

# Renaissance Voices

Derek Morphy, conductor

## Sopranos

Maureen Ferley, Louise Friesen, Mary Lynn Hepple,  
Wanda Nicol, Céline Ross, Tristin Tergesen,  
Karen Tole Henderson

## Altos

Miriam Baron, Edna Dahl, Charlene Diehl-Jones,  
Martha Graham, Barbara Hicks, Dan Peasgood

## Tenors

Peter Dueck, Ted Dueck, Kyle Friesen,  
Scott Naugler, Steve Newransky,  
Craig Schapansky

## Basses

John Brubacher, Rudy Dahl, John Dobson,  
Wes Elias, Mike Schroeder Hubert,  
Ted Wiens

A black and white photograph of three people singing from a book in a grand, domed hall. The title 'Bells and Flowers of Christmas' is written in a large, elegant font across the dome. The date and time of the concert are printed at the bottom.

**Renaissance Voices**  
conducted by Derek Morphy

presents

# Bells and Flowers of Christmas

**November 28 and 29, 2003**  
8 pm, Millennium Centre, Winnipeg

THE SHORTEST  
NEW OXFORD BOOK OF  
CAROLS

# Programme

**Ding! dong! merrily on high** Thoinot Arbeau

**Resonet in laudibus** Orlando di Lasso

*Trio: Dan Peasgood, alto; Kyle Friesen, tenor; Michael Schroeder Hubert, baritone*

**There is no rose** 15th century

*Soloists: Ted Dueck, John Dobson, Céline Ross,  
Charlene Diebl-Jones, Louise Friesen, Peter Dueck*

**There is no rose** Richard Popplewell

*Soloists: Dan Peasgood, Craig Schapansky, Maureen Ferley*

**Ding-dong ding!** arr. G. R. Woodward

**Resonet in laudibus** Jacob Handl

**A tender shoot** Otto Goldschmidt

**There is a flower** John Rutter

*Soloist: Mary Lynn Hepple*

**In dulci júbilo** Samuel Scheidt

*Trumpets: Darryl Ferguson, Renise Młodzinski*

## Intermission

Please enjoy a glass of hot cider or mulled wine,  
and be sure to enter our door prize draw.

**Jingle Bells** J. Pierpont, arr. Edgar LaMance Jr.

**Down in yon forest** arr. Andrew Carter

**Ding dong! merrily on high** Malcolm Williamson

**Jing-a-lye-ya** Bruce Sled

**There is no rose** John Joubert

**Jesus Christ, the apple tree** arr. Elizabeth Poston

*Soloist: Wanda Nicol*

**Ding dong! merrily on high** David Blackwell

# Programme Notes

Bells and flowers, two lasting symbols of the Nativity story, have piqued the interest of writers and composers through the ages. This Advent, we've chosen repertoire that highlights these two recurring patterns. Bell carols tend to be lively and loud, whereas flower carols are usually gentler and more reflective, so we have interwoven them in tonight's program.

The carol, **Ding! dong! merrily on high**, opens and closes our concert, and appears in the midst as well. This familiar tune is a dance in *Orchésographie*, an anthology of sixteenth-century French music compiled by Thoinot Arbeau. It was originally associated with the *branle*, a very energetic dance much loved by servants of the time, and occasionally copied by their more restrained masters. For those who found lifting their female partner a somewhat exhausting experience (depending on the configuration of the lady), Arbeau suggested 'there is no need to lift, but only to kiss, the young ladies'—a very satisfactory alternative! It took an Englishman, G. R. Woodward, to come up with the rather stilted but enormously popular text, and an Irish musician, Charles Wood, to match the Christmas text to this tune. They were part of a broader movement around the turn of the last century which created Christmas carols with sixteenth- and seventeenth-century continental origins.

**Resonet in laudibus**, which dates back to the fourteenth century, has long been one of the most popular Christmas songs in Germany, where it is sung to a quite different text, 'Joseph, lieber Joseph mein.' This carol was particularly associated with the medieval custom of cradle-rocking at the Christmas worship. The priest would rock a cradle, containing a highly coloured Christ-child, in time to the triple-time music, often, as in this carol, repeating the lullaby refrain, 'Eia! Eia!' In some traditions, the children in the congregation would rock a smaller cradle hung about with small bells, hence its inclusion in our repertoire. Other practices developed around this familiar carol too, including vigorous dancing and clapping in time to the music. We are performing two versions, both by sixteenth-century composers. The first is by Orlando di Lasso or Lassus—or Roland Delattre, depending on which country he was living in at the time! This motet is written in five parts, with a complex texture and shifting metre, and features a trio in the middle.

The identification of Mary with the rose was a common medieval conceit which forms the basis of several English carols and many Latin hymns. The text of **There is no rose** names the miracle that 'in this rose contained is Heaven and Earth in little space.' In the fifteenth-century version of this carol, the recurring refrain uses the technique of *faburden*, in which parts are added above and below the melody. The verses feature only two voices but more rhythmic elaboration.

The contemporary setting of **There is no rose**, published in 1974, is by English composer, Richard Popplewell, a chorister and later a choral scholar at King's College, Cambridge, who has established himself as a distinguished organist, choir conductor and composer in London. Though the melody of this version is entirely unlike the early version, and sung by a soloist, its character suggests it might also have ancient roots. In dramatic contrast to the chant-like verses, the short refrains are set in eight-part cluster chords, each succeeding version louder than the last; the final one, 'Transeamus,' alights on a unison D.

**Ding-dong ding!** is another result of the research undertaken by Englishman, G. R. Woodward, who provided this new—and somewhat unremarkable—text for a Latin hymn found in the 1582 Scandinavian publication, *Piae Cantiones*. Whatever it lacks in inventive language, the piece is bright and jolly, and has become a favorite of choirs across the English-speaking world.

The second version of **Resonet in laudibus** is written for double chorus by the sixteenth-century Slovenian composer, Jacob Handl (sometimes known as Gallus), who practised his craft as a singer and composer in Vienna and Prague. It is simpler in structure than the Lassus composition, but surprises with frequent false relations between the voices.

Otto Goldschmidt, who wrote the beautiful little motet **A tender shoot**, was born in Hamburg in 1829. A pianist as well as composer, he accompanied 'The Swedish Nightingale,' Jenny Lind, and they were married in 1852. The text, which has its origins in the fifteenth-century German folk carol, 'Es ist ein Ros entsprungen,' outlines the genealogy of Christmas narrative in a floral conceit: out of the root of Jesse, father of King David, a branch, the Virgin Mary, will grow and bear a little flower, the Christ-child. Some scholars have drawn attention to a quite different image of Christ as a tiny child within the enveloping rose of his mother.

In **There is a flower**, contemporary English composer John Rutter sets another liberal translation of 'Es ist ein Ros entsprungen,' this time by fifteenth-century writer John Audeley. The composition exemplifies the superb melodic writing of which Rutter is capable. It opens with a calm, reflective soprano solo, followed by a verse sung by the sopranos and altos of the choir. Gradually, the composition becomes more complex in texture, reaching a climax with the upper voices cascading alleluias over the male voice melody line. In typical Rutter fashion, he gradually releases the energy and volume, and the piece ends at a pianissimo dynamic.

**In dulci jubilo** is believed to be the oldest of the German 'mixed language' hymns, alternating between German and Latin. Legend has it that the song was taught to the fourteenth-century mystic, Heinrich Seuse, by a choir of angels, who led him in a heavenly dance while singing it with him. Samuel Scheidt, who spent most of his life as a court and church musician in his native city of Halle, has created a radiantly festive motet, scored for double choir and two trumpets. Although distinctly German in style, it is influenced strongly by the Venetian tradition of separated choirs and instrumental groups, posted in high galleries of ornate churches.

The music of the second half is firmly rooted in the twentieth century, although the textual origins are sometimes rooted in earlier times.

Although **Jingle Bells** was first published in 1857 under the title *The One Horse Sleigh*, it has become really popular among children in the last century. The words of both verse and chorus, as well as the tune to the verse, are virtually identical to the original, although the word 'fun' has been substituted for 'sport.' The tune for the chorus, though, is distinctly different, much easier and more monotonous. Edgar LaMance Jr. has created this arrangement for four part chorus, making it perhaps more complicated than it really needs to be!

The carol **Down in yon forest** is also known as the Corpus Christi carol, and its modern revival owes much to its collection in Derbyshire by English composer, Ralph Vaughan Williams. The text of the verses is sombre and austere, and this setting by Andrew Carter, which features repeated bell cluster chords underlying the melody, reinforces this mood. The Derbyshire version has a direct reference to Christmas in the last verse only, which seems to have been tacked on to end on a more cheerful note. The reference to the 'blossoming

thorn' in the Derbyshire version, and to the 'shrub tree' in the North Carolina version collected by John Jacob Niles, seems to suggest that the carol derives from the legend of the Holy Thorn of Glastonbury.

Malcolm Williamson composed this lively, and somewhat quirky, version of **Ding dong! merrily on high** in 1963.

The only Canadian composition on our program is the wonderfully inventive **Jing-a-lye-ya** by young Vancouver composer, Bruce Sled. The voices create a web of bell-like sounds and fragments of melodic lines emerge from the texture in quicksilver fashion.

There are many fine choral settings of **There is no rose**, not the least of which is the haunting version in *A Ceremony of Carols* by Benjamin Britten. The best loved is probably this one by John Joubert, published in 1954, which has become a twentieth-century classic. It is so simple in its compositional concept, with pairs of voices moving in thirds together, and later in contrary motion with another pair, but the result is a tremendous serenity and beauty.

Another simple folk carol is **Jesus Christ, the apple tree**, arranged by Elizabeth Poston, which was gathered by a Joshua Smith in the orchard region of New Hampshire. The text, with its emphasis on the earthy rhythms of the orchard, remind us of the interconnection between the forbidden fruit of Eden, the boughs of the crucifixion tree, and Jesus Christ, the fruit of Mary, whose body, offered in Communion, provides us with abundant life.

We end, as we began, with **Ding dong! merrily on high**, this time in a recent and riotous setting by contemporary English composer, David Blackwell. The playful spirit here reminds us all of the boundless joy of the season.

Thanks so much for joining us tonight. We wish you all the imaginable pleasures as Christmas approaches...

Derek Morphy,  
with a full nod to the extensive notes in *The New Oxford Book of Carols*,  
edited by Andrew Parrott and Hugh Keyte

**Ding! dong! merrily on high**  
(G.R. Woodward)

Ding! dong! merrily on high  
In heav'n the bells are ringing;  
Ding! dong! verily the sky  
Is riv'n with angel singing.  
*Gloria! Hosanna in excelsis!*

E'en so here below, below,  
Let steeple bells be swungen,  
And 'Io, io io!'  
By priest and people sungen.  
*Gloria! Hosanna in excelsis!*

Pray you dutifully prime  
Your matin chime, ye ringers!  
May you beautifully rime  
Your evetime song, ye singers!  
*Gloria! Hosanna in excelsis!*

**Resonet in laudibus**

*Resonet in laudibus,  
Cum jucundis plausibus  
Sion cum fidelibus:  
Apparuit quem genuit Maria.  
Sunt impleta quae praedixit Gabriel.  
Eja, eja!  
Virgo Deum genuit  
quod divina voluit clementia.  
Hodie apparuit in Israel,  
per Mariam virginam est natus Rex.  
Magnum nomen Domini, Emanuel,  
quod annunciatum est per Gabriel.  
Eja, eja!*

[Let Zion resound in praises  
with the joyful acclaim  
of the faithful:  
He whom Mary bore has appeared.  
The prophecies of Gabriel are fulfilled.  
O joy, O joy!  
The Virgin has given birth to God  
that which divine mercy willed.  
Today a king has appeared in Israel,  
born of the Virgin Mary.  
Great is the name of the Lord, Emanuel,  
which was announced by Gabriel.  
O joy, O joy!]

**There is no rose**  
(15th century)

There is no rose of such virtue  
As is the rose that bare Jesu.  
*Alleluia.*

For in this rose contained was  
Heaven and earth in little space.  
*Resmiranda* [a wonderful thing].

By that rose we may well see  
That he is God in persons three,  
*Paris forma* [of the same form].

The angels sungen the shepherds to,  
'*Gloria in excelsis Deo.*'  
*Gaudeamus* [let us rejoice].

Leave we all this worldly mirth,  
And follow we this joyful birth:  
*Transeamus* [let us go].

**A tender shoot**  
(W. Bartholomew)

A tender shoot hath started  
Up from the root of grace,  
As ancient seers imparted,  
From Jesse's holy race,  
It blooms without a blight,  
Blooms in the cold bleak winter  
Turning our darkness into light.

**Ding-dong ding!**  
(G.R. Woodward)

Ding-dong ding! Ding-a-dong-a-ding!  
Ding-dong, ding-dong, ding-a-dong ding!

Up good Christen folk, and listen  
How the merry church bells ring,  
And, from steeple, bid good people  
Come adore the newborn King!

Tell the story how from Glory  
God came down at Christmastide,  
Bringing gladness, chasing sadness,  
Show'ring blessings far and wide.

Born of mother, blest o'er other,  
*Ex Maria Virgine* [of the Virgin Mary],  
In a stable ('tis no fable)  
*Christus natus hodie* [Christ is born today].

This shoot Isaiah taught us  
From Jesse's root should spring,  
The Virgin Mary brought us  
The branch of which we sing,  
Our God of endless might  
Gave her this Child to save us,  
Thus turning darkness into light.

### **There is a flower**

(John Audelay, 15th century)

There is a flow'r sprung of a tree,  
The root therof is called Jesse,  
A flow'r of price; There is none such in paradise.

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

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

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

When that fair flow'r began to spread  
And his sweet blossom began to bed [bud],  
Then rich and poor of ev'ry land  
Marvelled how this flow'r might spread,  
Till kinges three; That blessed flower came to see.

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

### **In dulci jubilo**

(14th century)

*In dulci jubilo,*  
nun singet und seid froh!  
Unsers Herzen Wonne  
leit *in praesepio,*  
und leuchtet als die Sonne  
*matris in gremio.*  
*Alpha es et O! Alpha es et O!*

[With sweet jubilation,  
let songs and gladness flow!  
All our joy reclineth  
in a manger,  
And like the sun he shineth  
in his mother's lap.  
You are Alpha and Omega!]

### **Jingle Bells**

Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way,  
O what fun it is to ride in a one horse open sleigh.

Dashing through the snow in a one horse open sleigh.  
O'er the fields we go laughing all the way.  
Bells on bobtail ring making spirits bright.  
O what fun to ride and sing a sleighing song tonight.

Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way,  
O what fun it is to ride in a one horse open sleigh.

**Down in yon forest**  
(traditional)

Down in yon forest there stands a hall:  
The bells of Paradise I heard them ring:  
It's covered all over with purple and pall:  
And I love my Lord Jesus above anything.

In that hall there stands a bed:  
The bells of Paradise I heard them ring:  
It's covered all over with scarlet so red:  
And I love my Lord Jesus above anything.

At the bedside there lies a stone:  
The bells of Paradise I heard them ring:  
Which the sweet Virgin Mary knelt upon:  
And I love my Lord Jesus above anything.

At the bed's foot there grows a thorn:  
The bells of Paradise I heard them ring:  
Which ever blows blossom since he was born:  
And I love my Lord Jesus above anything.

Over that bed the moons shines bright:  
The bells of Paradise I heard them ring:  
Proclaiming our Saviour was born this night:  
And I love my Lord Jesus above anything.

**Jesus Christ, the apple tree**  
(anonymous)

The tree of life my soul hath seen,  
Laden with fruit, and always green:  
The trees of nature fruitless be  
Compared with Christ the apple tree.

His beauty doth all things excel:  
By faith I know, but ne'er can tell  
The glory which I now can see  
In Jesus Christ the apple tree.

For happiness I long have sought,  
And pleasure dearly I have bought:  
I missed of all; but now I see  
'Tis found in Christ the apple tree.

I'm weary with my former toil,  
Here I will sit and rest awhile:  
Under the shadow I will be,  
Of Jesus Christ the apple tree.

This fruit doth make my soul to thrive,  
It keeps my dying faith alive;  
Which makes my soul in haste to be  
With Jesus Christ the apple tree

# Renaissance Voices

*Renaissance Voices*, a chamber choir conducted by Derek Morphy, was formed in 1995 to prepare and perform music of the 16th and early 17th centuries. While this period is still a focus, we have extended our repertoire range into many other choral genres. As a group of musicians, *Renaissance Voices* recovers the underlying meaning of amateur performance: we sing out of a deep love for music and for the particular challenges and gifts of choral ensemble work.

As well as our annual Advent concert, we'll be joining the University of Manitoba Singers and the Winnipeg Boys' Choir this March in the Royal Winnipeg Ballet production of Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*. The choir has also been selected to perform at *Podium 2004*, the biennial conference of the Association of Canadian Choral Conductors, to be held here in Winnipeg in May.

If you're interested in joining the ensemble, or if you'd like to volunteer your time and talents to help in fund-raising or concert production, please contact Derek Morphy (488 9355, or [dmorphy@merlin.mb.ca](mailto:dmorphy@merlin.mb.ca)).

**Derek Morphy**, a dynamic choral musician, conductor, and adjudicator, sang as a Choral Scholar in the chapel at St John's College, Cambridge before coming to Canada in 1967. He has conducted many choirs, including award-winning high school chamber choirs in Brandon and Winnipeg, the Manitoba Youth Choir, all four regional Youth Choirs in Manitoba, the Brandon University Chorale, and *Renaissance Voices*. He is the co-chair of *Podium 2004*, the national conference of the Association of Canadian Choral Conductors.

[www.renaissancevoices.com](http://www.renaissancevoices.com)

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