



ST JOHN'S SMITH SQUARE

**'Let the earth open'
A recital for Advent**

**Jess Dandy (contralto)
Martin Roscoe (piano)**

December 2020



'Let the earth open'

Isaiah 45:8

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Arr. Foggitt	<i>Advent Prose</i>
Britten	<i>I wonder as I wander</i>
Wolf	<i>Nun wandre, Maria</i> <i>Die ihr schwebet</i>
Rodrigo	<i>Pastorcito Santo</i>
Nin	<i>Villancico Vasco</i> <i>Villancico Castellano</i> <i>Villancico de Córdoba</i> <i>Villancico Andaluz</i>
Warlock	<i>Bethlehem Down</i> <i>The First Mercy</i>
Cornelius	<i>Weihnachtslieder</i>
Britten	<i>The Birds</i>
Ravel	<i>Le Noël des jouets</i>
Chaminade	<i>Le Noël des oiseaux</i>
Poulenc	<i>Nous voulons une petite soeur</i>

PROGRAMME NOTES

Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it.

Isaiah 45:8 King James Version

Our recital begins in darkness, a world beleaguered by loss: Sion is a wilderness; Jerusalem desolate, humanity withered as a leaf, estranged from a self-concealing God. Yet folded into this seeming opacity of suffering is a collective cry, thrown up to the unknowable vastness of the heavens. “Send forth the Lamb”, it says, “that he might take away the yoke of our captivity”. Advent sits in the vast, cavernous uncertainty of anticipating a reply. The prophets tell us to hope; they know this cry will penetrate the heavens like a knife in its dogged will to be saved. And so, a light in the darkness appears, a star in the sky, life in the womb, mercy, kindness, inclusion, compassion. In our chosen music of Britten, Wolf, Rodrigo, and Cornelius, we ponder on how exactly we deserve this, we follow Mary and Joseph in their gruelling journey to Bethlehem, we meet the shepherd boy intent on giving his whole heart to Jesus, and we ultimately celebrate the burgeoning joy of new life and hope in a world, which seemed irredeemably beyond all of those things. The nativity is the deep victory of the little man, of the ostracised, the childlike, the vulnerable: Joachim Nin’s settings of Spanish Folk Carols celebrate Joseph, the carpenter and Mary, the laundress, and welcome in the child shivering at the door. The manger holds the entire universe in a humble microcosm, and the smallest of gestures speaks universal volumes: in Warlock’s ‘The First Mercy’, the baby Jesus lays love on those creatures guards have attempted to exclude – swallow, moth and mouse, understandably ‘afraid’; quiet inclusion somehow drowns out the brashness of defensive walls. It is this childlike quality, which allows us to fully embrace the potential of Christmas as Cornelius’ ‘blissful dream’, with his golden candles shimmering on the Christmas tree. We can revel in the Lilliputian magic of Ravel’s animated toys and their own whirling festivities. And, through the raucous crash, bang, wallop of Francis Poulenc, we can ultimately throw ourselves into the giddiness of Madame Eustache’s seventeen daughters and their obstinately unreasonable Christmas demands. From darkness into light at its most effervescent, join us as we plot the most beguiling of Advent calendars.

Jess & Martin

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

Advent Prose arranged by Peter Foggitt

*Rorate, coeli, desuper, et nubes pluant iustum;
aperiatur terra, et germinet Salvatorem.*

Ne irascáris Dómine, ne ultra memínaris
iniquitátis:
ecce cívitas Sancti facta est desérta:
Sion desérta facta est: Jerúsalem desoláta est:
domus sanctificatiónis tuæ et glóriæ tuæ,
ubi laudavérunt te patres nostri.

Peccávimus et facti sumus tamquam immúndus
nos,
et cecídimus quasi fólium univérsi:
et iniquitátes nostræ quasi ventus abstulérunt nos:
abscondísti fáciem tuam a nobis,
et allisisti nos in manu iniquitátis nostræ.

Vide Domine afflictiónem pópuli tui,
et mitte quem missúrus es:
emítte Agnum dominatórem terræ,
de Petra desérti ad montem filíæ Sion:
ut áuferat ipse jugum captivitátis nostræ.

Consolámini, consolámini, pópule meus: cito
véniet salus tua:
quare mæróre consúmeris, quia innovávit te
dolor?
Salvábo te, noli timére, ego enim sum Dóminus
Deus tuus,
Sanctus Israel, Redémptor tuus.

*Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour
down righteousness; let the earth open and send forth a
Saviour.*

Be not wroth very sore, O Lord,
neither remember iniquity forever:
Thy holy cities are a wilderness,
Sion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation:
Our holy and our beautiful house, where our
fathers praised thee.

We have sinned, and are as an unclean thing,
and we all do fade as a leaf:
and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us
away;
thou hast hid thy face from us:
and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.

Behold, O Lord, the affliction of thy people, and
send forth Him who is to come:
send forth the Lamb, the ruler of the earth,
from the Rock of the desert, to the mount of
daughter Sion: that he may take away the yoke of
our captivity.

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people,
my salvation shall not tarry:
I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy
transgressions:
Fear not, for I will save thee: for I am the Lord
thy God,
the Holy One of Israel, thy Redeemer.

“I wonder as I wander” from *Songs of the Hill Folk*, words and melody collected by John Jacob Niles,
arranged by Benjamin Britten

I wonder as I wander out under the sky
How Jesus our Saviour did come for to die
For poor or'n'ry people like you and like I,
I wonder as I wander out under the sky.

When Mary birthed Jesus 'twas in a cow stall
With wise men and shepherds and farmers and all,
On high from God's heaven the stars' light did fall
And the promise of the ages it did then recall.

If Jesus has 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 could've had it for he was the King!

I wonder as I wander out under the sky
How Jesus our Saviour did come for to die
For poor or'n'ry people like you and like I,
I wonder as I wander out under the sky.

from Hugo Wolf's *Spanisches Liederbuch* – Geistliche Lieder (Spanish Songbook – Sacred Songs)

“Nun wandre, Maria” (Journey on, now, Mary), No 3 Ocaña, translated Paul Heyse

DER HEILIGE JOSEPH SINGT

Nun wandre, Maria,
Nun wandre nur fort.
Schon krähen die Hähne,
Und nah ist der Ort.
Nun wandre, Geliebte,
Du Kleinod mein,
Und balde wir werden
In Bethlehem sein.
Dann ruhest du fein
Und schlummerst dort.
Schon krähen die Hähne
Und nah ist der Ort.
Wohl seh ich, Herrin,
Die Kraft dir schwinden;
Kann deine Schmerzen,
Ach, kaum verwinden.
Getrost! Wohl finden
Wir Herberg dort.
Schon krähen die Hähne
Und nah ist der Ort.
Wär erst bestanden
Dein Stündlein, Marie,
Die gute Botschaft,
Gut lohnt ich sie.
Das Eselein hie
Gäb ich drum fort!
Schon krähen die Hähne
Und nah ist der Ort.

ST JOSEPH SINGS

Journey on, now, Mary,
Keep journeying.
The cocks are crowing,
And the place is near.
Journey on, beloved,
My jewel,
And soon we shall
Be in Bethlehem.
Then you shall rest well
And slumber there.
The cocks are crowing,
And the place is near.
I will see, my lady,
That your strength is failing;
I can hardly, alas,
Bear your agony.
Courage! We shall find
Some shelter there.
The cocks are crowing,
And the place is near.
If only your hour of pain
Were over, O Mary,
I should handsomely reward
The happy tidings.
This little ass here
I'd gladly give away!
The cocks are crowing,
Come! The place is near.

Translation © Richard Stokes

“Die ihr schwebet um diese Palmen” (You, who hover about these palms), No 4
Lope de Vega, translated Emanuel Geibel

Die ihr schwebet
Um diese Palmen
In Nacht und Wind,
Ihr heiligen Engel,
Stillet die Wipfel!
Es schlummert mein Kind.
Ihr Palmen von Bethlehem
Im Windesbrausen,
Wie mögt ihr heute
So zornig sausen!
O rauscht nicht also!
Schweiget, neiget
Euch leis und lind;
Stillet die Wipfel!
Es schlummert mein Kind.
Der Himmelsknabe
Duldet Beschwerde,
Ach, wie so müd er ward
Vom Leid der Erde.
Ach nun im Schlaf ihm
Leise gesänftigt
Die Qual zerrinnt,
Stillet die Wipfel!
Es schlummert mein Kind.
Grimmige Kälte
Sauset hernieder,
Womit nur deck ich
Des Kindleins Glieder!
O all ihr Engel,
Die ihr geflügelt
Wandelt im Wind,
Stillet die Wipfel!
Es schlummert mein kind.

You who hover
About these palms
In night and wind,
You holy angels,
Silence the tree-tops!
My child is sleeping.
You palms of Bethlehem
In the raging wind,
Why do you bluster
So angrily today!
Oh roar not so!
Be still, lean
Calmly and gently over us;
Silence the tree-tops!
My child is sleeping.
The heavenly babe
Suffers distress,
Ah, how weary He has grown
With the sorrows of this world.
Ah, now that in sleep
His pains
Are gently eased,
Silence the tree-tops!
My child is sleeping.
Fierce cold
Blows down on us,
With what shall I cover
My little child's limbs?
O all you angels
Who wing your way
On the winds,
Silence the tree-tops!
My child is sleeping.

Translation © Richard Stokes

Pastorcito Santo (Holy Shepherd Boy), Lope de Vega set by Joaquin Rodrigo

Zagalejo de perlas
hijo del alba,
¿dónde vais que hace frío
tan de mañana?
Como sois lucero
del alba mía
a traer el día
nacéis primero;

Pearl-bright shepherd boy,
son of the dawn,
where are you bound in such cold
so early in the morning?
Since you are the morning star
of my dawn,
to bring in the day
you are the first to appear;

pastor y cordero,
 sin choza ni lana,
 ¿dónde vais que hace frío
 tan de mañana?
 Perlas en los ojos,
 risa en la boca,
 a placer y enojos
 las almas provoca;
 cabellitos rojos,
 boca de grana,
 ¿dónde vais que hace frío
 tan de mañana?
 ¿Qué tenéis que hacer
 pastorcito Santo,
 madrugando tanto?
 Lo dais a entender
 aunque vais a ver
 disfrazado el alma.
 ¿Dónde vais que hace frío
 tan de mañana?

shepherd and lamb,
 without hut or fleece,
 where are you bound in such cold
 so early in the morning?
 With pearls in your eyes
 and laughter on your lips,
 pleasure and anger
 you bring to our souls;
 little shock of russet hair,
 scarlet mouth,
 where are you bound in such cold
 so early in the morning?
 What must you do,
 holy little shepherd,
 to rise so early?
 You let it be known,
 even though you go forth disguised
 to see our souls.
 Where are you bound in such cold
 so early in the morning?

English © Jacqueline Cockburn

from *Diez villancicos españoles* texts anon. set by Joaquin Nin

Villancico Vasco

Ator, ator mutil etxera,
 Gastaña zimelak jatera
 Gabon gaba ospatuteko
 Aitaren ta amaren onduan;
 Ikusiko dok aita bareka
 Amabe guztiz kontentuz.

Basque Carol

Come, come home child,
 To eat soft chestnuts
 To celebrate Christmas night
 With your mother and father;
 You will see father laugh
 And mother too will be very happy.

Villancico Castellano

San José era carpintero, carpintero, ¡Ay !
 Y la Virgen lavandera, lavandera, ¡Ay !
 El Niño bajó del cielo
 En una noche lunera.
 San José era carpintero, carpintero, ¡Ay !

Castilian Carol

Saint Joseph was a carpenter
 And the Virgin was a laundress.
 The Child came down from Heaven
 On a moonlit night.
 Saint Joseph was a carpenter.

San José era carpintero, carpintero, ¡Ay !
 Y la Virgen lavandera, lavandera, ¡Ay !
 El Niño vino del aire
 Camino del paraíso.
 San José era carpintero, carpintero, ¡Ay !

Saint Joseph was a carpenter
 And the Virgin was a laundress.
 The Child came from the air,
 The Road to Paradise.
 Saint Joseph was a carpenter.

Villancico de Córdoba

Carol of Cordoba

Madre en la puerta hay un Niño

Mother, in the doorway is a Child

Más bello que flor de lirio.
Cubierto de blanco lino
Madre el Niño tiene frío.
Que venga a la lumbre y se calentará
¡Ay ! que en esta tierra
Ya no hay caridad.

Villancico Andaluz

Campana sobre campana
Y sobre campana una;
Asómate a esa ventana
Verás un Niño en la cuna.
Belén, campanas de Belén
Que los angeles tocan
¿Que nuevas me traés?

Recogido tu rebaño
¿A dónde vas, pastorcito?
Voy a llevar al Portal
Requesón manteca y vino.
Belén, campanas de Belén
Que los angeles tocan
¿Que nuevas me traés?

Campana sobre campana,
Y sobre campana dos;
Asómate a esa ventana,
Porque está naciendo Dios.
Belén, campanas de Belén
Que los angeles tocan
¿Que nuevas me traés?

Caminando a medianoche
¿A dónde vas mi buen pastor?
Le llevo al Niño que nace
Como a Dios, mi corazón.
Belén, campanas de Belén
Que los angeles tocan
¿Que nuevas me traés?
Original authors anon.

More beautiful than the lily,
Covered with white linen
Mother, the Child is cold.
Come to the fireplace
And warm yourself.
Ay, in this world there is no charity.

Andalucian Carol

A bell above a bell
And above a bell one more;
Come up to that window
You will see a Child in a manger.
Bethlehem, bells of Bethlehem
That the angels ring
What news do you bring me?

Gathering up your flock,
Where are you going, dear shepherd?
I'm going to take to the stable
Ricotta cheese, lard and wine.
Bethlehem, bells of Bethlehem
That the angels ring
What news do you bring me?

A bell above a bell
And above a bell two more;
Come up to that window
Because God is being born.
Bethlehem, bells of Bethlehem
That the angels ring
What news do you bring me?

Travelling at midnight,
Where are you going, good shepherd?
I'm taking to the Child who is born,
As to God, my heart.
Bethlehem, bells of Bethlehem
That the angels ring
What news do you bring me?
Translations © Barbara Miller

Bethlehem Down, text by Bruce Blunt set by Peter Warlock

“When He is King we will give him the King’s gifts,
Myrrh for its sweetness, and gold for a crown,
Beautiful robes”, said the young girl to Joseph
Fair with her first-born on Bethlehem Down.
Bethlehem Down is full of the starlight
Winds for the spices, and stars for the gold,
Mary for sleep, and for lullaby music
Songs of a shepherd by Bethlehem fold.
When He is King they will clothe Him in grave-sheets,
Myrrh for embalming, and wood for a crown,
He that lies now in the white arms of Mary
Sleeping so lightly on Bethlehem Down.
Here He has peace and a short while for dreaming,
Close-huddled oxen to keep Him from cold,
Mary for love, and for lullaby music
Songs of a shepherd by Bethlehem fold.

The First Mercy, text by Bruce Blunt set by Peter Warlock

Ox and ass at Bethlehem
On a night, ye know of them.
We were only creatures small,
Hid by shadows on the wall.
We were swallow, moth and mouse;
The Child was born in our house,
And the bright eyes of us three
Peeped at His nativity.
Hands of peace upon that place
Hushed our beings for a space
Quiet feet and folded wing,
Nor a sound of any thing.
With a moving star we crept
Closer when the Baby slept;
Men who guarded where He lay
Moved to frighten us away.
But the Babe, awakened, laid
Love on things that were afraid;
With so sweet a gesture He
Called us to His company.

Weihnachtslieder – Ein Liedercyklus, gedichtet von Peter Cornelius
Christmas Songs – A Song Cycle, words and music by Peter Cornelius

I. Christbaum

Wie schön geschmückt der festliche Raum!
Die Lichter funkeln am Weihnachtsbaum!
O fröhliche Zeit! o seliger Traum!

Die Mutter sitzt in der Kinder Kreis;
Nun schweiget alles auf ihr Geheiß:
Sie singet des Christkinds Lob und Preis.

Und rings, vom Weihnachtsbaum erhellt,
Ist schön in Bildern aufgestellt
Des heiligen Buches Palmenwelt.

Die Kinder schauen der Bilder Pracht,
Und haben wohl des Singen acht,
Das tönt so süß in der Weihenacht!

O glücklicher Kreis im festlichen Raum!
O goldne Lichter am Weihnachtsbaum!
O fröhliche Zeit! o seliger Traum!

IIb. Die Hirten

Hirten wachen im Feld;
Nacht ist rings auf der Welt;
Wach sind die Hirten alleine
Im Haine.

Und ein Engel so licht
Grüßet die Hirten und spricht:
"Christ, das Heil aller Frommen,
Ist kommen!"

Engel singen umher:
"Gott im Himmel sei Ehr!
Und den Menschen hienieden
Sei Frieden!"

Eilen die Hirten fort,
Eilen zum heiligen Ort,
Beten an in den Windlein
Das Kindlein.

IIIb. Die Könige

Drei Könige wandern aus Morgenland;

I. The Christmas Tree

How prettily is the festive room adorned!
The candles shimmer on the Christmas tree!
O glad time! o blissful dream!

Mother sits among her children;
now everyone is silent at her command:
she sings the Christ-child's praise and glory.

And all around, illuminated by the Christmas
tree,
beautifully shown in pictures,
is the palmy world of the Holy Book.

The children gaze at the pictures' magnificence
and pay close attention to the singing,
that sounds so sweet on the eve of Christmas!

O happy circle in a festive room!
O golden candles on the Christmas tree!
O glad time! o blissful dream!

IIb. The Shepherds

Shepherds watch in the field;
night surrounds the world;
only the shepherds are awake
in the grove.

And an angel so bright
greet the shepherds and says:
"Christ, the salvation of all pious souls,
is come!"

The angels sing all around:
"Glory to God in Heaven!
And to men down below,
peace!"

The shepherds hurry forth,
hurry to the holy place,
and worship the infant
in swaddling clothes.

IIIb. The Kings

Three kings are traveling from the East;

Ein Sternlein führt sie zum Jordanstrand.
In Juda fragen und forschen die drei,
Wo der neugeborene König sei?
Sie wollen Weihrauch, Myrrhen und Gold
Dem Kinde spenden zum Opfersold.

Und hell erglänzet des Sternes Schein:
Zum Stalle gehen die Kön'ge ein;
Das Knäblein schau'n sie wonniglich,
Anbetend neigen die Könige sich;
Sie bringen Weihrauch, Myrrhen und Gold
Zum Opfer dar dem Knäblein hold.

O Menschenkind! halte treulich Schritt!
Die Kön'ge wandern, o wandre mit!
Der Stern der Liebe, der Gnade Stern
Erhelle dein Ziel, so du suchst den Herrn,
Und fehlen Weihrauch, Myrrhen und Gold,
Schenke dein Herz dem Knäblein hold!

IV. Simeon

Das Knäblein nach acht Tagen
Ward gen Jerusalem
Zum Gotteshaus getragen
Vom Stall in Bethlehem.

Da kommt ein Greis geschritten,
Der fromme Simeon,
Er nimmt in Tempels Mitten
Vom Mutterarm den Sohn;

Vom Angesicht des Alten
Ein Strahl der Freude bricht,
Er preiset Gottes Walten
Weissagungsvoll und spricht:

"Nun lässest du in Frieden,
Herr, deinen Diener gehn,
Da du mir noch beschieden,
Den Heiland anzusehn,

Den du der Welt gesendet,
Daß er dem Heidentum
Des Lichtes Helle spendet
Zu deines Volkes Ruhm!"

Mit froh erstaunten Sinnen
Vernimmt's der Eltern Paar,
Dann tragen sie von hinnen
Das Knäblein wunderbar.

a small star leads them to Jordan.
In Judea they ask and search, these three,
where the new-born king is.
They wish to bring incense, myrrh and gold
as an offering to the child.

And the light of the star shines brightly:
the kings go into the stall;
gazing with wonder at the child,
the kings bow low in worship.
They bring incense, myrrh and gold
as an offering to the sweet baby boy.

O Sons of Man! keep faith!
The kings are journeying - travel with them!
The star of love, the star of grace
shine on your goal as you seek the Lord,
and if you lack incense, myrrh and gold,
give instead your heart to that sweet baby boy!

IV. Simeon

After eight days, the baby boy
was carried to Jerusalem,
to the house of God,
from the stall in Bethlehem.

There comes striding an old man,
the pious Simeon;
in the middle of the temple he takes
the son from his mother's arms.

From the face of the old man
beams bright joy;
he praises God's ways,
full of prophecy, and says:

"Now, permit your servant
to depart in peace, Lord,
for you have allowed
me to see the Saviour,

whom you sent into the world
to bestow upon the Gentiles
the brightness of your light,
to the glory of your people!"

With happily astonished minds,
the pair of parents listen,
then leave, carrying away
the wondrous infant boy.

V. Christus der Kinderfreund

Das zarte Knäblein ward ein Mann,
Erlöst uns von der Sünde Bann;
Doch neigt er freundlich immerdar
Und liebend sich zur Kinderschar.
Habt ihr den Ruf des Herrn vernommen,
Des Heilands Stimme mild und weich?
"Lasset die Kleinen zu mir kommen,
Denn ihrer ist das Himmelreich!"

Mich aber mahnt die Weihnachtszeit
An Träume der Vergangenheit;
Erinnerungsodem hauchet mild
Den Schleier von der Kindheit Bild;
Da Lichter hell am Baum erglommen,
Ist mir, als würd ich Kindern gleich,
Als dürft ich mit euch Kleinen kommen,
Zu teilen euer Himmelreich.

VI. Christkind

Das einst ein Kind auf Erden war,
Christkindlein kommt noch jedes Jahr.

Kommet vom hohen Sternenzelt,
Freut und beglückt alle Welt!

Mit Kindern feiert's froh den Tag,
Wo Christkind in der Krippe lag;

Den Christbaum zündet's überall,
Weckt Orgelklang und Glockenschall.

Christkindlein kommt zu arm und reich,
Die Guten sind ihm alle gleich.

Danket ihm denn und grüßt es fein,
Auch euch beglückte Christkindlein!

V. Christ the friend of children

The tender boy became a man
and redeemed us from the spell of sin;
Yet he always bows kindly
and lovingly to a crowd of children.
Have you heard the call of the Lord,
the Saviour's voice, mild and soft?
"Let the little ones come to me,
for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven!"

But to me, Christmastime reminds me
of the dreams of the past;
a breath of memory gently wafts
the veil away from images of childhood;
when the candles gleam brightly on the tree,
I feel as if I were a child again -
as if I could come with you children
to share your Heavenly Kingdom.

VI. The Christ-child

He who once was a child on this earth,
the Christ-child, comes yet again every year.

He comes from the sublime starry sky,
and delights and inspires all the world!

He joyously celebrates with children the day
the Christchild lay in his manger;

All around, he ignites the Christmas trees
and awakens the peal of an organ and the toll of
bells.

The Christ-child comes to the poor and the rich,
for to him, the good are all alike.

Thank him then, and greet him well;
the Christ-child has made you happy as well!

Translations © Emily Ezust

The Birds, text by Hilaire Belloc set by Benjamin Britten

When Jesus Christ was four years old,
The angels brought Him toys of gold,
Which no man ever had bought or sold.

And yet with these He would not play.
He made Him small fowl out of clay,
And blessed them till they flew away.

Tu creasti, Domine.

Jesus Christ, Thou child so wise,
Bless mine hands and fill mine eyes,
And bring my soul to Paradise.

Noël des jouets, words and music by Maurice Ravel

Le troupeau verni des moutons
Roule en tumulte vers la crèche.
Les lapins tambours, brefs et rêches,
Couvrent leurs aigres mirlitons.
Vierge Marie, en crinoline,
Ses yeux d'émail sans cesse ouverts,
En attendant Bonhomme hiver,
Veille Jésus qui se dodine.
Car, près de là, sous un sapin,
Furtif, emmitouflé dans l'ombre
Du bois, Belzébuth, le chien sombre,
Guette l'Enfant de sucre peint.
Mais les beaux anges incassables
Suspendus par des fils d'archal
Du haut de l'arbuste hiémal
Assurent la paix des étables.
Et leur vol de clinquant vermeil
Qui cliquette en bruits symétriques
S'accorde au bétail mécanique
Dont la voix grêle bêle:
«Noël! Noël! Noël!»

The painted flock of sheep
Trundles towards the crib.
The rabbit drummers, sharp and harsh,
Drown their shrill hewgags' sound.
The Virgin Mary in crinoline,
Her enamel eyes ever open,
Waits for good old winter to come,
Watching over Jesus who lies abed.
For nearby, skulking beneath a fir-tree
And muffled in the forest's shadow,
Beelzebub, the sinister dog,
Lies in wait for the coloured-sugar Child.
But the beautiful unbreakable angels,
Hanging by wires of brass
From the top of the Christmas tree
Guarantee the stables' peace.
And their tinselled vermilion flight,
Jingling in symmetrical sounds
Harmonizes with the mechanical cattle,
Whose harsh voices bellow:
'Noël! Noël! Noël!'

Translation © Richard Stokes

Le Noël des Oiseaux, text by Armand Sylvestre set by Cecile Chaminade

Petit Jésus, maître du ciel,
Que les anges chantant Noël
Veillent sous leurs blancheurs ailées,
Viens donc, viens donc pour les petits oiseaux
Qui frissonnent au bord des eaux gelées

Little Jesus, Master of Heaven,
May the Angels who sing 'Noel'
Watch beneath their winged whiteness,
So come, come then for the little birds shivering
at the frozen water's edge

Bonnes gens qui sur le chemin
Passez, un rosaire à la main,
Dont l'âme a des avés pour ailes,
Priez, priez pour les petits oiseaux
Dont la neige a trempé les os si frères.

Cloches sonores au doux bruit,
Qui pour la messe de minuit
Au fond de l'air tinte agiles,
Sonnez, sonnez pour les petits oiseaux
Les nids sont frères des berceaux fragiles.

Beaux anges, nos frères ailés,
Qui près de la crèche volez,
Vous que Dieu sur la terre envoie,
Apportez, apportez aux petits oiseaux
Grelottant parmi les Roseaux La joie.

You gentlefolk passing by the way,
Rosaries in hand,
Your souls have 'Hail Marys' for wings,
Pray, pray for the little birds
Whose bones, so fragile, the snow has soaked
through.

You sonorous bells of sweet sound,
Who for Midnight Mass
Resound nimbly through the air,
Ring, ring for the little birds
Their nests, brothers to fragile cradles.

Beautiful angels, our winged brothers,
Who fly about the cradle,
You whom God sends to Earth,
Bring joy, bring joy to the little birds
Shivering among the reeds.

Translation © Jess Dandy

“Nous voulons une petite soeur”, text Jean Nohain set by Francis Poulenc

The text is copyright and cannot be reproduced here. Suffice to say, Madame Eustache's seventeen daughters have some rather unreasonable demands on their Christmas lists. It doesn't end well...

BIOGRAPHIES



Noted for her 'velvety richness' (The Independent) & 'luscious' tone (The Times), Cumbrian contralto **Jess Dandy** is rapidly making a name for herself as one of the UK's most promising young singers.

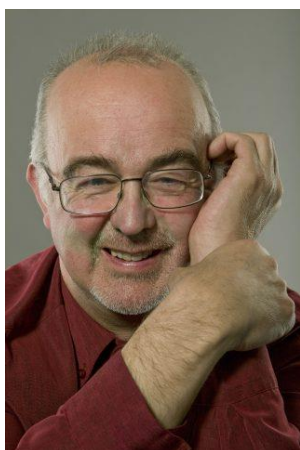
She has appeared on the concert platform with the Orchestre révolutionnaire et romantique, The English Concert, Florilegium, BBC National Orchestra & Chorus of

Wales, The Academy of Ancient Music, The Dunedin Consort, BBC Symphony Orchestra, and Les Arts florissants; collaborating with conductors including Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Harry Bicket, Trevor Pinnock, John Butt, William Christie, Kristian Bezuidenhout, and Stephen Layton. Venues include Carnegie Hall, New York; Palau de la música catalana, Barcelona, Harris Theater, Chicago, Barbican Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, and Bridgewater Hall.

Jess' discography includes a Gramophone Award nominated recording as Micah in Handel Samson with the Dunedin Consort & John Butt, and she has just recorded the role of Eduige in a new English Concert recording of Rodelinda under Harry Bicket. She was delighted to make her critically-acclaimed recital debut at Wigmore Hall a few weeks ago in Janacek's The Diary of One Who Disappeared with Nicky Spence and Julius Drake.

Upcoming engagements include Handel Messiah with the Dunedin Consort, as well as Christmas Oratorio with the Mozarteum Orchestra under Matthew Halls in Salzburg. She is represented worldwide by Askonas Holt Ltd and continues to study with Gary Coward.

Martin and Jess have enjoyed collaborating for the last three years as a duo and through Jess' other role as the director of the mental health initiative, SongPath, which, through therapeutically curated walking trails, promotes creative and restorative connection with ourselves, each other, and the world around us.



With an extraordinary career spanning over five decades, **Martin Roscoe** is unarguably one of the UK's best loved pianists. Renowned for his versatility at the keyboard, Martin is equally at home in concerto, recital and chamber performances. His enduring popularity and the respect in which he is universally held are built on a deeply thoughtful musicianship and his easy rapport with audiences and fellow musicians alike. Martin is Artistic Director of Ribble Valley International Piano Week and the Manchester Chamber Concerts Society, and Co-Artistic Director of the Beverley Chamber Music Festival.

With a repertoire of over 100 concertos performed or recorded, Martin continues to work regularly with many of the UK's leading orchestras, having especially close links with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Hallé Orchestra, Manchester Camerata, Northern Chamber Orchestra and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, where

he has given over ninety performances. Other orchestral highlights have included BBC Symphony Orchestra and Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Martin also performs widely across Europe, Canada, Australia and the Far East, sharing the concert platform with eminent conductors such as Sir Simon Rattle, Sir Mark Elder, Gianandrea Noseda, and Christoph von Dohnányi.

A prolific recitalist and chamber musician, Martin tours the UK extensively every season, including regular appearances at Wigmore Hall and Kings Place. He has long-standing associations with Peter Donohoe, Kathryn Stott, Tasmin Little and the Endellion and Maggini Quartets as well as more recent collaborations with Jennifer Pike, Liza Ferschtman and the Brodsky and Carducci Quartets. One of his most important ensembles, the Cropper Welsh Roscoe Trio (2005-2016), performed many times across the UK, most notably at Wigmore Hall.

Having made over 600 broadcasts, including seven BBC Prom appearances, Martin is one of the most regularly played pianists on BBC Radio 3. Martin has also made many commercial recordings for labels such as Hyperion, Chandos and Naxos. He has recorded the complete piano music of Dohnányi, Nielsen and Szymanowski, as well as four discs in the Hyperion Romantic Piano Concerto series. For the Deux-Elles label, Martin has recorded the complete Beethoven piano sonatas, for which he received unanimous critical acclaim.

Teaching has always formed an important part of Martin's life and the development of young talent helps him to constantly re-examine and re-evaluate his own playing. He is currently Professor of Piano at the Guildhall School of Music in London and has been awarded his Fellowship there.

Martin splits his free time between the stunning English Lake District and the Scottish Highlands, which provide inspiration and relaxation, and also enable him to indulge his passion for the countryside and hill-walking.

www.martinroscoe.co.uk

Image credits:

Clare Park (image of Jess Dandy)

Eric Richmond (image of Martin Roscoe)

Upcoming Events this month at St John's Smith Square...

Saturday 5 December

Roderick Williams sings Schubert's *Winterreise*

Thursday 10 December – 35th Christmas Festival

Rolf Hind plays Messiaen's *Vingt regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus*

Thursday 11 December – 35th Christmas Festival

Handel's *Messiah* (Part One)

Sunday 13 December – 35th Christmas Festival

The Gesualdo Six

Monday 14 December – 35th Christmas Festival

David Titterington plays Messiaen's *La Nativité du Seigneur*

Narrated by Timothy West

Tuesday 15 December

English Sinfonia: English Miniatures & The Lark Ascending

Wednesday 16 December

London Choral Sinfonia & Mary Bevan – Bach Magnificat in D

Thursday 17 December – 35th Christmas Festival

Ex Cathedra

Friday 18 December – 35th Christmas Festival

The Tallis Scholars

Sunday 20 December – 35th Christmas Festival

Brodsky Quartet

Tuesday 22 December – 35th Christmas Festival

Polyphony & Stephen Layton

For the full December programme and further details, please visit:

<https://www.sjss.org.uk/whats-on>

All tickets must be booked online and in advance. Booking closes 2 hours before the start of each performance.

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We are delighted to now be able to re-open and to start to share the joy of live music in these challenging times whilst providing a vital base for artists to once again perform. Ticket sales alone only cover approximately 30% of the operating costs for these concerts. If you have enjoyed today and are able to consider making an additional donation your support would be greatly appreciated. Details of ways in which you can help can be found on our website at: <https://www.sjss.org.uk/donations>. You can also make a simple donation by TEXT MESSAGE:

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