

CHRISTMAS WITH TRUE CONCORD

CAROLS IN THE AMERICAN VOICE



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Eric Holtan | Conductor

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- 1. *On Christmas Night (The Sussex Carol)**** | Trad. English, arr. Gerald Near 2:43
Guy Whatley, organ
- 2. *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming*** | Praetorius, ed. Alice Parker and Robert Shaw 2:42
- 3. *A Somerset Carol**** | Trad. English, arr. Dale Warland 2:40
Christine Vivona, harp
- 4. *Away in a Manger**** | William J. Kirkpatrick, arr. Mack Wilberg 4:34
Sara Fraker, oboe; Guy Whatley, organ
- 5. *Go, Tell It on the Mountain**** | Spiritual, harm. J.W. Work, arr. Stacey V. Gibbs 2:38
- 6. *Joseph Dearest, Joseph Mine**** | Trad. German, arr. Peter Rutenberg 2:44
Cait Frizzell, soprano; Christine Vivona, harp
- 7. *Cradle Song**** | Trad. Welsh, arr. Gerald Near 4:37
Guy Whatley, organ
- 8. *Wexford Carol**** | Trad. Irish, arr. Mack Wilberg 3:59
Christine Vivona, harp

- 9. *O Come, Divine Messiah!**** | Trad. French, arr. Howard Helvey 3:04
Guy Whatley, organ
- 10. *Silent Night*** | Franz Gruber, arr. Stephen Paulus 5:28
Cait Frizzell, soprano; Patrick Michael Muehleise, tenor
- 11. *Sing We Now of Christmas*** | Trad. French, arr. Fred Prentice, 1:35
harp accompaniment by Carol Barnett
Christine Vivona, harp
- 12. *Fourteen Angels**** | Jeffrey Van 5:15
Steven Lerman, guitar
- 13. *Ding Dong! Merrily on High*** | Trad. French, arr. Charles Wood, 1:45
descant* by Peter Rutenberg
- 14. *One Gift**** | Glenn L. Rudolph 5:30
Guy Whatley, organ
- 15. *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly**** | Trad. Polish, arr. Matthew Culloton 2:49
- 16. *Love Came Down at Christmas**** | Howard Helvey 4:01
Sara Fraker, oboe; Alexander Tentser, piano
- 17. *Midnight Clear**** | Russell Schulz-Widmar 4:42
Guy Whatley, organ

Total Time: 60:47

**World premiere recording of this composition or arrangement*

PROGRAM NOTES

by Eric Holtan

American composer Gerald Near has been a friend of True Concord for many years, due partly to his proximity in Green Valley, Arizona. He has written several pieces for True Concord's annual *Lessons and Carols by Candlelight* concerts. *On Christmas Night (The Sussex Carol)* was created for the Dove of Peace Lutheran Church Chancel Choir and later performed by True Concord.

The duo of Alice Parker and Robert Shaw is legendary on the American choral scene. They are responsible for numerous arrangements of folk songs and spirituals performed and beloved by American choirs for more than 60 years. Michael Praetorius is best known for his prolific settings of German Protestant hymn tunes ('chorales') including *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming* from 1609, which became well-known in the 20th century through this edition by Parker-Shaw.

Dale Warland, renowned as the director of America's preeminent professional choir, The Dale Warland Singers (1972-2004), has more than 30 compositions to his credit, including many carols arranged for both his Singers and other ensembles. *A Somerset Carol* was commissioned by the Cheyenne Chamber Singers.

As Music Director of the Tabernacle Choir at Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Mack Wilberg is widely known for his numerous original compositions and arrangements, many written for the Tabernacle Choir. Wilberg's *Away in a Manger* (to the tune by William Kirkpatrick) was originally scored for full orchestra. His more intimate setting for organ and oboe is heard in this collection.

The well-known African-American spiritual *Go, Tell It on the Mountain* dates back to the 19th century. John Wesley Work published it in his early 20th century collection of American spirituals, harmonizing it, and supplying new words for lost verses. Stacey V. Gibbs, acclaimed for his arrangements of spirituals performed around the world, reimagined Work's folk hymn into a rousing and rhythmic *tour de force*, written for the University of Oregon Chamber Choir.

True Concord's relationship with Peter Rutenberg began with its twice Grammy®-nominated recording of choral music by Stephen Paulus, *Far in the Heavens*, produced by Rutenberg and released on Reference Recordings®. Rutenberg is a Grammy®-winning producer and conductor, was nominated as Classical Producer of the Year in 2011, and was founding music director and conductor of Los Angeles Chamber Singers & Cappella for their 25-year tenure (1990-2015). The German lullaby, *Joseph Dearest, Joseph Mine*, originally for soprano and harp, was newly arranged with choir for this album.

Composed for Gerald Near's church choir in Green Valley, Arizona, *Cradle Song* is based on the traditional Welsh melody, Suo Gân, meaning 'lullaby'. The tune has found its way into both the classical and popular realms, including a lip-synched performance by Christian Bale in the film *Empire of the Sun*.

Thought to be one of the oldest surviving European carols, the traditional Irish *Wexford Carol* became more widely popular in the first part of the 20th century, thanks to musicologist and composer, William Henry Grattan Flood, who transcribed and published it in 1928. Mack Wilberg first scored the carol for choir and orchestra, subsequently creating this version with harp accompaniment.

Howard Helvey, organist and choirmaster at Calvary Episcopal Church in Cincinnati, Ohio, is also co-founder and conductor of the professional chamber choir, Cincinnati Fusion Ensemble. A prodigious composer and arranger, Helvey's setting of the 16th century French carol, *O Come, Divine Messiah!*, is one of many carols for choir and organ in his catalogue.

The late Stephen Paulus is widely regarded as one of America's most important and prolific composers. True Concord commissioned two works from him, including the Grammy®-winning composition *Prayers and Remembrances* for the tenth anniversary of the 9/11 tragedies. Paulus's original pieces and arrangements for the holiday season are manifold. This probing arrangement of *Silent Night* was written for The Singers — Minnesota Choral Artists.

Sing We Now of Christmas, based on the French carol, *Noël Nouvelet*, was originally arranged for unaccompanied choir by Fred Prentice. The Dale Warland Singers recorded that setting. Later, Warland asked his long-time collaborator, Carol Barnett, to compose the harp accompaniment heard on this recording.

In addition to an extensive career as a performer and educator, guitarist/composer Jeffrey Van has written often for the holiday season. *Fourteen Angels* was commissioned by a former student for friends, following the tragic death of their infant daughter. The 19th century text is set to original music by Van, who embedded the traditional Catalán Christmas carol *El Noi de la Mare* (“The Mother’s Boy”) in the long guitar interlude.

Charles Wood’s iconic early 20th century harmonization of *Ding Dong! Merrily on High* is often performed the world over. Peter Rutenberg composed a new *ad hoc* descant for three sopranos to adorn this classic.

Pennsylvania composer Glenn L. Rudolph sang professionally with the Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh and Pittsburgh Camerata, where he was Assistant to the Music Director and Assistant Conductor, respectively. Originally scored for strings and organ, Rudolph’s carol *One Gift* sets a text by Thomas H. Troeger, a frequent contributor to American church music.

Conductor/composer Matthew Culloton formed The Singers – Minnesota Choral Artists with many of his fellow members of The Dale Warland Singers after it disbanded in 2004. Culloton has continued Warland's commitment to commissioning new works, and has himself written numerous works and carol settings. As is his custom, Culloton's arrangement of the traditional Polish carol, *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly*, was written for annual Christmas concerts by The Singers.

Christina Rossetti's Christmas poem, "*Love Came Down at Christmas*," has been set both to pre-existing and new music, by John Rutter and Jennifer Higdon among others. Howard Helvey first set the text for choir and full orchestra, and later, this version for piano and oboe.

Midnight Clear reimagines the well-known 19th century text by Edmund Sears, with a new melody by Russell Schulz-Widmar. Based in Austin, Texas for most of his career, Schulz-Widmar is a composer, organist, and former Professor of Liturgical Music at Seminary of the Southwest. With several hymn tunes to his credit, he chaired the hymn music committee for the Episcopal Church's then-new *Hymnal 1982*.

Every December, **True Concord** presents its popular *Lessons and Carols by Candlelight* concerts in the Tucson area. Unique in the local milieu of seasonal offerings, the focus is on sacred Christmas carols. Even in their simplest form, carols evoke emotionally powerful memories of personal and family experiences that enrich and enliven annual holiday celebrations.

With this album, I wanted to capture the essence of our much-loved concerts with the mostly familiar carols presented here, but in musical settings by American composers that are new or not widely known. With the kind assistance of advisor Dale Warland — who set the standard of excellence with several cherished Christmas recordings over the years by The Dale Warland Singers — True Concord offers these holiday treasures, most of which are receiving their world premiere recordings.

This is *Christmas With True Concord — Carols in the American Voice*.

—Eric Holtan

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

“True Concord Voices & Orchestra has created something truly spectacular.”

—*Arizona Daily Star*

Founded in 2004, Tucson, Arizona-based **TRUE CONCORD** made its New York City debut at Lincoln Center’s Alice Tully Hall in September 2015 with Mozart’s *Requiem* and Stephen Paulus’s *Prayers and Remembrances*. That same year, True Concord made its international debut with its debut album on Reference Recordings®, *Far in the Heavens: Choral Music of Stephen Paulus*, for which it received a Grammy® nomination for Best Choral Performance, while Stephen Paulus won posthumously the Grammy® for Best Classical Contemporary Composition.

True Concord is committed to creating experiences with celebrated masterworks and music of today’s leading composers that move, enrich and inspire. Its expanding repertoire includes Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* and *Mass in B-Minor*, Mozart’s *Requiem* and *Mass in C-Minor*, Brahms’s *Ein deutsches Requiem* and Haydn’s *The Creation*. It has commissioned new works from Stephen Paulus, Gerald Near, Jake Runestad, Jocelyn Hagen, Ola Gjeilo, Paul Crabtree and Sheldon Curry. After the tragic death of its friend Stephen Paulus, True Concord launched the Stephen Paulus Emerging Composers Competition, an annual, national event held to honor Paulus’s legacy of nurturing young composers.



ERIC HOLTAN,

Founding Music Director of True Concord Voices & Orchestra, launched his professional music career at age 12 as a church organist.

A native of Minnesota, he studied organ, voice and conducting at Gustavus Adolphus College, earning a master's degree in choral conducting from the University of Iowa and the doctor of musical arts degree in choral and orchestral conducting from the University of Arizona.

Eric's principal conducting teachers include Karle Erickson, William Hatcher, Bruce Chamberlain and Thomas Cockrell, with additional studies with Donald Portnoy, Otto-Werner Mueller, Christoph Eschenbach, David Hayes, Duain Wolfe, Vance George, and Dale Warland.

Eric is also Director of Music and Liturgical Arts at Dove of Peace Lutheran Church in Tucson.





CHRISTMAS WITH TRUE CONCORD

CAROLS IN THE AMERICAN VOICE

(Author anonymous unless otherwise indicated)

On Christmas Night (The Sussex Carol)

On Christmas night all Christians sing,
To hear the news the angels bring;
News of great joy, news of great mirth,
News of our merciful King's birth.

Then why should men on earth be so
sad,
Since our Redeemer made us glad,
When from our sin he set us free,
All for to gain our liberty?

When sin departs before his grace,
Then life and health come in its place;
Angels and men with joy may sing,
All for to see the newborn King.

All out of darkness we have light,
Which made the angels sing this night:
"Glory to God and peace to men,
Now and forever more. Amen."

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming Anon., trans. Theodore Baker

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming
From tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming
As men of old have sung.
It came, a flow'ret bright,
Amid the cold of winter,
When half-spent was the night.

Isaiah 'twas foretold it,
The Rose I have in mind.
With Mary we behold it,
The Virgin Mother kind.
To shew God's love aright,
She bore to men a Saviour,
When half-spent was the night.

A Somerset Carol

Come all you worthy gentlemen
That may be standing by;
Christ our blessed Saviour
Was born on Christmas Day.
The blessed Virgin Mary
Unto the Lord did say:
“O, we wish you the comfort
and tidings of joy!”

Christ our blessed Saviour
Now in the manger lay,
He's lying in the manger
While the oxen feed on hay.
The blessed Virgin Mary
Unto the Lord did say:
“O, we wish you the comfort
and tidings of joy!”

God bless his servants in this place
That lovingly do meet;
And many happy Christmases
To strangers in the street.
God bless our generation,
Who live both far and near,
And we wish them
a happy new year!

Away in a Manger

Away in a manger,
no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus
laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky
looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus,
asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing,
the Baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus,
no crying he makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus,
look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle
till morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus,
I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever,
and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children
in Thy tender care,
And fit us for Heaven
to live with Thee there.

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

Refrain: American Folk Hymn

Verses: John W. Work

Go, tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and ev'rywhere.
Go, tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born.

When I was a seeker,
I sought both night and day.
I asked the Lord to help me,
And He showed me the way.

They found a lowly manger,
Where humble Christ was born,
And God sent our salvation
That blessed Christmas morn.

Joseph Dearest, Joseph Mine

Anon., trans. Peter Rutenberg

Joseph dearest, Joseph mine,
Help me rock the child divine.
God reward thee all that's thine
In paradise, so prays the Mother Mary.

He did appear on earth today in Israel,
As was foretold to Mary by Gabriel. Eia.
The baby Jesus born this day of Mary. Eia.

Cradle Song

Isaac Watts

Hush, my dear, lie still and slumber;
Holy angels guard thy bed!
Heav'nly blessings without number
Gently falling on thy head.

Sleep, my babe; thy food and raiment,
House and home, thy friends provide;
All without thy care or payment,
All thy wants are well supplied.

Soft and easy is thy cradle;
Coarse and hard thy Savior lay,
When his birthplace was a stable
And his softest bed was hay.

See the kindly shepherds round Him,
Telling wonders from the sky!
When they sought him,
 there they found Him,
With his Virgin-Mother by.

Mayst thou live to know and fear him,
Trust and love him all thy days;
Then go dwell forever near Him,
See his face and sing his praise!

Wexford Carol

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.

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.'

O Come, Divine Messiah!

Abbé Simon-Joseph Pellegrin,
trans. Mary Frances Lescher
(Sr. Mary of St. Philip)

O come, divine Messiah!
The world in silence waits the day
When hope shall sing its triumph,
And sadness flee away.

Dear Savior haste;
Come, come to earth,
Dispel the night and show your face,
And bid us hail the dawn of grace.

You come in peace and meekness,
And lowly will your cradle be;
All clothed in human weakness
Shall we your Godhead see.

O Christ, whom nations sigh for,
Whom priest and prophet long foretold,
Come break the captive fetters;
Redeem the long-lost fold.

Silent Night

Joseph Mohr

Silent night, Holy night,
All is calm, All is bright;
Round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, Holy night,
Shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heav'nly hosts sing Alleluia;
Christ the Savior is born!

Silent night, Holy night,
Son of God, love's pure light;
Radiant beams from thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord at thy birth.

Sing We Now of Christmas

Sing we now of Christmas, sing we all noel.
Of our Lord and Savior
 we the tidings tell.
Sing we noel, for Christ the King is born.
Sing we now of Christmas, sing we all noel.

Angels from on high say,
 "Shepherds come and see.
He is born in Bethlehem,
 a blessed Lamb for thee."
Sing we noel, for Christ the King is born.
Sing we now of Christmas, sing we all noel.

Shepherds found the child
 lying in a manger stall.
Joseph standing by,
 and mother Mary mild.
So now sing we noel,
 for Christ the King is born.
Sing we now of Christmas, sing we all noel.

Magi oriental journeyed from afar.
They did come to greet Him
 'neath the shining star.
Glory to God, for Christ the King is born.
Sing we now of Christmas, sing we all noel!

Fourteen Angels

Old German evening prayer

in Wilhelm Grimm's *Wunderhorn* (1808),
trans. B. J. Bloomer

When at night I go to sleep,
Fourteen angels watch do keep;
Two my head are guarding,
Two my feet are guiding,
Two are on my right hand,
Two are on my left hand,
Two who cover me,
Two who wake me,
And two who sing me into
the heavenly paradise.

Ding Dong! Merrily on High

George Ratcliffe Woodward

Ding dong! merrily on high,
In heav'n the bells are ringing;
Ding dong! verily the sky
Is riv'n with angels singing.
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!
E'en so here below, below,
Let steeple bells be swungen,
And "io, io, io,"
By priest and people sungen.
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!

Pray you, dutifully prime
Your matin chime, ye ringers;
May you beautifully rime
Your evetime song, ye singers.
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!



One Gift

Thomas H. Troeger

One gift the magi bore
worth more than all the rest:
The grace to kneel and bow
before the child whom starlight blest.

Their myrrh and frankincense
lay sweet upon the air,
But sweeter yet and more intense
the magi's humble prayer.

And though their gift of gold
shown brightly with the skies
Still heaven's light was twice as bold
in their adoring eyes.

One gift the magi bore
worth more than all the rest:
We give that gift when we adore
the child whom starlight blest.

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

Anon., trans. Edith Margaret

Gellibrand Reed

Infant holy, infant lowly,
For his bed a cattle stall;
Oxen lowing, little knowing
Christ the child is Lord of all.
Swiftly winging, angels singing,
Bells are ringing, tidings bringing;
Christ the child is Lord of all!

Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping
Vigil 'til the morning new
Saw the glory, heard the story,
Tidings of a gospel true.
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow,
Praises voicing, greet the morrow:
Christ the child is born for you!



Love Came Down at Christmas

Christina Rossetti

Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, love divine;
Love was born at Christmas:
Star and angels gave the sign.

Worship we the Godhead,
Love incarnate, love divine;
Worship we our Jesus,
But wherewith for sacred sign?

Love shall be our token;
Love be yours and love be mine,
Love to God and neighbor,
Love for plea and gift and sign.

Midnight Clear

Edmund H. Sears

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, good will to all,
From heaven’s gracious king.”
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come
With peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats
O’er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hovering wing,
And ever o’er its babel sounds
The blessed angels sing.
Yet with the woes of sin and strife
The world has suffered long;
Beneath the heavenly hymn have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong;
And warring humankind hears not
The tidings which they bring;
Oh hush the noise and cease your strife
And hear the angels sing!

For lo! The days are hast’ning on,
By prophets seen of old,
When with the ever-circling years
Shall come the time foretold,
When peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendors fling,
And all the world give back the song
Which now the angels sing.

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concord 
voices & orchestra

Eric Holtan, Founding Music Director & Conductor

Matthew Goinz, Assistant Director

Alexander Tentser, Rehearsal Accompanist

www.trueconcord.org

Soprano

Erika Burkhart
Cait Frizzell*
Sara Guttenberg
Chelsea Helm
Gitanjali Mathur
Sarah Moyer
Gabrielle Tresler
Asleif Willmer

Alto

Mary Gerbi
Helen Karloski
Emily Lau
Kim Leeds
Emily Marvosh
Gina Soranno
McCann
Naomi DeVries
Pomerantz*
Keely J. Rhodes

Tenor

Paul D'Arcy
Erik Gustafson
Aaron Humble
Patrick Michael
Muehleise*
James Reese
Paul John Rudoio
Steven Soph
Gene Stenger

Bass

Cameron Beauchamp
Elijah Blaisdell
Matthew Goinz
Joshua Hillmann
Philip Moody*
Thann Scoggin
Timothy C. Takach
Paul Max Tipton

Instrumentalists

Guy Whatley, organ
Christine Vivona, harp
Sara Fraker, oboe
Steven Lerman, guitar
Alexander Tentser, piano

**Section Leaders*

All choral artists sing on all tracks

**Recorded January 9 – 11, 2019
at Pinnacle Presbyterian Church, Scottsdale, Arizona**

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Recording Engineer: Steven Kaplan
Assistant Engineer: Eric Xu
Editing & Mixing: Steven Kaplan
Mastering Engineer: John Polito | Audio Mechanics
Production Manager: Shawn Campbell
Program Notes: Eric Holtan
Booklet Editor: Peter Rutenberg
Project Advisor: Dale Warland
Art Director: JoAnn Nunes

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