum.  
How faithfully you blossom!

O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum.  
With what delight I see you!  
When winter days are dark and drear  
You bring us hope for all the year.  
O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum,  
With what delight I see you!

O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum,  
You bear a joyful message;  
That faith and hope shall ever bloom  
To bring us light in winter's gloom.  
O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum,  
You bear a joyful message.

*Words: Ernst Anschütz (1824) translated by John Rutter  
Music: German traditional melody arranged by John Rutter*

## 12 Tomorrow shall be my dancing day

The age-old relationship between religion and the dance is the source of the unusual and vivid imagery of this carol (which, in its complete form, has eleven verses covering all the events of Christ's life up to the Ascension). The text is believed to date back earlier than the seventeenth century; it first appeared in print together with its tune in 1833. Sir David Willcocks's radiant setting, written for King's College Choir in 1966, has established itself as a classic.

Tomorrow shall be my dancing day;  
I would my true love did so chance  
To see the legend of my play,  
To call my true love to my dance.  
*Sing O my love, O my love,  
My love, my love;  
This have I done for my true love.*

In a manger laid and wrapped I was,  
So very poor, this was my chance,  
Betwixt an ox and a silly poor ass,  
To call my true love to my dance.

*(The first verse is repeated.)*

*English traditional carol, arranged by David  
Willcocks*

Then was I born of a virgin pure,  
Of her I took fleshly substance;  
Thus was I knit to man's nature,  
To call my true love to my dance.

## 13 A virgin most pure

One of the most delightful of English folk-carols, *A virgin most pure* tells the Christmas story with affecting simplicity. Charles Wood (whose settings of many carols including this one have come to be regarded as definitive) was a lecturer and later the Professor of Music at Cambridge University. He is remembered now mainly for his fluent and craftsmanlike choral writing.

A virgin most pure, as the prophets do tell,  
Hath brought forth a baby, as it hath befell;  
To be our Redeemer from death, hell, and sin,  
Which Adam's transgression had wrapped us in.

*Aye, and therefore be merry,  
Rejoice, and be you merry;  
Set sorrow aside;  
Christ Jesus our Saviour  
Was born at this tide.*

In Bethlehem Jewry a city there was,  
Where Joseph and Mary together did pass,  
And there to be taxed with many one mo,  
For Caesar commanded the same should be so.

But when they had entered the city so fair,  
A number of people so mighty was there,  
That Joseph and Mary, whose substance was small,  
Could find in the inn there no lodging at all.

Then they were constrained in a stable to lie,  
Where horses and asses they used for to tie;  
Their lodging so simple they took it no scorn,  
But against the next morning our Saviour was born.

*English traditional carol,  
arranged by Charles Wood  
(1866–1926)*



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**14 I sing of a maiden**

This, the loveliest of all medieval religious lyrics, has received many musical settings; Patrick Hadley's, with its magical atmosphere of stillness and peace, remains unsurpassed among them. Like Wood, Hadley was a Cambridge composer and Professor of Music (from 1946–62). He was a pupil of Vaughan Williams and outstandingly gifted, but his life was overshadowed by personal tragedy and his output remained small.

I sing of a maiden that is makeless\*;  
King of all kings to her son she ches†.

He came all so still where his mother lay,  
As dew in April that falleth on the spray.

He came all so still where his mother was,  
As dew in April that falleth on the grass.

Mother and maiden was never none but she;  
Well may such a lady God's mother be.

He came all so still to his mother's bower,  
As dew in April that falleth on the flower.

*Words: 15th century English*  
*Music: Patrick Hadley (1899–1973)*

\*makeless = without a mate †ches = chose

**15 Lute-book lullaby**

This was originally a solo song with lute accompaniment—one of a whole collection of them compiled in the early seventeenth century by the lutenist William Ballet, hence the title. Lullabies for the Christ child had become a popular form since the appearance of an especially lovely example by Byrd in 1588. The choral transcription by Geoffrey Shaw was made in the 1920s for *The Oxford Book of Carols*.

Sweet was the song the Virgin sang,  
When she to Bethlem Juda came  
And was delivered of a son,  
That blessed Jesus hath to name.  
'Lulla, lulla, lulla, lullaby,  
Lulla, lulla,

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Lalullaby, sweet babe,' sang she,  
'My son, and eke a Saviour born,  
Who hast vouchsaféd from on high  
To visit us that were forlorn;  
Lalula, lalula,  
Lalulaby, sweet babe,' sang she,  
And rocked him sweetly on her knee.

*Words and music: William Ballet (17th cent.)*  
*arranged by Geoffrey Shaw*

**16 The three kings**

Peter Cornelius was a German composer, a friend of Liszt, and well respected in his own lifetime for his operas and vocal music. *The three kings* was written in 1856 as a solo song with piano accompaniment, no. 3 of a set of six *Weihnachtslieder* (Christmas songs) to texts by the composer. Following the model of Bach, Cornelius introduces a chorale in the accompaniment; appropriately, it is the great Epiphany hymn *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern*. In the English speaking world *The three kings* has become a familiar part of many carol services as recorded here in the choral transcription by Elgar's friend Sir Ivor Atkins.

Three kings from Persian lands afar  
To Jordan follow the pointing star;  
And this the quest of the travellers three,  
Where the new-born King of the Jews may be.  
Full royal gifts they bear for the King;  
Gold, incense, myrrh are their offering.

The star shines out with a steadfast ray;  
The kings to Bethlehem make their way,  
And there in worship they bend the knee.  
As Mary's child in her lap they see;  
Their royal gifts they show to the King;

Gold, incense, myrrh are their offering.  
Thou child of man, lo, to Bethlehem,  
The kings are travelling, travel with them!  
The star of mercy, the star of grace,  
    Shall lead thy heart to its resting-place.  
Gold, incense, myrrh thou canst not bring;  
Offer thy heart to the infant King,  
Offer thy heart!

*CHORALE TEXT (sung by the choir):*

How brightly shines the morning star!  
With grace and truth from heav'n afar  
Our Jesse tree now bloweth.  
Of Jacob's stem and David's line,  
For thee, my Bridegroom, King divine,  
My soul with love o'erfloweth.  
Thy word, Jesu, inly feeds us,  
Rightly leads us, life bestowing.  
Praise, O praise such love o'erflowing.

*Words and music: Peter Cornelius (1824–74)*

*Chorale: Phillipp Nicolai (1556–1608)*

*Translations: H. N. Bate*

*Arrangement: Ivor Atkins (1869–1953)*

**17 Myn lyking**

Sir Richard Runciman Terry is remembered for his achievement in rescuing Tudor church music from near-oblivion; he published numerous editions and conducted pioneering performances at Westminster Cathedral, where he was organist from 1901 to 1924. *Myn lyking* is one of his handful of published compositions; its choice of text (taken from the important Sloane manuscript) illustrates his interest – not then widely shared – in the riches of early English poetry.

I saw a fair mayden sytten and sing.  
She lulled a lyttel childe, a sweete Lording.  
*Lullay myn lykīng, my dere sonne, my sweetīng,*  
*Lullay my dere herte, myn own dere derling.*

That same Lord is he that made alle thing;  
Of alle lordis he is Lord, of alle kynges Kyng.

There was mickle melody at that chylde's birth.  
All that were in heav'nly bliss, they made mickle mirth.

Angels bright sang their song to that chylde;  
Blyssid be thou, and so be she, so meek and so mild.

*Words: 15th century*

*Music: R. R. Terry (1865–1938)*

**18 O little one sweet**

This German lullaby-carol first appeared in print in Scheidt's *Tablaturbuch* of 1650, though it may have been written before then, either by Scheidt himself or by an unknown author. J. S. Bach's version (in the form of a melody and figured bass) was included in Schemelli's *Gesangbuch* of 1736.

O little one sweet, O little one mild,  
Thy Father's purpose thou hast fulfilled;  
Thou cam'st from heav'n to mortal ken,  
Equal to be with us poor men,  
O little one sweet, O little one mild.

O little one sweet, O little one mild.  
With joy thou hast the whole world filled;  
Thou camest here from heav'n's domain,  
To bring men comfort in their pain.  
O little one sweet, O little one mild.

O little one sweet, O little one mild,  
In thee love's beauties are all distilled;  
Then light in us thy love's bright flame.  
That we may give thee back the same.  
O little one sweet, O little one mild.

O little one sweet, O little one mild.  
Help us to do as thou hast willed.  
Lo, all we have belongs to thee!  
Ah, keep us in our fealty!  
O little one sweet, O little one mild.

*Words and melody: Samuel Scheidt (1587–1654)*

*Translation: Percy Dearmer*

*Harmonization: J. S. Bach (1685–1750)*

**[19] All my heart this night rejoices**

The composer Ebeling and hymn-writer Gerhardt worked together in the 1660s as Cantor and Deacon respectively at the church of St Nicolai in Berlin. Ebeling wrote music for more than 100 of Gerhardt's hymns, which were intended for private devotions rather than congregational use. *All my heart this night* rejoices is a felicitous translation of one of them.

All my heart this night rejoices.  
As I hear, far and near,  
Sweetest angel voices;  
'Christ is born!' their choirs are singing,  
Till the air everywhere  
Now with joy is ringing.

Come, then, let us hasten yonder!  
Here let all, great and small.  
Kneel in awe and wonder!  
Love him who with love is yearning!  
Hail the star that from far  
Bright with hope is burning!

Hark, a voice from yonder manger,  
Soft and sweet, doth entreat.  
'Flee from woe and danger!  
Brethren, come! from all doth grieve you,  
You are freed; all you need  
I will surely give you.'

Thee, dear Lord, with heed I'll cherish,  
Live to thee, and with thee,  
Dying, shall not perish;  
But shall dwell with thee for ever.  
Far on high, in the joy  
That can alter never.

*Words: Paul Gerhardt (1607–76)*

*Translation: Catherine Winkworth (1827–78)*

*Music: Johann Georg Ebeling (1637–76)*

**[20] I saw a maiden**

A number of charming folk-carols from the Basque region of Spain were introduced to England in the 1930s by the London organist and composer Edgar Pettman and popularized by inclusion in the King's College Christmas Eve service. *I saw a maiden* is one of the best-remembered of them, though only its verse-melody is of folk origin, the lullaby refrain and the arrangement being Pettman's own work.

I saw a maiden sitting and sing.  
She lulled her child, a little Lording:  
*Lullay, lullay; my dear son, my sweeting;*  
*Lullay, lullay, my dear heart,*  
*My own dear darling.*

This very Lord, he made all things,  
And this very God, the King of all Kings.

There was sweet music at this child's birth,  
And heav'n filled with angels, making much mirth.

Heav'n's angels sang to welcome the child  
Now born of a maid, all undefiled.

Pray we and sing on this festal day,  
That peace may dwell with us always.

*Words: 15th century (adapted)*

*Music: Basque Noel*

*Arranged and with refrain added by Edgar Pettman (1865–1943)*

**[21] Away in a manger**

The anonymous text of this much-loved carol first appeared in 1885 in *A Little Children's Book for Schools and Families*, a publication of the Evangelical Lutheran church in North America. The setting sung here, composed by the American church musician W. J.

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Kirkpatrick, was the first; it remains the only well-known one in England, though a later setting by J. R. Murray is equally popular in the United States.

Away in a manger, no crib for a 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 baby awakes,  
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 for ever, and love me, I pray;  
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,  
And fit us for heaven, to live with thee there.

*Words: anon. (published 1885, USA)*

*Melody: W. J. Kirkpatrick (1832–1921) arranged by John Rutter*

## 22 Nativity Carol

Written in 1963, this was one of its composer's earliest pieces. It was published in 1967 with organ accompaniment, and later scored for strings by the composer.

Born in a stable so bare,  
Born so long ago;  
Born 'neath light of star  
He who loved us so.

*Far away, silent he lay,  
Born today, your homage pay;  
Christ is born for aye,  
Born on Christmas Day.*

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Cradled by mother so fair,  
Tender her lullaby;  
Over her son so dear  
Angel hosts fill the sky.

Wise men from distant far land.  
Shepherds from starry hills  
Worship this babe so rare,  
Hearts with his warmth he fills.

Love in that stable was born  
Into our hearts to flow;  
Innocent dreaming babe,  
Make me thy love to know.

*Words and music: John Rutter*

Recording produced by Jillian White  
Recorded in the Great Hall of University College School, April 1985  
by the BBC Transcription Recording Unit  
Balance engineer: Campbell Hughes  
Digital editing: David Jacob  
Remastered June 2020

CSCD 526

Stereo DDD

Made in the EU

Cover picture: Guido Reni. The Adoration of the Shepherds.  
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Cover design: Nick Morris  
Layout: Nick Findell

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