

Christmas Night

Carols of the Nativity

The Cambridge Singers

The City of London
Sinfonia

conducted by
John Rutter





Choir singing before the Madonna
(Victoria and Albert Museum)



Annunciation to the shepherds
(British Library)

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The 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.

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Total playing time: 63' 40"

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

- [1] ***In dulci jubilo** (3' 12")
German traditional carol
arranged by R. L. Pearsall
- [2] ****Adam lay ybounden** (1' 07")
Boris Ord (*Novello*)
- [3] ***Christmas Night** (4' 00")
French 16th-century tune
arranged by John Rutter (*OUP*)
- [4] ***Once, as I remember** (2' 28")
Italian 17th-century carol
arranged by Charles Wood
- [5] ***A spotless Rose** (2' 45")
Herbert Howells (*Stainer and Bell*)
Baritone solo: Nicholas Sears
- [6] ***In the bleak mid-winter** (4' 32")
Harold Darke (*Stainer and Bell*)
- [7] ***There is a flower** (4' 04")
John Rutter (*OUP*)
Soprano solo: Ruth Holton
- [8] ***The cherry tree carol** (1' 48")
English traditional carol
arranged by David Willcocks (*OUP*)
- [9] ***I wonder as I wander** (2' 52")
Appalachian carol, coll. J. J. Niles
(G. Schirmer)
arranged by John Rutter
Baritone solo: Gerald Finley
- [10] †**Candlelight carol** (4' 06")
John Rutter (*OUP*)
- [11] †**O Tannenbaum** (1' 58")
German traditional carol
arranged by John Rutter (*OUP*)
- [12] ***Tomorrow shall be my dancing day**
(1' 55")
English traditional carol
arranged by David Willcocks (*OUP*)
- [13] ***A virgin most pure** (2' 38")
English traditional carol
arranged by Charles Wood

- [14] ****I sing of a maiden** (2' 54")
Patrick Hadley (*IMP*)
- [15] ***Lute-book lullaby** (2' 05")
William Ballet
arranged by Geoffrey Shaw (*OUP*)
- [16] ****The three kings** (2' 16")
Peter Cornelius
arranged by Ivor Atkins (*OUP*)
Baritone solo: Nicholas Sears
- [17] ***Myn lyking** (2' 35")
R. R. Terry (*Elkin, for J. Curwen*)
- [18] ***O little one sweet** (3' 15")
Samuel Scheidt
harmonized by J. S. Bach
- *included in *100 Carols for Choirs* (Oxford University Press)
**included in *Carols for Choirs 2* (Oxford University Press)
†published by Hinshaw Music, Inc. (in USA and Canada), Oxford University Press (in all other countries)
- [19] ***All my heart this night rejoices**
(2' 12")
J. G. Ebeling
- [20] ***I saw a maiden** (2' 52")
Basque Noël
arranged by Edgar Pettman (*IMP*)
- [21] †**Away in a manger** (2' 12")
W. J. Kirkpatrick
arranged by John Rutter (*OUP*)
- [22] ***Nativity carol** (4' 20")
John Rutter (*OUP*)

The Cambridge Singers

Soprano: Caroline Ashton, Donna Deam, Ruth Holton, Simone Mace, Joanna Maggs,
Mary Mure, Mary Seers, Nancy-Jane Thompson, Clare Wallace

Alto: Nicola Barber, Peter Gritton, Phyllida Hancock, Mary Hitch, Nicola-Jane Kemp,
Melanie Marshall, Susanna Spicer

Tenor: David Dunnett, Paul Gordon, Robert Graham Campbell, Mark Padmore,
David Watson, Richard Wilson

Bass: Andrew Hammond, Jamie Mure, Charles Pott, Nicholas Sears, Benjamin Thompson,
Russell Watson

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 Jesu parvule
I yearn for thee always!
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!

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

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 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-beene 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:
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-part 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 lalù.'

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 lalù.'

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 lalù.'

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 lalù.'

Words: G. R. Woodward (1849–1934)
Music: Italian 17th-century carol
arranged by Charles Wood (1866–1926)

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.

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
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 imagery of the poem is of a 'Jesse tree', often depicted in medieval painting and stained glass. The music was written 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 callèd 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

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.

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

Words: John Audelay (15th century)

Music: John Rutter

†bed = bud

[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*

[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 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 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 for to sing,
He surely could have had it, 'cause he was
the King.

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

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.

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

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.*

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.

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*

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.*

At Bethlehem Jewry a city there was,
Where Joseph and Mary together did pass,
And there to be taxèd 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 were they 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)*

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 was
As dew in April that falleth on the grass:

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

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

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

Words: 15th century

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, lullalu,
Lalullaby, sweet babe,' sang she,
'My son, and eke a Saviour born,
Who hast vouchsafèd 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 by William Ballet
(17th century)
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 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: Philipp 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, of which 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 lyking, my dere sonne, my
sweeting.*

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 chyld's birth.
All that were in heav'nly bliss, they made
mickle mirth.

Angels bright sang their song to that chyld;
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

Arrangement: 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.

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.'

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!

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 alway.

Words: 15th century (adapted)

*Music: Basque Noël 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 *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. 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 forever, 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.

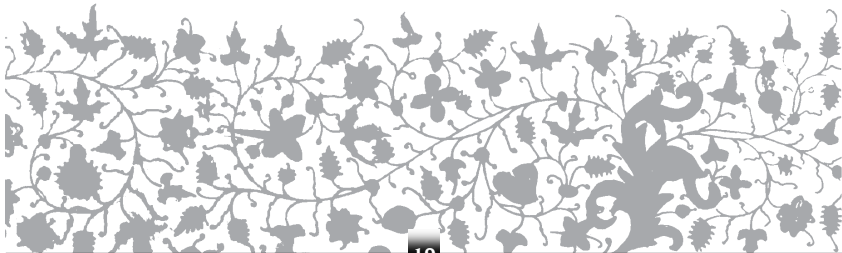
*Far away, silent he lay,
Born today, your homage pay,
Christ is born for aye,
Born on Christmas Day.*

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 stary 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



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COLCD 106

STEREO DDD

Made in Great Britain

Recording produced by Jillian White
Recorded in January 1987 by the BBC Transcription Unit
in the Great Hall of University College School, London.

Balance engineer: Campbell Hughes

Digital editing: David Jacob

Design: Nick Findell

Front cover: *Adoration of the Magi* (Musée Jacquemart-André)

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Christmas Night (subtitled Carols of the Nativity) is a Christmas-themed album by The Cambridge Singers conducted by John Rutter. Most songs are sung a cappella, on others the choir is accompanied by The City of London Sinfonia. It was first released in 1987 on Rutter's label Collegium Records. The CD version of Christmas Night contains 22 Christmas carols spanning more than six centuries. Most of these have become well known thanks to the Christmas Eve Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols at King's