

The Cantata Singers of Elmira

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The Cantata Singers

Will Wickham, Musical Director

In cooperation with the

North Presbyterian Church Choir

Paul Holland, Director of Music

present

**"Jingle Bells of Christmas:
Music by and for
New Englanders"**

Dr. William Cowdery, Organ
Frances McLaren, Piano

Sunday, December 7th, 2008
4:00 p.m.

North Presbyterian Church
921 College Ave, Elmira NY

Program

Magnificat Gerald Finzi
Dr. William Cowdery, organ

Shape Note Carols

As Shepherds in Darkness (Emmanuel) William Billings
Hark! Hark! Glad Tidings Charm Our Ears (Redemption) . A. Benham, Sr.
A Virgin Unspotted William Billings

Fuguing Tunes

While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks (Sherburne) Daniel Read
Joy to the World (Sounding Joy) Wyeth's Repository of Sacred Music

Shaker Holidays

Sweetest Music Softly Stealing Traditional, Mt. Lebanon Community
Upon This Lovely Christmas Morning Christmas Greeting,
Mt. Lebanon Community
The Glad New Year! Mt. Lebanon Community
Nativity Madrigals Daniel Pinkham (Poems by Norma Farber)
Frances McLaren, Piano

Intermission

A free will offering will be taken

Alleluia Randall Thompson
Cantata Singers and the Choir of North Presbyterian Church

Shout the Glad Tidings William Ives
Frances McLaren, Piano

A Christmas Carol Charles Ives
Frances McLaren, Piano

Peace on Earth (A Christmas Anthem) Mrs. H. H. A. Beach
Dr. William Cowdery, Organ

Traditional Carol Singing (Music can be found in the Hymnal)

O Little Town of Bethlehem (#44) P. Brooks & L. Redner
It Came upon a Midnight Clear (#38) E. H. Sears & R. S. Willis
Joy to the World (#40) I. Watts & L. Mason

Concert Personnel

Dr. William Cowdery, Organ
Frances McLaren, Piano

The Cantata Singers
Will Wickham, Director

Soprano

Ruth Bruning
Robin Fitzgerald
Susan B. Hartney
Joy McFarland
Susan Nagle

Tenor

Bill Brodginiski
Michael Hartney
Felix Kapron
Tom McCloskey
Gary Tucker

Alto

Phyllis Bishop
Shirley Brodginiski
Martha Horton
Lauren Janosco
Cora Range
Cynthia Terry
Frances McLaren

Bass

Joe Fiori
Stephen Nagle
David Rosplock
Nikolas B. Lutomski

Rehearsal Accompanist - Frances McLaren

North Presbyterian Church Choir

Paul Holland, Director of Music
Barb Mosher, Organist

Pam Caroscio
Gloria Dildine
Bob Drake
Barb Fitzsimmons
Melissa Goodier
Erin Jacob

Ashley Koopmann
Karen Moshier
Karen Paul
Annette Stevens
Noel Weigel
Connie Wilson

Program notes:

New England has a special place in the history of these United States of America. From the founding of the Plymouth Colony in 1620 through the 1770s war that earned the original thirteen colonies independence from the British monarchy, the New England area has been, and continues to be a place of new ideas. We should not be surprised that New England has been a haven for musical development in the new world as well.

Perhaps the most famous reason that the Pilgrims left the old world for the new involves the practice of religion. The Shakers, who first came to the region about 1774, were very involved in music and dance as part of worship.

Outside of Shaker traditions, shape note singing was an early 19th century development intended to make hymn singing easier for people who don't read music. In shape note practice the tune is represented by a series of geometric shapes rather than notes on a staff. Although the practice was somewhat short lived in New England, there is a revival that continues to this day, primarily in the southeastern part of our country.

Fuguing tunes, originating in England in the mid 18th century, found fertile ground within the musical community of New England. A fuguing tune is a musical phrase, typically a harmonized psalm-tone, followed by a section that has voice parts starting each in their own turn. This practice is different from the Fugue tradition of classical European music in that fugues such as JS Bach composed use the same melody in each voice while fuguing typically involves one part with the tune and the others supporting that tune harmonically. While many tunes from these traditions survive with no known connection to specific composers, we do know that **William Billings**, **A. Benham** and **Daniel Read** were among the composers who wrote in these uniquely New England styles.

Ives has been an important family name in New England since the 1600's. In addition to writing music from time to time, **William Ives** was a cofounder of the city of New Haven, Connecticut. Several generations later came **Charles Ives**, a successful insurance salesman whose musical fame came nearly two decades after he stopped composing in 1930.

Other New England composers working through the late 19th and 20th centuries include **Mrs. H. H. A. (Amy) Beach**, one of America's most prolific composers. Additionally **Daniel Pinkham** spent much of his life in the Boston area where **Randall Thompson** also taught for many years.

The only composer on today's program who never resided in New England is **Gerald Finzi**. A life-long resident of England, Finzi's "Magnificat" was the result of a commission for the choirs of Smith and Amherst Colleges in Massachusetts.

We close today with community carol singing, a long-standing Christmas tradition. New England has also given the world the three carols we sing today. The words of **Isaac Watts** were set by **Lowell Mason** to create the beloved "Joy to the World. "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear" was written by **Edmund H. Sears** (words) and **Richard S. Willis** (music) and "O Little Town of Bethlehem" is the words of **Phillip Brooks** set to the music of **Lewis Redner**.

For the record, the Jingle Bells of the concert title is indeed the carol that includes the "one horse open sleigh" and "dashing through the snow". James Pierpont of Medford, Massachusetts allegedly wrote the tune in Simpson's Tavern in 1850. There is a commemorative plaque at the spot listing the names of several patrons who enjoyed the first impromptu performance of the carol at the tavern's piano. As for us, we wish you the very happiest of Christmases and many wonderful seasons of Jingle Bells to come.

If you enjoy the concert and like to sing, we would love to have you join us! For more information please contact our director, Will Wickham, at 607-796-5034 or email us at cantatasingers@ymail.com. You can also find additional information about us by visiting our web site www.cantatasingers.com

Magnificat

My soul doth magnify the Lord :
and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.
For he hath regarded the lowliness of his
handmaiden.
For behold, from henceforth all generations shall
call me blessed.
For he that is mighty hath magnified me and
holy is his Name.
And his mercy is on them that fear him
throughout all generations.
He hath shewed strength with his arm
He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of
their hearts.
He hath put down the mighty from their seat
And hath exalted the humble and meek.
He hath filled the hungry with good things
And the rich he hath sent empty away.
He remembering his mercy hath holpen his
servant Israel
As he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and
his seed for ever.

As Shepherds in Darkness (Emanuel)

1. As shepherds in darkness were guarding their
sheep,
Promiscuously seated estranged from sleep;
An angel from heaven presented to view,
And thus he accosted the trembling few.
Dispel all your sorrows, and banish your fears;
For Jesus your savior this day does appear.
Dispel all your sorrows, and banish your fears;
for Jesus your savior this day does appear.
2. Tho' Adam the first in rebellion was found,
Forbidden to tarry on hallowed ground;
Yet Adam the second appears to retrieve,
The loss you sustained by the Devil & Eve.
Then shepherds be tranquil this instant a rise,

Go visit your Savior & see where He lies.
Then shepherds be tranquil this instant arise,
Go visit your Savior & see where He lies.

3. A token I leave you where by you may find,
This heavenly stranger this friend to mankind;
A manger's His cradle a stall his abode,
The oxen are near him and blow on your God.
Then shepherds be humble, be meek and lie low
For Jesus, your Savior's abundantly so.
Then shepherds be humble, be meek and like low
For Jesus your Savior's abundantly so.

4. This wonderous story fierce cool'd on the Ear,
When thousands of angels in glory appear;
They join in the concert & this was the theme
All glory to God & good will towards men.
Then shepherd strike in join your voice to the
choir
And catch a few sparks of celestial fire.
Then shepherd strike in join your voice to the
choir
And catch a few sparks of celestial fire.

5. Hosanna! The angels in ecstasy cry.
Hosanna! The wondering shepherds reply;
Salvation, redemption are centered in one,
All glory to God for the birth of his Son.
Then shepherds adieu we commend you to God,
Go visit the Son in his humble abode.
Then shepherds adieu we commend you to God,
Go visit the Son in his humble abode.

6. To Bethlehem city the shepherds repaired.
For full confirmation of what they had heard;
They entered the stable with aspect so mild,
And there they beheld the Mother & Child.
Then make proclamation divulge it a broad,
That gentle and simple may hear of the Lord.
Then make proclamation divulge it abroad,
That gentle and simple may hear of the Lord.

Hark! Hark! Glad Tidings Charm Our Ears

Hark! Hark! Glad tidings charm our ears,
Angelic music fills the spheres;
Earth spreads the sound with decent mirth,
A God is born on earth!
A God is born! The valleys cry;
A God is born! The hills reply;
Evening repeats to wondering morn,
A God on earth is born!

A Virgin Unspotted

1. A Virgin unspotted, by Prophet foretold,
Should bring forth a Saviour which now we
behold,
to be our Redeemer from death, hell and sin,
Which Adam's transgression involved us in.
Chorus:
Then let us be merry, put sorrow away
our Saviour, Christ Jesus was born on this day.
2. God sent down an angel from heaven so high,
To certain poor shepherds in fields as they lie,
And made them no longer in sorrow to stay,
Because that our Saviour was born on this day.
3. Then presently after the shepherds did spy
A number of angels that stood in the sky;
They joyfully talked and sweetly did sing
"To God be all glory, our Heavenly King!"
4. To teach us humility all this was done,
Then learn we from hence, haught'ry pride fro to
shun.
A manger's his cradle, who came from above,
The Great God of mercy, of peace and of love.

While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night

1. While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
all seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down,
and glory shone around.

2. All glory be to God on high,
and to the earth be peace;
Goodwill henceforth from heaven to men
begin and never cease.

Joy to the World

1. Joy to the world! The savior reigns
Let men their songs employ,
While fields and floods,
Rocks, hills, and plains,
Repeat the sounding joy.

2. No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow
Far as the curse is found.

3. He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness
And wonders of his love

4. Joy to the world! The Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing.

Sweetest Music Softly Stealing

1. Sweetest music softly stealing
O'er our hearts in tuneful chime,
Shall in joyous notes revealing,

Swell the song of olden times.
When the mourning star was beaming,
Angels sang of peace and love;
Many souls awoke from dreaming,
Hail'd the light from Heaven above.

Chorus: Gladsome sound we echo still,
Peace on earth, to all good will.

2. Wake we now to joy and gladness,
Christ the Saviour we have found:
Banish from our hearts all sadness,
And in deed of love abound.
Now the fount of good unsealing,
Let us all our souls upfull;
And, in kindly Christian feeling,
Breathe sweet peace and speak good will.

Upon this Lovely Christmas Morning

Upon this lovely Christmas morning,
We come forth our friends to cheer.
In the East, the star is beaming;
Lo! We've found our Saviour near.
Oh we love to spread the tidings,
That will gladden every heart,
That with him we may be rising,
In his suffering we have a part.
Hark! I hear the angles singing,
Peace! Peace on earth, good will to all.

The Glad New Year

1. Along the shadowy aisles of time,
There floats a murmur soft and low,
Now swelling in harmonious chime,
Sweet notes in measured numbers flow.
With joy we catch the gladsome strain,

Which fills our hearts with loving cheer.
And, echoing back a full refrain,
Give welcome to the Glad New Year!

2. Our hopes on starry pinions rise,
High aspiration thrills our soul,
A nobler life to realize,
Ascending to perfection's goal,
The past with joy and sorrow fraught,
Shall from our vision disappear;
The present claims our earnest thought:
All hail the bright, the Glad New Year!

3. Like angels from the realms unseen,
Lightwing'd the moments come and go,
The shining links of life, between
Ethereal spheres and earth below;
They bear a record of the deeds
That cloud, or make our pathway clear:
Broadcast they sow time's precious seeds,
And usher in the Glad New Year!

4. We tread the vale of time and sense,
Amid its phantom fleeting dreams,
Still longing, with a hope intense,
For something that enduring seems;
Yet duty's path we will pursue,
Without a doubt or cringing fear;
With lofty aim and purpose true,
We'll toil throughout the Glad New Year.

5. The tender chords of purest love,
With peace entwined, shall stronger grow!
We'll bear the spirit of the dove,
And kindness to the erring show;
With gentle words, and Christlike deeds,
A monument of good we'll rear;
While bliss, that fills our spirit needs,
Awaits us in the Glad New Year!

Nativity madrigals

GUARDIAN OWL

Company coming by night,
Who are you? Whoo?
I live here. I have the right
To know what's new.
Have you come in fear, in flight?
Is the hang of your life askew?

Then welcome, come so far,
So much ado.
I guard the stable a star
is pointing to.
Enter, the door's ajar,
To fit the fullest of you.

Go in, I'll check you off.
You're overdue.
Don't push or pinch or shove
For a better view.
Just say your name with love
When I ask, Who *are* you? Whoo?

GET UP! SAID MARY

Get up! Said Mary to the three grown
Men on their knees.
And since her child was newly born,
They rose, somewhat stiff, to please
The serious mother, who
Was shooing off assorted nosy
Animals, *Shoo! Shoo!*
That sniffed her infant's toes.

Sh! (with severity) It's too much
Commotion for so small
A thing. Let him breath. Don't touch!
Oh what a frightening stableful!

Go now, all of you. Let me raise him

As one among others, a regular
Boy. Thanks to your praise,
And what you say about a star.
I mean, these first few days:
Don't make me look too far.

WHAT DID THE BABY GIVE THE KINGS?

Three things:

Firstly, a promise, as of every birth
That freshens earth,
Like dawn which hints anew
That what was dreamed may yet come true.

Then hope,
As when you're thrown a rope
On nearly drowning in a tidal wave.
This gift as well the baby gave.

Lastly, a laugh like rising sun
Before the day has quite begun,
So still a mirth, a note
So quiet in the throat
Of morning. Kings could only guess
At all its shining tunefulness

Amazed, as monarchs are
Who bring their royal wealth from far,
The Kings turned back with gifts so rare,
So right,
They hovered in the homeward air
Like early light.

HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS BY SEA

Fish of the sea couldn't come –
Not over dry ground.
They loitered in sight of the Holy Lane,
And listened for word from Bethlehem.

Close as they dared, whales swam,
Trying not to cough.
Dolphins surmounted the vaults of surf.
Starfish hushed the spitting foam.

Deep denizens left their gloom
For the surface, this once.
The shallows uncovered half their fins.
Freshwater gills left lake and stream.

Crabs took a chance or a whim
To climb the shale
With crooked claw and jagged shell.
They hustled back when they heard of Him.

They took the word to the tide –
Which was going out.
Minnow told plaice, plaice told pout.
Hear all about it! New! They cried.

AFTER

After the taming, after
The manger moment, the baby
The bowing down, the gifts,
The gathering round for one
Last look – thereafter when kings
Go home and shepherds tend
Again their flocks and stars
Resume their usual course –

Oh then let creatures leave
According to their kind,
Lion fierce and serpent
Fanged and boar a brute
Undaunted by that stable
Pause: the wild of world
Natural still, still
A glory like a birth.

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Shout the Glad Tidings

Chorus: Shout the glad tidings, exultingly sing,
Jerusalem triumphs, Messiah is King!

1. Tell how he cometh; from nation to nation,
The heart-cheering news let the earth echo
round:

How free to the faithful he offers salvation,
His people with joy everlasting are crowned.

2. Zion, the marvelous story be telling,
The Son of the Highest, how lowly his birth!
The brightest archangel in glory excelling,
He stoops to redeem thee, he reigns upon earth.

3. Mortals, your homage be gratefully bringing,
And sweet let the gladsome hosanna arise:
Ye angels, the full alleluia be singing;
One chorus resound through the earth and the
skies.

A Christmas Carol

1. Little star of Bethlehem!
Do we see Thee now?
Do we see Thee shining
O'er the tall trees?
Little Child of Bethlehem!
Do we hear thee in our hearts?
Hear the Angels singing:
Peace on earth, good will to men!
Noel!

2. O'er the cradle of a King,
Hear the Angels sing:
In Excelsis Gloria, Gloria!
From his Father's home on high,
Lo! for us He came to die;
Hear the Angels sing:
Venite adoremus Dominum.

Peace on Earth

It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth,
To touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, goodwill to men,
From heaven's all-gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay,
To hear the angels sing.
Peace on the earth, goodwill to men.

O ye, beneath life's crushing load,
Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way
With painful steps and slow,
Look now! for glad and golden hours
come swiftly on the wing.
O rest beside the weary road,
And hear the angels sing!
Peace on the earth, goodwill to men.

For lo!, the days are hastening on,
By prophet seen of old,
When with the ever-encircling year
Shall come the time foretold
When peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendors fling,
And the whole world send back the song
Which now the angels sing.
Peace on the earth, goodwill to men.