



ARTIST
SERIES

The King's Singers

Wednesday, Dec. 8, 7:30 p.m.
Macky Auditorium

Program

Christmas with The King's Singers

Hodie Christus natus est	Plainchant
Tomorrow shall be my dancing day	Traditional, arr. David Willcocks

Travelling to Europe

La filadora	Traditional, arr. Goff Richards
Julebudet til dem, der bygge	J. P. E. Hartmann, arr. Bo Holten
Jul, Jul, strålande Jul	Gustaf Nordqvist
Gaudete!	Traditional, arr. Brian Kay

Celebrations in England

The quiet heart	June Collin
The Angel Gabriel	Traditional, arr. Edgar Pettman
Balulalow	James Burton
Ding! Dong! merrily on high	Traditional, arr. Charles Wood

Finding Harmony...

Heliseb väljadel	Urmas Sisask
If I can help somebody	Alma Androzzo, arr. Stacey Gibbs
Cielito lindo	Quirino Mendoza y Cortés, arr. Jorge Cozatl

The King's Singers are represented by Intermusica Artists' Management Ltd

Tonight's show is generously co-sponsored by:



PLEASE NOTE

- Masks are required in public indoor spaces on the CU Boulder campus, regardless of vaccination status.
- Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of the house manager.
- Photography and video recordings of any type are strictly prohibited during the performance.
- Smoking is not permitted anywhere. CU Boulder is a smoke-free campus.
- This performance includes an intermission.

...at this time of year

The Christmas Song

Mel Tormé, arr. Peter Knight

— Intermission —

Song of the Nuns of Chester

Anonymous

Ancient carols reimagined

Quelle est cette odeur agréable?

Traditional, arr. Henry Hawkesworth

Wither's Rocking Hymn

Traditional, arr. Christopher Bruerton

Dormi, dormi

Traditional, arr. Guy Turner

God rest ye merry, gentlemen

Traditional, arr. Geoffrey Keating

Music for festive cheer

The King's Singers would like to close with a selection of brand-new surprises and festive favorites in their signature close harmony style, to send you off into the holiday season.

Christmas with The King's Singers

If you are a singer of any kind—be that in a choir, as a soloist, in a professional group, or if you simply like a singsong in the shower or after a glass of wine—chances are that Christmas music is in your blood. Even if you're not vocally-inclined, choral music still lies at the heart of many people's Christmases. For the six of us, festive carols and songs are part of the soundtracks of our lives and have been since childhood. As children, Christmases were a time of magic and mystery: from the drama of the biblical nativity story, through to the excitement of Father Christmas' visits and the excitement of hoping for snow in December, the season always seemed to hold a sense of wonder—and its music captures this unlike anything else can. In this program, *Christmas with The King's Singers*, we want to bottle that frosty, moonlit, fireside Christmas wonder and pour it into our sound.

Each half of the program opens with ancient melodies with anonymous roots: *Hodie Christus natus est* (Christ is born today), and *Qui creavit caelum* (Song of the Nuns of Chester). *Hodie* is the Magnificat antiphon for Christmas Day in the Catholic plainchant tradition, and is famously included as the start and end of Benjamin Britten's *Ceremony of Carols*. The original plainchant melody first appears in a Swiss manuscript from c. 990AD, but it had likely been in circulation for a long time by then. *Qui creavit caelum* is a macaronic carol (using both Latin and English in alternation) that dates from the early 15th century in the Benedictine nunnery of St. Mary, in the north-English city of Chester. We chose

these ancient single-line melodies to offer some balance to the rich harmony in other tracks by more recent composers.

From here, our selection of music covers everything from contemporary choral gems and folk songs through to well-loved carols. It was important to us to include a flavor of what we call "Christmas folk music," collected on our travels around the world, particularly in Europe. These are songs based on the Christmas story, but whose origins are in traditional melodies passed down through folk traditions across the world. Many of these pieces are great arrangements already in our music library, such as the Catalan folk song *La filadora* (The spinner), arranged by Goff Richards (1944-2011). Included partly because of a wonderful tour to Denmark shortly before pandemic, *Julebudet til dem, der Bygge* (The Christmas message for those who build) is an old Danish carol with a beautiful lilting melody, arranged by a leading light in Danish choral music today, Bo Holten (b.1948). From Sweden, Gustav Nordqvist's (1886-1949) *Jul, jul, strålande jul* (Christmas, brilliant Christmas) captures some of the beauty of the Swedish Christmas tradition, part of which is the Sankta Lucia service which takes place in mid-December, illuminated solely by candles and celebrating light at a time of darkness. Also from our library of Christmas folk music comes the ancient Dutch carol *Gaudete!*, arranged by our founding bass Brian Kay (b. 1944). This has become one of our best-loved Christmas arrangements over the years, thanks to both the familiarity of the melody and

the thrilling, brassy textures that Brian captures in his arrangement.

Another element of our program explores music from the English church tradition, taking the six of us right back to our earliest singing days, and also reflecting our group's heritage at King's College, Cambridge. These include Charles Wood's (1866-1926) *Ding! Dong! Merrily on high* and Edgar Pettman's (1866-1943) arrangement of *The Angel Gabriel*. Earlier in the program, but also belonging to that great sacred choral canon is *Tomorrow shall be my dancing day*, which was composed by King's College's legendary Director of Music (and mentor to our forebears in The King's Singers) Sir David Willcocks (1919-2015). Balulalow, by the esteemed composer and conductor James Burton (b.1974), sets a medieval English text, and was written while he was still a student at Cambridge University. *The quiet heart* by June Collin—with words by James Morgan—has charm and immediate familiarity, but was written in 1968 for musicians of the Salvation Army, with whom we have performed and recorded on many occasions.

For a long time, we have been fascinated to witness the power that music has to unite people; this could not be more true than at Christmastime. For centuries, people of all different ages, ethnicities, faiths and nationalities have celebrated during the holiday season with their own songs, giving thanks for the last year and for time spent together. The next section of the program takes a look at this idea. It features some specially-selected songs from our *Finding Harmony* album, which explores this idea of musical solidarity and community in depth. We will tell the stories from the stage, but each of these three songs has huge significance in its country of origin. From the 'Singing Revolution' in Estonia we have *Heliseb valjadel*. From Martin Luther King's movement for civil rights in the United States, we have a beautiful new arrangement of *If I can help somebody* by Stacey V Gibbs (b.1962). And from the heart and soul of Mexico we have our new arrangement of their unofficial national anthem *Cielito Lindo*. The first half of the program finishes with a song whose words could not express the spirit of the season more perfectly: "All the folk we love are here: Yuletide brings us all together this time of year." It was written by Mel Tormé (1925-1999) in 1945 and it's called *The Christmas Song*.

After the interval, we explore a set of four pieces which take old, familiar carols and give them a fresh approach in the arrangement; two are European carols, and two are British. *Dormi, dormi* (Sleep, sleep) is an ancient anonymous Italian carol—particularly popular in Corsica—which has been given the perfect a cappella treatment by the English composer and arranger Guy Turner (b. 1955), who combines his composing with singing in the choir at the beautiful Southwell Minster in the east of England. *Quelle est cette odeur agréable* is a

17th century French carol, which has also been used as a tune for Frank Houghton's English hymn *Thou who was rich beyond all splendour*. The most famous carol setting is David Willcocks' from his celebrated *Carols for Choirs* series, but this luxuriant re-imagining by former King's College choral scholar Henry Hawkesworth (b. 1991) takes inspiration from a variety of 20th century choral composers. Ever since our first baritone, Chris, was a young chorister, he has loved the carol *Wither's Rocking Hymn* by Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958). The poem is by the English Elizabethan writer George Wither, and Chris's arrangement takes the flowing melody of Vaughan Williams' setting—first published in the Oxford Book of Carols—and makes it uniquely "King's Singers," including an unusual verse which puts the melody in the lowest voices. Few re-imaginings are quite as creative as Geoffrey Keating's version of *God rest you merry, gentlemen*, which manages to fuse together the traditional, 16th-century minor-mode English carol with the lilting rhythms of Dave Brubeck's jazz hit *Take Five*. For a carol which gets a prominent mention in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* (1843), this is the least Victorian treatment one can imagine!

The program closes with a section called "Music for festive cheer." From our ever-growing library of seasonal close harmony arrangements, we will select songs from the pop, jazz, and folk worlds to close the concert in style. Whether it's glitzy American Christmas songs or something smoother, perhaps even from the southern hemisphere, we promise to include a song or two which will leave you smiling, and perhaps get your foot tapping.

Much of the music in this program is available on The King's Singers new album, *Christmas Carols with The King's Singers*, which is now available for physical purchase, streaming or downloading.

A message from The King's Singers, on their Global Foundation

Music is a universal language, shared by people all over the world regardless of the boundaries of wealth, age, gender, race or background. Countless times through history, music has been a force for good, bringing people together in times of difficulty and helping to heal divisions in societies. Today, in a world which feels more fractured than ever, the six of us are determined to do whatever we can to make a positive impact on people's lives through music. That's why we set up The King's Singers Global Foundation in 2018.

With an experienced board and an advisory panel of world-renowned musicians and educators, our Global Foundation aims to champion music as a tool for finding musical and social harmony. The Foundation has a wide remit, including commissioning new music by composers of different backgrounds, arranging high-quality choral

training and live music experiences for young people who could not afford it, and harnessing technology to bring music into the lives of millions of people worldwide. In the last two years alone, the Foundation has commissioned over 15 new musical works, arranged free workshops for over 100 singers, reached an audience of over 600,000 through collaborations with musical charities online, and arranged a composition prize which inspired 350 brand new choral compositions from composers aged 15 to 70.

As members of The King's Singers, the Global Foundation helps our work reach far beyond just the concert platform and recording catalogues. It helps us focus on the people and places where music—particularly singing—can truly change lives, create joy and find harmony. You can find out more about the Global Foundation by heading to our website or by speaking to one of us after the concert.
kingssingers.com

Personnel

Patrick Dunachie Countertenor
Edward Button Countertenor
Julian Gregory Tenor
Christopher Bruerton Baritone
Nick Ashby Baritone
Jonathan Howard Bass

The King's Singers have represented the gold standard in a cappella singing on the world's greatest stages for over 50 years. They are renowned for their unrivaled technique, versatility and skill in performance, and for their consummate musicianship, drawing both on the group's rich heritage and its pioneering spirit to create an extraordinary wealth of original works and unique collaborations.

What has always distinguished the group members is their comfort in an unprecedented range of styles and genres, pushing the boundaries of their repertoire, while at the same time honoring their origins in the British choral tradition. They are known and loved around the world, and appear regularly in major cities, festivals and venues across Europe, North America, Asia and Australasia, including Carnegie Hall, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Leipzig Gewandhaus, Mozarteum Salzburg, Tonhalle Zurich, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Edinburgh International Festival, Helsinki Music Centre, Sydney Opera House, Tokyo Opera City and the National Centre for the Performing Arts, Beijing. They also work with orchestras, recently including the NDR Radiophilharmonie and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, with whom they performed a specially commissioned work by Sir James MacMillan. The King's Singers' extensive discography has led to

numerous awards including two Grammy Awards, an Emmy Award, and a place in *Gramophone* magazine's inaugural Hall of Fame. As part of their 50th anniversary celebrations in 2018, the group undertook a series of major tours worldwide, supporting the release of a special anniversary album GOLD (also nominated for a Grammy Award), which featured important works in the group's history and new commissions by Bob Chilcott, John Rutter and Nico Muhly.

This commitment to creating a new repertoire has always been central to the group, with over 200 commissioned works by many leading composers of the 20th and 21st centuries, including John Tavener, Judith Bingham, Eric Whitacre, György Ligeti, Luciano Berio, Krzysztof Penderecki and Toru Takemitsu. These join a unique body of close-harmony and a cappella arrangements, including those by individual King's Singers past and present. Many of their early collaborators' own experience with brass bands helped to inform the distinct "King's Singers sound" and a large number of their commissioned works and arrangements are available in their own signature series with Hal Leonard, selling over two million copies worldwide. A key to the group's success has been their ability to evolve and innovate over many years—and through 28 individual members—while always retaining this special sound and musical integrity.

They also lead educational workshops and residential courses across the world, working with groups and individuals on their techniques and approaches to ensemble singing. In 2018 they founded The King's Singers Global Foundation to provide a platform for the creation of new music across multiple disciplines, to coach a new generation of performers and to provide musical opportunities to people of all backgrounds.

The King's Singers were formed in 1968, when six recent choral scholars from King's College, Cambridge, gave a concert at London's Queen Elizabeth Hall. By chance, the group was made up of two countertenors, a tenor, two baritones and a bass, and the group has maintained this formation ever since that debut.