

PROGRAM NOTES

Quincy Symphony Orchestra & Choruses

December 3, 2022 Quincy, Illinois

Compiled by Dr. Paul Borg

Christmas time! Music associated with it has wide familiarity. We all sing/hum/listen-to these melodies and are thus reminded of the joyous season. We scarcely need, as in usual program notes, to introduce such carols as "Joy to the World," "O, Christmas Tree," "Sleigh Ride," or any of the other many songs we will perform on this concert. What is important, however, is participation -- not only of the performers on stage, but also of us, the audience, tapping our feet, clapping our hands, and even singing along with the tunes we know and love.

One special thing about our Quincy Symphony tradition is its close association with musical composers. Every year we commission a work that we premiere. (Just wait till the next concerts in our season!) In our Christmas celebration today, we enjoy our connection with a wonderful musician, John Wasson. He is a composer, arranger, and performer (trombonist today with the Dallas Brass), a consummate musician. His works have been commissioned by many musical groups around the country. Several of his arrangements of Christmas music are on the program today. He very deftly groups the carols by topics: ***The Majesty of Christmas, Christmas Around the World, Children's Christmas, and Fireplace Medley***. Today, we welcome him here both as musical arranger and performer.

Other Christmas musical medleys also are on the program. Our traditional opener, Calvin Custer's ***It's Christmastime***, has opened several QSO Christmas concerts under Dr. Briney, including his very first Christmas Pops with the QSO in 2006. This medley contains many eager words of anticipation of the Christmas holiday. It combines the tunes "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town," "Have Yourself a Merry," "Silver Bells," and "I'll Be Home for Christmas."

J. Edmund Hughes, of Chandler-Gilbert Community College in Arizona, adapted the tune of Joseph Mohr's *Silent Night* into the poetic ***Lullaby for a King*** about the birth of Christ. The poem is by his colleague Mary Ellen Loose. Our youth chorus is accompanied by the harp.

Lullaby, lullaby, sleep my baby. Lullaby, lullaby, close your eyes.

Angels are watching, keep you from harm. Sleep my dear one, rest in my arms.

Lullaby, lullaby, sleep my baby. Lullaby, lullaby, baby, "Good night."

Lullaby, lullaby, infant holy. Lullaby, lullaby, Child divine.
Christ our savior, heavenly King, "Alleluia's" to Him we sing.
Lullaby, lullaby, Christ the baby; Lullaby, lullaby, Lord of all.

Johann Sebastian Bach's *Meine Seele (My Spirit Be Joyful)* is his setting of a Christmas hymn which has been arranged many times for differing instrumental combinations. Here, the Dallas Brass join our strings, oboes, and continuo.

A standard work is LeRoy Anderson's *Sleigh Ride*. Its evocation of jingling bells, the lively trot of the horse, its sudden turn into a jazzy idiom, all contribute to a sense of pleasure that everyone enjoys. Adding to the fun today is a "celebrity" guest conductor: the winner of Encore's "Battle for the Baton" fundraising competition.

Mark Hayes is a prolific composer/arranger, especially of sacred texts. *An Olde English Christmas* displays his imaginative musical creativeness in its expressive combination of five carols for chorus and orchestra.

Our concert ends with John Wasson's new arrangement of *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*, which we introduce to the world today as a grand finale combining all forces. Afterward, join the Dallas Brass and the QSOA family in a sing-along of a very favorite Christmas song to send you on your way.