



**SOMERVILLE**  
COLLEGE

# Christmas Carol Concert



Artwork by Katie Driver (2020)

Somerville College Chapel  
*Monday 9th December 2024*  
*7:00 PM*

***Before the service, the organist will perform:***

*J.S. Bach (1685-1750) - Nun Komm, der Heiden Heiland, BWV 659*

*Louis-Claude Daquin (1694-1772) - I. Noël sur les jeux d'Anches*

*- IX. Noël sur les Flûtes*

*- XII. Noël Suisse, Grand Jeu et Duo*

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***Please stand with the choir to sing***

***Once in Royal David's City***

CHOIR ONLY

*Once in royal David's city  
Stood a lowly cattle shed,  
Where a mother laid her baby  
In a manger for his bed:  
Mary was that Mother mild,  
Jesus Christ her little Child.*

*He came down to earth from heaven  
Who is God and Lord of all,  
And his shelter was a stable,  
And his cradle was a stall:  
With the poor and mean and lowly,  
Lived on earth our Saviour holy.*

## ALL

For he is our childhood's pattern,  
Day by day like us he grew,  
He was little, weak and helpless,  
Tears and smiles like us he knew;  
And he feeleth for our sadness,  
And he shareth in our gladness.

And our eyes at last shall see him  
Through his own redeeming love,  
For that Child so dear and gentle,  
Is our Lord in heaven above:  
And he leads his children on  
To the place where he is gone.

Not in that poor lowly stable,  
With the oxen standing by,  
We shall see him: but in heaven,  
Set at God's right hand on high,  
When like stars his children crowned,  
All in white shall wait around.

C. F. Alexander (1818–1895)

IRBY

Henry J. Gauntlett (1805–1876)

Harmonised: Arthur Henry Mann (1850–1929)

vv5 arr. Sir David Willcocks (1919–2015)

**Welcome**

**Sara Kalim (1990)**

Development Director

## **Drop down ye heavens**

Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour forth  
righteousness: let the earth be fruitful, and bring forth a Saviour.

Be not very angry, O Lord, neither remember our iniquity for ever:  
thy holy cities are 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: our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away; thou hast hid  
thy face from us: and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.

Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have  
chosen; that ye may know me and believe me: I, even I, am the Lord,  
and beside me there is no Saviour: and there is none that can deliver  
out of my hand.

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.

Words: Anon. – liturgical:  
The Advent Prose

Music: Richard Lloyd: (1933–2021)

### **‘BC:AD’, by U.A. Fanthorpe**

**Read by Alison Skilbeck (1964)**

This was the moment when Before  
Turned into After, and the future's  
Uninvented timekeepers presented arms.

This was the moment when nothing  
Happened. Only dull peace  
Sprawled boringly over the earth.

This was the moment when even energetic Romans  
Could find nothing better to do  
Than counting heads in remote provinces.

And this was the moment  
When a few farm workers and three  
Members of an obscure Persian sect  
Walked haphazard by starlight straight  
Into the kingdom of heaven.

**Venite, gaudete!**

Veni veni Emmanuel.	O come, o come Emmanuel.
Venite adoremus.	Come let us adore him.
Puer natus est nobis, Alleluia!	A boy is born for us, Alleluia!
Hodie Christus natus est,	Christ is born today,
laetantur archangeli.	let us rejoice with with the angels.
Gaudete, venite, Alleluia!	Rejoice, and come, Alleluia!

Words: Anon. – traditional

Music: Adrian Peacock (b.1962)

***Please stand with the choir to sing***

**God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen**

God rest ye merry, gentlemen,  
let nothing you dismay,  
for Jesus Christ our Saviour  
was born on Christmas Day,  
to save us all from Satan's power  
when we were gone astray:  
O tidings of comfort and joy.

From God our heavenly Father  
a blessed angel came,  
and unto certain shepherds  
brought tidings of the same,  
how that in Bethlehem was born  
the Son of God by name:  
O tidings of comfort and joy.

The shepherds at those tidings  
rejoiced much in mind,  
and left their flocks a-feeding  
in tempest, storm and wind,  
and went to Bethlehem straightway,  
this blessed Babe to find:  
O tidings of comfort and joy.

But when to Bethlehem they came,  
whereat this Infant lay,  
they found him in a manger,  
where oxen feed on hay;  
his Mother Mary kneeling,  
unto the Lord did pray:  
O tidings of comfort and joy.

Now to the Lord sing praises,  
all you within this place,  
and with true love and brotherhood  
each other now embrace;  
This holy tide of Christmas  
all other doth deface:  
O tidings of comfort and joy.

Words: Anon. – traditional

Music: Anon. – traditional London tune  
arr. Sir David Willcocks (1919–2015)

*A Child's Christmas in Wales*, by Dylan Thomas

Read by Tony Taylor (2016)

At the end of a long road was a drive that led to a large house, and we stumbled up the darkness of the drive that night, each one of us afraid, each one holding a stone in his hand in case, and all of us too brave to say a word. The wind through the trees made noises as of old and unpleasant and maybe webfooted men wheezing in caves. We reached the black bulk of the house. 'What shall we give them? Hark the Herald?'

'No,' Jack said, 'Good King Wencelas. I'll count three.' One, two three, and we began to sing, our voices high and seemingly distant in the snow-felted darkness round the house that was occupied by nobody we knew.

We stood close together, near the dark door. Good King Wencelas looked out On the Feast of Stephen . . . And then a small, dry voice, like the voice of someone who has not spoken for a long time, joined our singing: a small, dry, eggshell voice from the other side of the door: a small dry voice through the keyhole. And when we stopped running we were outside our house; the front room was lovely; balloons floated under the hot-water-bottle-gulping gas; everything was good again and shone over the town.

'Perhaps it was a ghost,' Jim said. 'Perhaps it was trolls,' Dan said, who was always reading.

'Let's go in and see if there's any jelly left,' Jack said. And we did that.

Always on Christmas night there was music. An uncle played the fiddle, a cousin sang 'Cherry Ripe,' and another uncle sang 'Drake's Drum.' It was very warm in the little house. Auntie Hannah, who had got on to the parsnip wine, sang a song about Bleeding Hearts and Death, and then another in which she said her heart was like a Bird's Nest; and then everybody laughed again; and then I went to bed.

Looking through my bedroom window, out into the moonlight and the unending smoke-colored snow, I could see the lights in the windows of all the other houses on our hill and hear the music rising from them up the long, steady falling night. I turned the gas down, I got into bed. I said some words to the close and holy darkness, and then I slept.

## **There is no rose**

Alleluia.

There is no rose of such virtue, as is the rose that bear Jesu. Alleluia.  
For in this rose contained was heaven and earth in little space; Res  
miranda.

And by that rose we may well see that he is God in persons three,  
Pari forma.

Now leave we all this worldly mirth and follow we this joyful birth;  
Transeamus.

Alleluia.

Words: Anon. – traditional

Music: Lucy Walker (b.1998)

## **‘Christmas Night’, by Conrad Hilberry**

**Read by Jo Greenslade (1990)**

Let midnight gather up the wind  
and the cry of tires on bitter snow.  
Let midnight call the cold dogs home,  
sleet in their fur—last one can blow

the streetlights out. If children sleep  
after the day’s unfoldings, the wheel  
of gifts and griefs, may their breathing  
ease the strange hollowness we feel.

Let midnight draw whoever’s left  
to the grate where a burnt-out log unrolls  
low mutterings of smoke until  
a small fire wakes in its crib of coals.

## **Refugee**

We think of him as safe beneath the steeple,  
Or cosy in a crib beside the font,  
But he is with a million displaced people  
On the long road of weariness and want.  
For even as we sing our final carol  
His family is up and on that road,  
Fleeing the wrath of someone else's quarrel,  
Glancing behind and shouldering their load.  
Whilst Herod rages still from his dark tower  
Christ clings to Mary, fingers tightly curled,  
The lambs are slaughtered by the men of power,  
And death squads spread their curse across the world.  
But every Herod dies, and comes alone  
To stand before the Lamb upon the throne.

Words: Malcolm Guite (b.1957)

Music: Joanna Marsh (b.1970)

***Please stand with the choir to sing***

### **O Little Town of Bethlehem**

O little town of Bethlehem,  
how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
the silent stars go by.  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
the everlasting light;  
the hopes and fears of all the years  
are met in thee tonight.

O morning stars, together  
proclaim the holy birth  
and praises sing to God the king,  
and peace to men on earth;  
for Christ is born of Mary;  
and, gathered all above,  
while mortals sleep, the angels keep  
their watch of wondering love.

How silently, how silently,  
the wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts  
the blessings of his heaven.  
No ear may hear his coming;  
but in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive him still  
the dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem,  
descend to us, we pray;  
cast out our sin, and enter in,  
be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels  
the great glad tidings tell:  
O come to us, abide with us,  
Our Lord Emmanuel.

Words: P. Brooks (1835–1893)

Music: FOREST GREEN,  
arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)  
vv4 arr. Thomas Armstrong (1898–1994)

**‘Nativity’, by John Donne**

**Read by Luke Pitcher, Fellow and Tutor in Classics**

Immensity cloistered in thy dear womb,  
Now leaves His well-belov'd imprisonment,  
There He hath made Himself to His intent  
Weak enough, now into the world to come;  
But O, for thee, for Him, hath the inn no room?  
Yet lay Him in this stall, and from the Orient,  
Stars and wise men will travel to prevent  
The effect of Herod's jealous general doom.  
Seest thou, my soul, with thy faith's eyes, how He  
Which fills all place, yet none holds Him, doth lie?  
Was not His pity towards thee wondrous high,  
That would have need to be pitied by thee?  
Kiss Him, and with Him into Egypt go,  
With His kind mother, who partakes thy woe.

**In the Bleak Midwinter**

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

Our God, heav'n cannot hold him or earth sustain;  
Heav'n and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign:  
In the bleak midwinter 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 can I give him, give my heart.

Words: Christina Rossetti (1830–1894) Music: Harold Darke (1888–1976)

***The Children of Green Knowe, Lucy M. Boston (1914)***

**Read by Barbara Gabrys (1998)**

It was late afternoon before they finished the Christmas tree, and it was growing dark. They lit the old red Chinese lantern and many candles so that they could see to work. There were no glaring electric bulbs on this tree. Mrs Oldknow had boxes of coloured glass ornaments, each wrapped separately in tissue paper and put carefully away from year to year. Some were very old and precious indeed. There were glass balls, stars, fir-cones, acorns and bells in all colours and all sizes. There were also silver medallions of angels. Of course the most beautiful star was fixed at the very top, with gold and silver suns and stars beneath and around it. Each glass treasure, as light as an eggshell and as brittle, was hung on a loop of black cotton that had to be coaxed over the prickly fingers of the tree. Tolly took them carefully out of their tissue paper and Mrs Oldknow hung them up. The tiny glass bell-clappers tinkled when a branch was touched. When it was all finished, there were no lights on the tree itself, but

the candles in the room were reflected in each glass bauble on it, and seemed in those soft deep colours to be shining from an immense distance away, as if the tree were a cloudy night sky full of stars. They sat down together to look at their work. Tolly thought it so beautiful he could say nothing, he could hardly believe his eyes.

### **Christmas Welcome**

Welcome, Yole, in good array,  
in worship of the holy day!

Welcome be thou, Heaven King,  
Welcome, born in one morning,  
Welcome, to thee now will we sing,  
Welcome, Yole, forever and ay!

Welcome be thou, Mary mild,  
Welcome be thou and the Child,  
Welcome, fro the Fiend thou us shield,  
Welcome, Yole, forever and ay!

Welcome be ye, Stephen and John,  
Welcome, children every one,  
Welcome, Thomas martyr, every one,  
Welcome, Yole, forever and ay!

Welcome be thou, good New Year,  
Welcome, the twelve days efere,  
Welcome be ye all that been here,  
Welcome, Yole, forever and ay!

Welcome be ye, lord and lady,  
Welcome be ye, all this company,  
For Yolis love now makis merry,  
Welcome, Yole, forever and ay!

Words: John The Blind Audelay      Music: James Whitbourn (1963–2024)  
(d. c.1426) as found in  
Bodleian Library MS Douce 302

### **Closing Words**

**Sara Kalim (1990)**  
Development Director

***Please stand with the choir to sing***

### **O Come, All Ye Faithful**

O come, all ye faithful,  
joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;  
come and behold him  
born the King of Angels:  
*O come, let us adore him,*  
*O come, let us adore him,*  
*O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!*

God of God,  
Light of Light.  
Lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;  
very God,  
begotten, not created:  
*O come, let us adore him...*

See how the Shepherds,  
summoned to his cradle,  
leaving their flocks, draw nigh with lowly fear;  
we too will thither  
bend our joyful footsteps:  
*O come, let us adore him...*

Sing, choirs of Angels,  
sing in exultation,  
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;  
glory to God  
in the highest:  
*O come, let us adore him...*

Words: Anon. Latin C.18th  
tr. J. F. Wade (1711–86) &  
F. Oakeley (1802–80)

Music: Traditional, vv5 arr.  
Sir David Willcocks (1919–2015)

*After the service, the organist will perform:  
Widor: Toccata (Symphony No.5)*

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Everyone is warmly invited to join us after the service for a reception  
in the Brittain-Williams Room

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The Choir of Somerville College

Will Dawes  
Director of Chapel Music

Alfred Kelsey (2023)  
Emanuel Bor (2023)  
Organ Scholars