

WIGMORE HALL 125

Monday 1 December 2025
7.30pm

This concert is supported by the Rick Mather David Scrase Foundation

‘Weihnachten – es naht die jubelvolle Zeit’

Christiane Karg soprano
Gerold Huber piano

Engelbert Humperdinck (1854-1921)	From <i>Weihnachtslieder</i> (1898) <i>Weihnachten</i> • <i>Das Licht der Welt</i> • <i>Christkindleins Wiegenlied</i> • <i>Weihnachtsfreude</i>
Peter Cornelius (1824-1874)	From <i>Weihnachtslieder</i> Op. 8 (1856, rev. 1859) <i>Christbaum</i> • <i>Die Hirten</i> • <i>Die Könige</i> • <i>Christkind</i>
Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)	<i>Weihnachtslied</i> (1832)
Joseph Marx (1882-1964)	<i>Christbaum</i> (1908)
Richard Strauss (1864-1949)	<i>Weihnachtsgefühl</i> (1899) <i>Die heiligen drei Könige aus Morgenland</i> Op. 56 No. 6 (1906)
	<i>Interval</i>
Max Reger (1873-1916)	<i>Maria am Rosenstrauch</i> from <i>5 Neue Kinderlieder</i> Op. 142 (1915)
Hugo Wolf (1860-1903)	From <i>Spanisches Liederbuch Geistliche Lieder</i> (1889-90) <i>Ach, des Knaben Augen</i> • <i>Die ihr schwebet</i>
Eduard Toldrà (1895-1962)	<i>Cantarcillo</i> (1941)
Joaquín Nin (1879-1949)	10 villancicos españoles (1932) <i>Villancico vasco</i> • <i>Villancico murciano</i> • <i>Villancico castellano</i> • <i>Villancico asturiano</i>
Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)	<i>La madonna col bambino</i> (c.1855)
Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936)	<i>Noël ancien</i> (1909)
Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)	<i>Noël des jouets</i> (1905)
Cécile Chaminade (1857-1944)	<i>Le Noël des oiseaux</i> (pub. 1893)
Jules Massenet (1842-1912)	<i>Le Noël des humbles</i> (1908) <i>Noël de fleurs</i> (1912) <i>Noël païen</i> (1886)



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This Christmas programme is developed from the album *Licht der Welt: A Christmas Promenade*, which Christiane Karg and Gerold Huber released in 2021. In the CD booklet, Karg describes how her existing affection for the Christmas Lieder of Engelbert Humperdinck, Peter Cornelius and other German composers led to an exploration of little-known Christmas songs in several other European languages. Karg mentions 'the very special magic' of her childhood Christmases being 'embodied [...] by the aroma of spice cookies'. Particular traditions of the season – which of course vary by country, region, community, and family – come through in several of the songs' invocations of sights, sounds, and food.

Humperdinck is best known for his fairytale opera *Hansel und Gretel*, which remains a seasonal favourite of companies around the world. The gift for melody that animates his darkly sweet opera is also found across his *Weihnachtslieder*, a collection of nine songs set to texts by various poets including his wife Hedwig Humperdinck and his sister and frequent collaborator Adelheid Wette. 'Weihnachten' captures the gentle spectacle of Christmas evenings, with trees lighting up windows and a thousand stars sparkling outside; the more directional momentum of 'Das Licht der Welt' represents the Star of Bethlehem's guidance of the Magi. 'Christkindleins Wiegenlied' is a gentle lullaby of unknown origin, found in the popular source for folk poetry *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, while the Christmas cheer of 'Weihnachtsfreude' is bound up with nostalgia – its score is the most elaborate of this selection, with a soaring vocal line, post-Wagnerian harmonies and, in the piano, ear-catching snatches of a motif familiar from *Hansel und Gretel*.

Throughout his life, **Cornelius** viewed himself as much a poet and writer as a composer: his *Weihnachtslieder* is one of many song collections for which he wrote both poems and music. Cornelius first wrote his Christmas songs in 1856, but on the suggestion of his friend Franz Liszt – who had a lifelong propensity for musical revision and adaptation – he reworked them twice, in 1859 and prior to their eventual publication in 1870. This selection of four begins with another luminous Christmas tree, here symbolising families gathering to share songs, stories and traditions; with 'Die Hirten' and 'Die Könige', Cornelius turns his focus to different characters' narratives within the Nativity story. 'Die Könige' is the best known of Cornelius's set, owing to its sensitive, striking incorporation of the hymn tune 'Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern' in the piano part – part of the revisions to the songs Cornelius enacted on the suggestion of Liszt. With 'Christkind', the selection ends with a celebration in rhyming couplets.

Felix Mendelssohn's *Weihnachtslied* was written in 1832 as a Christmas present for his younger sister Rebecka. It sets a sacred carol and is replete with allusions to Bach's sacred music that so enthralled the composer. **Joseph Marx's** *Christbaum* (1908) is one of several songs on this programme to begin with a piano

invocation of tinkling bells, but this opening simplicity is soon transformed into a soundworld more typical of Marx's *fin-de-siècle* language. Just before the turn of the century, in December 1899, **Richard Strauss** composed *Weihnachtsgefühl*, though this delicate portrayal of now-lost seasonal magic remained unpublished in his lifetime. Strauss turned to Heinrich Heine's poem 'Die heiligen drei Könige aus Morgenland' in 1906. It was composed initially for voice and orchestra, but its expansive scope is equally apparent in the version for voice and piano.

The next group thematises Mary. The lilting vocal line of **Max Reger's** 'Maria am Rosenstrauch' (1915) is echoed softly in the piano's right hand throughout. Now moving away from German composers, the two sacred songs selected from Austrian **Hugo Wolf's** *Spanisches Liederbuch* use old Spanish poems in German translation: the calm devotion of 'Ach, des Knaben Augen' is paired with the restless anxiety of 'Die ihr schwebet'. The text of the latter was drawn from Lope de Vega's 'Cantarcillo de la Virgen', and the same poem is heard, in Spanish, in a very different interpretation of 1940-1 by the Catalan composer **Eduard Toldrà**.

The *10 villancicos españoles* (1932) is one of several works by Cuban composer **Joaquín Nin** that arrange and reimagine Spain's national and regional musical traditions. The villancico is typically a short, simple song which, over time, came to be particularly associated with carols and Christmas. 'Villancico vasco' is a gentle arrangement of the Basque carol 'Hator, hator mutil etxera', which the performers are instructed to approach 'like a berceuse'. From the north to the south-east of Spain, the 'Villancico murciano' begins with a ponderous piano introduction before the singer enters, extolling praise upon Mary on Nochebuena (Christmas Eve). The 'Villancico castellano' is dedicated in the score to the mezzo-soprano Conchita Supervia; it's an upbeat arrangement, with the refrain 'San José era carpintero' appended with a punchy '¡Ay!', after which the devotional 'Villancico asturiano' completes the selection.

The final group begins with **Camille Saint-Saëns's** setting of an Italian poem by Saint Alphonsus Liguori (pub. 1868), before Italian composer **Ottorino Respighi's** setting of the old French carol text *Noël ancien*. **Maurice Ravel's** typically playful poem and music *Noël des jouets* brings to life the shapes, colours, sounds, and materials of Christmas characters imagined as toys, perhaps those of a child's *crèche de Noël* nativity scene. Next, the busy piano part of pianist-composer **Cécile Chaminade's** *Noël des oiseaux* underpins a vibrant setting of Armand Silvestre's multi-layered metaphors. Of the three festive *mélodies* by **Jules Massenet** that conclude the recital, Karg has written of her pleasure in discovering songs 'whose excellence may leave you astonished' but which 'seemed to have been scarcely noticed by posterity'.

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Engelbert Humperdinck (1854-1921)

From *Weihnachtslieder* (1898)

Weihnachten

Adelheid Wette

Christmas

Leise weht's durch alle
Lande
Wie ein Gruss vom
Sternenzelt,
Schlinget neue
Liebesbande
Um die ganze weite
Welt.

Drifting softly across
every land,
like a greeting from the
stars on high,
a new bond of love wraps
itself
around the whole wide
world.

Jedes Herz mit starkem
Triebe
Ist zu Opfern froh bereit,
Denn es naht das Fest der
Liebe,
Denn es naht die
Weihnachtszeit.

Every heart, with strong
desire,
is happy to make sacrifices,
for the festival of love is
drawing near,
for Christmas is drawing
near.

Und schon hat mit tausend
Sternen
Sich des Himmels Glanz
entfacht,
Leise tönt aus
Himmelsfernen
Weihgesang der heil'gen
Nacht.

And the brilliant sky has
already been lit up
by thousands of
stars,
and softly from the distant
reaches of heaven
the solemn hymn of Holy
Night rings out.

Hell aus jedem Fenster
strahlet
Wundersam des
Christbaums Licht,
Und der Freude Schimmer
malet
Sich auf jedem Angesicht.

Brightly from every
window shines
the Christmas tree's
wondrous light,
and a shimmer of joy is
reflected
in every face.

Lichte Himmelsboten
schweben
Ungeseh'n von Haus zu
Haus;
Selig Hehmen, selig
Geben
Geht von ihrer Mitte aus.

Gleaming angels
float
unseen from house to
house;
blessed giving, blessed
receiving
radiates from their midst.

O willkommen,
Weihnachtsabend,
Allen Menschen, gross und
klein!
Friedebringend, froh und
labend
Mögst du allen Herzen sein!

O welcome, Christmas
Eve,
to all people great and
small!
May you refresh all
hearts
with peace and happiness!

Das Licht der Welt

Otto Jacobi

The light of the world

Es strahlt am Himmelsrande
Ein Stern so lieb und mild,
Der stammt aus Morgenlande,
Und schwebt durch das
Gefild.

A loving and gentle star
shines at the heaven's rim,
it comes from the East
and floats through the
firmament.

Er schwebt mit Silberblinken
Den Weisen hell
voran,
Und kommt auch mir zu
winken,
Wie er dereinst gethan.

Its silvery twinkling
lights the Wise Men on
their way,
and beckons to me
too,
as it used to do.

Er ist mir nicht verloren,
Ich seh' ihn, wo er
hält;
Uns ist der Christ geboren,
Der Heiland dieser Welt!

It is not lost to me.
I can see where it has
come to rest;
Christ is born unto us,
the Saviour of this world!

Christkindleins Wiegenlied

Traditional

The Infant Jesus's lullaby

O Jesulein zart,
O Jesulein zart,
Das Kripplein ist hart,
Wie liegst du so hart,
Ach schlaf, ach tu die
Äugelein zu,
Schlaf, und gieb uns die
ewige Ruh.

O gentle little Jesus,
O gentle little Jesus,
your little crib is hard,
how hard is your bed,
ah sleep, ah close your
little eyes,
sleep, and grant us
eternal peace.

Nichts mehr sich bewegt,
kein Mäuslein sich regt,
Zu schlafen beginnt das
herzige Kind.
Schlaf denn und tu dein'
Äuglein zu,
Schlaf und gib uns die ewige
Ruh!
Nichts mehr man dann singt,
kein Stimmlein mehr
klingt:
Schlaf, Jesulein zart, von
göttlicher Art!

Nothing now moves, no
mouse stirs,
the sweet child is growing
drowsy.
sleep, then, and close
your little eyes,
sleep and grant us
eternal peace!
All singing now has
ended, all voices are
quiet:
sleep, gentle and divine
little Jesus.

Please do not turn the page until the song and its accompaniment have ended.

Weihnachtsfreude

Richard Dehmel

Aus trauter Kindheit Tagen
Steigt hold ein Traum
empor,
Draus hebt ein heimlich
Klingen
Sich zaubrisch süß zum Ohr.
O Weihnachtsfreud, o sel'ge
Zeit
Voll stiller Liebe, voll
jauchzend froher Lust!
Wie dehnte dein Nahen die
junge Brust!

Die Knabenjahre
schwanden,
Der Jüngling zog hinaus,
Zu ringen mit dem Leben,
Fern lag das
Elternhaus.
O Weihnachtsfreud, o sel'ge
Zeit
Voll stiller Liebe, voll
jauchzend froher Lust!
Wie schwoll da von
Sehnsucht des Jünglings
Brust!

Nun ist er fest geworden
In Lebens Weh und Glück,
Doch sanft und reich wie
einstens
Klingts heut in ihm zurück:
O Weihnachtsfreud, o sel'ge
Zeit
Voll stiller Liebe, voll
jauchzend froher Lust!
Wie dehnt du noch heute
des Mannes Brust!
O Weihnachtsfreud, o
Weihnachtsfreud,
O sel'ge, sel'ge Zeit!
O Weihnachtsfreud!

Christmas joy

A blessed dream rises up
from the beloved days of
childhood,
and wondrously sweet
and mysterious music
assails the ear.
O Christmas joy, O
blessed time,
full of silent love and
joyous happiness!
How your advent swells
the child's heart!

The years of boyhood are
past,
the young man emerged
to struggle with life,
the parental home is far
away.
O Christmas joy, O
blessed time,
full of silent love and
happiness!
How the young man's
heart did swell with
longing!

Now He is well versed
in life's grief and joy,
but today He hears the
music as gently and richly
as He did long ago:
O Christmas joy, O
blessed time
full of silent love and
happiness!
How you swell today the
grown man's heart!
O Christmas joy, O
Christmas joy,
O blessed, blessed time!
O Christmas joy!

Peter Cornelius (1824-1874)

From *Weihnachtslieder Op. 8*

(1856, rev. 1859)

*Peter Cornelius, trans. HN
Bate*

Christbaum

Wie schön geschmückt der
festliche Raum!
Die Lichter funkeln am
Weihnachtsbaum!

Christmas Carols

The Christmas tree

How lovely the festive
room looks!
The candles glitter on the
Christmas tree!

O fröhliche Zeit, o seliger
Traum!
Die Mutter sitzt in der Kinder
Kreis,
Nun schweiget alles auf ihr
Geheiss,
Sie singet des Christkinds
Lob und Preis,
Und rings vom
Weihnachtsbaum erhellt
Ist schön in Bildern
aufgestellt
Des heiligen Buches
Palmenwelt.
Die Kinder schauen der
Bilder Pracht,
Und haben wohl des
Singens Acht,
Das tönt so süß in der
Weihenacht.
O glücklicher Kreis im
festlichen Raum,
O gold'ne Lichter am
Weihnachtsbaum,
O fröhliche Zeit, o seliger
Traum!

Die Hirten

Hirten wachen im
Feld,
Nacht ist rings auf der
Welt,
Wach sind die Hirten
alleine
Im Haine.

Und ein Engel so licht
Grüßet die Hirten und
spricht:
'Christ, das Heil aller
Frommen,
Ist kommen!'

Engel singen unher:
'Gott im Himmel sei Ehr!'
Und den Menschen hienieden
Sei Freiden!'

Eilen die Hirten
fort,
Eilen zum heil'gen Ort,
Beten an in den Windlein
Das Kindlein.

O joyful time, O blissful
vision!
Mother sits with her
children around her,
all are now silent at her
bidding,
she sings the Christ-
child's praise and glory,
lit all around by the
Christmas tree
beautifully displayed in
pictures -
the palm-tree world of
the Holy Book.
The children gaze at the
pictures' splendour,
and listen attentively to
the singing
that sounds so sweet in
the Christmas night.
O happy circle in the
festive room,
O golden candles on the
Christmas tree,
O joyful time, O blissful
vision!

The Shepherds

Shepherds keep watch in
the field,
night lies on the world
around,
only the shepherds are
awake
in the grove.

And an angel so bright
greet the shepherds,
saying:
'Christ, the Saviour of the
pious,
is come!'

Angels sing all around:
'Glory be to God on high,
and to men on earth
be peace!'

The shepherds hasten
away,
hasten to the holy place,
to adore the infant
in his swaddling clothes.

Die Könige

Drei Kön'ge wandern aus
Morgenland;
Ein Sternlein führt sie Zum
Jordanstrand.
In Juda fragen und forschen
die drei,
Wo der neugeborene König
sei?
Sie wollen Weihrauch,
Myrrhen und gold
Dem Kinde spenden zum
Opfersold.

Und hell erglänzet des
Sternes Schein:
Zum Stalle gehen die Kön'ge
ein;
Das Knäblein schau'n sie
wonniglich,
Anbetend neigen die Könige
sich;
Sie bringen Weihrauch,
Myrrhen und Gold
Zum Opfer dar dem
Knäblein hold.

O Menschenkind! halte
treulich Schritt!
Die Kön'ge wandern, o
wandre mit!
Der Stern der Liebe, der
Gnade Stern
Erhelle dein Ziel, so du
suchst den Herrn,
Und fehlen Weihrauch,
Myrrhen und Gold,
Schenke dein Herz dem
Knäblein hold!

Christkind

Das einst ein Kind auf Erden
war,
Christkindlein kommt noch
jedes Jahr.

Kommet vom hohen
Sternzelt,
Freut und beglückt alle
Welt.

Mit Kindern feiert's froh den
Tag,
Wo Christkind in der Krippe
lag.

The Kings

Three kings journey from
the East,
a little star leads them to
Jordan's banks,
in Judaea the three of
them seek and inquire
where the new-born king
might be.
They wish to make
offerings to the child:
gold, frankincense and
myrrh.

And brightly shines the
light of the star.
The three kings enter the
stable,
they gaze in rapture at
the child,
bowing low in
adoration,
gold, frankincense and
myrrh
they bring to the child as
offering.

O child of man! Follow
them faithfully,
the kings are journeying,
O journey too!
Let the star of love, the
star of grace,
light your way as you
seek the Lord,
and if you lack frankincense,
myrrh and gold,
give your heart to that
sweet child!

The Christ-child

Once a baby on this
earth,
the Christ-child still
returns each year.

He comes from the
firmament on high,
filling all the world with
gladness and joy.

He joins the children in
honouring the day
when the Christ-child lay
in the manger.

Den Christbaum zündet's
überall,
Weckt Orgelklang und
Glockenschall.

Christkindlein kommt zu
Arm und Reich,
Die Guten sind ihm alle
gleich.

Danket ihm denn und grüsst
es fein,
Auch euch beglückte
Christkindlein.

He lights Christmas trees
everywhere,
makes organs peal and
bells ring.

The Christ-child comes to
both rich and poor,
the virtuous to Him are all
alike.

So give Him thanks and
greet Him well,
the Christ-child has made
you happy too.

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Weihnachtslied (1832)

*Christian Fürchtegott
Gellert*

Christmas carol

Auf, schicke dich
Recht feierlich
Des Heilands Fest mit
Danken zu begehen;
Lieb' ist der Dank,
Der Lobgesang,
Durch den wir ihn, den Gott
der Lieb', erhöhen.

Arise,
prepare with true solemnity
to celebrate with thanks
the Saviour's festival.
Love is the thanks,
the song of praise,
through which we exalt
Him, the God of Love.

Sprich dankbar froh:
Gott hat also
Die Welt in seinem Sohn
geliebet!
O, wer bin ich,
Herr, dass du mich
So herrlich hoch in deinem
Sohn geliebet?

Utter with joy your gratitude:
God, in this fashion,
has loved the world in His
Son!
O who am I,
Lord, that you
have loved me with such
splendour and exaltation!

Joseph Marx (1882-1964)

Christbaum (1908) <i>Christiane Rosalia Friederik</i>	Christmas tree
Hörst auch Du die leisen Stimmen Aus den bunten Kerzlein dringen? Die vegessenen Gebete Aus den Tannenzweiglein singen?	Can you hear the soft voices emerging from the bright candles? The forgotten prayers singing from the fir-tree branches?
Hörst Du auch das schüchternfrohe, Helle Kinderlachen klingen? Schaust auch Du den stillen Engel Mit den reinen, weißen Schwingen?	Can you also hear the bashful-happy laughter of the children resounding brightly? Can you also see the silent angel with the pure, white wings?
Schaust auch Du Dich selber wieder Fern und fremd nur wie im Traume? Grüsst auch Dich mit Märchenaugen Deine Kindheit aus dem Baume?	Can you also see yourself again, distant and strange as if in a dream? Does your own childhood also greet you from the tree with wondrous eyes?

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

Weihnachtsgefühl (1899) <i>Martin Greif</i>	Christmas feeling
Naht die jubelvolle Zeit, Kommt auch mir ein Sehnen; Längst entfloh'ner Seligkeit Denk' ich nach mit Tränen.	When the joyful time draws near, I feel a yearning; tearfully I think of the rapture that vanished long ago.
Und ich schaue, wie im Traum Ihren fernen Schimmer Weben um den Weihnachtsbaum, Keht sie selbst auch nimmer.	And as in a dream I see its distant shimmer weave around the Christmas tree, though rapture itself never returns.

Die heiligen drei Könige aus Morgenland Op. 56 No. 6 (1906) <i>Heinrich Heine</i>	The three holy kings from Eastern Lands
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Die heiligen drei Könige aus Morgenland, Sie frugen in jedem Städtchen: 'Wo geht der Weg nach Bethlehem, Ihr lieben Buben und Mädchen?'	The three holy kings from Eastern Lands, they asked in every town: 'Where is the way to Bethlehem, dear little boys and girls?'
Die Jungen und Alten, sie wussten's nicht, Die Könige zogen weiter; Sie folgten einem goldenen Stern, Der leuchtete lieblich und heiter.	Young and old, they did not know; the three kings journeyed on; they followed a star of golden light that shone down bright and cheerily.
Der Stern blieb stehn über Josephs Haus, Da sind sie hineingegangen; Das Öchslein brüllte, das Kindlein schrie, Die heiligen drei Könige sangen.	The star stood still over Joseph's house, and there they went inside; the little ox bellowed, the baby cried, the three holy kings, they sang.

Interval

Max Reger (1873-1916)

Maria am Rosenstrauch from 5 Neue Kinderlieder Op. 142 (1915) <i>Ernst Ludwig Schellenberg</i>	Mary by the rosebush
Maria sitzt am Rosenbusch Und wiegt den Jesusknaben; Kommen drei Englein in leichtem Husch Und bringen die schönsten Gaben.	Mary sits by the rosebush And cradles the boy Jesus; Three little angels swoop down And bring the loveliest gifts.
Tragen mit Düften süß und lind Drei weisse Rosen blüten, Wollen das liebe Jesuskind Ganz sanft im Schlaf behüten!	Three blossoming roses they bring, Shedding sweet and gentle fragrance, Wishing to watch over the Christ Child, Deep in tender sleep!

Hugo Wolf (1860-1903)

From *Spanisches Liederbuch Geistliche Lieder*

(1889-90)

Ach, des Knaben Augen

Juan López de Úbeda trans.

Paul Heyse

Ach, des Knaben Augen sind
Mir so schön und klar
erschienen,
Und ein Etwas strahlt aus
ihnen,
Das mein ganzes Herz
gewinnt.

Blickt er doch mit diesen
süssen
Augen nach den meinen hin!
Säh er dann sein Bild
darin,
Würd er wohl mich liebend
grüssen.
Und so geb ich ganz mich hin,
Seinen Augen nur zu
dienen,
Denn ein Etwas strahlt aus
ihnen,
Das mein ganzes Herz
gewinnt.

Die ihr schwebet

Lope de Vega trans.

Emanuel Geibel

Die ihr schwebet
Um diese Palmen
In Nacht und Wind,
Ihr heil'gen Engel,
Stillet die Wipfel!
Es schlummert mein Kind.

Ihr Palmen von Bethlehem
Im Windesbrausen,
Wie mögt ihr heute
So zornig sausen!
O rauscht nicht also!
Schweiget, neiget
Euch Leis' und lind;
Stillet die Wipfel!
Es schlummert mein Kind.

Der Himmelsknabe
Duldet Beschwerde,
Ach, wie so müd' er ward
Vom Leid der
Erde.
Ach nun im Schlaf ihm

Ah, the Infant's eyes

Ah, the Infant's eyes seem
so beautiful and clear to
me,
and a radiance streams
from them
that captures my whole
heart.

If only he would
turn
those sweet eyes on mine!
If then he saw his image
reflected there,
he would surely greet me
lovingly.
So I surrender myself
to the sole service of his
eyes,
for a radiance shines from
them
that captures my whole
heart.

You who hover

You who hover
About these palms
In night and wind,
You holy angels,
Silence the treetops!
My child is sleeping.

You palms of Bethlehem
In the raging wind,
Why do you bluster
So angrily today?
Oh roar not so!
Be still, lean
Calmly and gently over us;
Silence the treetops!
My child is sleeping.

The heavenly babe
Bears many burdens,
Ah, how weary he has grown
With the sorrows of this
world.
Ah, now that in sleep

Leise gesänftigt
Die Qual zerrinnt,
Stillet die Wipfel!
Es schlummert mein Kind.

Grimmige Kälte
Sauset hernieder,
Womit nur deck' ich
Des Kindleins Glieder!
O all ihr Engel
Die ihr geflügelt
Wandelt im Wind,
Stillet die Wipfel!
Es schlummert mein Kind.

Eduard Toldrà (1895-1962)

Cantarcillo (1941)

Lope de Vega

Pues andáis en las
palmas,
Ángeles santos,
Que se duerme mi niño,
Tened los ramos.

Palmas de Belén
Que mueven airados
Los furiosos vientos
Que suenan tanto:
No le hagáis ruido,
Corred más paso,
Que se duerme mi niño,
Tened los ramos.

El niño divino,
Que está cansado
De llorar en la tierra
Por su descanso,
Sosegar quiere un poco
Del tierno llanto.
Que se duerme mi niño,
Tened los ramos.

Rigurosos yelos
Le están cercando;
Ya veis que no tengo
Con qué guardarlo.
Ángeles divinos
Que váis volando,
Que se duerme mi niño,
Tened los ramos.

His pains
Are gently eased,
Silence the treetops!
My child is sleeping.

Bitter cold winds
Blow down on us,
With what shall I cover
My little child's limbs?
O all you angels
Who wing your way
On the winds,
Silence the treetops!
My child is sleeping.

A Little Carol

Since you hover about
the palms,
holy angels,
hold back the boughs,
for my Child is sleeping!

Palms of Bethlehem,
tossed angrily
by the raging winds
that roar so loud,
do not bluster so,
blow more gently:
hold back the boughs,
for my Child is sleeping!

The holy Child,
who is weary
of weeping on earth
for peace,
craves a little respite
from his piteous weeping:
hold back the boughs,
for my Child is sleeping!

Bitter frost
surround him;
see, I have nothing
with which to shield him.
Blessed angels
flying by,
hold back the boughs,
for my Child is sleeping!

*Please do not turn the page until the song and its
accompaniment have ended.*

Joaquín Nin (1879-1949)

From 10 villancicos españoles (1932)
Traditional

Villancico vasco

Ator, ator mutil etxera,
Gastaña zimelak jatera
Gabon gaba ospatuteko
Aitaren ta amaren onduan;
Ikusiko dok aita bareka
Amabe guztiz
kontentuz.

Basque folk carol

Come, come home child,
to eat soft chestnuts
to celebrate Christmas night
with your mother and father;
you will see father laugh
and mother too will be
very happy.

Villancico murciano

Esta noche es Nochebuena
Buena noche de cantar
Que está la Virgen Encinta
Y a las doce ha de a
lumbrar.
Gloria a la Virgen Santísima
Que esta noche ha de a
lumbrar.
Gloria al Padre, gloria al
Hijo
Gloria a la Virgen María ¡Ay!

Folk carol from Murcia

Tonight is Christmas Eve,
a good night of singing,
when the Virgin is pregnant
and at midnight has to
give birth.
Glory to the Holy Virgin
who this night has to give
bith!
Glory to the Father, Glory
to the Son
Glory to the Virgin Mary.

Villancico castellano

San José era carpintero,
¡Ay!
Y la Virgen lavandera,
¡Ay!
El Niño bajó del
cielo
En una noche lunera.
El Niño vino del aire
Camino del paraíso.

Castilian carol

Saint Joseph was a
carpenter. Ah!
And the Virgin a
washerwoman. Ah!
The Child came down
from heaven
on a moonlight night.
The Child came from the air
on the road to Paradise.

Villancico asturiano

No hay tal andar como andar
a la luna
Y vereis el Niño en la
cuna
Que nació en la noche ascura,
De Bethlén en un portal
Que no hay tal andar.
No hay tal andar como
buscar a Cristo,
No hay tal andar como a
Cristo buscar,
Que no hay tal andar.

Asturian carol

Nothing can compare
with a walk at once,
when you see the Child in
the cradle,
born in the dark night
at Bethlehem in a stable.
Nothing can compare.
Nothing can compare
with seeking Christ,
with seeking Christ
nothing can compare,
nothing can compare.

No hay tal andar como andar
a las dos
Y vereis al Hijo de
Dios
Que por nos salvar a nos
Sangre quiso derramar
Que no hay tal andar.
No hay tal andar como
buscar a Cristo,
No hay tal andar como a
Cristo buscar,
No hay tal andar.

Nothing can compare
with a walk at two,
when you see the Son of
God,
who to save us
willingly shed his blood.
Nothing can compare.
Nothing can compare
with seeking Christ,
with seeking Christ
nothing can compare.
nothing can compare.

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)

La madonna col
bambino (c.1855)
Alphonsus Liguori

Fermarono i cieli
La loro armonia,
Cantando Maria
La nanna a Gesù.

Madonna and Child

The heavens ceased
their music-making
as Mary sang a lullaby
to her child Jesus.

Con voce divina,
La Vergine bella,
Più vaga che stella
Diceva così:

In tones divine,
the fair Virgin,
lovelier than a star,
sang these words:

Mio Figlio, mio Dio,
Mio caro tesoro,
Tu dormi, ed io
moro
Per tanta beltà.

My Son, my God,
my dearest treasure,
you are sleeping, and I
shall die
at the sight of such beauty.

Dormendo, mio bene,
Tua madre non miri;
Ma l'aura, che spiri,
È fuoco per me.

My love, as you slumber
you look not at your mother;
but the air you breathe
is as fire to me.

Cogl'occhi serrati
Il cor mi ferite;
Or quando li aprite
Per me che sarà?

Even your closed eyes
wound my heart;
what will become of me
when you open them?

Le guance di rose
Mi rubano il core.
O Dio! Che mi moro
Per tanta beltà!

Your rosy cheeks
have stolen my heart.
O God! I shall die at the
sight of such beauty!

Mi sforza a baciarti
Un labbro sì raro;
Perdonami, o caro,
Non posso più, no!

Your lips so rare
compel me to kiss you;
forgive me, my darling,
I can bear no more, no!

Si tace; ed al petto Stringendo il bambino, Al volto divino Un bacio donò.	She fell silent; and clutching her child to her chest, placed a kiss upon his divine face.
Si desta il bambino, E tutto amoroso Con occhio vezzoso Sua madre guardò.	The baby awoke and, full of love, turned his fair eyes to gaze upon his mother.
O Dio! ch'alla madre Quel occhio, quel sguardo Fu strale, fu dardo Che l'alma ferì!	O God! those eyes, that gaze, were darts, were arrows that wounded the soul of his mother!
E tu non languisci, O dura alma mia, Vedendo Maria Languir per Gesù!	O hard heart of mine, do you feel no pain when you see how Mary suffers for Jesus?
Se tardi v'amai Bellezze divine	Though I was late to love you, O beauties divine,
Or mai senza fine Per voi arderò.	I shall now burn with love for you evermore.
Il figlio, e la madre, La madre col figlio, La rosa col giglio Quest'alma vorrà.	My soul will always love the child and his mother, the mother and her child, the rose and the lily.

Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936)

Noël ancien (1909) *Anonymous*

Ancient Noël

Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici, Dévotes gens, Crions à Dieu merci, Chantons Noël pour le Roi nouvelet.	Noël anew, Nöel we sing here; devout folk, cry thanks to God, let us sing Noël for the newborn King.
Quand m'éveillai, Ayant assez dormi, J'ouvris les yeux, Vis un arbre fleuri, Dont il sortait un bouton vermeillet.	When I awoke, having slept long enough, I opened my eyes, to see a tree wreathed in flowers, from which emerged a crimson bud.

Quand je le vis, Mon cœur fut réjoui Car grand' beauté Resplendissait en lui, Comme soleil levant au matinet.	When I saw it, my heart rejoiced for great beauty was radiant within it, like sun rising at dawn.
D'un angelet Après les chants ouïs Qu'aux pasteurs disait: 'Partez d'ici, en Bethléem trouverez l'agnelet.'	I then heard the songs of an angel who said to the shepherds: 'Leave this place; in Bethlehem you will find the newborn lamb.'
En Bethléem Marie et Joseph Vis, l'âne et le bœuf Près de l'Enfant au lit: La crèche était au lieu d'un bercelet.	In Bethlehem I saw Mary and Joseph, the donkey and the ox beside the Child lying abed: the crib was in place of a cradle.
L'étoile y vis Qui dans la nuit éclaircit, Qui d'Orient D'où son éclat jaillit En Bethléem les trois Rois amenait.	I saw the star which lit up the night, and which from the East where its light had arisen brought the three Kings to Bethlehem.
L'un portait l'or Et l'autre offrait la myrrhe, Et l'autre encens qu'il faisait bon sentir: Du Paradis semblait le jardinet!	One brought gold and another offered myrrh, and the other sweet- smelling incense: the little garden seemed like Paradise!

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Noël des jouets (1905) The toys’ Christmas

Maurice Ravel

Le troupeau verni des moutons	The varnished flock of sheep
Roule en tumulte vers la crèche.	trundles noisily towards the crib.
Les lapins tambours, brefs et rêches,	The rabbit drummers, brusque and abrasive,
Couvrent leurs aigres mirlitons.	drown out their shrill reed flutes.
Vierge Marie, en crinoline, Ses yeux d’émail sans cesse ouverts,	The Virgin Mary, in crinoline, her enamelled eyes forever open,
En attendant Bonhomme hiver, Veille Jésus qui se dodine.	awaiting old man winter, keeps watch over Jesus, rocked to sleep.
Car, près de là, sous un sapin,	For close by, beneath a fir tree,
Furtif, emmitoufflé dans l’ombre	furtive, cloaked in the shadow
Du bois, Belzébuth, le chien sombre,	of the woods, Beelzebub, the baleful dog,
Guette l’Enfant de sucre peint.	lies in wait for the painted sugar Child.
Mais les beaux anges incassables	But the beautiful unbreakable angels
Suspendus par des fils d’archal	hung by their brass wires
Du haut de l’arbuste hiémal	from the top of the winter evergreen
Assurent la paix des étables.	ensure the peace of the stables.
Et leur vol de clinquant vermeil	And their sequinned silver-gilt flight
Qui cliquette en bruits symétriques	jingling with symmetrical sounds
S’accorde au bétail mécanique	harmonises with the mechanical livestock,
Dont la voix grêle bête:	voices battering and bleating:
‘Noël! Noël! Noël!’	‘Noël! Noël! Noël!’

Cécile Chaminade (1857-1944)

Le Noël des oiseaux Noël of the birds

(pub. 1893)

Armand Silvestre

Petit Jésus, maître du ciel,	Little Jesus, master of heaven,
Que les anges chantant Noël	may the angels singing Noël,
Veillent sous leurs blancheurs ailées,	keeping watch beneath their winged whiteness,
Viens donc, viens donc pour les petits oiseaux	make haste, make haste to the little birds
Qui frissonnent au bord des eaux gelées	who tremble beside the frozen waters.
Bonnes gens qui sur le chemin Passez, un rosaire à la main,	Good folk who pass by on the way, rosary in hand,
Dont l’âme a des avés pour ailes,	whose souls have Ave Marias for wings,
Priez, priez pour les petits oiseaux	pray, pray for the little birds
Dont la neige a trempé les os si frères.	whose frail bones have been drenched with snow.
Cloches sonores au doux bruit,	Bells ringing out with a sweet timbre,
Qui pour la messe de minuit Au fond de l’air tinte	which for midnight mass chime brightly through the air,
agiles,	sound, sound for the little birds,
Sonnez, sonnez pour les petits oiseaux	their nests are akin to fragile cradles.
Les nids sont frères des berceaux fragiles.	
Beaux anges, nos frères ailés,	Lovely angels, our winged brothers
Qui près de la crèche volez,	who fly around the manger,
Vous que Dieu sur la terre envoie,	you whom God sends to earth,
Apportez, apportez aux petits oiseaux	bring joy, bring joy to the little birds
Grelottant parmi les roseaux la joie.	shivering among the reeds.

Jules Massenet (1842-1912)

Le Noël des humbles Noël of the meek
(1908)

Jean Aicard

L'enfant est nu; Tout un peuple est venu Dans l'étable, L'âne est joyeux Et le bœuf aux grands yeux, Charitable. Noël! Noël! Noël! Noël!	The child is naked; a crowd has gathered in the stable, the ass is joyful and the ox with its big eyes, compassionate. Noël! Noël! Noël! Noël!
Jésus en pleurs Vient souffrir nos malheurs: Il soupire... Lors, un berger Chante pour l'obliger A sourire. Noël! Noël! Noël! Noël!	Jesus in tears comes to suffer our misfortunes: he sighs... then, a shepherd sings to make him smile. Noël! Noël! Noël! Noël!
Toc, toc, dehors, C'est, portant des trésors En hommages, Trois rois puissants, L'or, la myrrhe et l'encens, Les rois mages. Noël! Noël! Noël! Noël!	Knock knock, outside, bringing treasures as tribute, it is three powerful kings, gold, myrrh and incense, the three wise men. Noël! Noël! Noël! Noël!
Mais le berger, Qu'il faudrait déranger, Chante et prie.. 'Eh bien, les rois Attendront tous les trois,' Dit Marie. Noël! Noël! Noël! Noël!	But the shepherd, whom they would have to disturb, is singing and praying... 'Well then, the kings can all three of them wait,' says Mary. Noël! Noël! Noël! Noël!

Noël de fleurs (1912)

Louis Schneider

Il pleut des iris, des jasmins, des roses, Dans la pauvre étable où naîtra l'Enfant; Les fleurs doucement sur le sol se posent Pour former un berceau charmant. Il pleut des iris, des jasmins, des roses, Sur l'humble plancher où l'Enfant repose. Noël! C'est Noël! au ciel radieux Monte l'encens pur, présent des Rois Mages, Bergers et puissants, acclamez les Cieux; Le Sauveur naissant attend vos hommages. Il pleut des iris, des jasmins, des roses. Sur l'humble plancher où l'Enfant repose. Noël! Noël! Noël! Noël!	It is raining irises, jasmine and roses in the lowly stable where the Child will be born; the flowers gently settle on the ground to form an enchanting cradle. It is raining irises, jasmine and roses on the humble floor where the Child lies. Christmas! It is Christmas! towards the radiant sky rises pure incense, a gift from the Wise Men; shepherds and the powerful, exalt the Heavens; the new-born Saviour awaits your offerings. It is raining irises, jasmine and roses on the humble floor where the Child lies. Noël! Noël! Noël! Noël!
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Noël païen (1886)

Armand Silvestre

Noël! Noël!
Sous le ciel étonné,
C'est quand Mai nous rend
sa caresse
Que nous chantons plein
d'allégresse:
Noël! Noël! L'amour est né!

Non pareil aux Jésus
moroses
Sous l'haleine des bœufs
couchés,
Le Dieu qui remet nos
péchés
Est né dans un berceau de
roses;
Et l'étoile qui, nous
cherchant,
Nous a guidés de sa lumière,
C'est Vénus! debout la
première,
Sur les marches d'or du
couchant,
Sous le ciel étonné,
C'est quand Mai nous rend
sa caresse
Que nous chantons plein
d'allégresse:
Noël! Noël! L'amour est né!

Ce n'est pas un troupeau de
mages
Vêtus comme des
Nécromans,
C'est le chœur fleuri des
amants
Qui vient lui rendre ses
hommages!
Car le Dieu que nous
adorons,
Quand vient le temps des
fêtes saintes,
Veut des couronnes
d'hyacinthes
Et des pervenches à nos
fronts!
Sous le ciel étonné,
C'est quand Mai nous rend
sa caresse
Que nous chantons plein
d'allégresse,
Noël! Noël! L'amour est né!

Pagan Noël

Noël! Noël!
Beneath the dazzling sky,
it's when May returns her
caress to us
that we sing
joyfully:
Noël! Noël! Love is born!

Nothing like some dreary
Jesus
lying beneath the breath
of the oxen,
the God who forgives our
sins
is born in a cradle of
roses;
and the star which,
searching for us,
guided us with its light,
is Venus! first to
stand
on the golden steps of
the setting sun;
beneath the dazzling sky,
it's when May returns her
caress to us
that we sing
joyfully:
Noël! Noël! Love is born!

It's not a herd of wise
men
dressed like
Necromancers,
it's the choir of lovers
bedecked in flowers
who come to bring him
their tributes!
For the God whom we
love,
when holy days come
around,
wants garlands of
hyacinths
and periwinkles on our
foreheads!
Beneath the dazzling sky,
it's when May returns her
caress to us
that we sing
joyfully:
Noël! Noël! Love is born!

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