



33 years
Arizona
Repertory
Singers

Radiant Dawn

Elliot Jones
Conductor

Gregg Reynolds
Pianist

Dawn

The word was God.....**Rosephanye Powell** (b. 1962)

O nata lux de lumine.....**Thomas Tallis** (c. 1505-1585)

*O Light born of Light, Jesus, redeemer of the world,
With loving kindness deign to receive suppliant praise and prayer.
Thou who once deigned to be clothed in flesh for the sake of the lost,
Grant us to be members of thy blessed body.*

O radiant dawn.....**James MacMillan** (b. 1959)

Christmas daybreak (Christina Rossetti).....**Robert Convery** (b. 1954)

Mary

A hymn to the virgin.....**Benjamin Britten** (1913-1976)

Solo quartet: Carolyn Adler, Angela Merley, Dan Manship, Christopher Newsom

[Choir, in English:]

Of one that is so fair and bright

Brighter than the day is light

I cry to thee, thou see to me, Lady,

pray the Son for me

That I may come to thee

All this world was forlorn

Till our Lord was y-born

With "Ave" it went away, Darkest night,

and comes the day

The well springeth out of thee

Lady, flower of everything

Thou bare Jesu, Heaven's King

Of all thou bear'st the prize,

Lady, queen of paradise

Maid mild, mother

[Quartet, in Latin:]

As a human star

Parent and daughter

So holy

Mary

Eve is sinful

According to the Mother

Salvation

Powerful virtue

Rose without a thorn

Divine grace

One chosen

For accomplishment

Ave Maria

Javier Busto (b. 1949)

Ave Maria, gratia plena

Dominus tecum.

Benedicta tu in mulieribus

et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus

Sancta Maria, mater Dei

Ora pro nobis peccatoribus

nunc et in hora mortis nostrae, Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace,

the Lord is with thee.

Blessed art thou among women,

and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God,

pray for us sinners,

now and in the hour of our death. Amen.

Sing Hallelu!.....**Stephen Paulus** (1949-2014)

Tomorrow shall be my dancing day.....**David Willcocks** (1919-2015)

Ya viene la vieja.....Traditional Spanish, arr. Alice Parker and Robert Shaw

*Ya viene la vieja
Con el aguinaldo
Le parece mucho
Le viene quitando.*

*Here comes the old lady
with a little gift,
it seems so much to her,
that she takes some of it away.*

*[Estrillo:]
Pampanitos verdes
Hojas de limón
La Virgen Maria
Madre del Señor.*

*[Refrain:]
Little green leaves
lemon leaves
The Virgin Mary,
Mother of the Lord.*

*Ya vienen los Reyes
Por el arenal
Y le traen al Niño
Un torre real.
[Estrillo]*

*Here come the Kings
through the desert
and they bring to the child
a real tower.
[Refrain]*

*Ya vienen los Reyes
Por aquel camino
Y le traen al Niño
Sopitas en vino.*

*Here come the Kings
down this road
and they bring to the child
Sweet-cakes soaked in wine.*

[Estrillo]

[Refrain]

INTERMISSION

Welcome Yule

Nowell sing we.....**Gabriel Jackson** (b. 1962)

Virga Jesse floruit..... **Anton Bruckner** (1824-1896)

Virga Jesse floruit:

Virgo Deum et hominem genuit:

pacem Deus reddidit,

in se reconcilians ima summis.

Alleluja.

The branch from Jesse blooms:

a Virgin brings forth God and man:

God restores peace,

reconciling in Himself the lowest

with the highest.

Alleluia.

My Lord has come.....**Will Todd** (b. 1970)

Welcome Yule..... **Edwin Fissinger** (1920-1990)

Soloists: Dave Stewart and Nadeen Jahn

CHRISTMAS

What cheer?.....**William Walton** (1902-1983)

The lamb (William Blake).....**John Tavener** (1944-2013)

In the bleak midwinter (Christina Rossetti) **Gustav Holst** (1874-1934), arr. Elliot Jones

Emily Lyons, mezzo soprano soloist

Deck the hall.....arr. John Rutter

Ding dong! Merrily on high..... arr. Howard Helvey

Program Notes

Written by Elliot Jones

This season carries a plethora of meanings and sentiments that range, depending on the individual, from profound thoughts of expectation, to feeling like a child again. We allow ourselves to be more sentimental at this time of year, be it through *Hark! the Herald Angels* or *Rudolph*. The best composers are in tune with this sentiment, and draw upon music of the past to create new seasonal works that fascinate, move, and comfort us.

We are offering you a wide variety of music today. I have put together this program with great care, taking into consideration many things, including the results of audience surveys from last year! Some of this repertoire is million-dollar poetry set to million-dollar music, like Christina Rossetti set by Gustav Holst and William Blake set by John Tavener. If you are like me, the first time you heard *In the bleak midwinter* it moved you profoundly. I heard it first when I was very young, and only later learned what a classic it was. We are also offering new music, like Will Todd's *My Lord has come*, composed in 2011. With its unusual harmonies that seem to simply hover in time, it touches me just as strongly as "Bleak" did many years ago.

As a conductor, I program music I have done before that I know works well, but I also like to do pieces on each concert that I have never done before. In this concert series, I am conducting Bruckner's *Virga Jesse floruit* for the first time. With the skill and dedication of the Arizona Repertory Singers, for which I am immensely grateful, it seems like the perfect time to do so.



Rosephanye Powell's *The word was God* sets up a sense of ritualistic expectation with ostinatos that crescendo, only to halt so that a new one can begin. Sir James MacMillan's *O radiant dawn*, composed in 2007, reflects the influence of Tallis's *O nata lux* in its rhetorical directness and harmonic surprises. A rocking "Amen" sets up *Christmas daybreak*, a Christina Rossetti poem set by Robert Convery in 1996. This composer's education could not be more impressive: Westminster Choir College, The Curtis Institute of Music, and a doctorate from The Juilliard School.

Benjamin Britten had a stage mother who wanted him to be the "Fourth B" (after Bach, Beethoven and Brahms). The beauty and sophistication of *Hymn to the virgin*, composed when he was sixteen years old, prove that this is not so far-fetched! It is "macaronic," meaning that it employs two languages. Famous examples of this practice include *In dulci jubilo* (German and Latin) and *Angels we have heard on high* (English and Latin).

Javier Busto was a medical doctor in Spain before exploring a second career in conducting and composing choral music. His *Ave Maria* is a treasure among the many settings of this text. *Sing Hallelu!* by Stephen Paulus was inspired by the traditional spiritual *Mary had a baby*.

John Rutter wrote in a tribute that "David Willcocks has transformed our musical celebration of Christmas" through his leadership of choirs at King's College Cambridge, the Bach Choir in London, and his many original compositions and arrangements of carols, like *Tomorrow shall be my dancing day*. *Ya viene la vieja* is in the same form as a carol, with a refrain called an "estribillo."

Gabriel Jackson was born in Bermuda, but grew up in England and was a boy chorister at Canterbury Cathedral. He was educated in composition at the Royal College of Music where he was awarded the R.O. Morris Prize, among other honors. His music has received attention from the finest choirs in Europe and the United States, including commissions from The BBC Singers, The Sixteen, The Tallis Scholars, The Latvian Radio Choir and The Crossing. The use of mixolydian mode and macaronic text in *Nowell sing we* reflects the composer's respect for techniques of the past, but the often unpredictable mixed meter gives it a lively and very contemporary rhythmic energy.

Anton Bruckner is associated with the Cecilian Movement, which sought to revive elements of 16th century *a cappella* polyphony, like that of Palestrina. But works like *Virga Jesse floruit* also incorporate 19th century Romantic features such as extremes of dynamics, chromaticism, and an operatic high tessitura. Edwin Fissinger gives the 15th century text of *Welcome Yule* a modern touch using mixed meter and quartal harmony.

William Walton wrote music for large forces, like symphonies, concertos, ballets and an opera, but *What cheer* shows his ability to create effective miniatures. It is a setting of a text from the 16th century “Commonplace Book.” In *The lamb* John Tavener employed modernist compositional techniques such as combining a melody with its inversion, presenting it backwards (retrograde), and both at once. But the listener may not be (and need not be) aware of any of these, as the effect is one of perfect tranquility, like the poetry to which it is set.

John Rutter collaborated with David Willcocks on the iconic collection, *100 Carols for Choirs*. One of his contributions was a delightful arrangement of *Deck the hall*, which adds just a touch of lighthearted sophistication to this familiar carol. Howard Helvey plays with listeners’ expectations in the way he adds extra beats and irregular meter to the familiar melody of *Ding dong! Merrily on high*, and provides rich jazzy harmony in up to nine parts.

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