

All the Long Echoes

A Score of Solstice Celebrations



SEVENTIMES SALT

Karen Burciaga, *violin, viola, guitar, alto*
Dan Meyers, *recorders, flutes, bagpipes, percussion, baritone*
David H. Miller, *viola da gamba, baritone*
Josh Schreiber, *viola da gamba, bass*
Matthew Wright, *lute, tenor*

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Eliot Church, Newton, MA

All the Long Echoes

Joseph est bien marié	16th c. French, arr. D. Meyers
The Night Watch As it fell on a holie eve Rorate coeli	Anthony Holborne (1545-1602) Anthony Holborne trad. Scottish, arr. D. Meyers
Bethlehem Down The Gower Wassail The Halsway Carol	Peter Warlock (1894-1930) trad. English, arr. Steeleye Span Nigel Eaton (b. 1966)
While shepherds watched their flocks	Daniel Read (1737-1858)
There is no rose New Year's Eve (for Aimee) A Jolly Wassail Bowl	D.C. Culbertson (1951-2004) David Douglass (b. 1951) trad. English, arr. M. Wright
Travellers' Prayer The Solstice Maid The Unconquered Sun	John Renbourn (1944-2015) Jay Ungar (b. 1946) Ken Nicol (b. 1951) arr. Burciaga/Wright
Please to see the King Christmas Eve The Wise Maid Branle de l'Official	trad. Welsh, arr. Steeleye Span trad. Irish trad. Irish <i>Orchesographie</i> (1588)

with Guests of Solstice Past & Present

Elise Groves, *soprano*
Elizabeth Hardy, *bagpipes, recorder, dulcian*
Barbara Allen Hill, *mezzo/soprano*
Teri Kowiak, *mezzo-soprano*
Jaya Lakshminarayanan, *soprano, harp*
Joshua T. Lawton, *baritone*
Jean Monroe, *soprano, melodica, piano*
Ari Nieh, *bass-baritone*
Beth Schreiber, *soprano, ukulele*
Matthew Stein, *dulcian, baritone*

and

Michael Barrett, *tenor*
Matthew Groves, *trombone*
Shelley Otis, *harp*
Tobi Szüts, *viola da gamba*

About the Program

Welcome to our twentieth annual winter solstice celebration! Seven Times Salt usually focuses on early music of Europe, but every December we take the opportunity to roam through the centuries and perform music of varied places and times including the modern day. Guests joining us for the first time may recognize a song or two, but will more likely hear wonderful seasonal tunes never encountered before. Friends of solstices past will hear old favorites as well as a few forgotten treasures from the last 20 years. We hope our music brings light into this time of year as we enjoy the Sun's return.

We begin in 16th-c. France with **Joseph est bien marié**, the time-honored story of a carpenter, a maid, and...a set of bagpipes. This song opened our first solstice concert back in 2003, and we have reworked it into a special version with "more bagpipes," as our friend Kyle is wont to cheer. **The Night Watch** and **As it fell on a holie eve** are found in Holborne's *Pavans, Galliards and Almains* of 1599. A lutenist and Gentleman Usher to Elizabeth I, he composed numerous works for instrumental consort. These tunes may or may not have been intended for holiday use, but their titles suit the occasion. Facing the north wind, we perform **Rorate coeli desuper** by Scottish diplomat William Dunbar. His poem's first line ("drop down, ye heavens") comes from the Advent liturgy. Dunbar was a diverse and prolific author who produced works from hymns to satire, serene elegy to obscene comedy, with ease. His text is set to the tune "Strily Vale" attributed to 18th-c. composer James Oswald, and this year Dan arranged it anew, pairing it with another 18th-c. tune, "My Ain Kind Dearie."

In December 1927, Peter Warlock and his poet-friend Bruce Blunt, hoping "to get suitably drunk at Christmas," entered a piece in *The Telegraph's* carol competition. Blunt thought of the words of **Bethlehem Down** on a stretch of moonlit path between two pubs in Hampshire and sent the poem to Warlock who promptly composed the music. Their gorgeous, haunting carol won and was printed on Christmas Eve (in Renaissance notation, no less), and the pair enjoyed an "immortal carouse." Next we present two British folk songs, one ancient and one new. **The Gower Wassail** comes from the ancient wassailing tradition in Gower in the south of Wales. Our version is inspired by famed folk rock band Steeleye Span, who recorded it in 1971. Unlike some cheerful wassails, Gower has a slightly darker feel and a wonderful verse that reflects the pagan practices of ancient Britain and perfectly suits the winter solstice: "We know by the moon that we are not too soon..." **The Halsway Carol** began as the "Halsway Schottische," written in 2010 by English hurdy-gurdy player Nigel Eaton. It refers to Halsway Manor in England, a centre for the folk arts housed in a 15th-c. home, which offers courses in traditional music, dance, song, and storytelling to people of all ages. Nigel's friend Iain Frisk wrote words for the tune the following year, and we are so glad to have discovered this beautiful solstice song. We follow it with the wonderful tune "Tom Kruskal's" by New England musicians Emily Troll and Amelia Mason.

Shifting gears, we take a brief trip across the ocean to early America with **While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks**. This rousing fuguig tune comes from Connecticut general store owner Daniel Read's *The American Singing Book*, the most-bought music book in the nation from 1785-1790. "Sherburne" is the name of the tune itself, and traditionally could have been used with any text that happened to fit the rhythm.

Each year, we honor absent friends through music, and tonight's program offers pieces written by and for some very special people. Matt's friend Dawn Culbertson, composer of this setting of **There is no rose**, was a lutenist and prolific journalist from Baltimore. Culbertson composed in a harmonic language that straddled early music and modern practice; here she sets the medieval text to rich and dissonantly beautiful textures. Chicago-based violinist David Douglass, our friend and mentor, wrote the beautiful piece **New Year's Eve**, in which he interweaves a sprightly English country dance tune with stately chaconne-like interludes. David dedicated the piece to his mother Aimee. On a more joyful note, one thing the pandemic has taught us is how to make music remotely, and here we've used these skills to present a brand new version of **A Jolly Wassail Bowl**. This collaboration includes guests of solstice concerts past who now live in locales spanning from California to England.

We once asked English folk icon John Renbourn if we could perform his wonderful **Travellers' Prayer**. He was kind enough not only to immediately send us the score, but also read all about us, listened

to our sound clips, and infamously said, “You Salts sound wonderful. You should come over to the old country and shake us up.” Renbourn made Scotland his home for the last twenty years of his life; he based this piece on a traditional folk prayer called “The New Moon” collected in Scotland’s Western Isles in the 19th century. It, along with several hundred such folk blessings, charms, and incantations was published in 1900 in the multi-volume *Carmina Gadelica* (Gaelic Songs), a fascinating record of pre-Christian traditions in Scotland. Revered New York fiddler Jay Ungar wrote **The Solstice Maid** in 2010 in honor of both the winter and summer solstices. Its beautiful, melancholy lilt suits a cold clear night, when we look up at the December moon. Now, we arrive at the year’s turning point and celebrate the return of the Sun. **The Unconquered Sun** by the iconic folk-rock band Steeleye Span has been a favorite ever since their album “Winter” came out in 2004. Singer Ken Nicol comments, “In the northern latitudes...solstice has been an important time for celebration throughout the ages. On this shortest day of the year, the sun is at its lowest and weakest, a pivot point from which the light will grow stronger and brighter. The Romans called it Dies Natalis Invicti Solis, the Birthday of the Unconquered Sun.” Accompanied by a few cups of stingo, we invented a chorus combining tidbits of the dance tunes Halfe Hannikin along with Steeleye Span’s original song.

We bid you adieu with a final set of tunes. **Please to See the King** is connected with St. Stephen's day festivities on December 26. The wren (king of the birds) represented the death of winter and the old year. Groups of ruffians called wrenboys would capture a bird and sing as they paraded through the streets and solicited donations for the wren's “funeral.” Today in Ireland, groups of musicians “hunt the wren” by going door to door playing tunes and expect money or food and drink in return. The traditional Irish reels **Christmas Eve** and **The Wise Maid** are followed by a familiar tune from the Renaissance dance treatise *Orchesographie*. We hope it inspires you to get up and dance! Thank you so much for watching, and Happy Solstice.

For Absent Friends

Ray Chester (1948-2022)
 Hannah Davidson (1958-2022)
 Frank Dudas (1949-2022)
 Jonny Larason (1960-2022)
 Larry Monroe (1932-2022)
 Maxine Neuman (1948-2022)

Texts & Translations

Joseph est bien marié
 à la fille de Jessé.
 C'était chose bien nouvelle
 D'être mère et pucelle.
 Dieu y avait opéré:
Joseph est bien marié!

Quand Joseph est aperçu
 Que sa femme avait conçu,
 Il lui dit : ma douce amie,
 Certes digne ne suis mie
 D'être à vous apparié.

Mais Gabriel lui a dit :
 Joseph, tu es en crédit,
 Car ton épouse Marie
 A conçu le fruit de vie,
 Par prophète publié.

Joseph is well married
 To the daughter of Jesse.
 It was a fine new thing,
 (For her) to be both mother and maiden.
 God has been at work there:
 Joseph is well married!

When Joseph understood
 That his wife had conceived,
 He said to her: “My sweet darling,
 Certainly I am not worthy
 To be your spouse.”

But (the angel) Gabriel said to him:
 Joseph, you are deserving,
 Because your wife Mary
 Has conceived the fruit of life,
 As the prophet foretold.

A Noël sur la minuit
La Vierge enfanté son fruit.
Sans lit, traversin, ni couche,
Joseph l'enfant traite, accouche
Où son âne était lié.

Les anges y sont venus
Voir le Rédempteur Jésus.
Par très grande compagnie
Puis à haute voix jolie,
Gloria ils ont chanté.

Les pasteurs ont entendu
Que le sauveur est venu.
Ont laissé leurs briebettes
Et jouant de leurs musettes,
Disant que tout est sauvé.

Les trois rois pareillement
Lui ont fait noble présent:
D'or, d'encens, aussi de myrrhe.
La mère, ce fait admire,
Comme du ciel envoyé.

Rorate coeli desuper!*
Hevins, distil your balmy schouris!
For now is risen the bricht day-ster,
Fro the rose Mary, flour of flouris:
The cleir Sone, quhom no cloud devouris,
Surmounting Phebus in the Est,
Is cumin of his hevinly touris:
*Et nobis Puer natus est.**

Synnaris be glad, and penance do,
And thank your Maker hairtfully;
For he that ye nicht nocht come to
To you is cumin full humbly
Your soulis with his blood to buy
And loose you of the fiendis arrest—
And only of his own mercy;
Pro nobis Puer natus est.

**Drop down, heavens, from above
And unto us a child is born

At midnight on Christmas,
The Virgin brought forth her child.
Without bed, pillow, or mattress,
Joseph took the infant, and laid him down
Next to where his donkey was resting.

The angels have now come
To see the Savior Jesus.
With a great company
And with loud, beautiful voices,
They are singing "Gloria".

The shepherds have heard
That the Savior has come.
They have left their ewes and lambs
And are playing their bagpipes,
Saying that all have been saved.

In similar fashion, the three kings
Make noble gifts to him:
Gold, frankincense, and also myrrh.
The mother wonders at these gifts,
Which seem sent from Heaven.

—*transl. D. Meyers*

Celestial foulis in the air,
Sing with your nottis upon hicht,
In firthis and in forrestis fair
Be myrthful now at all your mycht;
For passit is your dully nicht,
Aurora has the cloudis perst,
The Sone is risen with glaidsum licht,
Et nobis Puer natus est.

Sing, hevin imperial, most of hicht!
Regions of air mak armony!
All fish in flud and fowl of flicht
Be mirthful and mak melody!
All Gloria in excelsis cry!
Heaven, erd, se, man, bird, and best,—
He that is crownit abone the sky
Pro nobis Puer natus est!

—*"On the Nativity of Christ"*
William Dunbar (1460-1520)

Bethlehem Down

'When he is King we will give him the King's gifts,
Myrrh for its sweetness, and gold for a crown,
Beautiful robes,' said the young girl to Joseph,
Fair with her firstborn on Bethlehem Down.

Bethlehem Down is full of the starlight—
Winds for the spices, and stars for the gold,
Mary for sleep, and for lullaby music
Songs of a shepherd by Bethlehem fold.

When he is King they will clothe him in gravesheets,
Myrrh for embalming and wood for a crown,
He that lies now in the white arms of Mary,
Sleeping so lightly on Bethlehem Down.

Here he has peace and a short while for dreaming,
Close-huddled oxen to keep him from cold,
Mary for love, and for lullaby music
Songs of a shepherd by Bethlehem fold.

—*Bruce Blunt (1927)*

The Gower Wassail

A-wassail, a-wassail throughout all the town,
Our cup it is white and our ale it is brown.
Our wassail is made of the good ale and cake,
Some nutmeg and ginger, the best we could bake.
*Fol the dol, fol the doldy dol,
fol the doldy dol, fol the doldy dee;
foldeedairol lol the daddy, sing tooral aye o!*

Our wassail is made of the elderberry bough,
And so my good neighbours, we'll drink unto thou,
Besides all on earth, you have apples in store,
Pray, let us come in for it's cold by the door.

We hope that your apple trees prosper and bear
So that we may have cider when we call next year.
And where you have one barrel we hope you'll have ten
So that we may have cider when we call again.

There's a master and a mistress sitting down by the fire
While we poor wassailers stand here in the mire.
Come you pretty maid with your silver-headed pin,
Pray, open the door and let us come in.

We know by the moon that we are not too soon,
And we know by the sky that we are not too high,
And we know by the stars that we are not too far,
And we know by the ground that we are within sound.

The Halsway Carol

Lo for the tiding of the Long Night Moon,
Let the sunrise call about the morning soon.
Short is the bidding of the fading light,
Sing for the coming of the longest night.
North wind tell us what we need to know
When the stars are shining on the midnight snow,
All of the branches will be turned to white,
Sing for the coming of the longest night.
*A winter day, the summer grass turned hay
Frost in the field 'til the dawn of May,
A summer's light never shone as great or as bright
So dance in the shadows of a winter's night.*

Lo for the tiding of the Long Night Moon
May the harvest last until the springtime bloom.
Home is our comfort at the winter's height
Sing for the coming of the longest night.
All of the colours of the sunrise sky
Shine a light upon us, as the day goes by.
Sunsetting shadows fading out of sight
Sing for the coming of the longest night.
*A winter day, the summer grass turned hay,
Frost in the field 'til the dawn of May,
A summer's light never shone as great or as bright
So dance in the shadows of a winter's night.*

—Iain Frisk (2011)



While shepherds watched their flocks by night all seated on the ground
The angel of the Lord came down and glory shone around.
"Fear not," he said, for mighty dread had seized their troubled minds,
"Glad tidings of great joy I bring to you and all mankind."
Thus spake the seraph, and forthwith appeared a shining throng
Of angels praising God, who thus addressed their joyful song:
"All glory be to God on high and to the earth be peace;
Goodwill henceforth from heaven to men begin and never cease!"

—The American Singing Book (1785)

There is no rose of such vertu

As is the rose that bar Jesu.

Alleluia.

For in this rose contained was
Heaven and Earth in little space.

Res miranda. (A marvelous thing)

By that Rose we may well see

There be one God in persons three.

Pares forma. (Equal in form)

The angels sungen the shepherds to

Gloria in excelsis Deo! (Glory to God in the highest!)

Leave we all this worldly mirth,

And follow we this joyful birth.

Transeamus. (Let us go)

Travellers' Prayer

Praise to the moon, bright queen of the skies,
Jewel of the black night, the light of our eyes,
Brighter than starlight, whiter than snow,
Look down on us in the darkness below.

If well you should find us then well let us stay,
Be it seven times better when you make your way,

Be it seven times better when we greet the dawn,
So light up our way and keep us from all harm.

Give strength to the weary, give alms to the poor,
To the tainted and needy five senses restore,
Give song to our voices, give sight to our eyes,
To see the sun bow as the new moon shall rise.

Cast your eyes downwards to our dwelling place,
Three times for favour and three times for grace,
Over the dark clouds your face for to see,
To banish misfortune and keep Trinity.

In the name of our Lady, bright maiden of grace,
In the name of the King of the City of Peace,
In the name of our Saviour, who hung on the tree,
All praise to the moon, for eternity.

The Unconquered Sun

With solstice here we'll celebrate
This sacred time, and have much cheer;
We will bring warmth, we will bring light,
Into the darkest time of year.

The mistletoe will be cut down
With sickle from the sacred tree
A kiss I'll give to you, my love,
A pledge of friendship made to thee.

REFRAIN:

*For greater than the will of man
Or want of that which can be done
It falls and shines on where we stand
Beneath the great unconquered sun.*

For this is now our turning point –
The shortest day, the longest night.
We'll look unto the months to come,
When the sun will grow both strong and bright.
A versed crown, all decked with green,
That tells of winter's tales and mirth,
Will bring great gladness and much joy
To all who walk upon the earth.

REFRAIN: *For greater than the will of man...*

We'll burn the lamps to ward away
The spirits from the halls of those
Whose houses all be decked with boughs
Where evergreen and laurel grows.
The earth's white crust where it lay down
Does bow the oaken branch to fall;
'tis solstice now, account ye sins,
Repent ye beggars, one and all!

REFRAIN: *For greater than the will of man...*

We'll gather round the blazing hearth,
Unbowed by cold, or plague, or war,
We'll toast to those we've loved and lost,
And welcome new friends at our door.
All quarrels mended, all debts paid,
Untrammelled snow reflects the moon.
We'll pass the night until the dawn
With voices twined in merry tunes.

REFRAIN: *For greater than the will of man...*

Please to See the King

Joy, health, love and peace be all here in this place,
By your leave we will sing concerning our king.
Our king is well dressed in silks of the best,
In ribbons so rare no king can compare.
We have travelled many miles over hedges and stiles,
In search of our king unto you we bring.
Here with friends new and old who've come in from the cold
We gather as one to sing back the Sun.
Old Christmas is past, Twelfth Night is the last,
And we bid you adieu, great joy to the new!

—Additions by K. Burciaga (2022)

