

USA Tour 2023
VIENNA BOYS CHOIR
Conductor: Manuel Huber

HOLIDAY PROGRAM

Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924)

Là sui monti del est (Over the hills, far away)
from the opera Turandot (1924)

Turandot, Puccini's last opera, is set in an imaginary version of ancient China. It tells the story of cruel Princess Turandot who likes to behead her suitors; the plot is based on an 18th century play which has its roots in an ancient Persian tale. To her people, Turandot commands unimaginable power, and as she is getting ready for yet another execution, the boys sing of her splendor. The melody is an 18th century folk song, Mo li hua (Jasmin flower) - one of the most iconic Chinese songs and still hugely popular all over Asia.

Puccini was just about able to finish the opera before his death. Turandot was first performed in 1926, with Arturo Toscanini conducting.

Lyrics

Là sui monti dell'Est la cicogna cantò.
Ma l'april non rifiorì, ma la neve non sgelò.
Dal deserto al mar non odi tu mille voci sospirar:
"Principessa, scendi a me!
Tutto fiorirà, tutto splenderà!" Ah!

Translation

There in the Eastern mountains, a stork sings.
But April has not yet brought flowers, the snow has not melted.
From the desert to the sea, you hear a thousand voices sighing,
"Princess, come down to me,
Everything will bloom, everything will shine!" Ah!

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Excerpt from the cantata

La Damoiselle élue (The Blessed Damozel), L. 62 (1887-88)

Words: Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882),

French translation: Gabriel Sarrazin (1853-1935)

Claude Debussy's cantata La Damoiselle élue is based on the poem "The Blessed Damozel" by Pre-Raphaelite poet Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Rossetti in turn took his inspiration from Edgar Allan Poe's The Raven, where a lover mourns the death of his beloved. Rossetti looks at the situation - literally - from the other side: He has the dear departed damozel in heaven, longing for her lover, who is still alive and earthbound. She manages to make her presence felt by leaning on Heaven's golden barrier and speaking with a voice "like that of the stars".

Lyrics

La damoiselle élue s'appuyait
Sur la barrière d'or du ciel.
Ses yeux étaient plus profonds

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Que l'abîme des eaux calmes au soir.
Elle avait trois lys à la main
Et sept étoiles dans les cheveux.

Sa robe flottante
n'était point ornée de fleurs brodées,
Mais d'une rosé blanche, présent de Marie,
Pour le divin service justement portée;
Ses cheveux qui tombaient le long de ses épaules
Étaient jaunes comme le blé mûr.

Autour d'elle des amants,
Nouvellement réunis,
Répétaient pour toujours, entre eux,
Leurs nouveaux noms d'extase;
Et les âmes, qui montaient à Dieu,
Passaient près d'elle comme de fines flammes.

Alors, elle s'inclina de nouveau et se pencha
En dehors du charme encerclant,
Jusqu'à ce que son sein eut échauffé
La barrière sur laquelle elle s'appuyait,
Et que les lys gisent comme endormis
Le long de son bras courbé.

Le soleil avait disparu, la lune annelée
Était comme une petite plume
Flottant au loin dans l'espace; et voilà
Qu'elle parla à travers l'air calme,
Sa voix était pareille à celle des étoiles
Lorsqu'elles chantent en chœur.

English Original

The blessed damozel leaned out
From the gold bar of Heaven;
Her eyes were deeper than the depth
Of waters stilled at even;
She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were seven

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,
No wrought flowers did adorn,
But a white rose of Mary's gift,
For service meetly worn;
Her hair that lay along her back
Was yellow like ripe corn.

(Literal translation)

All around her, lovers,
newly reunited,
forever repeating to each other
their new-found terms of endearment

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and the souls who ascended to God
passed by her like fine flames.

And so, she leaned forward once more and
Out of the encircling magic,
Until her breast had warmed
The golden bar upon which she leant
Until the lilies rested as if in sleep
Along her curved arms.

As the sun disappeared, the ringed moon
Appeared like a small feather,
Floating in space; and - voilà,
She spoke through the quiet air,
Her voice like that of the stars,
When they sing in choirs.

Maurice Duruflé (1902-1986)

Tota pulchra es Maria (You are wholly beautiful, Mary)

from: Quatre motets sur des thèmes grégoriens, opus 10 (1960)

Maurice Duruflé was introduced to organ music as a chorister at the cathedral in Rouen, Normandy. At age 17, he moved to Paris, where he became the organ assistant at the church of Sainte-Clotilde, at the same time pursuing his studies at the Paris Conservatoire. Duruflé left Sainte-Clotilde to become Louis Vierne's assistant at Notre-Dame Cathedral. In 1929, he was appointed organist of Saint-Etienne-du-Mont and in 1943, professor at the Conservatoire. After a car accident in 1975, Duruflé gave up performing. He died in 1986 near Paris.

Duruflé was a perfectionist. He was highly critical of his own work and allowed only a handful of compositions ever to be published. He continued to work on pieces even after publication.

Tota pulchra es Maria is one of four motets on Gregorian themes, written in 1960. Duruflé's setting is in three to four parts, with the voices imitating the Gregorian sequence. A frequent change in metre results in an ethereal, suspended quality. The original prayer dates to the fourth century. It is an antiphon for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception on 8 December, inspired by love lyrics from the Song of Songs, and verses from the book of Judith in the Bible.

Lyrics

Tota pulchra es, Maria et macula originalis non est in te.
Vestimentum tuum candidum quasi nix, et facies tua sicut sol.
Tota pulchra es, Maria, et macula originalis non est in te.
Tu gloria Jerusalem, tu laetitia Israel, tu honorificentia populi nostri.
Tota pulchra es, Maria.

Translation

You are wholly beautiful, Mary, and the stain of original sin is not on you.

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Your clothing is white like snow, and your face is like the sun.
You are wholly beautiful, Mary, and the stain of original sin is not on you.
You are the glory of Jerusalem, you are the delight of Israel,
you are the honoured of our people.
You are wholly beautiful, Mary.

Hans Leo Hassler (1564-1612)
Cantate Domino (Sing to the lord)
for four-part choir a cappella
Words: Psalm 96

Hans Leo Hassler was born into a Protestant family in Nuremberg. His father was something of a jack-of-all-trades: Isaak Hassler was active as a musician, as a composer, an organist, and – as a lithotomist, a barber surgeon specialising in the removal of kidney and gall stones. Isaak Hassler ensured that his three sons, Caspar, Hans Leo, and Jakob, all received excellent musical training. In 1584, Hans Leo was sent to Venice to study with Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli; he was among the first German musicians to do so.

Two years later, Hassler returned to Germany. He became chamber organist to the wealthy and hugely influential Fugger Family in Augsburg. Like his father, Hassler was an all-rounder: in addition to his activities as a musician and composer, he built clocks and musical automata. In 1600, Hassler became director of music of the city of Nuremberg, and in 1608, he was appointed chamber organist of the Prince Elector of Saxony in Dresden – one of the most powerful nobles of the Holy Roman Empire.

Hassler's music reflects his cosmopolitan outlook; he wrote for both Protestant and Catholic services. One of his most enduring tunes was later adapted by J.S. Bach for the Saint Matthew Passion: the chorale "O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden". Hassler's own contemporaries especially liked his cheerful madrigals, some of which are still popular today.

The text of Cantate Domino is based on Psalm 96, which in Biblical times would have been sung at the New Year festival.

Lyrics

Cantate Domino canticum novum, cantate Domino omnis terra.
Cantate Domino, et benedicite nomini eius:
annuntiate de die in diem salutare eius
annuntiate inter gentes gloriam eius
in omnibus populis mirabilia eius

Translation

Sing to the Lord a new song,
Sing to the Lord all the world.
Sing and bless his name,
Tell aloud of his salvation, day by day.
Tell the nations of his glory
and all peoples of his miracles.

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Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Bourrée II

From: English Suite No. 2 in a minor, BWV 807

Arr. Manuel Huber

Bach wrote his “English” suites - a set of six suites for a keyboard instrument - in Weimar around 1715. Their composition may have been influenced by the keyboard suites of François “Charles” Dieupart (1676-1751), a famous contemporary harpsichord virtuoso.

Bach’s instrumental music, never predictable, but always to the point, always in control, and always hugely enjoyable, lends itself to be arranged for a-cappella choir. Choirmaster Manuel Huber arranged the Bourrée II for his boys, following a tradition started by the Swingle Singers in the 1960s. There are no words, simply syllables chosen for musical effect.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Eine kleine Nachtmusik (A little night music),

Serenade in G major, K. 525

Arr. for a cappella choir: Gerald Wirth

As composer to the Imperial Court, Mozart is one of the musicians closely linked to the history of the Vienna Boys Choir. For its 525th anniversary, the Choir decided to do its own version of Mozart’s K. 525 - one of the most famous and best-loved pieces in Classical music.

Mozart wrote the serenade in G major in the summer of 1787; he himself dubbed it “a little night music”. A serenade is a musical tribute, usually played in the evening or at night, and Mozart scored this piece for a string ensemble. Gerald Wirth, the artistic director of the Vienna Boys Choir, adapted the first movement for the boys, with the sopranos singing the part of first and second violins, and the altos covering the lower parts of viola, cello, and bass. There is no text; the voices imitate the instruments.

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Ronde (Roundelay)

From: Trois chansons no. 3 (1916)

Ravel wrote his Trois chansons in the months immediately following the end of World War I; they were intended as pure escapism into a fairy world, with lyrics by the composer himself. No. 3 is a roundelay, which has different groups singing at each other. The old women and old men address a group of young people, warning them to stay away from the dangerous Woods, teeming with all

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manner of magical creatures, some alluring, others mysterious, and not all of them altogether pleasant - precisely why the young people would want to go.

Ravel had asked his friends Georges Jean-Aubry and Alexis Roland-Manuel, both music critics, to collect all the names of forest creatures and demons that they could find. It is both a musical joke and a tongue-twisting play on words; in the very best tradition of French Renaissance chansons.

Lyrics

[Les vieilles]

N'allez pas au bois d'Ormonde,
Jeunes filles, n'allez pas au bois:
Il y a plein de satyres, de centaures, de malins sorciers,
Des farfadets et des incubes,
Des ogres, des lutins,
Des faunes, des follets, des lamies,
Diables, diablots, diabolins,
Des chèvre-pieds, des gnomes, des démons,
Des loups-garous, des elfes, des myrmidons,
Des enchanteurs et des mages,
Des stryges, des sylphes, des moines-bourrus,
Des cyclopes, des djinns, gobelins,
Korrigans, nécromants, kobolds...

[Les vieux]

N'allez pas au bois d'Ormonde,
Jeunes garçons, n'allez pas au bois:
Il y a plein de faunes, de bacchantes et de males fées,
Des satyresses, des ogresses et des babaïagas,
Des centaures et des diables,
Goules sortant du sabbat,
Des farfadettes et des démons,
Des larves, des nymphes, des myrmidones,
Hamadryades, dryades, naïades, ménades, thyades,
Follettes, lémures, gnomides,
Succubes, gorgones, gobelines...
N'allez pas au bois d'Ormonde.

[Filles et garçons]

N'irons plus au bois d'Ormonde,
Hélas! plus jamais n'irons au bois.
Il n'y a plus de satyres, plus de nymphes ni de males fées.
Plus de farfadets, plus d'incubes,
Plus d'ogres, de lutins,
De faunes, de follets, de lamies,
Diables, diablots, diabolins,
De chèvre-pieds, de gnomes, de démons,
De loups-garous, ni d'elfes, de myrmidons,
Plus d'enchanteurs ni de mages, de stryges, de sylphes,
De moines-bourrus, de cyclopes, de djinns,

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De diabloteaux, d'éfrits, d'aegypan, de sylvains, gobelins,
Korrigans, nécromans, kobolds...
N'allez pas au bois d'Ormonde,
Les malavisées vieilles,
Les malavisés vieux
Les ont effarouchés. Ah!

Translation:

[The old women]
Don't go into Ormonde Woods,
Young girls, don't go into the woods.
It is full of satyrs, centaurs, evil wizards,
Imps and incubi,
Ogres, goblins,
Fauns, sprites, lamias (child eating monsters),
Devils, small and tiny devils,
Goat-footed demons, gnomes, demons,
Werewolves, elves, myrmidons,
Enchanters and magi,
Witches, sylphs, cantankerous monks,
Cyclops, djinns, goblins,
Korrigans, necromancers, leprechauns ...

[The old men]
Don't go into Ormonde Woods,
Young lads, don't go into the woods:
It is full of female fauns, Bacchae and evil fairies,
female satyrs, ogresses, Baba Yagas,
female centaurs and devils,
ghouls coming directly from a witches' Sabbath,
impettes and demonesses,
nymphs, myrmidons,
hamadryads, dryads, nayads, menads, thyades,
crazies, lemurs, female gnomes,
succubi, gorgons, female goblins ...
Do not go into Ormonde Woods.

[Lasses and lads]
We will not venture into Ormonde Woods anymore,
We will never again go into the woods.
There are no satyrs anymore, no nymphs, nor male fairies.
No more Imps and incubi,
No more ogres, goblins,
Fauns, sprites, lamias,
Goat-footed demons, gnomes, demons,
Werewolves, elves, myrmidons,
No more enchanters or magi, witches or sylphs,
Cantankerous monks, cyclops, or djinns,
Devils, ifrits, Aegipans, forest ghosts, hobgoblins,
Korrigans, necromancers, leprechauns ...
Don't go into Ormonde Woods.

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The ill-advised old women,
The ill-advised old men,
They have scared them off. Ah!

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809-1847)

Bunte Schlangen, zweigezüngt! (You spotted snakes, with double tongues)
Elves' chorus, from: Ein Sommernachtstraum (A Midsummer Night's Dream),
opus 61/4 (1842)

Text: August Wilhelm Schlegel (1767-1845), after William Shakespeare

Felix Mendelssohn grew up surrounded by culture. His family was wealthy and generous with it. They travelled widely, and had a large house where they entertained many prominent visitors, among them Goethe, Humboldt and Hegel. The Mendelssohns, members of the assimilated German-Jewish aristocracy, converted from Judaism to Christianity in 1816.

The Mendelssohns saw to it that their four children had every possibility to learn. Felix, the second child, studied piano with Ludwig Berger and theory and composition with Karl Friedrich Zelter. At the age of nine, he gave his first public recital, at the age of ten, he became a member of the Berliner Singakademie. He was eleven when his own first compositions were publicly performed. A year later, he met Goethe, Carl Maria von Weber and Cherubini. Thereafter, he turned out sonatas, concertos, string symphonies, piano quartets and Singspiele which revealed his increasing mastery of counterpoint and form.

In 1829, at the ripe old age of 20, he directed a pioneering performance of Bach's St. Matthew Passion at the Berlin Singakademie (with a reported chorus of 600 singers): this one performance (an 'event') put Bach firmly on the repertoire list for choirs. Mendelssohn was also famous as a festival organiser, he was associated especially with the Lower Rhine and Birmingham music festivals. Mendelssohn's most significant achievements as a conductor and organiser were in Leipzig (1835-47), where he conducted the Gewandhaus Orchestra to great acclaim. In 1843, he founded the Leipzig Conservatory and managed to recruit Robert Schumann and Moritz Hauptmann as teachers. His death at the age of 38, after a series of strokes, was mourned internationally.

Mendelssohn's music shows influences of Bach, Handel, Mozart, and Beethoven. He clearly liked to be inspired by his surroundings; his music often has literary, artistic, historical, geographical or emotional connotations; the underlying ideas are easily accessible.

In 1826, 17-year-old Mendelssohn read Schlegel's translation of Shakespeare's famous play; this prompted him to compose an overture for the piece. The other ten movements of incidental music for the play (including the famous Wedding March) were written in 1842, commissioned by King Frederick William IV of Prussia.

Lyrics
Erste Elfe

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Bunte Schlangen, zweigezüngt,
Igel, Molche, fort von hier!
Dass ihr euren Gift nicht bringt
In der Königin Revier!

Chor
Nachtigall, mit Melodei
Sing in unser Eiapopei!
Eiapopeia! Eiapopei!
Dass kein Spruch,
Kein Zauberfluch
Der holden Herrin schädlich sei.
Nun gute Nacht mit Eiapopei!

Zweite Elfe
Schwarze Käfer, uns umgebt
Nicht mit Summen! Macht euch fort!
Spinnen, die ihr künstlich webt,
Webt an einem andern Ort!

Chor

Erste Elfe
Alles gut, nun auf und fort!
Einer halte Wache dort!

Translation / Shakespeare's English Original
First elf

You spotted snakes with double tongue,
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;
Newts and blind-worms, do no wrong;
Come not near our fairy queen.

Chorus
Philomel, with melody,
Sing in our sweet lullaby;
Lulla, lulla, lullaby; lulla, lulla, lullaby!
Never harm,
Nor spell nor charm,
Come our lovely lady nigh;
So, good night, with lullaby.

Second elf
Weaving spiders, come not here;
Hence, you long-legg`d spinners, hence!
Beetles black, approach not near;
Worm nor snail, do no offence.

Chorus

Second elf
Hence, away! now all is well:

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One aloof stand sentinel.

Stephen Sondheim (1930–2021)
No One Is Alone | Children Will Listen
from the musical Into the Woods (1986)

“Into the Woods” tells the story of a baker and his wife who, while trying to start a family, get drawn into several fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm and meet, among others, characters from Cinderella, Jack and the Beanstalk, and Little Red Riding Hood. The musical won three Tony Awards (Best Score, Best Book, and Best Actress in a musical).

On their 2023 tour of the USA, the Vienna Boys Choir performs the two final songs from Sondheim’s musical. “No One Is Alone” has the four lead characters pondering the consequences of their wishes, only to discover that no one is truly alone, and that people are there to help each other “through the woods”.

Lyrics

No One Is Alone

CINDERELLA

Mother cannot guide you.
Now you're on you're own.
Only me beside you.
Still, you're not alone.
No one is alone, truly.
No one is alone.

BOTH

Someone is on your side.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD & JACK

Our side.

CINDERELLA & BAKER

Our side -
Someone else is not.
While we're seeing our side -

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD & JACK

Our side....

CINDERELLA & BAKER

Our side -

ALL

Maybe we forgot:
They are not alone.

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No one is alone.

CINDERELLA
Hard to see the light now.

BAKER
Just don't let it go.

BOTH
Things will come out tight now.
We can make it so.
Someone is on your side,
No one is alone.

Children Will Listen

Careful the things you say
Children will listen
Careful the things you do
Children will see and learn
Children may not obey, but children will listen
Children will look to you for which way to turn
To learn what to be
Careful before you say 'Listen to me'
Children will listen

Careful the wish you make
Wishes are children
Careful the path they take
Wishes come true, not free
Careful the spell you cast
Not just on children
Sometimes the spell may last
Past what you can see
And turn against you
Careful the tale you tell
That is the spell
Children will listen ...

Giacomo Puccini
La sui monti del est (Over the hills, far away)
From: Turandot

* * * INTERMISSION * * *

Andachtsjodler (Devotional yodel)
Christmas Yodel from the Austrian Alps

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Yodels are one of the chief elements of Alpine folk music. Initially used as a means of communication across the valleys, they literally reflect the Alps. The echoes added by the mountains lead to elaborate, spur-of-the-moment variations. Yodels have no text; instead, singers use various similar sounding syllables which match their feelings, syllables which generate a good echo.

This ancient devotional yodel consists of only eight bars, which can be repeated ad libitum. It is slow and introspective, designed to invite contemplation. It was sung by the congregation during the main Christmas Day service probably as early as the 17th century and has recently regained in popularity.

Anton Reidinger (1839-1912)

Es wird scho glei dumpa (It will be dark soon)

Sacred lullaby from Upper Austria; arr. Gerald Wirth

This particular carol takes the form of a lullaby for Jesus; it would have been sung in the Alps by carollers dressed as shepherds and as part of a Christmas pageant performed in church, allowing both listeners and singers to feel part of the Christmas story: the Biblical shepherds are "simple" people, yet their gifts are as important as the gifts from the three kings. In short, Christmas is for everyone.

Anton Reidinger was Dean of several rural parishes in Upper Austria; he wrote this carol in the local dialect for his parishioners. It has since become (and still is) one of the most popular carols in Austria and Southern Germany.

Lyrics

Es wird scho glei dumpa, es wird scho glei Nacht.
Drum kimm i zu dir her, mein Heiland, auf d'Wacht.
Will singen a Liadl dem Liebling, dem kloan,
Du mågst ja net schlåfn, i hör' di nur woan.
Hei, hei, schlaf süss, herzliabs Kind!

Vergiss hiaz, o Kinderl, dein Kummer, dei Load,
dass du dâ muasst leidn im Ståll auf da Hoad.
Es ziern jâ die Engerl dei Liegerstatt aus.
Möcht schöna nit sein drin an König sei Haus.
Hei, hei . . .

Jâ Kinderl, du bist hålt im Kripperl so schen,
mi ziemt, i kånn nimmer dâ weg von dir gehn.
I wünsch dir von Herzen die süasste Ruah,
die Engerl vom Himmel, die deckn di zua.
Hei, hei . . .

Translation

It will be dark soon, it will soon be night.
Therefore I come to you, my Saviour, to guard you.
I want to sing a carol for (my) darling, the little one.

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You cannot sleep: I hear you fret.
Hei, hei, hei, hei: sleep tight, (my) darling child.

Now forget, child, your sorrow, your pain,
Which makes you suffer in the stable, on the heather.
Angels adorn your bedstead.
A king's house could not be better.
Hei, hei, hei, hei: sleep tight, (my) darling child.

Yes, child, you are so beautiful in your crib,
I cannot bear to part from you.
I wish you with all my heart the sweetest of rests,
may the angels from heaven tuck you in.
Hei, hei, hei, hei: sleep tight, (my) darling child.

Emile Waldteufel (1837–1915)
Les Patineurs (The skaters), waltz opus 183
Words: Tina Breckwoldt; arr. Manuel Huber

People have been skating at least since the Neolithic, when they first strapped animal bones to their feet in order to cross frozen bodies of water quickly and safely. Later, the Dutch went in for speed skating along their icy canals; in Sankt Petersburg, the tsarina had entire castles carved out of the ice on the Neva. Skating as a hobby exploded in the 18th century, even the aristocracy would spend days on the ice. Treatises were written, techniques analyzed and debated. In Germany, poets composed entire odes to skating, even Goethe, who loved the sport, wrote a short poem called "Eis-Lebens-Lied" (Ice-Life-Song) and was known to put off other engagements in favor of skating. William Wordsworth included a passage on skating in *The Prelude*, published posthumously in 1850.

Emile Waldteufel was born into a family of musicians in Strasbourg; he received his first music lessons from his parents. When he was five, the family moved to Paris. Waldteufel was an accomplished pianist; he started giving lessons as a teenager. At the same time, he wrote his first compositions, which caught the attention of Charles Gounod. Waldteufel went on to study at the Paris Conservatoire; Georges Bizet and Jules Massenet were his contemporaries. Most of Waldteufel's works are dances: *Les Patineurs*, the skaters, is his most famous composition. Choirmaster Manuel Huber arranged the piece to suit the choirboys' voices, and the words are intended to reflect the landscape and the whole gamut of feelings experienced on the ice.

Lyrics
Landschaft im Schnee,
Stillschwarzer See
und mir erscheint plötzlich die Idee:

Erst mit zaghaften Tritten, ganz vorsichtig, vorsichtig,
fragt man sich leise und trägt es mich, trägt es mich
Zögernd und stockend und: Kommt ihr mit? Kommt ihr mit?
Wird es allmählich zum Schlittschuhschritt,

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Weiter trainiert wird die Muskelkraft,
perfektioniert bis zur Meisterschaft,
zusätzlich braucht man noch Taktgefühl,
nur so besteht man in diesem Gewühl,
nur so erreicht man schlussendlich das Ziel.

Und mit der Zeit sind wir soweit
Schreiten und gleiten mit Sicherheit.
Ich nehme (Wir nehmen) jetzt Mass-
ein himmlischer Spass
mit plötzlichem Schwung,
ein Sprung, ein Sprung.

Und -
wackeln und fackeln und
knarren und knirschen und
tippeln und trippeln und
ziehen und fliehen und
wehen und wirbeln und
jagen und treiben und
surren und sirren und
zischen dahin.

Und ich nehme Schwung
zum dreifachen Sprung!
Pirouetten, Achterketten,
und dazu noch ein Bogen,
ganz in Ruhe gezogen.

Jetzt mit besserem Stil,
noch ein weiteres Ziel,
einmal rückwärts im Kreis
auf dem dünneren Eis.
Doch was heisst das denn jetzt
ich habe zuletzt
endlich übergesetzt ...

Landschaft im Schnee,
Stillschwarzer See
und uns erscheint plötzlich die Idee:

Jetzt mit besserem Stil,
wir verändern nicht viel,
immer dasselbe Spiel
einmal rückwärts im Kreis
auf dem dünneren Eis.

Mmmmmh -
ich genieße die schnelle Fahrt,
wir genießen die
Landschaft im Schnee,
den stillschwarzen See.

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Translation:

Snow-covered land

Silent black lake

Spur-of-the-moment idea comes to me:

First, tentative steps, carefully, carefully,
You ask yourself, will this carry me, carry me,
Halting and faltering and: come join me, come join me?
Changes over time to a proper skating pace,
While you train your muscle power,
You finally arrive at a mastery.
Still, you need a sense of time and rhythm,
The only chance to hold your own in the *melée*
The only way to arrive at your goal.

With time we are ready
To go and glide safely.
I (we) estimate the distance
a heavenly pleasure
with a sudden push
a leap forward, a jump.

And so we -
Wobble and juggle and
Creak and crackle and
Scuttle and scurry and
Drift and shift and
Waft and whirl and
Chase and drive and
Whirr and buzz and
Fly over the icy surface.

And as I gain momentum,
I perform a triple jump!
Pirouettes, figures of eight,
Finally, an elegant curve,
Drawn in perfect serenity.

Now with more style,
Yet another goal,
Gliding backwards in a circle,
On thinner ice.
What does it mean?
Am I finally
Having a breakthrough ...

Snow-covered land
Silent black lake
Spur-of-the-moment idea comes to us:

Now with more style,

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we won't change much
it is always the same,
gliding backwards in a circle
On thinner ice.

Mmmmmh -
I am enjoying the swift passage
We are enjoying the
Snow-covered land,
And the silent black lake.

Ola Gjeilo (b. 1978)

Tundra

Words: Charles Anthony Silvestri (b. 1965)

Ola Gjeilo is one of the most popular choral composers around. Born in Norway, Gjeilo was educated at the Conservatory in Oslo, at the Royal College of Music in London, and at The Juilliard School in New York. His music shows influences of Classical music, jazz, folk, and pop, as well as film scores; Gjeilo feels inspired by Keith Jarrett and Pat Metheny as well as architect Frank Gehry among others.

The lyrics for Tundra were written by American poet Charles Anthony Silvestri, a frequent collaborator. The words are inspired by the Hardanger Plateau (Hardangervidda) in Norway, the composer's childhood landscape. Hardangervidda has been occupied since the Neolithic; today, much of it is protected as a National Park. The landscape is barren and beautiful at the same time – Henrik Ibsen's play *When We Dead Awaken* is partly set there; and the Hoth sequences in *The Empire Strikes Back* were shot on the Hardangerjøkulen glacier.

Lyrics

Wide, worn and weathered,
Sacred expanse
Of green and white and granite grey;
Snowy patches strewn,
Anchored to the craggy earth,
Unmoving;
While clouds dance
Across the vast, eternal sky.

Mykola Leontovych (1877-1921)

Carol of the Bells (Shchedryk)

English words & arr.: Peter J. Wilhousky (1902-1978)

Carol of the Bells started life as a Ukrainian shchedrivka, a New Year's carol, written by Mykola Leontovych and traditionally sung on the Ukrainian New Year's Eve (January 13). The original Ukrainian song, Shchedryk, looks into the year

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ahead, as a sort of horoscope, hoping for an early spring, a luscious wife for the farmer, and a rich harvest. It was first performed in Kiev in 1916; in the 1920s, Leontovych toured Europe and North America with his choir, and the song soon became popular. In 1936, Peter J. Wilhousky, a New York-based composer and choral conductor of Ukrainian descent, provided it with English lyrics and a new name.

Lyrics

Hark! how the bells
Sweet silver bells
All seem to say,
"Throw cares away."
Christmas is here
Bringing good cheer
To young and old
Meek and the bold

Ding, dong, ding, dong
That is their song
With joyful ring
All carolling
One seems to hear
Words of good cheer
From ev'rywhere
Filling the air

O, how they pound,
Raising the sound,
O'er hill and dale,
Telling their tale,
Gaily they ring
While people sing
Songs of good cheer
Christmas is here
Merry, merry, merry, merry Christmas

On, on they send
On without end
Their joyful tone
To ev'ry home
Ding, dong, ding, dong

Kim André Arnesen (b. 1980)

Cradle Hymn

Words: Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

Christmas lullaby

Isaac Watts was a nonconformist theologian. Born into a nonconformist household, Watts showed early on a talent for poetry. He had an excellent sense of rhythm and rhyme, and a way with words. As a Congregational minister, he

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found singing gloomy psalms rather unhelpful; this prompted him to write his own verses. Watts explained that he liked to add the lighter imagery of faith, love, and hope to the mix, and grace, glory, and life eternal feature prominently in his writing. He wrote well over 700 hymns; most of them are found in modern hymnals. "Joy to the World" is doubtless his most famous work. The Church of England and the Lutheran Church remember Watts in the Calendar of Saints on 25 November.

Grammy-nominated composer Kim André Arnesen was educated at the Music Conservatory in Trondheim in his native Norway. He has strong ties to Trondheim's Nidaros Cathedral where many of his works were first performed; his "Cradle Hymn" was written for the Cathedral's Girls Choir in 2010.

Lyrics

Hush, my dear, lie still and slumber,
Holy angels guard thy bed!
Heavenly blessings without number
Gently falling on thy head.

See the kindly shepherds round him
Telling wonders from the sky!
When they sought Him, there they found Him
With his Virgin Mother by

See the lovely babe adressing;
Lovely infant, how He smiled!
When He wept, the mother's blessing
Soothed and hushed the holy child

Mayst thou live to know and fear Him
Trust and love Him all thy days;
Then go dwell forever near Him
See His face, and sing His praise!

Hush, my dear.
Holy angels guard thy bed!
Amen.

Adolphe Adam (1803-1856)

O Holy Night (Cantique de Noël), 1847

English words: John Sullivan Dwight (1812–1893), c. 1850

Cantique de Noël was composed as a Christmas carol – its poet was an atheist, its composer a Jew. In December 1847, the curate of a village church in Roquemaure (Cotes-du-Rhône, France) asked Placide Cappeau, resident free-thinker (an atheist, no less) and part-time poet, to write a Christmas poem for a fundraiser to finance the church's stained-glass windows. A singer named Emily Laurey, who happened to be staying in the village, came across the poem and gave it to her friend Adolphe Adam to set to music, and the rest, as they say, is

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history. The audience loved the sweeping tune; today, *Cantique* is firmly associated with Christmas.

The song's two authors took a more general approach; Cappeau kept wanting to change the words to something more pantheistic, and Adam referred to the piece as a "religious Marseillaise". For years, most of the French clergy loathed it passionately; and theologians and musicologists wrote spiteful articles condemning the performance in a church – some of them appeared as late as the 1930s, almost a century after *Cantique* was first performed.

The English version of the text was written in the 1850s, by American clergyman John Sullivan Dwight.

Lyrics

O holy night! the stars are brightly shining,
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
Till he appeared, and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope the weary soul rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn;
Fall on your knees; O, hear the angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born!
O night, O holy night, O night divine.

Led by the light of faith serenely beaming,
With glowing hearts by his cradle we stand;
So led by light of a star sweetly gleaming,
Here came the wise men from Orient land.
The King of kings lay thus in lowly manger,
In all our trials born to be our friend;
He knows our need, To our weaknesses is no stranger.
Behold your King, before him lowly bend!

Jule Styne (1905–1994)

Let It Snow!

Words: Sammy Cahn (1913–1993); arr. Kirby Shaw

In 1942, Jule Styne (Julius K. Stein) and Sammy Cahn (Samuel Cohen) formed a very productive partnership; they collaborated on numerous songs, musicals and film scores. They wrote the score for several Sinatra films, such as *Step Lively* (1942), *Anchors Aweigh* (1945), and *It Happened in Brooklyn* (1947), as well as films starring Danny Kay, Doris Day and Marilyn Monroe (*The Seven Year Itch*, 1955). *Let It Snow* was written in the 1940s and first sung by Vaughn Monroe.

Lyrics

Oh, the weather outside is frightful
But the fire is so delightful
And since we've no place to go
Let it snow! Let it snow! Let it snow!

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It doesn't show signs of stopping
And I brought some corn for popping
The lights are turned way down low
Let it snow! Let it snow! Let it snow!

When we finally say goodnight
How I'll hate going out in the storm!
But if you'll really hold me tight
All the way home I'll be warm

Oh, the fire is slowly dying
And, my dear, we're still goodbye-ing
But as long as you love me so
Let it snow! Let it snow! Let it snow!

Hava nagila (Let us rejoice)
Jewish folk song / Hasidic niggun,
attributed to Abraham Zvi Idelsohn (1892–1938)
Words based on Psalm 118:24
Arr. Manuel Huber

Hava nagila started life as a niggun, a spiritual, wordless chant sung by the Hasidim from Sadhora, modern Ukraine. The musicologist Abraham Zvi Idelsohn (1892–1938) probably encountered the melody c. 1915, when he was cataloguing Jewish music. Idelsohn and his student Moshe Nathanson (1899–1981) added the words and changed the rhythm of the original niggun – and Hava nagila was born.

The celebratory feel-good song is a fixture at Jewish weddings, bar and bat mitvah rituals, and it is firmly entrenched in popular culture. There are famous versions by Harry Belafonte, Benny Goodman, Bob Dylan, and Danny Kaye. It is sung by fans of Ajax Amsterdam and Tottenham Hotspur, and – less surprising – it features prominently among fans of the Maccabi Tel Aviv basketball team.

Lyrics

Hava nagila, hava nagila,
hava nagila ve-nismeha

Hava neranenah, hava neranenah
hava neranenah ve-nismeha

Uru, uru ahim,
Uru ahim belev sameah
Uru ahim, uru ahim,
Belev sameah

Translation

Let us rejoice, let us rejoice,
Let us rejoice and be happy.

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Let us sing, let us sing,
Let us sing and be happy.

Awake, awake, brothers,
Awake, brothers, with a happy heart.
Awake, brothers, awake, brothers,
With a happy heart.

Hugo Blanco (1940-2015)
El burrito de Belén (The little donkey from Bethlehem)
Villancico from Venezuela

Hugo Blanco composed his „villancico“ carol in 1972. The cheerful little song about a boy and his little donkey is extremely popular in Latin America, possibly due its bouncy merengue rhythm. „cuatrico“ is a diminutive for the cuatro, a type of four-stringed guitar used in Venezuelan folk music.

Blanco is best known for his songs, among them „Moliendo Café“, sung by football fans around the world, and „La vecina“ (The neighbor), which was used in an episode of Miami Vice.

Text

Con mi burrito sabanero voy camino de Belén
si me ven, si me ven, voy camino de Belén
el lucerito mañanero ilumina mi sendero
si me ven, si me ven, voy camino de Belén
con mi cuatrico voy cantando, mi burrito va trotando
si me ven, si me ven, voy camino de Belén

Tuqui tuqui tuqui, tuqui tuquita
apurate mi burrito que ya vamos a llegar
Tuqui tuqui tuqui, tuqui tuquitu
apurate mi burrito que vamos a ver a Jesús

Translation

With my little Savannah donkey, I am on my way to Bethlehem,
if they see me, if they see me, I am on my way to Bethlehem,
the little morning light will shine on my path,
if they see me, if they see me, I am on my way to Bethlehem,
with my little cuatro I sing along, my little donkey trots along
if they see me, if they see me, I am on my way to Bethlehem

Tuqui tuqui tuqui, tuqui tuquita
Hurry, my little donkey, we are about to arrive,
Tuqui tuqui tuqui, tuqui tuquitu
Hurry, my little donkey, we are going to see Jesus.

Hail, Holy Queen

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Arr. Marc Shaiman (b. 1959); adapted by Roger Emerson
from the movie "Sister Act" (1992)

Hail, Holy Queen from the movie Sister Act is a choral favourite, bound to make the audience smile. Starting as a demure chant, it soon explodes into a jubilant choir with rhythmic clapping.

In the film, a group of nuns performs them under the direction of Whoopi Goldberg, who plays a Las Vegas singer hiding from organised crime. She manages to transform the languishing nunnery choir into a spectacular ensemble singing with such pizzazz they manage to fill the hitherto empty church.

The solo interjections, "Mater ad mater inter marata" and "Virgo respice" are not Classical Latin, and somewhat lacking in grammar, but then so are quite a few medieval texts. The first line might be rendered "Mother among mothers" (which should really be "Mater inter matres"; if "ad" were correct, it would require the accusative matrem). However, perhaps it should just be understood as an exclamation, "ah", Mother, oh, Mother. "marata" is not a word at all; it may be a typo for either merata/meraca "pure", or murata "walled" - inter murata might then mean "surrounded by walls", as in a nunnery. As the words were written for the movie, and the character who comes up with them is a Las Vegas singer, they were perhaps not meant to be taken too seriously.

Lyrics

Hail holy Queen enthroned above, oh Maria,
Hail mother of Mercy and of Love, oh Maria,

Triumph all ye cherubim!
Sing with us ye seraphim!
Heaven and Earth, resound the hymn!
Salve Regina!

Our life, our sweetness here below, oh Maria,
Our hope in sorrow and woe, oh Maria,
Alleluia

Mater ad mater inter marata
Sanctus sanctus dominus
Virgo respice mater adspice
Sanctus sanctus dominus