

# *All the Long Echoes*

*A Score of Solstice Celebrations*



December 20, 2022  
Eliot Church, Newton, MA

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## *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
The Gower Wassail The Halsway Carol	trad. English, arr. Steeleye Span Nigel Eaton (b. 1966)
Bethlehem Down NOEL: The Bells of Paradise	Peter Warlock (1894-1930) Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) arr. K. Burciaga
While shepherds watched their flocks	Daniel Read (1737-1858)
The Wexford Carol (7:30pm) There is no rose New Year's Eve (for Aimee) A Jolly Wassail Bowl	trad. Irish, arr. Steven Sérpa (b. 1976) D.C. Culbertson (1951-2004) David Douglass (b. 1951) trad. English, arr. M. Wright
Travellers' Prayer (7:30pm) 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)

### **SEVEN TIMES 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*

### *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*

## *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)

## *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 await 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."

Next we head south for two 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. We follow it with the wonderful tune "Tom Kruskal's" by New England musicians Emily Troll and Amelia Mason.

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." Some time ago, Karen came across J.R.R. Tolkien's "NOEL", originally published in an Oxfordshire school newspaper in 1936. The poem had been lost until scholars located it in the school's archives in 2015. Filled with Middle Earth imagery (we imagine a dwarven band setting off over the Misty Mountains) the poem is in fact quite Christian, as befits Tolkien, who was both a prolific author of fantasy and a faithful Roman Catholic. Dan knew the melody to accompany it—the folk tune "Kingsfold," which may date back to the Middle Ages. Vaughan Williams heard the tune in Sussex and published his hymn setting in 1906. We devised a chorus, and several "good deep mugs of beer" later, we are pleased to share **NOEL: The Bells of Paradise**. Please sing the chorus with us!

Shifting gears, we take a brief trip across the ocean to early America with **While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks**. This rousing fuguing 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. The 7:30pm crowd will hear our friend Steven Sérpa's setting of **The Wexford Carol**, written for us in 2005. 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. One thing the pandemic has taught us is how to make music remotely, and today we 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—please sing along!

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 joining us, and Happy Solstice.

### *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!*

**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!



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.

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.

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.

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*

***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*

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)*

## 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)



## 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)

## NOEL: THE BELLS OF PARADISE


 Please join us on the refrain!

Em C G D Em Bm  
 O'er mist o'er snow o-ver moun tain we\_ go, and glo - ri - a\_\_\_ we sing. O'er

Em C G D Em D Em  
 mist o'er\_snow o-ver moun-tain we\_ go, the bells of pa - ra - dise ring.

Grim was the world and grey last night:  
 The moon and stars were fled,  
 The hall was dark without song or light,  
 The fires were fallen dead.  
 The wind in the trees was like to the sea,  
 And over the mountains' teeth  
 It whistled bitter-cold and free,  
 As a sword leapt from its sheath.

The lord of snows upreared his head;  
 His mantle long and pale  
 Upon the bitter blast was spread  
 And hung o'er hill and dale.  
 The world was blind, the boughs were bent,  
 All ways and paths were wild:  
 Then the veil of cloud apart was rent,  
 And here was born a Child.

*REFRAIN:*  
*[O'er mist, o'er snow, over mountain we go,*  
*And Gloria we sing,*  
*O'er mist, o'er snow, over mountain we go,*  
*The bells of Paradise ring.]*

The ancient dome of heaven sheer  
 Was pricked with distant light;  
 A star came shining white and clear  
 Alone above the night.  
 In the dale of dark in that hour of birth  
 One voice on a sudden sang:  
 Then all the bells in Heaven and Earth  
 Together at midnight rang.

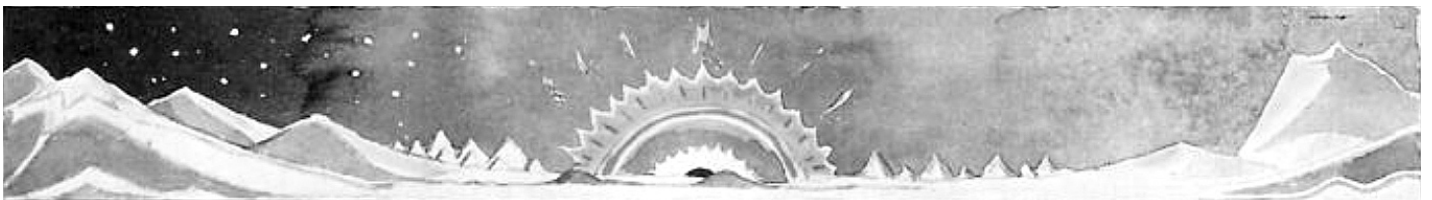
*REFRAIN: O'er mist, o'er snow...*

Mary sang in this world below:  
 They heard her song arise  
 O'er mist and over mountain snow  
 To the walls of Paradise,  
 And the tongue of many bells was stirred  
 In Heaven's towers to ring  
 When the voice of mortal maid was heard,  
 That was mother of Heaven's King.

*REFRAIN: O'er mist, o'er snow...*

Glad is the world and fair this night  
 With stars about its head,  
 And the hall is filled with laughter and light,  
 And fires are burning red.  
 The bells of Paradise now ring  
 With bells of Christendom,  
 And Gloria, Gloria we will sing  
 That God on earth is come.

—"NOEL" by J.R.R. Tolkien (publ. 1936)  
 Refrain by K. Burciaga



**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 Wexford Carol** (7:30pm)

Good people all, this Christmas time,  
 Consider well and bear in mind  
 What our good God for us has done  
 In sending his beloved Son.  
 With Mary holy we should pray  
 To God with love this Christmas day;  
 In Bethlehem upon that morn  
 There was a blessed Messiah born.

The night before that happy tide  
 The noble Virgin and her guide  
 Were long time seeking up and down  
 To find a lodging in the town.  
 But mark how all things came to pass;  
 From every door repelled alas!  
 As long foretold, their refuge all  
 Was but an humble ox's stall.

Near Bethlehem did shepherds keep  
 Their flocks of lambs and feeding sheep;  
 To whom God's angels did appear,  
 Which put the shepherds in great fear.  
 'Prepare and go,' the angels said.  
 'To Bethlehem, be not afraid;  
 For there you'll find, this happy morn,  
 A princely babe, sweet Jesus born.'

With thankful heart and joyful mind,  
 The shepherds went the babe to find,  
 And as God's angel had foretold,  
 They did our saviour Christ behold.  
 Within a manger he was laid,  
 And by his side the virgin maid,  
 Attending on the Lord of life,  
 Who came on earth to end all strife.

**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** (7:30pm)

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.



