

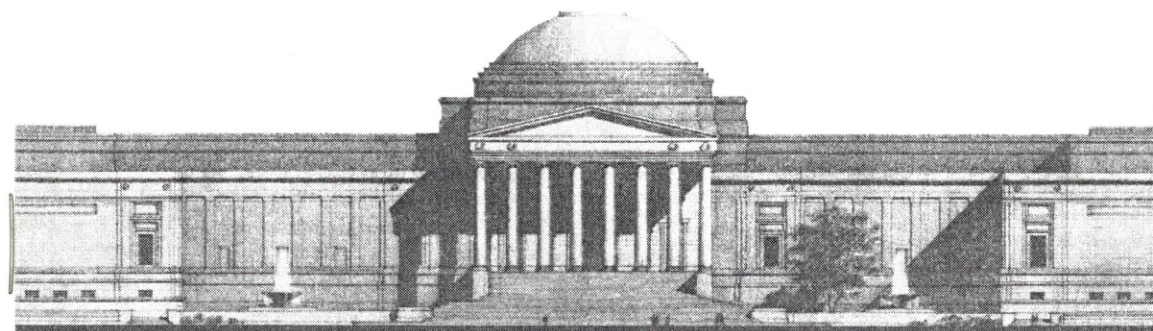
For the convenience of concertgoers
the Garden Café remains open until 6:00 pm.

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the
performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones,
pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that late entry or reentry after 6:30 pm
is not permitted.

Music Department
National Gallery of Art
Sixth Street and Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC

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The Sixty-fourth Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lamot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,553rd Concert

The Suspicious Cheese Lords
Hodie! Celebrating the Christmas Spirit

December 18, 2005
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Fifteenth-Century Plainsong

Veni, veni Emmanuel

Petrus Speilier (sixteenth century)

Christus natus est nobis

Anonymous

Attributed to Matheo Flecha the Elder (c. 1481–c. 1553)

Ríu, ríu, chíu

Marc'Antonio Ingegneri (1535–1592)

Ecce enim evangelizo

Gordon Geise (b. 1965)

There Were Abiding in the Fields

World premiere performance

Traditional

Ding Dong! Merrily on High

Arranged by Charles Wood (1866–1926)

Elzéar Genet (c. 1470–1548)

Gabriel angelus locutus est

Luc Jakobs (b. 1956)

O Kerstnacht

Samuel Scheidt (1587–1654)

Nun komm, der Heyden Heyland

INTERMISSION

Thomas Stoltzer (c. 1480–1526)

O admirabile commercium

Francisco Guerrero (1528–1599)

A un niño llorando

William Byrd (1543–1623)

Puer natus est nobis

Gustav Holst (1874–1934)

In the Bleak Midwinter

Cristóbal de Morales (c. 1500–1553)

O magnum mysterium

Morten Lauridsen (b. 1943)

Ave dulcissima Maria

Luca Marenzio (c. 1553–1599)

Hodie Christus natus est

Thomas W. Carter (nineteenth century)

Night Watchman

The Musicians

The Suspicious Cheese Lords, an a cappella ensemble of men's voices, was founded in 1996 when Clifton "Skip" West III invited a group of friends over for a savory gourmet meal in exchange for singing *The Lamentations of Jeremiah* by Thomas Tallis. The combination of song, friendship, and West's cooking soon became a regular event. To this day the Cheese Lords continue to have dinner before their regular rehearsals. The ensemble's unconventional name is derived from the title of another Tallis motet, *Suscipe quæso Domine*. In a playful mistranslation of the title, it was observed that *Suscipe* could be "suspicious," *quæso* is close to the Spanish word *queso* (cheese), and *Domine* is, of course, "Lord." "Suspicious Cheese Lords" in time became adopted as the group's name. Suspiciously, the Cheese Lords have yet to perform the latter Tallis motet.

Although specializing in music of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the ensemble sings a full repertoire, ranging from Gregorian chant to contemporary compositions. The Cheese Lords are artists-in-residence at the Franciscan Monastery in Washington, D.C. They have performed in numerous Washington area venues, including the Smithsonian Institution, Washington National Cathedral, the Old Presbyterian Meeting House in Alexandria, Virginia, and the Society of the Cincinnati's Anderson House Museum. Many of their performances have been broadcast on the Vox channel of XM Satellite Radio, hosted by Robert Aubry Davis. The *Washington Post* called their recent performances "beautifully styled" and "warmly opulent," and they were profiled last year in *Early Music America* magazine.

The Cheese Lords have released two world premiere CDs: *Mæstro di capella: Music of Elzéar Genet (Carpentras)* and *Missa l'homme arme: Sacred Music of Ludwig Senfl*. Both recordings received enthusiastic reviews in *Early Music America* and have been featured on public radio's "Millennium of Music." More information on the Suspicious Cheese Lords may be found at the ensemble's Web site at www.cheeselords.org.

The members, who playfully call themselves "The Lords," are:

Daniel Boettcher
Nathan Carlisle
George P. Cervantes
Ryan Dolan
Daniel Ebeling
Gordon Geise
James Heaney
Matthew Irish
Peter Larsen
Christopher G. Riggs
Anthony Simione
Robert Stenger
Clifton N. West III
Gary W. Winans Jr.

Performance Advisor
Jay White, D.M.A.

Program Notes

The program begins with what might be considered the most familiar chant of the Advent and Christmas season. The Latin words of *Veni, veni Emmanuel* are from the twelfth century and are based on the ancient *Magnificat* antiphons known as the great “O” antiphons. Beginning with acclamations such as *O Emmanuel, O Sapientia, and O Adonai*, these antiphons were recited or sung during vespers on the seven days prior to Christmas Eve. The origin of the haunting melody of *Veni, veni Emmanuel* is believed to be a French processional that was adapted to the text in the fifteenth century.

Virtually nothing is known of Petrus Speilier, the composer of the joyous motet *Christus natus est nobis*. This work appears in the collection *Novi atque catholici thesauri musici*, published in 1568 by the famed Venetian music printer Antonio Gardano. Gardano’s grand five-volume anthology, dedicated to Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II, offers a thorough record of the musical life of the Hapsburg courts in the mid-sixteenth century.

In 1556 a collection entitled *Villancicos de diversos autores* (Carols by various authors) was published in Venice. Almost all copies of this marvelous book were lost, but fortunately one survived in Uppsala, Sweden. Among its more than fifty songs, written in a hybrid of Catalán and Provençal, is *Ríu, ríu, chíu*, which is often attributed to the Spanish composer Matheo Flecha the Elder. Among the more unlikely groups who have performed and recorded this piece are the Monkees, who featured it on the Christmas Day 1967 broadcast of their eponymous NBC television series.

Marc’Antonio Ingegneri was born in Verona, Italy, and as a boy sang at the Verona Cathedral. He was a gifted writer of masses, motets, and madrigals, but his historical reputation is secured by his having been a tutor of Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643). After brief employment as a string player for processions at Saint Mark’s Cathedral in Venice, Ingegneri eventually

settled in Cremona, though he had patrons throughout Italy and as far away as Vienna. The text of *Ecce enim evangelizo* is the angel’s pronouncement to the shepherds “abiding in the fields,” taken from the Gospel according to Luke.

A more comprehensive version of the same text has been set to music by Cheese Lord Gordon Geise in *There Were Abiding in the Fields*, which receives its premiere performance this evening. The piece opens with a chantlike solo but quickly erupts into a joyful, rollicking canticle with meters that change every few measures. Geise, a baritone from New Jersey, joined the Lords in January 2003 and has composed several pieces for the group.

The delightful melody of *Ding Dong! Merrily on High* is a secular French dance tune, *Branle de l’officiel*, which first appeared in *Orchésographie*, a dance treatise compiled by Jehan Tabourot (1520–1595). In 1924 the English carol writer George Ratcliffe Woodward (1848–1934) added an English text to the melody and published it with a harmonization by Charles Wood in the *Cambridge Carol Book*.

The Cheese Lords delight in presenting works of lesser-known but deserving composers, among whom they count Elzéar Genet, also known as Carpentras. Genet was the first musician to hold the title “master of the papal chapel” and the first composer to publish his collected works. *Gabriel angelus locutus est* is based on the plainchant for the antiphon for the *Magnificat* at the second vespers on the Feast of the Annunciation.

Luc Jakobs was born in Weert, The Netherlands. He studied music education and music theory at the Conservatorium Maastricht, to which he returned as a teacher in 1985. His education led him to choral conducting, which he began in 1973, and in 1992 he founded his own a cappella chamber choir, Couleur Vocale. The poem *O Kerstnacht* is by Joost van den Vondel (1587–1679), who is considered in some circles to be the greatest of all Dutch writers. Amsterdam’s 120-acre Vondelpark is named for him.

One of the Christmas texts that scholars attribute to Saint Ambrose of Milan (c. 340–397) is *Veni redemptor gentium*, which Martin Luther translated into German as *Nun komm, der Heyden Heyland*. Samuel Scheidt scored this setting for an eight-part double choir of equal voices and published it in his *Cantiones sacrae* (1620). A composer and organist of the early German baroque, Scheidt studied under Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck (1562–1621) in Amsterdam, after which he entered into long service to the city of Halle as organist and composer.

A popular composer in his time in Germany, Thomas Stoltzer served from 1519 to 1522 as a priest at the Cathedral of Breslau (now Wrocław, Poland). Subsequently he moved to Buda, at the request of Queen Maria of Hungary, to serve as *minister capellae*. Although Stoltzer may have been sympathetic to Protestantism, he mainly composed music for the traditional Catholic liturgy. The text of *O admirabile commercium* is the opening antiphon for the octave of Christmas. In this five-voice motet each of the upper four voices begins with an imitation of the original chant melody.

Francisco Guerrero may hold the distinction of being the only composer in this program of Christmas music to have traveled to Bethlehem. Guerrero lived in Spain during the *siglo de oro*, the golden age of Spanish art and culture. In 1588 he journeyed to the Near East, traveling as far as Jerusalem and Damascus. Immediately following this “grand tour,” he spent six weeks in Venice, preparing for publication of his second book of sacred and secular songs and motets, which includes the lively *A un niño llorando*.

English composer William Byrd probably began his musical career as a boy chorister in the Chapel Royal, but this cannot be substantiated, because chapel records in the sixteenth century named only the adult singers. As a young man, he became the organist-choirmaster of Lincoln Cathedral, then later returned to the Chapel Royal. Byrd devoted the last thirty years of his life to a massive project, composing music for the Roman Catholic Mass. *Puer natus est nobis* is the introit for the third Mass of Christmas Day.

The hymn *In the Bleak Midwinter* is a sublime coupling of Victorian poetry (from Christina Georgina Rossetti, 1830–1894) and twentieth-century melody and harmony (from the English composer Gustav Holst). A deeply religious person, Rossetti wrote the poem in 1872, but the text did not come to public attention until it appeared in a posthumous collection entitled *Poetical Works* (1904). Her words first appeared with Holst’s tune *Cranham* in the *English Hymnal* of 1906.

Cristóbal de Morales was born in Seville and was for a time the choirmaster at Ávila Cathedral. He also sang in the papal chapel in Rome, later claiming to have been personally recruited for the position by Pope Paul III. Eventually Morales returned to Spain to work as a choirmaster in Toledo and Málaga. *O magnum mysterium*, the responsory at matins for Christmas Day, remains to this day one of the most popular Christmas texts for composers.

Morten Lauridsen divides his time between Los Angeles, where he is a professor of composition at the University of Southern California’s Thornton School of Music, and Washington State, where he has a cabin in the San Juan Islands. Listeners may be familiar with his *O magnum mysterium*, now a standard in the choral repertoire. *Ave dulcissima Maria* is one of his most recent compositions. It was commissioned by the Harvard Glee Club and performed at the 2005 National Convention of the American Choral Directors Association.

The son of a notary clerk, Luca Marenzio became a singer, composer, and expert lute player. He worked his way up the ranks, employed in turn by the powerful Gonzaga family, Cardinal Cristoforo Madruzzo (the prince-bishop of Trent), and finally Pope Clement VIII. He may have fallen out of favor with the pontiff, who dispatched him to Poland for several years to work for King Sigismund III. *Hodie Christus natus est* is the antiphon at the *Magnificat* from the second vespers on Christmas Day.

According to Dr. David W. Music, professor of church music at Baylor University, “The Methodists had Wesley. The Lutherans had Bach. The Catholics had Palestrina, [and] the Baptists had *The Sacred Harp*.” The tunes from this mid-nineteenth-century songbook are uniquely American. All are three- or four-part a cappella compositions, exhibiting a refreshingly unrestrained quality. Some of the songs date back to America’s colonial times, while others were written for camp meetings and revivals held in the southern United States during the 1800s. The English poet Sir John Bowring (1792–1872) penned *Night Watchman* in 1825, and it was set to several harmonizations in the following decades. Little is known about Dr. Thomas W. Carter, who wrote the version sung in this program, except that he was a member of the Chattahoochee and Southern Musical Conventions in the mid-1800s. Carter composed several of the tunes that appear in *The Sacred Harp*.

Program notes by George P. Cervantes and Christopher G. Riggs