

the
American Repertory Singers

ARSIS

Leo Nestor, Director



Welcome
Christèmas

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Jay R. Rader, Organist

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American Repertory Singers

The **American Repertory Singers**, one of America's premier choruses, is a professional vocal ensemble resident in Washington, D.C. **ARS** singers are selected not only for their vocal ability and sensitive musical understanding, but also for their range of flexibility in matters of ensemble. Although the **American Repertory Singers** perform music of all periods, the chorus particularly espouses American music, especially that of our day. The ensemble's previous recordings have been acclaimed in reviews, and have received extensive airplay on FM radio.

Leo Nestor, artistic director of the American Repertory Singers, came to Washington, D. C. from Los Angeles in 1984 to assume the position of Music Director at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Under Dr. Nestor's direction, the choir of the Basilica has achieved national prominence and is acclaimed by the *Washington Post* as "one of Washington's secret treasures." A singer's conductor first, Nestor has envisioned for **ARS** a stylistic and vocal malleability of unparalleled diversity as response to the literature at hand.

Jay R. Rader, has been accompanist for **ARS** since its inception in 1994. Formerly director of music at St. Patrick's Church in downtown Washington (where all of this compact disc was recorded), Mr. Rader is currently organist at St. Matthew's Cathedral in Washington, D.C.

The Composers

James Helme Sutcliffe was born in China (1929), educated at Geelong College and Melbourne Conservatory in Australia as well as at Juilliard School and Eastman School of Music. He was *associate professor of music* at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, from 1957 to 1961. Since then he has lived in Europe where he is an opera critic for *OPERA*, *Opera Canada*, *OPERNWELT*, and the *Herald Tribune*. The two carols included here were written for the Plymouth Congregational Church Choir, Minneapolis.

Richard DeLong (1951–1994) continues to receive a rapidly growing national reputation as a choral composer. Very active at the national and local levels of the American Guild of Organists and the American Choral Directors Association, Mr. DeLong served as Director of Music at St. Mark the Evangelist Church, Plano, Texas from 1980 until his untimely death in 1994.

John Carter (b. 1930) has worked with church and school choral groups for over 35 years, serving as clinician, workshop leader, and guest conductor for festivals, contests, and choral sessions. Mr. Carter has over 400 published choral works to his credit, many of these having been commissioned by churches, schools, and community choruses. He and his wife, Mary Kay Beall are Directors of Music and Youth Ministries at Northwest United Methodist Church, Columbus, Ohio.

Robert Schuneman (b.1934) is President and principal owner of ECS Publishing in Boston and producer of this recording. Trained as musicologist and conductor, his prior careers included serving churches in San Francisco, New York, Glens Falls (NY), Chicago and Cambridge (MA), and teaching at Concordia Senior College (Fort Wayne, IN), Westminster Choir College, Boston Conservatory of Music, and New England Conservatory of Music.

Ronald Arnatt (b.1930) is currently Director of Music at St. John's Church, Beverly Farms, MA and an editor at ECS Publishing, Boston. Born and trained in England where he was a chorister at both Westminster Abbey and King's College, Cambridge, Dr. Arnatt has pursued his entire adult career in the United States. His distinguished career has included directing music at Christ Church Cathedral, St. Louis, being President of the American Guild of Organists, and directing the church music program at Westminster Choir College. His many compositions, both secular and sacred include works for orchestra, voice, keyboard, and chamber ensembles.

Jane Marshall (b.1924) has long been active in the Hymn Society of America, the American Guild of Organists, the American Choral Directors Association, and the Christer's Guild. Ms. Marshall teaches choral conducting and theory at Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University. Long a strong advocate of congregational song, she has been recently composing much choral music.

Richard Wayne Dirksen (b.1921) is the retired Organist and Choirmaster and Canon Precentor Emeritus of the Washington National Cathedral in the nation's capitol. He began his forty-nine years there as a cathedral musician and Director of Music in the Cathedral's schools. In 1964 he became the Cathedral's first Program Director and in 1969 the first layman Precentor of a cathedral. Named a Canon in 1982, Mr. Dirksen retired in 1991.

John V. Mochnik (b.1942) is presently Director of Choral Activities at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. Having studied at Heidelberg College, Indiana University, and the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, Mr. Mochnik has also taught previously at Wake Forest University, Salem College, the State University of New York at Cortland, and the University of Kentucky at Prestonsburg. He has served as board member, conductor, clinician and editorial advisor of the Moravian Music Foundation, and he was honored with an Award of Merit by the Moravian Music Foundation in 1990.

Leo Nestor (b.1948) director of the American Repertory Singers, is identified on page three.

Daniel Pinkham (b. 1923), prolific and versatile composer, has been a major force in American music for more than fifty years. His catalog includes four symphonies, cantatas and oratorios, concertos, theater works, chamber music, film scores, and choral music. Mr. Pinkham studied with Walter Piston, Aaron Copland, Arthur Honegger, Samuel Barber, and Nadia Boulanger. He is currently on the faculty of the New England Conservatory of Music, and Music Director of historic King's Chapel in Boston. In 1990, the American Guild of Organists named him **Composer of the Year**.

TEXTS

1. Welcome Christèmas

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Who goes there that singeth so? It is I, Sir Christèmas. Welcome to you, Sir Christèmas, welcome to you all both more and less. Sing Nowell.

God be with you, my good sirs, Tidings do I bring, A maid hath borne a yonge child, the cause for you to sing. Sing Nowell, Nowell, Nowell. God be with you, Christ is born of the purest maid, For in an oxstall he is found, therefore make a joyful sound. Sing we Nowell, Nowell, Nowell.

Rejoice and raise a song to welcome Christèmas. Make good cheer and be right merry, sing with us now joyfully, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell.

— *Old English, c. 1480*

2. The Cherry Tree Carol

When Joseph was an old man, an old man was he, he married Virgin Mary, the Queen of Galilee. Then Mary spoke to Joseph, so sweet and so mild. "Joseph, gather me some cherries for I am with child."

Then Joseph flew in anger, in anger flew he; "Let the father of the baby gather cherries for thee."

Then Jesus spoke a few words, a few words spoke he; "Let my mother have some cherries, bow low down cherry tree."

The cherry tree bowed down, bowed low down to the ground, and Mary gathered cherries while Joseph stood around.

Then Joseph took Mary all on his right knee, "What have I done, Lord, have mercy on me."

Then Joseph took Jesus all on his left knee, "Oh tell me pretty baby when thy birthday will be?"

"The sixth day of Januar' my birthday will be, when the stars in the elements shall tremble with glee."

— *Appalachian Colonial version of an Old English Carol*

3. Of a Rose, a Lovely Rose

Of a Rose, a lovely Rose, of a Rose is all my song.

Listen nobles old and young, How this rose at outset sprung; In all this world I know of none I so desire as that fair Rose. Of a Rose, a lovely Rose, of a Rose is all my song.

The angel came from heaven's tower To honour Mary in her bower, And said that she should bear the flower to break the Devil's chain of woes. Of a Rose, a lovely Rose, of a Rose is all my song.

In Bethlehem that flower was seen, A lovely blossom of bright sheen. The rose is Mary, heaven's Queen, Out of her womb that blossom rose. Of a Rose, a lovely Rose, of a Rose is all my song.

The first branch is full of might, That sprouted on the Christmas night When star of Bethlehem shone bright, For far and wide its lustre shows. Of a Rose, a lovely Rose, of a Rose is all my song.

The second branch sprang forth to hell, The Devil's fearful power to quell, And there henceforth no

soul could dwell. Blessed be the coming of that rose! Of a Rose, a lovely Rose. . .
 To heaven sprang the third shoot, Sweet and fair, both stem and root, To dwell therein and bring us
 good: In priestly hands it daily shows. Of a Rose, a lovely Rose, of a Rose is all my song.
 Let us then with honour pray To her is our help and stay, And turns us from the Devil's way. From her
 that holy bloom arose. Of a Rose, a lovely Rose, of a Rose is all my song.

4. Nova, Nova: Ave fit ex Eva — *Medieval English verse, trans. Brian Stone*

Nova, Nova: Ave fit ex Eva. [*Gabriel's salutation (Ave) to Mary carries the news (Nova) that she will
 be a second Eve (Eva) who will redeem the errors of the first. The palindrome is found as early as
 the ninth century.*]

Gabriel of hygh degre, He came down from Trynnye, From Nazareth to Galalye, Nova, Nova. . .
 He mete a maydyn in a place; He kneled down afor her face; He sayd, "Hayle, Mary, full of grace."
 Nova, Nova. . .

When the maydyn herd tel of this, She was ful sor abashed, ywys, And wened that she had done
 amys; Nova, Nova. . .

Then said the angell, "Dred not thou; For ye be conceyved with grete vertu Whose name shall be
 called Jhësu." Nova, Nova. . .

Then said the maydyn, "Verily, I am your servant right truly; Ecce ancilla domini. [*"Behold, the
 handmaid of the Lord."*] Nova, Nova. . . — *English, 15th Century*

5. We Have Seen His Star in the East

We have seen his star in the east, and have come to worship him.

Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

O Morning Star, how fair and bright, thou beamest forth in truth and light! O sovrein meek and
 lowly! Thou root of Jesse, David's Son, My Lord and Savior thou hast won my heart to serve thee
 solely! Thou art holy, fair and glorious all victorious, rich in blessing. Rule and might o'er all
 possessing.

— *St. Matthew 2:26, Isaiah 60:1, P. Nicolai/C. Winkworth*

6. There Is No Rose

There is no rose of such virtue as is the rose that bare Jesu. Alleluya.

For in this rose contained was heaven and earth in little space. Res miranda. [*O wondrous thing*]

And by that rose we may well see there be one God in Persons Three. Gaudeamus. [*Let us rejoice.*]

The angels sing, the shepherds too. Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gaudeamus.

Now leave we all this worldly mirth, and follow we this joyful birth. Transeamus. [*Let us go there.*]

— *English, 15th Century*

7. I Sing of a Maiden

I sing of a maiden That is makeless: King of all Kinges To her son she ches.

He came all so stille There his mother was As dew in Aprille That falleth on the grass.

He came all so stille To his mother's bower As dew in Aprille That falleth on the flower.

He came all so stille There his mother lay As dew in Aprille That falleth on the spray.

Mother and maiden was Never none but she; Well may such a lady Goddes mother be.

— *English, 15th Century*

8. Holy Sound, Holy Sight

Holy sound. Winter's breeze in stiffened leaves, softcreature footsteps bending in wind, dry wood.

Holy sight. Deep blue afterrain sky, ancient crust on tender boughs, tall grass, dormant, but alive.

God of sound and sight, *laudamus te.*

— *John Thornburgh, 1995*

9. Prophet's Song

To sing when fleeting breath and truant hope forbid, to stand when gusts of fear at cyclone strength
 prevail, to act when blanketheavy apathy surrounds, to roar when falsehood clothed in silence
 overwhelms; this then is faith: 'the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not
 seen,' and in God's good grace to sing, to stand, to act, to roar. We are called to live this faith.

— *John Thornburgh, 1995*

10. Lo How Soft the Light

Lo how soft the light in the mystery of evening, at the promise of the dawn; glows in the wonder of a
 soul and in the Shepherd's love.

— *The Very Rev. Francis B. Sayre, Jr.*

[*The above inscription is carved in the oak screen of the Good Shepherd Chapel, Washington National
 Cathedral, Washington, D.C.*]

11. O magnum mysterium

O magnum mysterium, et admirabile sac-
 ramentum, ut animalia viderent
 Dominum natum, jacentem in præsepio.
 Beata Virgo, cujus viscera meruerunt
 portare Dominum Christum. Alleluia.

— *fourth Responsory at Matins, Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord, trans. John V. Mochnik*

*O mystery beyond all knowledge, and wondrous sac-
 rament, that animals should see the birth of Jesus
 Christ our Lord, who lieth in a manger bed.*

*O blessed Virgin, chosen by God above, who was wor-
 thy to bear the Son of God, Jesu. Alleluia.*

12. Rorate cæli desuper

Rorate cæli desuper, et nubes pluant
 justum.

Ne irascaris, Domine!

Ne ultra memineris iniquitatem.

Ecce civitas santa facta est deserta:

Sion deserta facta est.

*Ye heavens, open from above, that clouds may rain the
 Just One.*

Do not be angry, Lord our God!

No longer be mindful of our past offenses.

*See how Zion, thy city now has been deserted:
 Zion has been deserted now.*

Jerusalem desolata facta est.
Domus sanctificationis tuæ et gloriæ tuæ,

ubi laudaverunt te patres nostri.
Rorate cæli desuper. . .
Vide, Domine, afflictionem populi tui,
et mitte quem missurus es:
emitte Agnum, dominatorem terræ,
de petra deserti ad montem filiæ Sion:
ut auferat ipse jugum captivitatis nostræ.

Rorate cæli desuper. . .
Consolamini, popule meus:
citoveniet salus tua.
Quare moerore consumeris?
Quia innovavit te dolor?
Salvabo te: noli timere.
Ego enim sum Dominus Deus tuus:
Sanctus Israel, Redemptor tuus.
Rorate cæli desuper. . .

— *Advent antiphon, Anonymous, Paris, 1634; translated by Leo Nestor*

13. Before the Paling of the Stars

Before the paling of the stars
Before the winter morn
Before the earliest cockcrow
Jesus Christ was born:

Born in a stable
Cradled in a manger,
In the world His Hands had made
Born a Stranger.

Priest and King lay fast asleep
In Jerusalem,
Young and old lay fast asleep
In crowded Bethlehem:

*Jerusalem now is left abandoned:
This is the holy mountain of your presence and place
of your glory,
where our fathers did sing your praise.
Ye heavens. . .*

*See, O Lord our God, the great affliction of your people,
and send down Him who is to come:
send forth the Chosen, the Lamb to save us;
the rock in the desert visits the daughters of Zion:
that he may bring rescue, freeing us from the yoke of
captivity.*

*Ye heavens. . .
Be ye comforted, Israel my people:
quickly he will come, your salvation.
Why has this sorrowing consumed you?
Why have pain and sadness come to you?
Your Savior comes: do not be fearful,
I am always your Lord God and Savior;
Israel's Holy One, and your Redeemer.
Ye heavens. . .*

Saint and Angel, Ox and Ass
Kept a watch together
Before the Christmas daybreak
In the winter weather.

Jesus on His Mother's breast
In the stable cold,
Spotless Lamb of God was He
Shepherd of the Fold:

Let us kneel with Mary Maid
With Joseph bent and hoary
With Saint and Angel Ox and Ass
To hail the King of Glory.

— *Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)*

14. Who Comes?

Who comes? A child, delivered on a stable floor. His mewling, newborn cry is all that God can say Of hunger, thirst and aching need Where Jesus lives today. Come, singing fire of truth, compassion, right, and scorch our hardened apathy, Till love is new and bright.

Who comes? A Jew, declaiming from a prophet's scroll. His cry is all that God can say Of freedom, health, and saving hope Where Jesus lives today. Come, singing breeze from worlds already, new. Blow in and out of weary minds Till faith is singing new.

Who comes? A man, in dying on the cross. His Godforsaken cry is all that God can say Of searching, scarred, redeeming love Where Jesus lives today. Come, singing light from new creation's dawn. Where trees of healing deck the streets, And joy is newly born.

— *Brian Wren, © 1986 Hope Publishing Company, used by permission*

15. Where Is This Stupendous Stranger?

Where is this stupendous stranger?
Prophets, shepherds, kings, advise.
Lead me to my Master's manger,
Show me where my Saviour lies.

O most Mighty, O most holy!
Far beyond the seraph's thought,
Art thou then so mean and lowly
As unheeded prophets taught?

O the magnitude of meekness!
Worth from worth eternal sprung;
O the strength of infant weakness,
If eternal is so young!

God all bounteous, all creative,
Whom no ills from good dissuade,
Is incarnate, and a native
Of the very world he made.

— *Christopher Smart (1722-1771)*

16. What Sweeter Music Can We Bring?

What sweeter music can we bring
Than a carol, for to sing
The birth of this our heav'nly King?
Awake the voice! Awake the string:

We see him come, and know him ours,
Who with his sunshine and his showers
Turns all the patient ground to flowers.

Dark and dull night, fly hence away,
And give the honour to this day,
That sees December turned to May,
If we may ask the reason, say:

We see him come, and know him ours. . .

The darling of the world is come,
And fit it is we find a room
To welcome him. The nobler part
Of all the house here is the heart:

We see him come, and know him ours. . .

Which we will give him, and bequeath
This holly and this ivy wreath,
To do him honour who's our King,
And Lord of all this revelling:

We see him come, and know him ours. . .

— *Robert Herrick (1591-1674)*

17. All My Heart This Night Rejoices

All my heart this night rejoices

As I hear, Far and near

Sweetest angel voices.

"Christ is born," their choirs are singing,

Till the air Everywhere

Now with joy is ringing.

Hark! a voice from yonder manger,

Soft and sweet, doth entreat:

"Flee from woe and danger!

Brethren, come! From all that grieves you

You are freed; all you need

I will surely give you."

Thee, dear Lord, with love I'll cherish;

Live to thee, And with thee

Dying, shall not perish.

But shall dwell with thee forever,

Far on high, In the joy

That shall alter never.

Come, then, let us hasten yonder!

Here let all, Great and small,

Kneel in awe and wonder!

Love him who with love is yearning!

Hail the star That from far

Bright with hope is burning!

— Paul Gerhardt, 1653; translated Catherine Winkworth, 1858, altered.

18. Yes, Indeed!

Joys secure God's Michael sings Born to us is Israel's King. Yes, indeed! Yes, indeed! O joys of Season new, O joys of wondrous News.

Highest heaven sings of Glory, Speaking peace to every country. Yes, indeed! Yes, indeed! O joys of Season new, O joys of wondrous News.

Our fatherland to us he gives Wherein life is ours to live. Yes, indeed! Yes, indeed! O joys of Season new, O joys of wondrous News.

Thus let us avoid all sin Which each virtue brings to ruin. Yes, indeed! Yes, indeed! O joys of Season new, O joys of wondrous News.

Faithfulness her lilies cast, Maidenhood gives birth at last. Yes, indeed! Yes, indeed! O joys of Season new, O joys of wond'rous News. — Medieval Latin, translated by Eugene A. Green

Recorded direct to digital master in May 1995, April 1996, and April 1997 at St. Patrick's Church in the City, Washington, D.C.

Recording Engineer: Edward Kelly, Mobile Master, Hyattsville, MD

Production, editing & mastering: Robert Schuneman, Arsis Audio, Boston, MA

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American Repertory Singers

performing on this recording:

Soprano: **Susan Bender, *Susan Crowder, **Tanya Hoffmann, Elizabeth Holt, Linda Kennedy-Sills, Mary McCarthy,

Alto: +Patricia Caya, *Gail Collins, Lisa Koehler, Virginia Wallace

Tenor: *Michael Ford, Douglas Gaddis, Boyd Galloway, Wayne Glass, Will Lowry,

Bass: John Boulanger, Charles T. Bowers, *Mark Cobb, David Eberhardt, Ted Faris

* = soloists, track 2 ** = soloists, track 6 + = soloist, track 7

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