

**PROGRAM NOTES**  
**Quincy Symphony Chorus**  
**December 2, 2017**  
**Dr. Carol Mathieson**

*He is Born (Il Est Ne)* joins French delicacy with equally French jauntiness in this traditional French Noël (carol) arranged by Hollywood choral master Roger Wagner. For generations at midnight on Christmas Eve, French children have marched to the village church singing *Il Est Ne* accompanied by fife and drum.

*Noe! Noe!* brings to a simple French Noël the festive grandeur of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir in this setting by Mack Wilberg. Director of the MTC since 2008, Wilberg also serves on the faculty of Brigham Young University in addition to having a distinguished career as composer and conductor. The humble French carol *Noe! Noe!* comes from *Les Noël's Bressans* and appears in this arrangement with a new English translation by David Warner.

*In the Silence* also incorporates a folk melody into a larger setting, this time an Appalachian ballad. In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Indiana composer Craig Courtney served as vocal coach on the faculty of the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria; but he also worked for the Baptist Church there, composing prolifically to make up for a paucity of contemporary music in English. *In the Silence*, composed for the Geneva Presbyterian Church in California, reflects his fondness for traditional American music.

*All on a Starry Night* sets Arkansas poet J. Paul Williams' gentle poem of angel song on a cloudless night to a lilting melody by composer Joseph Graham, who adds a brief echo of the familiar *Silent Night* at the very close.

*Shine for You* tells the story of Jesus' birth from the viewpoint of the star shining above the manger. Although composer Ruth Elaine Schram's music has appeared in television broadcasts of *The 700 Club* and HBO's series *The Sopranos*, she has published over 1,500 that speak mainly to children. In this setting of her own text, she reminds young and old alike that even though others offer the Christ child glorious gifts, the most precious gift of all is one's own best self.

*Mary's Lullaby* represents one of the most popular of a wide catalog of liturgical anthems written by English composer John Rutter. A graduate of Clare College, Cambridge, Rutter spent much of the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century revitalizing the English cathedral choral tradition and re-popularizing sacred choral composition in general. Though he incorporates elements of the entire spectrum of contemporary compositional vocabulary, Rutter's work maintains a tonal foundation that has characterized music of the British Isles from the days when Sarum chant and Welsh rondellus nudged Gregorian chant into awareness of the beauty of triads. He wrote both text and music for *Mary's Lullaby* in 1978 to be sung by and dedicated to the choir at Clare.

*Three Nativity Carols* provides a glimpse of medieval Christmas. Long-time composer and arranger for Minnesota's Dale Warland Singers Stephen Paulus chose carols which date from 15<sup>th</sup> century Britain to show how people re-crafted images and made messages of Jesus' birth relevant to their own time. The chorus presents two of the carols today. *The Holly and the Ivy* reexamines an ancient ballad about a contest between lords (holly) and ladies (ivy) for superiority (in which running deer actually figure), reassigning courtly gender roles to honor Christ as sacrifice and Mary as nurturer. *This Endris Night* shows a familiar and more human side to the mother and son relationship. Mary asks her son why, if he is a king, he chose to be born in an uncomfortable stable. Baby Jesus responds that even though in time great kings will bow before him, right now he needs his mother's love. The word *endris* means other or outside of, as the Nativity Eve is a private moment

before Christmas. Though both carols come from long ago, they celebrate a universal hope that Christ's birth will bring peace and fellowship into the world with angel song.

***What Ya Gonna Name Your Baby Boy?*** offers Pennsylvania jazz composer David Lantz III's vigorous outburst in spiritual style for a cappella choir shouting for joy that the Prince of Peace is born.

***Baloo Lammy*** continues the lullaby mood with a 17<sup>th</sup> century Scottish folk melody arranged by composer and conductor Theron Kirk, whose career spanned much of the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Composer of over 1,000 works, Kirk served as national president of the American Choral Directors' Association. Such prestigious orchestras as the Philadelphia, St. Louis, and Chicago Chamber premièred his grand instrumental compositions, yet *Baloo Lammy* demonstrates the artistry with a simple melody that characterized his style.

***See, Amid the Winter's Snow*** adds Dan Forrest's graceful accompaniment to the beautiful 19<sup>th</sup> century hymn *Humility* by Father Edward Caswall, with its melody by Sir John Goss. A respected poet, Father Caswall nevertheless devoted his life to helping children, the sick and the poor; Dr. Goss taught harmony at the Royal Academy of Music where he shared a deep commitment to effective melody with such noted students as Sir Arthur Sullivan. Also an acclaimed composer and educator as well as a music publisher, Dan Forrest has surrounded the beautifully simple *Humility* with an orchestral sound sculpture that enhances its message of service to the lowly and angel song on high..

***No Room*** combines texts from Luke, Matthew, II Corinthians, and Philippians to emphasize the kinship of the Baby Jesus to the marginalized of the world. Composer Larry Nickel taught operetta and jazz in Vancouver high schools before becoming associate composer of the Canadian Music Centre and co-founder of the West Coast Mennonite Chamber Choir. Composed in 1993, *No Room* also found a place in Nickel's *A Cappella Christmas Cantata* of 2015.

***Veni, Veni Emmanuel*** provides another example of ancient music speaking in modern language. The familiar chant text originates from 9<sup>th</sup> century antiphons the first letters of which, when placed in reverse chronological order, form the acrostic ERO CRAS: tomorrow, I will be. Contemporary New York composer Michael John Trotta adds enormous rhythmic vitality to this expression of longing with joyous expectation.

***little tree*** shows the tender and whimsical side of iconic Yankee poet e.e. cummings' view of the post-WWI world, welcoming a Christmas tree into family celebrations as a comfort from isolation. Minnesota's Dale Warland Singers commissioned award-winning film composer and champion of environmental causes Steve Heitzeg to set the poem for chorus.

***E'en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come*** calls out in hope from the depths of anguish, with its text based on Revelation 22 and its musical setting composed as Paul and Ruth Manz sat at the bedside of their critically ill 3-year old son. Chicago concert organist Paul Manz composed extensively for liturgical services, but *E'en So, Lord Jesus* stands as his best known anthem. It has found a welcome home in the annual *Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols* broadcast from King's College in Cambridge, England.

***Gloria, Gloria*** brings the Renaissance fantasia form into the 20<sup>th</sup> century in a commission from The Boys Choir of Harlem. **Fantasia** suggests creative whimsy in new approaches to existing motifs. In this case, organist and composer James Hurd interweaves his own material with the traditional *Lo, How a Rose, God Rest You, Merry Gentlemen*, and *Angels We Have Heard on High*, utilizing a statement with mirror-image pairing in *God Rest* and a grand fugue for the *Gloria* section of *Angels*.