CHICAGO SYMPHONY PRESENTS

NINETY-SIXTH SEASON

Saturday, November 28, 2026, at 1:30

VIENNA BOYS CHOIR: *CHRISTMAS IN VIENNA*

Johannes Pell Choirmaster

GREGORIAN CHANT	Veni, creator spiritus
EYBLER	Omnes de Saba venient
PALESTRINA	Pueri hebraeorum
RAMOS	O magnum mysterium
SCHUBERT	Psalm 23, D. 706
MOZART	Laudate Dominum from *Vesperae solennes de confessore,* K. 339
GJEILO	Tundra
MIŠKINIS	Cantate Domino
BEC	Jubilate Deo
NORTH AMERICAN FOLK SONG	Amazing Grace (arr. Coates)

INTERMISSION

BRITTEN	Selections from *A Ceremony of Carols*, Op. 28 Procession Wolcum Yole! There Is No Rose This Little Babe Deo gracias
TRADITIONAL FRENCH MELODY	O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (arr. Willcock)
ADVENT CAROL FROM THURINGIA AND PADERBORN	Maria durch ein' Dornwald ging (arr. Theimer)
TRADITIONAL GERMAN CAROL	Es ist ein Ros´entsprungen (arr. Praetorius)
GAUNTLETT	Once in Royal David's City (arr. Willcocks)
REIDINGER	Es wird scho glei dumpa (arr. Wirth)
RUTTER	Star Carol (arr. Pont)
HOLST	In the Bleak Midwinter
SACRED LULLABY FROM LOWER AUSTRIA	Ein Kind geboren gar wunderschön (arr. Wirth)
COOTS	Santa Claus Is Coming to Town
WADE	O Come, All Ye Faithful (Adeste fideles) (arr. Willcocks)
TRADITIONAL ENGLISH CAROL	We Wish You a Merry Christmas (arr. Rutter)
J. STRAUSS, JR.	An der schönen blauen Donau, Op. 314 (arr. Wirth)

Program subject to change

Chicago Symphony acknowledges support from the Illinois Arts Council.

GREGORIAN CHANT

Veni, creator spiritus

"Veni, creator spiritus" is a hymn for Whitsunday, a feast commemorating the descent of the Holy Spirit. The text is attributed to Hrabanus Maurus, a famous scholar and theologian. Hrabanus was abbot in Fulda, Germany, from 822 to 842 and became bishop of Mainz in 847. He wrote a twenty-two-volume encyclopedic dictionary, *De universo;* his scholarship and excellent administration made Fulda an outstanding academic center. Hrabanus wrote "Veni creator spiritus" around 809, but the first mention of the tune, found in Bavaria's monastery of Kempte, dates to the tenth century.

The hymn is written in iambic meter, in accordance with the rules of Latin poetry. It is used at Pentecost and to mark beginnings, such as confirmation, the ordination of priests, or the election of a new pope. The hymn has been translated into many languages, including English by John Dryden (1631–1700) and German by Martin Luther (1483–1546) and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832). Goethe incorporated it into his play *Faust,* interpreting the hymn as an invocation of the universal spirit.

The Holy Spirit is addressed as Paraclete, from the Greek *parakletos,* which means consoler, advisor, advocate, protector, literally "the one who guides you by the hand." The "sevenfold gift" refers to the four cardinal virtues derived from Plato's *Protagoras* (wisdom, temperance, fortitude, and justice), plus three virtues added by Saint Ambrose, Augustine of Hippo, and Thomas Aquinas: faith, hope, and love (1 Corinthians 13:13). According to tradition, these were the names of the first three rungs of the ladder on which Jacob ascended to heaven (Genesis 28:12). "The fulfilment of the Father's promise" in verse three refers to John 14:16, where Jesus says: "I will ask my Father, and He shall give you another mainstay to be always with you." *C*

Veni creator spiritus
Veni, creator spiritus,
mentes tuorum visita
imple superna gratia
quae tu creasti pectora.

Qui diceris Paraclitus,
donum Dei altissimi,
fons vivus, ignis, caritas,
et spiritalis unctio.

Tu septiformis munere,
digitus paternae dexterae,
tu rite promissum Patris,
sermone ditans guttura.

Text: Hrabanus Maurus

Come, Creator Spirit
Come, Creator Spirit,
visit the minds of those who are yours,
fill with the highest grace
the hearts of those whom you have created.

You are called Paraclete,
you are God's greatest gift,
the power of life, fire, mercy,
and ointment for the soul.

You are the sevenfold gift,
the right hand of the Father,
the fulfillment of the Father's promise,
preaching tongue.

JOSEPH EYBLER

Born February 8, 1765; Schwechat, near Vienna, Austria
Died July 24, 1846; Vienna, Austria

Omnes de Saba venient

Josef von Eybler was educated in a seminary run by the city of Vienna. As a young boy, he studied composition with court composer Johann Georg Albrechtsberger. Joseph Haydn and Wolfgang Mozart helped his career; Mozart, who was a close friend, asked Eybler to conduct rehearsals for the premiere of his opera *Così fan tutte*. Ironically, as a court employee, Eybler was far more influential in his lifetime than either Haydn or Mozart.

In 1803 Eybler began working for the Imperial Chapel (Hofmusikkapelle), to which the Vienna Boys Choir belongs. His responsibilities included organizing the choirboys' rehearsals and performances; one of the boys under his charge was Franz Schubert. In 1824 Eybler succeeded Antonio Salieri as director of the Imperial Chapel.

Joseph von Eybler wrote thirty-two masses, two oratorios, a requiem, several motets, symphonies, and some chamber music. The gradual "Omnes de Saba venient," with its bright soprano solo, remains his most popular work. It is used to great effect in Walt Disney's 1961 movie on the Vienna Boys Choir, *Almost Angels* (aka *Born to Sing*), directed by Steve Previn. 𝄞

Omnes de Saba venient

Choir:
Omnes de Saba venient,
Aurum et thus deferentes
et laudem Domino annuntiantes.
Alleluja!

Solo:
Surge et illuminare Jerusalem
quia gloria Domini super te orta est.
Alleluja!

Choir:
Vidimus stellam ejus in Oriente.
Alleluja!
Et venimus cum muneribus
adorare Dominum.
Alleluja!

Text: Isaiah 60:6 and Matthew 2:2

They Will All Come from Saba

Choir:
They will all come from Saba;
(they will) bring gold and frankincense
and praise the Lord.
Hallelujah!

Solo:
Rise and shine, Jerusalem,
For the glory of the Lord has risen above you.
Hallelujah!

Choir:
We have seen His star in the East,
Hallelujah!
And we have come with presents
to worship the Lord.
Hallelujah!

GIOVANNI PIERLUIGI DA PALESTRINA

Born December 17, 1525; Palestrina, Italy
Died February 2, 1594; Rome, Italy

Pueri hebraeorum

Palestrina, who adopted the name of his birthplace, began his musical career as a chorister at Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome. From 1544 to 1551, he served in his native town as organist and choirmaster. In 1551 Pope Julius III summoned him to Rome to serve as choirmaster of the Cappella Giulia, the choir of Saint Peter's Basilica and a principal source of singers for the Sistine Chapel. Palestrina later joined the Sistine Chapel Choir, but in 1555 Pope Paul IV dismissed him and two others because they were married, in violation of the choir's rules. Palestrina then succeeded Orlando di Lasso as choirmaster of Saint John Lateran. In 1560 he resigned in protest over the inadequate food provided to the choirboys, and in 1561 he was appointed choirmaster of Santa Maria Maggiore. In 1567 papal reforms declared some of his masses "unliturgical" because they incorporated secular melodies or words foreign to the ordinary.

Around that time, Palestrina entered the service of Cardinal Ippolito d'Este, whose excellent private chapel offered a better salary than either the Vatican or the imperial court in Vienna, which had also sought to hire him. In 1571 the composer returned to his former post as director of the Cappella Giulia, serving under Pope Pius V.

Palestrina endured considerable personal hardship, losing both his sons and his wife to the plague. He considered becoming a priest but ultimately found another solution: he remarried. His new wife was the wealthy widow of a fur merchant. Possessing a keen business sense, Palestrina amassed a fortune that enabled him to publish several collections of his music.

Palestrina's music resembles the architecture of the time. It is characterized by soaring lines, a skillful blend of voices, and a rich sonority. His contemporaries regarded him as the embodiment of spirituality and modesty, and his compositions were admired as models of perfection. His enormous output includes over 100 masses, 68 offertories, 35 magnificats, 11 litanies, and around 300 motets. *C*

Pueri hebraeorum

Pueri hebraeorum, portantes ramos olivarum,
obviaverunt Domino
clamantes et dicentes:
Hosanna in excelsis!

Text: John 12:13 and Psalm 24:7–10

The Hebrew Children

The Hebrew children, bearing olive branches,
went to meet the Lord
while calling out and saying:
Hosanna in the highest!

EVAN RAMOS
Born 1983

O magnum mysterium

Evan Ramos is a well-known American choral director, composer, and arranger.

"O magnum mysterium" is a responsorial chant for Christmas; the text from the Divine Office is not biblical but based on biblical passages—Isaiah 1:3 and Luke 2:7. It is the spoken or sung equivalent of a nativity showing Jesus in his cradle, with the animals watching. No animals are named in the Bible, but they were in the hugely popular Golden Legend, which prompted countless painters to add an ox and donkey to their scenes of Christ in the manger, and countless composers, including Palestrina and Victoria, added their music to the now familiar image.

Evan Ramos's version is a quiet introspection, marveling at the scene and focusing on the miracle and mystery; at the end of his composition, he simply repeats the opening phrase "O great mystery." *C*

O magnum mysterium
O magnum mysterium
et admirabile sacramentum
ut animalia viderent Dominum natum
jacentem in praesepio.
O magnum mysterium!

O Great Mystery
O great mystery
and holy wonder,
that animals should have seen the newborn Lord
lying in a manger.
O great mystery!

Text: Latin Christmas Responsory

FRANZ SCHUBERT
Born January 31, 1797; Himmelpfortgrund, northwest of Vienna, Austria
Died November 19, 1828; Vienna, Austria

Psalm 23, D. 706

Psalm 23, titled "The Good Shepherd," is one of the most popular psalms of King David. The good shepherd is an epithet used for gods and kings throughout the Ancient Near East. It was the duty of the king or the city deity to provide for the people and keep them from harm, the same way a shepherd looks after his flock. The last two verses describe a gesture of hospitality in the Near East—a festive banquet; in fact, it is the ultimate banquet, where God himself anoints the believer.

Schubert wrote this piece for Anna Fröhlich and her pupils in December 1820. The poetic translation is by philosopher Moses Mendelssohn (1729–1786), Felix Mendelssohn's grandfather, a fierce advocate of an interfaith society based on mutual respect. *C*

Psalm 23
Gott ist mein Hirt, mir wird nichts mangeln.
Er lagert mich auf grüner Weide,
er leitet mich an stillen Bächen
er labt mein schmachtendes Gemüt
er führt mich auf gerechtem Steige
zu seines Namens Ruhm.

Und wall' ich auch im Todesschattentale,
so wall' ich ohne Furcht, denn du
beschützest mich.
Dein Stab und deine Stütze sind mir immerdar
mein Trost.

Du richtest mir ein Freudenmahl im Angesicht
der Feinde zu,
Du salbst mein Haupt mit Öle und schenkst mir
volle Becher ein.

Mir folget Heil und Seligkeit in diesem
Leben nach,
einst ruh' ich ew'ge Zeit dort in des
Ew'gen Haus.

Psalm 23
God is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
He leads me beside still waters.
He restores my aching soul,
He leads me on the right path
to honor His name.

And though I walk through the valley of the
shadow of death,
I fear no evil: for you watch over me.
Your rod and your staff comfort me always.

You prepare a banquet for me before
my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil and fill my cup to
the brim.

Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days
of my life,
and I shall dwell forever in the house of the
eternal God.

Text: Psalm 23

WOLFGANG MOZART
Born January 27, 1756; Salzburg, Austria
Died December 4, 1791; Vienna, Austria

Laudate Dominum from *Vesperae solennes de confessore*, K. 339

"Laudate Dominum" is one of the most famous soprano works, beloved around the world for its beautiful, soothing melody.

It is one of the six movements making up the solemn vespers written in 1780 for the cathedral in Salzburg. At the time, Mozart was organist and composer at the court of Prince-Archbishop Hieronymus Colloredo, the city-state's ruler.

The text is a Latin version of Psalm 117, a psalm of general praise. Mozart's setting has a calmness about it, yet at the same time an irresistible draw. It is, to all intents and purposes, an operatic aria for soprano with a humble background chorus surrounding the soloist in the final praise. *C*

Laudate Dominum

Laudate Dominum omnes gentes,
laudate eum, omnes populi.
Quoniam confirmata est
super nos misericordia eius
et veritas Domini manet
in aeternum.
Gloria Patri, et Filio,
et Spiritui Sancto.
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc,
et semper,
et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Praise the Lord

Praise the Lord, all nations,
praise Him, all peoples.
For He has bestowed
His mercy on us,
and the truth of the Lord remains
in eternity.
Glory be to the Father, and the Son,
and the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now,
and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

Text: Psalm 117

OLA GJEILO

Born May 5, 1978; Skui, Norway

Tundra

One of the most popular contemporary choral composers, Ola Gjeilo was born in Norway and studied at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo, the Royal College of Music in London, and the Juilliard School in New York. His music draws on classical music, jazz, folk, and pop, as well as film scores; Gjeilo is inspired by Keith Jarrett, Pat Metheny, and architect Frank Gehry, among others.

The lyrics for "Tundra" were written by frequent collaborator Charles Anthony Silvestri. The text is inspired by Norway's Hardangervidda, the vast plateau that formed the backdrop to the composer's childhood. Settled since the Neolithic period and now largely protected as a national park, Hardangervidda is at once barren and beautiful. Its striking landscape has inspired artists for generations: Henrik Ibsen's *When We Dead Awaken* is partly set there, and the Hoth scenes in *The Empire Strikes Back* were filmed on the nearby Hardangerjøkulen. 𝒞

Tundra

Wide, worn, and weathered,
sacred expanse
of green, and white, and granite grey;
snowy patches strewn,
anchored to the craggy earth,
unmoving
while clouds dance
across the vast, eternal sky.

Text: Charles Anthony Silvestri

VYTAUTAS MIŠKINIS
Born June 5, 1954; Vilnius, Lithuania

Cantate Domino

Vytautas Miškinis is Lithuania's most famous living choral composer and conductor. He joined the legendary Ąžuoliukas Boys Choir at age seven as a singer and has been serving as its artistic director since 1979. He has also taught at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre in various capacities since 1985. Miškinis is a professor of choral conducting, president of the Lithuanian Choral Union, and an internationally sought-after adjudicator at international choir competitions.

His output includes over 400 secular songs, 10 settings of the Mass Ordinary, and around 150 compositions using traditional liturgical texts. He blends Western harmonies and polyphony with sound clusters and abrupt rhythm changes to striking effect.

"Cantate Domino" exemplifies that blend through a fast-paced six-part setting driven by a syncopated rhythm. The repetitions of the imperative "cantate" (sing) mimic the joyous shouting of a crowd. The performance demands rhythmic and vocal precision from the singers and has proved highly popular with audiences. *C*

Cantate Domino
Cantate Domino canticum novum,
cantate Domino omnis terra.
Cantate Domino, et benedicite nomini ejus,
annuntiate de die in diem salutare ejus.
Cantate Domino in cithara et voce psalmi.

Alleluja!

Text: Psalm 96:1–2 and Psalm 98:1, 5

Sing to the Lord
Sing to the Lord a new song,
sing to the Lord, all the earth.
Sing to the Lord, and bless His name,
proclaim His salvation from day to day.
Sing to the Lord with the harp and the voice of a psalm.
Hallelujah!

TINE BEC
Born 1993; Brežice, Slovenia

Jubilate Deo

"Jubilate Deo" is a vibrant, celebratory motet composed by Slovenian composer and conductor Tine Bec. The text is taken from the Latin Vulgate Bible. Bec opens with a nod to the Middle Ages, using monophonic chant before the music explodes into a highly energetic, contemporary sonic experience, with body percussion to boot: the singers stomp, clap, and thump their chests to provide a driving, primal rhythmic foundation. Bec weaves complex choral harmonies and joyful syncopation into the percussion, ultimately building into a final, ecstatic "Alleluia." *C*

Jubilate Deo
Jubilate Deo, universa terra;
psalmum dicite nomini eius.
Venite et audite, et narrabo vobis,
omnes qui timetis Deum,
quanta fecit Dominus animae meae.
Alleluia!

Rejoice in God
Rejoice in God, all the earth,
say a psalm in His name.
Come and listen, and I will tell you,
all you God-fearing people,
how much the Lord has done for my soul.
Alleluia!

Text: Psalm 66:1–2, 16

NORTH AMERICAN FOLK SONG

Amazing Grace (Arranged by John Coates)

At first glance, John Newton's biography hardly seems that of a writer of religious texts. He undertook his first sea voyage at age eleven; at eighteen, he was pressed into service on a British man-of-war. He deserted, was caught, flogged, and demoted; he finally wound up aboard a slave ship. Life was unpleasant, and Newton began to read and teach himself Latin.

In 1748 Newton's ship was caught in a violent storm, which led to his conversion. In 1755 Newton left the sea and took up religion. He met Methodists and Calvinists, learned Greek and Hebrew, and eventually became a minister. He accepted the curacy of Olney, Buckinghamshire. Newton must have been a captivating preacher, as his church had to be enlarged to accommodate the crowds.

"Amazing Grace" was written between 1769 and 1770, probably for a service. Newton published it in 1779 (second edition 1807) under the title "Faith's Review and Expectation," and it references 1 Chronicles 17:16. The song's first verse also recalls John 9:25. The music is supposedly Early American, and it has been speculated that the melody was sung by slaves. *C*

Amazing Grace
Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
that saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost but now am found,
was blind but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
and grace my fear relieved.
How precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise
than when we first began.

Text: John Newton

BENJAMIN BRITTEN

Born November 22, 1913; Lowestoft, England
Died December 4, 1976; Suffolk, England

Selections from *A Ceremony of Carols*, Op. 28

After three successful years in America, Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears boarded a Swedish cargo vessel, the *Axel Johnson,* on March 16, 1942, for their return to Britain. The journey took nearly a month, and the mood must have been subdued, to say the least. A war was on, there were U-boats about, and the *Axel Jonsson* was not meant for passengers. Britten had intended to continue work on "Hymn to Saint Cecilia" and a piece for Benny Goodman, but customs officials confiscated the manuscripts, fearing that they might contain coded messages for clarinet-playing Nazi spies.

While the ship was docked in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Britten came across a book of medieval poems, most of them religious in content but with a distinctly pagan flavor. Some of them he set during the voyage as the *Ceremony of Carols,* a work for boys choir and harp. "One had to alleviate the boredom," Britten wrote.

The *Ceremony* is more than a set of jolly Christmas carols: Britten's carefully crafted music captures the poems' medieval spirit and evokes the fight of light against dark, good against evil. For this year's holiday program, the Vienna Boys Choir has selected five pieces from Britten's cycle, opening with the choir processing to plainsong chant.

"Wolcum Yole!" welcomes Christ, the saints of the holiday season, the holiday season itself, and everyone assembled, including the audience.

"There Is No Rose" is set in F major. The rose is Mary, who, pregnant, holds an entire universe in her womb. The text alternately employs English and Latin, something that came about during the Late Middle Ages, when Christmas was exclusively celebrated in church. The Latin passages were sung by the clergy, the English by the congregation.

The text of "This Little Babe" was written by Robert Southwell (1561–1595), a Jesuit priest who spent much of his life in hiding. His poems had to be printed and circulated illegally. Their powerful imagery and language made them popular: a certain W. Shakespeare was among their readers. In the end, Southwell was captured and hanged in 1592 after thirteen years in prison.

Britten's setting of the poem is spectacular. One voice starts it off, tentatively, "this little babe" having just been born. But he is here to defeat "Satan's fold." The baby's weapons seem silly and weak; still, his tears and cries cause hell to quake. The voices chase one another until they reach the end: "If thou wilt foil thy foes with joy"—the best way to deal with your enemies—"then flit not from this heavenly boy." The accompaniment is used as percussion, imitating battle noises.

In the end, we thank God that Adam, who represents mankind, was benighted and lay i-bounden for so long (note that the poet refers to this state of stupor as winter), simply because he had indulged in an apple. But had he not done that, there would not have been Mary or Christ. Sometimes a rash (and not necessarily good) action can have the most surprising outcome. *c*

Hodie Christus natus est

Hodie Christus natus est;
hodie Salvator apparuit.
Hodie in terra canunt angeli,
laetantur archangeli.
Hodie exsultant justi dicentes:
"Gloria in excelsis Deo. Alleluia!"

Today Christ Is Born

Today Christ is born;
today the Savior has appeared.
Today the angels sing on earth,
the archangels rejoice.
Today the righteous exult, saying:
"Glory to God on high! Alleluia!"

Wolcum Yole!

Wolcum, wolcum,
Wolcum be thou hevenè, King,
wolcum Yole!
Wolcum, born in one morning,
wolcum, for whom we sall sing!

Wolcum, be ye Stevene and Jon,
wolcum, innocentes every one.
Wolcum, Thomas marter one,
wolcum, be ye good Newe Yere,
wolcum, Twelfthe Day both in fere,
wolcum, seintes lefe and dere,
wolcum Yole!

Candelmesse, Quene of bliss,
wolcum, bothe to more and lesse.
Wolcum, be ye that are here,
wolcum, alle and make good cheer.
Wolcum, alle another yere.
Wolcum Yole, wolcum!

Text: Anonymous

There Is No Rose

There is no rose of such vertu
as is the rose that bare Jesu.
Alleluia!
For in this rose containèd was
heaven and earth in litel space,
Res miranda. [A miracle]
By that rose we may well see
there be one God in persons three,
Pares forma. [Equal in nature.]
The aungels sungen the shepherds to:
Gloria in excelsis Deo,
Gaudeamus. [Let us rejoice.]
Leave we all this werldly merth
and follow we this joyful birth,
Transeamus. [Let us pass over.]

Text: Anonymous

This Little Babe

This little babe so few days old
is come to rifle Satan's fold.
All hell doth at his presence quake,
though he himself for cold do shake;
for in this weak unarmed wise,
the gates of hell he will surprise.
With tears he fights and wins the field,
his naked breast stands for a shield.
His battering shot are babish cries,
his arrows looks of weeping eyes,
his martial ensigns cold and need,
and feeble flesh his warrior's steed.

His camp is pitched in a stall,
his bulwark but a broken wall.
The crib his trench, haystalks his stakes;
of shepherds he his muster makes.
And thus, as sure his foe to wound,
the angels' trumps alarum sound.
My soul, with Christ join thou in fight;
stick to the tents that he hath pight.

Within his crib is surest ward;
this little babe will be thy guard.
If thou wilt foil thy foes with joy,
then flit not from this heavenly boy.

Text: Robert Southwell

Deo gracias

Deo gracias!
Adam lay i-bounden,
bounden in a bond;
four thousand winter
thought he not too long.
Deo gracias!
And all was for an appil, an appil that he tok,
as clerkès finden written in their book.

Deo gracias!
Ne had the appil takè ben,
the appil takè ben,
ne haddè never our lady
a ben hevenè quene.
Blessèd be the time
that appil takè was.
Therefore we moun singen,
Deo gracias!

Text: Anonymous

TRADITIONAL FRENCH MELODY

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (Arranged by David Willcocks)

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" is a Christian Advent hymn. The text, originally written in Latin, is an eighteenth-century metrical paraphrase of a series of plainchant antiphons sung over the seven days before Christmas, the so-called O Antiphons, which date from the early Middle Ages. Each verse begins with the exclamation "O," addressing a different Messianic title from the Scriptures that prophesy and foreshadow Jesus's coming: Wisdom, My Lord, Root of Jesse, Key of David, Dawn of the East, King of Nations, and finally, Emmanuel, meaning in Hebrew "God is with us."

In 1851 John Mason Neale translated the Latin verses into English; his collaborator, Thomas Helmore, paired the words with an old French tune, creating the version of the carol we know today. The tune is attested in an early sixteenth-century Franciscan processional, with an entirely different text. *C*

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Chorus
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

O come, O Wisdom from on high,
who ordered all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show
and teach us in its ways to go.

Chorus

O come, O come, great Lord of might,
who to your tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times did give the law
in cloud and majesty and awe.

Chorus

O come, O Branch of Jesse's stem,
unto your own and rescue them!
From depths of hell your people save,
and give them victory o'er the grave.

Chorus

O come, O Key of David, come
and open wide our heavenly home.
Make safe for us the heavenward road,
and bar the way to death's abode.

(Please turn the page quietly.)

Chorus

O come, O Bright and Morning Star,
and bring us comfort from afar!
Dispel the shadows of the night
and turn our darkness into light.

Chorus

O come, O King of nations, bind
in one the hearts of all mankind.
Bid all our sad divisions cease,
and be yourself our King of Peace.

Chorus

Text: Ninth-Century Latin Advent Antiphon

ADVENT CAROL FROM THURINGIA AND PADERBORN

Maria durch ein' Dornwald ging (Arranged by Uwe Theimer)

This moving carol, created in the sixteenth century, was later used as a procession hymn in Thuringia and Paderborn, Germany. It is firmly rooted in the Catholic tradition of medieval hymns to Mary: it tells the miracle of Christ's birth as a simple legend, using metaphors well-known in the sixteenth century. The *Dornwald* (thorn brush) is a symbol of the fallen world (Genesis 2:9, 3:18), and the blossoming roses represent the birth of Christ and the overcoming of death.

The Vienna Boys Choir recorded the song in 2013 for Curt Faudon's film *Songs for Mary.* 𝒸

Maria durch ein' Dornwald ging
Maria durch ein' Dornwald ging.
Kyrie eleison.
Maria durch ein' Dornwald ging,
Der hat seit sieben Jahren kein Laub getragen.
Kyrie eleison.

Was trug Maria unter ihrem Herzen?
Kyrie eleison.
Ein kleines Kindlein ohne Schmerzen,
das trug Maria unter ihrem Herzen.
Kyrie eleison.

Da hab'n die Dornen Rosen getragen.
Kyrie eleison.
Als das Kindlein durch den Wald getragen,
da hab'n die Dornen Rosen getragen.
Kyrie eleison.

Mary Walked Through a Thorn Brush
Mary walked through a thorn brush.
Kyrie eleison.
Mary walked through a thorn brush
that hadn't shown any green for seven years.
Kyrie eleison.

What did Mary carry beneath her heart?
Kyrie eleison.
A small child without pain,
Mary carried beneath her heart.
Kyrie eleison.

And then the thorns bore roses.
Kyrie eleison.
When the child was carried through the brush,
the thorns bore roses.
Kyrie eleison.

TRADITIONAL GERMAN CAROL

Es ist ein Ros´entsprungen (Arranged by Michael Praetorius)

This is one of Europe's most popular carols. It originated in Germany in the High Middle Ages, at least 200 years before its first publication in the Speyer Hymnal.

There are a number of textual variants, expressing different theological ideas; some focus on Mary, others on the Christ child. The "rose" of verse one is a misinterpretation of the old German word for shoot or sprig *(Reis);* later on, it becomes a play on the two words. The shoot is Jesus, the youngest offspring of an old family. The song traces Joseph's (and thus Jesus's) roots to Jesse, the father of King David (Matthew 1:16). This textually legitimizes Jesus as King and God.

The second verse plays on the word *rose,* echoing Isaiah 11:1 ("And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a flower shall grow out of his roots"). The rose is identified as Mary, who bore Jesus, the "blossom." The story is connected to a medieval legend, which tells of a monk lost in deep snow. It is nearly midnight, and he cannot find his way home, when all of a sudden, he comes across a blooming rose—and he knows everything will be all right.

The Vienna Boys Choir performed this song for their Christmas movie, *Songs for Mary,* in a large ice cave near Salzburg, Austria. In the United Kingdom and the United States, the carol is known as "Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming." *C*

Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen

Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen
aus einer Wurzel zart.
Wie uns die Alten sungen,
aus Jesse kam die Art
und hat ein Blümlein bracht
mitten im kalten Winter,
wohl zu der halben Nacht.

Das Röslein das ich meine,
davon Jesaia sagt:
Maria ist's, die Reine,
die uns das Blümlein bracht.
Aus Gottes ew'gen Rat
hat sie ein Kind geboren
wohl zu der halben Nacht.

Das Blümelein so kleine,
das duftet uns so süss,
mit seinem hellen Scheine
vertreibt's die Finsternis.
Wahr' Mensch und wahrer Gott,
Hilf uns aus allem Leide,
rettet von Sünd' und Tod.

Text: Speyer Hymnal, Cologne

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

A shoot came up
from a tender root.
As the ancients told us,
this kind stemmed from Jesse,
and it brought forth a little flower
in the middle of the cold winter,
at midnight.

The little rose that I refer to
of which Isaiah says:
It is Mary, the pure,
who brings us the little flower.
According to God's eternal counsel,
she bore a child
at midnight.

The little flower, so small,
smells so sweetly,
and with its bright sheen
it dispels the darkness.
True human and true God,
save us from all pain,
save us from sin and death.

HENRY JOHN GAUNTLETT

Born July 9, 1805; Wellington, England
Died February 21, 1876; London, England

Once in Royal David's City (Arranged by David Willcocks)

Born in Dublin, Cecil Frances Alexander began writing verse in her childhood. Many of her works are religious, strongly influenced by the Oxford Movement. By the 1840s, she was well-known as a hymn writer, and her works were included in official hymnals. Her most famous are "Once in Royal David's City" and "All Things Bright and Beautiful." She also wrote poems and translated French poetry under various pseudonyms. "Once in Royal David's City" was published in Alexander's *Hymns for Little Children*. The 1848 book, intended to make Christian concepts accessible to children and teach them to be "mild, obedient, good as He," was popular in Sunday schools and reached a stunning sixty-nine editions.

Alexander, an "indefatigable visitor to poor and sick," devoted much of her life to charity. She used the royalties from her publications to help build the Derry and Raphoe Diocesan Institution for the Deaf and Dumb; the profits from *Hymns for Little Children* were also donated to the school. In keeping with the philanthropic ideals of the time, she supported a Home for Fallen Women and helped develop a district nurses service.

Henry John Gauntlett was a prominent English organist who served at a number of London churches throughout his career. He wrote over a thousand hymn tunes. "Irby," named after a village Gauntlett liked, was the naturally flowing melody he invented for "Once in Royal David's City," and which has become a timeless classic. *C*

Once in Royal David's City

Once in royal David's city
stood a lowly cattle shed,
where a mother laid her baby
in a manger for his bed.
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven,
who is God and Lord of all,
and his shelter was a stable,
and his cradle was a stall;
with the poor and mean and lowly
lived on earth our Saviour holy.

And through all his wondrous childhood,
He would honour and obey,
love and watch the lowly maiden
in whose gentle arms he lay.
Christian children all must be
mild, obedient, good as He.

Text: Cecil Frances Alexander

ANTON REIDINGER

Born April 29, 1839; Krenglbach, Upper Austria
Died December 25, 1912; Obernberg am Inn, Upper Austria

Es wird scho glei dumpa (Arranged by Gerald Wirth)

This particular carol takes the form of a lullaby for Jesus. It would have been sung in the Alps by carollers dressed as shepherds.

Shepherd carols focus on the shepherds' role in the Christmas story—their belief, their dignity, and their reliability. Both listeners and singers can identify with someone in the story: the biblical shepherds are simple people, yet their gifts are as important as the gifts from the three kings. In short, the Christmas story relates to everyone. Most shepherd carols were written and sung in the local dialect. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the carols were sung in Christmas pageants. Reidinger was dean of a village church and he wrote this carol for his parishioners. *C*

Es wird scho glei dumpa

Es wird scho glei dumpa, es wird scho glei Nacht.
Drum kimm i zu dir her, mein Heiland, auf d'Wacht.
Will singen a Liadl dem Liebling, dem kloan,

du mågst ja net schlåfn, i hör' di nur woan.
Hei, hei, schlaf süss, herzliabs Kind!

Vergiss hiaz, o Kinderl, dein Kummer, dei Load,
dass du då muasst leidn im Ståll auf da Hoad.

Es ziern jå die Engerl dei Liegerstatt aus.
Möcht schöna nit sein drin an König sei Haus.
Hei, hei . . .

Jå Kinderl, du bist hålt im Kripperl so schen,
mi ziemt, i kånn nimmer då weg von dir gehn.
I wünsch dir von Herzen die süasste Ruah,
die Engerl vom Himmel, die deckn di zua.
Hei, hei . . .

It Will Be Dark Soon

It will be dark soon; it will soon be night.
Therefore, I come to you, my Savior, to guard you.
I want to sing a carol for (my) darling, the little one.
You cannot sleep; I hear you fret.
Hey, hey, sleep tight, (my) darling child.

Now forget, child, your sorrow, your pain,
which makes you suffer in the stable, on the heather.
Angels adorn your bedstead.
A king's house could not be better.
Hey, hey . . .

Yes, child, you are so beautiful in your crib,
I cannot bear to part from you.
I wish you with all my heart the sweetest of rests.
May the angels from heaven tuck you in.
Hey, hey . . .

Text: Traditional, Anton Reidinger

JOHN RUTTER
Born September 24, 1945; London, England

Star Carol (Arranged by Kenneth Pont)

Sir John Milford Rutter is an English composer, conductor, editor, arranger, and record producer, mainly of choral music, particularly carols. As a boy chorister, he took part in the first recording of Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem,* with Britten conducting. Rutter went on to study music at Clare College, Cambridge, and from 1975 to 1979 served as the college's director of music and led its choir to international prominence. In 1981 the composer founded his own choir, the Cambridge Singers, with whom he made many recordings, chiefly on his own label, Collegium Records.

"Star Carol" was written for the Bach Choir and Sir David Willcocks, who had asked Rutter for a contribution to the choir's Christmas concerts in the Royal Albert Hall. The idea was to write a cheerful piece with a catchy chorus that the children in the audience could learn at the concert. It was a natural assignment for Rutter, who had attended the Bach Choir concerts since childhood. As a young man, he sat backstage, helping with last-minute musical arrangements. 𝒸

Star Carol
Sing this night (for a boy is born in Bethlehem).
Christ our Lord (in a lowly manger lies),
bring your gifts (come and worship at His cradle).
Hurry to Bethlehem and see the son of Mary.

Chorus
See his star shining bright
in the sky this Christmas night.
Follow me joyfully,
hurry to Bethlehem and see the son of Mary.
Angels bright (come from heaven's highest glory)
bear the news (with its message of good cheer).
Sing, rejoice (for a King is come to save us)!
Hurry to Bethlehem and see the son of Mary.

Chorus

See, he lies in his mother's tender keeping,
Jesus Christ in her loving arms asleep.
Shepherds poor come to worship and adore Him,
offer their humble gifts before the son of Mary.

Chorus

Let us pay our homage at the manger.
Sing His praise on this joyful Christmas night.
Christ is come, bringing promises of salvation.
Hurry to Bethlehem and see the son of Mary.

Chorus

Text: John Rutter

GUSTAV HOLST

Born September 21, 1874; Cheltenham, England
Died May 25, 1934; London, England

In the Bleak Midwinter

Christina Rossetti's poem "In the Bleak Midwinter" was first published in the January 1872 issue of Scribner's *Monthly*. The deeply religious Rossetti uses the stark imagery of a nineteenth-century English winter to describe the spiritual bleakness of the world at large, recalling Pieter Brueghel's *Adoration of the Magi*. To bring redemption, the infant Jesus arrives in a stable, surrounded by an ox, donkey, and (doubtless an English) camel, as well as angel hosts. The singer asks what gifts they can bring; the answer is simple: their heart. The idea is the same as in Katherine Kennicott Davis's "The Little Drummer Boy"—you give yourself.

Gustav Holst wrote his version in 1906 as a hymn. To him, the poem conjured up images of the Gloucestershire village where he had spent much time with his maternal grandparents and after which he named his tune "Cranham." *C*

In the Bleak Midwinter

In the bleak midwinter,
frosty wind made moan,
earth stood hard as iron,
water like a stone:
snow had fallen,
snow on snow, snow on snow,
in the bleak midwinter,
long ago.

Enough for Him whom cherubim
worship night and day,
a breastful of milk
and a mangerful of hay:
enough for Him
whom angels fall down before,
the ox and ass and camel,
which adore.

Angels and archangels
may have gathered there,
cherubim and seraphim
thronged the air,
but only His mother,
in her maiden bliss,
worshiped the beloved
with a kiss.

What can I give Him,
poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd,
I would bring a lamb;
if I were a wise man
I would do my part,
yet what I can I give Him—
give my heart.

Text: Christina Rossetti

SACRED LULLABY FROM LOWER AUSTRIA

Ein Kind geboren gar wunderschön (Arranged by Gerald Wirth)

Sacred lullabies are a typical form of Christmas carols in the Alps. Most lullabies were written by parishioners for Christmas pageants and performed on Christmas Eve. *c*

Ein Kind geboren gar wunderschön
Ein Kind geboren gar wunderschön.
Zur Erd' ist kommen aus Sternenhöhen.
Da liegt im Stalle der hohe Gast;
den aller Welt Gebäud' nicht fasst.
Halleluja!

Auf rauem Lager von Heu und Stroh
wie macht der Himmel die Erde froh.
Anstimmen Engel den Friedensgesang,
und Berg und Tal erfüllt Jubelklang.
Halleluja!

A Beautiful Babe Is Born
A beautiful child is born.
He came to earth from starry heights.
The high guest lies in the stable;
the entire world cannot contain Him.
Hallelujah!

On a rough bed of hay and straw
heaven brings earth great joy.
Angels begin to sing of peace,
and mountains and valleys resound with sounds of joy.
Hallelujah!

Text: Anonymous

J. FRED COOTS

Born May 2, 1897; New York City
Died April 8, 1985; New York City

Santa Claus Is Coming to Town

"Santa Claus Is Coming to Town" owes its existence to a clever corporate gamble rather than pure holiday magic. In the fall of 1934, executives at Leo Feist, Inc., sought a jazzy, commercial Christmas hit aimed specifically at children.

Copyright manager Edgar Bitter formally commissioned lyricist Haven Gillespie and composer J. Fred Coots to create an upbeat, catchy song about Santa Claus. Gillespie, who had just lost his brother, hesitated to write a joyful tune, but Coots persuaded him. However, the folks at Feist weren't convinced by the result. To help market the track, they concocted a classic, and doubtless apocryphal, Tin Pan Alley myth about a nearly destitute Gillespie frantically scribbling the lyrics on the back of a crumpled envelope while riding the New York City subway.

Coots had a better idea. He pitched the tune directly to radio superstar Eddie Cantor, who performed it during his Thanksgiving broadcast in November 1934. The song became an overnight sensation. Within a day, the public rushed to buy 500,000 copies of the sheet music and more than 30,000 records, cementing its status as an instant classic. Over the decades, this holiday standard has been adapted by over 200 artists across every musical genre. From Bing Crosby and the Supremes to Bruce Springsteen, Mariah Carey, and Pentatonix, the song's mix of playful warning and joyful anticipation continues to define the magic of the holiday season. *C*

Santa Claus Is Coming to Town

You better watch out,
you better not cry,
better not pout,
I'm telling you why:
Santa Claus is coming to town!

He's making a list,
he's checking it twice;
gonna find out who's naughty or nice.
Santa Claus is coming to town!

He sees you when you're sleeping,
he knows when you're awake;
he knows if you've been bad or good,
so be good for goodness' sake!

You better watch out, . . .

Text: Haven Gillespie

JOHN FRANCIS WADE

Born January 1, 1711; England
Died August 16, 1786; Douai, France

O Come, All Ye Faithful (Adeste fideles)

(Arranged by David Willcocks)

The original Latin text of "Adeste fideles" is a Christmas hymn by John Francis Wade, an English Catholic who spent many years in exile in France. Wade is also credited with the tune. Additional contemporary verses were written by Abbot Etienne Jean François Borderies (1764–1832).

The song became popular throughout Europe in the 1740s, and there are translations into virtually every language. In today's program, the choir sings the well-known English translation by Frederick Oakeley (1802–1880), an Anglican priest who converted to Catholicism in 1845.

It is possible that the carol has older roots. The tune is sometimes referred to as Portuguese, possibly because the Duke of Leeds, who served as foreign secretary under William Pitt the Younger, heard it in the chapel of the Portuguese Embassy in London in 1795. Another theory has it that King John IV of Portugal wrote the hymn when his daughter Catherine married King Charles II in 1662. Wherever she went, this music announced her arrival like a personal theme tune. The two theories do not exclude one another; they might well both be true. 𝒞

O Come, All Ye Faithful (Adeste fideles)

Chorus
O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come and behold Him, born the King of angels;
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.

God of God, Light of Light,
lo, He abhors not the virgin's womb;
very God, begotten, not created.

Chorus

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, glory in the highest!

Chorus

Text: John Francis Wade

TRADITIONAL ENGLISH CAROL

We Wish You a Merry Christmas (Arranged by John Rutter)

"We Wish You a Merry Christmas" is an English West Country carol, listed as numbers 230 and 9681 in the Roud Folk Song Index. It is rooted in the English tradition of caroling, in which singers were given food and drink by the residents of the houses they visited, often the lord and lady of the manor, who in medieval times were responsible for feeding those who lived on their estates. The playful threat to not "go until we get some" alludes to that duty. In the English West Country, "figgy pudding" referred to a raisin or plum pudding. The word *figgy* implied richness, suggesting that the hosts should not skimp on the ingredients.

In return for their figgy pudding, the carolers brought their well-wishes for good luck. A similar version was sung in the nineteenth century by mummers, mostly boys or young men who went from door to door performing in exchange for gifts. *C*

We Wish You a Merry Christmas
We wish you a merry Christmas,
we wish you a merry Christmas,
we wish you a merry Christmas
and a happy new year!
Good tidings we bring to you and your kin:
we wish you a merry Christmas
and a happy new year!
Now bring us some figgy pudding
and bring some out here,
for we all like figgy pudding,
so bring some out here.
And we won't go till we've got some,
so bring some out here.
We wish you a merry Christmas, . . .

JOHANN STRAUSS, JR.

Born October 25, 1825; Vienna, Austria
Died June 3, 1899; Vienna, Austria

An der schönen blauen Donau, Op. 314 (Arranged by Gerald Wirth)

Austria's secret national anthem is dedicated to the Vienna Männergesang-Verein (Vienna Men's Choral Society) and was first performed in February 1867 at the chorus's carnival ball. The composer was absent, at a court engagement. The original text was slightly silly and was meant to make fun of the fact that many carnival balls had been canceled that year—it ran, "Viennese, be joyous! O-ho! Why-o?" It fit the occasion but did not survive beyond the carnival. There had been several earlier attempts to improve the lyrics before lawyer Franz von Gernerth wrote his version in 1889. His maudlin, flowery, and somewhat patriotic description of the Danube has remained standard until today. *C*

An der Schönen blauen Donau

Donau so blau, durch Tal und Au
Wogst ruhig du hin.
Dich grüßt unser Wien,
dein silbernes Band Knüpft Land an Land
und fröhliche Herzen schlagen
an deinem schönen Strand.

Weit vom Schwarzwald her
eilst du hin zum Meer,
Spendest Segen allerwegen.
Ostwärts geht dein Lauf,
nimmst viel Brüder auf:
Bild der Einigkeit für alle Zeit.

Alte Burgen seh'n
Nieder von den Höh'n;
grüßen gerne dich von ferne,
und der Berge Kranz,
hell vom Morgenglanz
spiegelt sich in deiner Wellen Tanz.

Die Nixen auf dem Grund
die geben flüsternd kund
was alles du erschaut
seitdem über dir der Himmel blaut.

Halt an deine Fluten bei Wien,
es liebt dich ja so sehr.
Du findest wohin du magst ziehen
ein zweites Wien nicht mehr.

Du kennst wohl deinen Bruder, den Rhein,
an seinen Ufern wächst herrlicher Wein,
dort auch steht bei Tag und bei Nacht
die feste, treue Wacht.

Das Schifflein fährt auf den Wellen so sacht
still ist die Nacht, Liebe nur wacht,
der Schiffer flüstert der Liebsten ins Ohr
dass längst schon sein Herz sie erkor.

Nun singt ein fröhliches, seliges Lied,
das wie Jauchzen die Lüfte durchzieht.
Und zum Schluss bringt noch einen Gruß,
unsrer Donau, dem herrlichen Fluss.

Danube, So Blue

Danube, so blue, you meander calmly
through vales and meadows.
Our Vienna greets you,
your silver ribbon links land to land,
and cheerful hearts beat
on your beautiful shores.

From the Black Forest
you rush towards the Black Sea,
blessing everything on your way.
You flow east,
taking in many brothers:
an eternal image of harmony.

Old fortresses look down
from their hills;
they like to greet you from afar,
and the top of the mountains,
bright in the morning light,
are reflected in the dancing of your waves.

The mermaids in the river bed
whisper about
everything you have seen
since heaven began.

Stop when you reach Vienna,
it really adores you.
Wherever you may wander,
you will not find a second Vienna.

You probably know your brother, the Rhine,
lovely wine grows along its banks,
and night and day it is flanked
by faithful guardians.

The little boat rides on the waves,
the night is quiet, love is in the air,
the skipper tells his beloved
his heart had selected her long since.

Now sing a happy, cheerful song,
filling the air with joy.
And, finally, give a special cheer
for the Danube, our beautiful river.

Text: Franz von Gernerth

Vienna Boys Choir



The Vienna Boys Choir is one of the world's oldest and most famous choirs. Boys have been singing at Vienna's Imperial Chapel at least since 1296. Two hundred years later, on July 7, 1498, Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I established a Court Chapel in Vienna. He specifically instructed that boys be among the singers, thus laying the foundation for the Vienna Boys Choir. Like their modern successors, the early boys spent much time on the road, following their imperial employer to sing at the Holy Roman Empire's parliamentary meetings, imperial coronations, weddings, state processions, and feasts.

Over the centuries, the Viennese court attracted musical geniuses such as Heinrich Isaac, Johann Joseph Fux, and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Composers Joseph Haydn, Michael Haydn, and Franz Schubert sang in the Choir as boys; Anton Bruckner gave them singing and piano lessons.

Today, the former imperial ensemble has grown into a full-time campus. The modern Vienna Boys Choir is a private, non-profit organization that funds itself mainly through concerts and touring, as well as donations and sponsorship deals. The Vienna Boys Choir maintains an elementary and middle school focused on choral music and singing, attended by 330 boys and girls, ages six to nineteen. All students have individual voice lessons, and all sing in one of the choirs. In addition to the four famous boys choirs, there is a female counterpart—the Vienna Girls Choir (Wiener Chormädchen) for girls aged ten to fourteen, who will make their North American tour debut in Spring 2027. In addition, there is the Chorus Primus, a mixed children's chorus comprised of all boys and girls enrolled in the fourth grade of the Choir's elementary school, and the Chorus Juventus, a mixed youth choir of the senior high school. The Vienna Boys Choir's education is listed by UNESCO as cultural heritage and is open to all, regardless of origin, gender, nationality, or religion.

Currently, ninety active boy choristers are divided into four boys choirs, all performing as the Vienna Boys Choir: Brucknerchor (Choirmaster Manolo Cagnin), Haydnchor (Choirmaster Jimmy Chiang), Mozartchor (Choirmaster Manuel Huber), and Schubertchor (Choirmaster Johannes Pell). The four choirs share concerts, tours, sound recordings, and filming equally. They perform nearly 300 concerts per year, with close to half a million people attending. Since 1924 the choirs have completed more than 1,000 tours in 100 different countries, totaling a staggering 29,000 concerts.

On Sundays, the choirs take turns singing mass in Vienna's Imperial Chapel, joining forces with members of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and the men's chorus of the Vienna State Opera. They frequently perform in large-scale symphonic concerts under conductors like Joana Mallwitz, Zubin Mehta, Riccardo Muti, Christian Thielemann, Simone Young, and Franz Welser-Möst. Other highlights are appearances at the Salzburg Festival and at the New Year's concert of the Vienna Philharmonic.

The Vienna Boys Choir cooperates with several charities, including UNICEF and the Austrian agencies Licht ins Dunkel (Light into Darkness) and Die Möwe (The Seagull, a child-protection agency). Together with Caritas and the Vienna Konzerthaus, the Choir founded Superar, an outreach program that offers children access to free music education. In addition, the Vienna Boys Choir runs Chorus Amabilis, a choir for adult singing enthusiasts, aimed particularly at retirees.

Photo © by Lukas Beck

In 2023 the Choir celebrated its 525th anniversary. To mark the occasion, Deutsche Grammophon released a live album of the anniversary concert in Vienna's Musikverein, Decca Classics released a box set of twenty-one CDs featuring the Choir's landmark recordings, and the academic publishing house Böhlau released a book on the Choir's rich history. In 2024 the Vienna Boys Choir and the Vienna Girls Choir jointly received the European Culture Award.

Erasmus Baumgartner was appointed artistic director of the Vienna Boys Choir in the fall of 2023.

viennaboyschoir.net

Wiener Sängerknaben
Seit 1498

Johannes Pell Choirmaster



Johannes Pell studied piano, choral conducting, and orchestral conducting in Vienna and Salzburg, having developed his early musical foundations with the Saint Florianer Sängerknaben and the Bruckner Conservatory in Linz.

His distinguished career in opera and concert performance includes engagements with Theatre Erfurt, Bonn Opera, the Vienna Volksoper, and the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra. He previously served as principal conductor of the Wuppertal Opera and, from 2020 to 2024, as principal conductor of the Staatsoperette Dresden. Pell's talent was recognized early in his career when the prestigious *Opernwelt* magazine named him Emerging Artist of the Year.

VIENNA BOYS CHOIR ADMINISTRATION
Erich Arthold President
Erasmus Baumgartner Artistic Director
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