

NAXOS

Elizabeth **POSTON**

Carols and Anthems

St Albans Cathedral Girls Choir
Lay Clerks of St Albans Cathedral
Oliver Morrell, Organ • Tom Winpenny



<p>1 The Boar's Head Carol (Traditional, arr. E. Poston) (1960) (Text: Traditional, 15th-century English Carol, English translations: William Henry Davenport [1828–1891])</p>	3:08	<p>5 This is the truth sent from above 1:44 6 O Joseph being an old man truly 1:58 7 And while they lived in joy and bliss 5:02 8 Spoken carol: I sing of a maiden 0:50 9 Scena: Joseph and Mary walked 5:16 10 As Joseph was a-walking 3:16 11 There is no rose of such virtue 2:03 12 I saw a fair maiden sitten and sing 2:58 13 Spoken carol: A lovely lady thus did sing 1:25 14 Qui creavit coelum 3:17 15 Christo paremus cantica 2:20</p>
<p>Two Carols in Memory of Peter Warlock (1956) (Text: Traditional Basque Carols, translated by Rev. John O'Connor [1870–1952], adapted by Elizabeth Poston)</p> <p>2 No. 2. O Bethlehem (Traditional Basque, arr. E. Poston) 2:37</p> <p>3 No. 1. Praise our Lord (Traditional Basque, arr. E. Poston) 1:43</p>		<p>16 Sheepfolds (1957) 1:37 (Text: Sister Mary Madeleva Wolff, C.S.C. [1887–1964])</p>
<p>4 Jesus Christ the Apple Tree (1967) 3:39 (Text: Mid-18th century. Sourced by Elizabeth Poston from <i>Divine Hymns or Spiritual Songs</i>, collection of Joshua Smith [1760–1795], pub. 1784)</p>		<p>17 Balulalow (1928) 1:58 (Text: James Wedderburn [1495–1533], John Wedderburn [1505–1556], Robert Wedderburn [1510–1555])</p>
<p>The Nativity: A Sequence for Christmas (1950) (Texts: compiled and edited by Terence Tiller [1916–1987] – see sung texts on pps. 8–13 for details) (Musical sources: Herefordshire folk carol, collected by Ralph Vaughan Williams 5; Herefordshire folk tune, collected by Ralph Vaughan Williams 6; 13th-century melody (Dublin Troper manuscripts), transcribed by Dom Anselm Hughes 7; Herefordshire folk tune and 'traditonal tune from a broadside' 9; Traditional Cornish tune (adapted) 10; 15th century, Cambridge Manuscript 11; 15th century, adapted, Harleian Manuscript 12; 14th century, adapted, Oxford Manuscript 13; from a Chester Manuscript (c. 1425) 14; 15th century, Harleian Manuscript 15)</p>		<p>18 The Dormouse's Carol (1954) 2:05 (Text: Hilary Pepler [1878–1951])</p> <p>19 Carol: Salve Jesus, little Lad (1924) 5:48 (Text: Anonymous – Old English)</p> <p>20 The Princesses' Carol (1948) 2:12 (Text: Eleanor Farjeon [1881–1965])</p> <p>21 In Bethlehem Town (1958) 1:38 (Text: Sister Mary Madeleva Wolff, C.S.C.)</p> <p>22 Sing unto the Lord (1959) 3:32 (Text: Bible – Old Testament: Isaiah 12:5–6; 49:13; 55:12; 52:8; 30:29; 14:7; 52:9; 51:11 [King James Version])</p> <p>23 The Queen of Sheba's Song: It was a true report... (1956) 2:22 (Text: Bible – Old Testament: 1 Kings 10:6–7 [King James Version])</p>

<p>24 Happy are thy men (1958) (Text: Bible – Old Testament: 1 Kings 10:8–9 [King James Version])</p>	2:29	<p>Antiphon and Psalm – Laudate Dominum (1955) (Text: 2 Chronicles 5:13-14 [King James Version] 26; Psalm 150, Book of Common Prayer, 1662 27)</p>	
<p>25 Song of Wisdom (Pavane, Passacaglia and Descant on Gosterwood) (1956) (Text: Bible – Old Testament: Proverbs 4:5, 4:7–9, 8:11, 14:34, 17:6 [King James Version]; Ecclesiasticus 44:1, 44:13–14; G.W. Briggs [1875–1959]) (Musical source: <i>Gosterwood</i> – English traditional melody)</p>	7:53	<p>26 It came even to pass 27 O praise God in his holiness</p>	<p>2:35 2:04</p>

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Oliver Morrell, Organ 3 5–7 9 10 12 15 20–27

St Albans Cathedral Girls Choir 1–7 9–12 14–18 20–22 24–27

Lay Clerks of St Albans Cathedral 1 2 4–7 9–12 14 15 21 22 24–27

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Recorded: 17 3 16–18 20, 18 5–7 9 10 12 19 23, 19 2 4 8 11 14 15 26, 20 1 13 21 22 24 25 27 July 2023
at St Albans Cathedral, Hertfordshire, UK, by kind permission of the Dean and Chapter

Producer, engineer and editor: Adrian Lucas (Acclaim Productions)

Production assistant: Grace Hall

Publishers: Oxford University Press 1 5–15 20 22–24, Wise Music 2 3 16 18 21,
Boosey & Hawkes 17 25–27, Banks Music Publications 4, Stainer & Bell 19

With special thanks to Helen Templeton for her help with this recording

This recording has been generously supported by St Albans Cathedral Music Trust,
the Fraternity of the Friends of St Albans Abbey, Dr Stephen and Mrs Margaret Leese,
Mandy Tompkins Delderfield, and Anna and Fredrik Klemming

Elizabeth Poston (1905–1987)

Carols and Anthems

Elizabeth Poston was born near Stevenage, Hertfordshire, in 1905. Shortly after the death of her father in 1913 she moved with her mother Clementine to nearby Rooks Nest House, Stevenage – E.M. Forster’s childhood home, which had inspired his famous novel *Howards End*: Poston became its guardian until her death in 1987. Her mother being a fine pianist, Elizabeth was eager to learn the piano from her; later she continued her piano studies with Bach specialist Harold Samuel, and took violin lessons. She enrolled as a pianist at the Royal Academy of Music in 1924: there she excelled also as a composer under the guidance of Julius Harrison, winning numerous prizes and achieving BBC broadcasts of her works. During this time she took organ lessons from Stanley Marchant, organist of St Paul’s Cathedral, and studied composition privately with Ralph Vaughan Williams. Poston met composer Peter Warlock (the pseudonym of Philip Heseltine) in 1924 and became enamoured of him and his music, on which she became an authority. She was a deeply private person and forever evasive about the extent of their relationship: his apparent suicide in 1930 was undoubtedly traumatic for her. Poston appears to have spent much of the 1930s travelling extensively with her mother throughout Europe and as far afield as Palestine and Tasmania.

After the outbreak of war in 1939, Poston found work with the BBC, where she described her career as ‘meteoric’ and was soon overseeing music for the wartime European Service, based in Bush House. This proved to be a highly stressful role: a particular responsibility was to co-ordinate the broadcast of specific musical works that would thereby provide coded information about military action. Immediately after the war, Poston spent time in North America where she collected folk songs. In 1947 she was invited to assist with the creation of the BBC’s *Third Programme* (the precursor to BBC Radio 3, its classical music station) for which she composed music for collaborations with writers including Terence Tiller and Dylan Thomas, and which brought her work to a wide audience. Poston was president, from 1955 to 1961, of the Society of Women Musicians; she also passionately supported grass-roots music making: she was the first president of Stevenage Music Society and served as a governor of Hertfordshire Rural Music School. She had a deep love of the natural world and vehemently campaigned for the preservation of the rural idyll of her local community, known as ‘Forster Country’.

Vocal and choral miniatures form a large part Poston’s *oeuvre*. She explained ‘I’m really a littlemonger [...] I dislike the colossal, never wanted to write any big works, and never have. My loves are folk song, carols, nursery rhymes, the English hymnal tradition...Blake’s “world in a grain of sand”’. Her earliest works – mostly solo songs – include the enchanting *Sweet Suffolk Owl*, which featured in the Last Night of the 1928 Promenade Concerts. Her return to the BBC in 1947 provided huge creative impetus: ‘there was money to spend and all the music one longed to do’. The radio productions that she scored – many of which require choral forces – represent her largest canvases. Nevertheless, she described incidental music as ‘my journalism’, her strong literary interests stimulating her desire to collaborate on an artistic whole, rather than to seek the limelight as a composer.

Poston subsequently branched out with instrumental works such as *Serenatina for Pipes*, and *Trio for Flute, Clarinet and Harp*, and her interest in Tudor music – through Warlock’s influence – is demonstrated in *Concertino da camera on a Theme of Martin Peerson* for recorder, oboe d’amore, bass viol and harpsichord.

In the 1960s Poston’s energies turned to collections of vocal music, some of which stemmed from an unrealised intended collaboration – proposed late in life by Vaughan Williams – to revise both *The English Hymnal* and *The Oxford Book of Carols*. Punctilious scholarly research went into Poston’s *Penguin Books of Christmas Carols*, in which her concern was to return honour to folk song carol melodies, ridding them of unsympathetic accretions of later centuries. Similar was her approach to hymnody: *The Cambridge Hymnal* demonstrates her determination to match words and music of the highest quality; for this she commissioned 30 British composers to provide new tunes, and made sensitive arrangements of many others: she had longed, above all, for a chance to ‘cheer things up’.

Poston’s choral works, principally written from the 1950s, and composed for an array of schools, parishes and amateur groups, show similarly practical consideration encouraging the best out of performers, while drawing imaginatively on attractive texts.

The ancient tradition of presenting a sacrificed boar’s head at a Yuletide feast is the origin of *The Boar’s Head Carol* [1](#), a traditional English melody now closely associated with The Queen’s College, Oxford which continues to host an annual Boar’s Head Gaudy. Poston’s arrangement of the earthy melody was made for the City of Bath Choir and its conductor Cuthbert Bates.

The *Two Carols in Memory of Peter Warlock* are arrangements of Basque carol melodies. The tranquil setting *O Bethlehem* [2](#) incorporates, in its second verse, a quotation from *Pieds-en-l’air* of Warlock’s famous *Capriol Suite* for string orchestra. In contrast, *Praise our Lord* [3](#) displays a vigorous treatment of a livelier melody.

Poston's most famous work, *Jesus Christ the Apple Tree* [4], employs a captivating original melody much indebted to the composer's love of folk song. Its direct charm is enhanced by the radiant imagery of the text, taken from an 18th-century American collection of religious verse. First published in a simplified version in *The Children's Song Book* (1961), Poston's evergreen carol quickly gained popularity from its inclusion in broadcasts from King's College, Cambridge, since the late 1960s.

The Nativity [5–15] was composed for broadcast by the BBC at Christmas 1950. It is dedicated to Vaughan Williams and owes much to his *Fantasia on Christmas Carols* (1912), which similarly opens with the Herefordshire carol *The truth sent from above*. The *Radio Times* listing for the broadcast explains: 'Its libretto is a careful mosaic derived from traditional ballads and carols and medieval lyrics, together with a few lines written in imitation of these. However, Elizabeth Poston has woven round them much original music [...]. The ideal aimed at, throughout both libretto and score, has been a simple (but not naive) beauty.' The story is told by mezzo-soprano and tenor narrators, while the music for the roles of Mary (soprano) and the Angel Gabriel (alto) exhibits frequent rhythmic freedom. Set alongside are deft choral arrangements of carols such as *Angelus ad virginem* and newly composed passages – many of them indistinguishable from traditional folk songs – including an exquisite setting of the medieval text *There is no rose of such virtue*.

Sheepfolds [16] sets a Christmas poem by American abbess Sister Mary Madeleva Wolff; its apparent simplicity is heightened by the text's evocative atmosphere and by Poston's judicious and expressive use of dissonance.

One of several texts that Warlock also set, *Balulalow* [17] encapsulates Poston's melodic gift, its lilting phrases and undulating accompaniment complementing the folk-like, predominantly pentatonic, melody.

The Dormouse's Carol [18] is a fine example of Poston's gift for engaging and sympathetic writing for children. Dedicated to the children and staff of St Edmund's School, Manchester, it sets playful words by Hilary Pepler (published by St Dominic's Press), accompanied by a scuttling piano part.

Poston's earliest published carol, *Salve Jesus, little Lad* [19], for two voices, sets an anonymous macaronic text. Its decorative vocal lines and rich piano accompaniment vividly and expressively portray a shepherd's homage at the manger.

Broadcast during *Children's Hour* on the BBC Home Service in December 1948, *The Princesses' Carol* [20] provides an entrancing original melody for a poem by Eleanor Farjeon. The figurative text – serving as a tribute to the young princesses Elizabeth and Margaret – elucidates the lives of Saints Elizabeth of Hungary and Margaret of Scotland, with the wish that all the saints' namesakes might follow their example.

The melodic appeal of *In Bethlehem Town* [21], composed for St Martin-in-the-Fields, London, is another example of Poston's gift for creating a melody that might easily be mistaken for a centuries-old folk song. It effortlessly sets another text by Sister Mary Madeleva Wolff, and its concluding descant quotes briefly from *The First Nowell*.

Written for the centenary Peterborough Diocesan Choirs' Festival in 1959, *Sing unto the Lord* [22] is a finely crafted example of Poston's liturgical writing. A rhythmic fluidity pervades the piece, its highly effective word setting – of a joyous text from the book of Isaiah – being closely aligned to speech rhythms. Each evocative line is vividly characterised, and a unified work created through the use of a refrain-like quintuplet figure for the buoyant phrases 'clap their hands' and 'sing together'.

Taking words extolling the wisdom of King Solomon, *The Queen of Sheba's Song* [23], published in 1955, comprises an intrada featuring a gentle *siciliano* dotted-figure rhythm, followed by a charming arietta, *Happy are thy men* [24] – heard here in its later revision in an extended version for full choir.

Composed for the Yardley Grammar School, Birmingham, and incorporating its school motto, 'Keep Troth', *Song of Wisdom* [25] is cast in three main sections which are bookended by a brief introduction and epilogue. It is an anthem suitable for school rededications and commemorations of benefactors. The flexible scoring – for two-part or mixed voice choir – again demonstrates Poston's highly practical writing. A soaring descant surmounts the rousing final congregational hymn – the English folk melody *Gosterwood*.

Antiphon and Psalm – Laudate Dominum was composed for the 1955 St Cecilia Day Festival Service at St Sepulchre's Church, Holborn, and sung by the combined choirs of St Paul's Cathedral, Canterbury Cathedral and the Chapels Royal. The atmospheric *Antiphon* [26] complements the concise and exuberant paean conveyed in the ensuing setting of *Psalm 150 (Laudate Dominum)* [27], which Poston fills with rhythmic interest and imaginative textures in the organ part. Effective use is made of unison passages, evoking – in the line *Praise him upon the well-tuned cymbals* – Charles Villiers Stanford's own well-known Anglican chant for the psalm.

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1 The Boar's Head Carol

*Nowell, nowell,
Tidings good I think to tell.*

The boar's head in hand bear I,
Bedecked with bays and rosemary.
And I pray you, my masters, be merry
Quot estis in convivio.
[Ye who are now at the feast]

*Caput apri defero,
Reddens laudes Domino.
[I bring the boar's head
Returning praise to the Lord.]*

The boar's head, as I understand,
Is the bravest dish in all the land,
When thus bedecked with a gay garland.
Let us servire cantico.
[Let us serve it with a song.]

Caput apri defero,
Reddens laudes Domino.

The boar's head that we bring here
Betokeneth a prince withoutè peer
Is born this day to buy us dear;
*Nowell, nowell
Tidings good I think to tell.*

Caput apri defero,
Reddens laudes Domino.

This boar's head we bring with song,
In worship of him that thus sprang
Of virgin to redress all wrong;
*Nowell, nowell
Tidings good I think to tell.*

Our steward hath provided this
In honour of the King of Bliss,
Which on this day to be served is,

In Reginensi Atrio.
[In the Queen's Hall.]

Caput apri defero,
reddens laudes Domino

Traditional English Carol
English translations: William Henry Davenport
(1828–1891)

Two Carols in Memory of Peter Warlock

2 O Bethlehem

O Bethlehem! Rose of thy heart,
its Bud embowering, O Bethlehem!
O Bethlehem! Yet has thy Rose
its time for flow'ring, O Bethlehem!
Hadst thou no room for God's own Son,
Stranger within a lowly stable?
Now there is room in ev'ry cradle,
And he is gone, O Bethlehem.

O Bethlehem! Ancient of days,
within the story Heaven was laid.
O Bethlehem! Anguish must be
the price of glory, and thou hast paid.
God's greatest gift to thee was made;
So to himself our gift is given,
Given, ourselves, from earth to Heaven,
O Bethlehem! O Bethlehem!

Traditional Basque Carol
Translated by Rev. John O'Connor (1870–1952),
adapted by Elizabeth Poston

3 Praise our Lord

Praise our Lord who came this night,
Praise our Lady, Mother bright;
Bless St Joseph's faithful watch and ward,
Keeping our Lady and our Lord.
Merciful kindness of our God

Drew him from his bright abode,
Saving sinful man from Satan's pay,
Lifting us all to lasting day.

Gabriel from above was sent,
Hailing our Lady's pure intent;
Heaven's spirit and the power most high
Filled her with grace to mother by.

Jesus was born in nakedness,
Sent to save, and born to bless;
So he wrought and taught his children's need,
Naked he died that we be freed.

Praise and blessing be to him
Reigning beyond the Seraphim;
Making earth his home this Christmas night,
Blessèd be he, our heart's delight.

Traditional Basque Carol
Translated by Rev. John O'Connor (1870–1952),
adapted by Elizabeth Poston

4 Jesus Christ the Apple Tree

The tree of life my soul hath seen,
Laden with fruit and always green,
The trees of nature fruitless be
Compared with Christ the apple tree.

His beauty doth all things excel:
By faith I know, but ne'er can tell
The glory which I now can see
in Jesus Christ the apple tree.

For happiness I long have sought,
And pleasure dearly I have bought;
I missed of all; but now I see
'Tis found in Christ the apple tree.

I'm weary with my former toil,
Here will I sit and rest a-while:
Under the shadow will I be
Of Jesus Christ the apple tree.

This fruit doth make my soul to thrive,
It keeps my dying faith alive;
Which makes my soul in haste to be
with Jesus Christ, the apple tree.

Mid-18th century
Sourced by Elizabeth Poston from
Divine Hymns or Spiritual Songs
(collection of Joshua Smith [1760–1795]), pub. 1784

The Nativity: A Sequence for Christmas

Mary **7** **9** **12** Alexandra McPhee, Soprano
The Unborn Child **9** Selma Klemming, Soprano
Female Narrator **5** **6** **9** **10** Nina Vinther, Mezzo-soprano
Angel **7** **9** **10** Izzi Blain, Alto
Male Narrator **7** **9** **10** **12** Oliver Martin-Smith, Tenor
Joseph **9** Ciaran Yeo, Bass
Narrators Roger Mullis **8**, Alisha Ardeshta **13**

5 *Female Narrator:*
This is the truth sent from above,
The truth of God, the God of love,
Therefore don't turn me from your door,
But hearken all both rich and poor.

Choir:
All we were heirs to endless woes
Till God the Lord did interpose;
And so a promise soon did run
That he would redeem us by his son.

6 *Narrator:*
O Joseph being an old man truly
He married this virgin fair and free;
A purer virgin could no man see,
Than he chose for his wife and his dearest dear.

Now Joseph wedded in Galilee,
unto this maid by name Mary
Never was man more glad than he
As he dwelt with his bride and his dearest dear.

Choir: Gloria.

Traditional English

7 *Narrator:*

And while they lived in joy and bliss,
There came to Galilee the angel Gabriel from God unto this maid Mary.

Choir:

Angelus ad virginem subintrans in conclave,
Virginis formidinem demulcens, inquit, 'Ave.
Ave, regina virginum, coeli terraeque Dominum
concupies et paries intacta, salutem hominum;
Tu porta coeli facta, medela criminum.'
Gloria.

*[The angel came to the Virgin, entering secretly into
her room.*

Calming the Virgin's fear, he said 'Hail.

*Hail, queen of virgins: you will conceive the Lord
of heaven*

*and earth and bear him, whilst a virgin, the saviour
of mankind.*

*You will be made the gate of heaven, the cure of sins.'
Glory.]*

Angel:

Hail to thee, queen of Virgins all!
Within a little space thou shalt conceive and bear
the Lord of earth and heaven and grace.
From thee, a virgin, shall He spring
To bring all men solace.

Choir:

Quomodo conciperem, quae virum non cognovi,
Qualiter infringerem, Quod firmamente vovi?
'Spiritus sancti gratia perficiet haec omnia;
ne timeas, sed gaudeas secunda, quod castimonia.
Manebit in te pura Dei potentia.' Amen.

*[How can I conceive, when I have not known a man?
How can I transgress vows that I have made with a
firm mind?*

'The grace of the Holy Spirit shall do all this.

*Do not be afraid, but rejoice without a care, since
your chastity*

*Will remain in you unspoilt through God's power.'
Amen.]*

Mary:

But how shall I conceive a son
And yet a maiden be?
Or how shall I deny the vows
That I have laid on me?

Angel:

The virtue of the Holy Ghost
Shall overshadow thee;
Be not afraid, rejoice,
Be sure God's power and his will
Shall do the wonders I proclaim,
And save thee virgin still.

Choir:

Ad haec virgo nobilis respondens inquit ei:
'Servula sum humilis omnipotentis Dei.
Tibi coelesti nuntio, tanti secreti conscio,
consentiens et cupiens videre factum quod audio,
Parata sum parere Dei consilio!'

*[To this, the noble Virgin, replying, said to him,
'I am the humble handmaid of almighty God.*

*To you, heavenly messenger, and bearer of such
a great secret,*

*I give my consent, and wishing to see done what I hear,
I am ready to obey the will of God!']*

Narrator:

Then bespoke the maid again,
And answered womanly:

Mary:

I am the humblest handmaid of the blessed Trinity;
And I will do whatever God
By thee commandeth me.
For I am eager to behold
So great a mystery.
According to His holy word,
Let it be done to me.

14th-century English

8 I sing of a maiden (spoken carol)

I sing of a maiden
That is makèless;
King of all kings
To her son she ches. [*chose*]

He came all so still
Where his mother was,
As dew in April
That falleth on the grass.

He came all so still
To his mother's bower,
As dew in April
That falleth on the flower.

He came all so still
Where his mother lay,
As dew in April
That falleth on the spray.

Mother and maiden
Was never none but she;

Well may such a lady
Godès mother be.

15th-century English

9 Scena

(Narrator, Mary, Joseph, The Unborn Child, Angel)

Joseph and Mary walkèd
All through an orchard green
Where was berries and cherries
As thick as might be seen.

O then bespoke Mary
With words so meek and mild:
'Pluck me one cherry, Joseph,
For I am with child.'

O then bespoke Joseph,
with answer so unkind:
'Let him pluck thee a cherry
That brought thee now with child.'

O then bespoke the baby
Within his mother's womb:
'Bow down then the tallest tree
For my mother to have some.'

Then bowèd down the highest tree
unto his mother's hand.
Then she cried: 'See, Joseph,
I have cherries at command.'

Angel:

Fear not, old Joseph, she's thy wife
And still a spotless maid;
And there is no conceit of sin
against her can be laid.

O then bespoke Joseph:
'I have done Mary wrong;
But now cheer up my dearest,
And do not be cast down.'

'O eat your cherries Mary,
O eat your cherries now;
O eat your cherries, Mary,
That grow upon the bough.'

Then Mary plucked a cherry
As red as any blood;
And Mary she went homewards
All with her heavy load.

They lived both in joy and bliss,
But now a strict commandment is
In Jewryland, no man should miss
To go along with his dearest dear.

Unto the place where he was born,
Unto the Emperor to be sworn.
To pay a tribute that's duly known
Both for himself and his dearest dear.

And when they were to Bethlehem come
The inns were filled, both all and some;
For Joseph entreated them everyone
Both for himself and his dearest dear.

Then they were constrained presently
Within a stable all night to lie,
Where he did oxen and asses tie
With his true love and his dearest dear.

Traditional English

10 As Joseph was a-walking

As Joseph was a-walking that night
He heard a herald angel sing:
'This night there shall be born to you
On earth our heavenly King.

'He neither shall be born to you
in house nor in hall,
Nor in the place of Paradise,
But in an ox's stall.

'He neither shall be clothèd there
In purple silk nor yet in pall,
But in the linen swaddling bands
As wear the babies all.

'He neither shall be christened
In white wine nor in red,
But with the fair spring water so bright
As we were christenèd.'

This came to pass as God's will was
And even as the angel told;
About midnight an angel bright
Came to the shepherd's fold.

And told them then both where and when
Born was the child our Lord,
And all along this was their song:
'All glory unto God'.

Traditional English

11 There is no rose of such virtue

There is no rose of such virtue
As is the rose that bare Jesu,
Alleluia.

For in this rose containèd was
Heaven and earth in little space,
Res miranda.
[A wonderful thing.]

By that rose we may well see
There is one God in persons three,
Pares forma.
[Equal in form.]

The angels sang the shepherds to
Gloria in excelsis Deo,
Gaudeamus.
[Let us rejoice.]

Leave we all this worldly mirth,
And follow we this joyful birth.
Transeamus.
[Let us proceed]

15th-century English

12 I saw a fair maiden sitten and sing
I saw a fair maiden sitten and sing;
She lullèd a little child, a sweetè lording.

15th-century English

Jesu, sweet son, my dearest dear,
On poorful bed thou liest here,
And that me grieveth sore;
The crib is like a bier; alas,
Thy fellows are the ox and ass,
And I must weep, must weep therefor.

Jesu, sweet son, oh be not wroth
Though I have neither clout nor cloth
In which I may thee fold and wrap;
Alas, I have n rag to lap
Thee in; lie closer to my pap
And shelter from the cold.

14th-century English

13 A lovely lady thus did sang (spoken carol)

A lovely lady thus did sing:
'Jesu, my son, and heaven's king,
Why liest thou in a stall?
And why hast thou no rich bedding
In some rich king's hall?
Methinks, by right
The lord of might
Should lie in rich array:
But nevertheless
I will not cease
To sing "By by, lully lulley."

Then spoke the child: 'Oh mother fair,
Methinks there is no law
That I should go where the kings are,
And they are not to me draw;
But you shall see
That those kings three
To me will come on the Twelfth Day;
For this behest
Give me your breast,
And sing "By by, lully lulley."

'Jesu my son, and heaven's king,
If that it be thy will,
Grant thou me mine own asking,
As reason would, and skill:
To every man
That will and can
Be merry on this day,
To bliss them bring,
And I shall sing,
"Lullay, by by, lully lulley."

15th-century manuscript

14 Qui creavit coelum
Qui creavit coelum,
Lully, lully, lu,
Nascitur in stabulo,
By, by, by, by, by, by,
Rex qui regit seculum,
Lully, lully, lu.

Joseph emit panniculum,
Lully, lully, lu,
Mater involvit puerum
By, by, by, by, by, by,
Et ponit in prasepio,
Lully, lully, lu.

Inter animalia
Lully, lully, lu,

Jacent mundi gaudia,
By, by, by, by, by, by,
Dulcis super omnia,
Lully, lully, lu.

Lactat mater domini,
Lully, lully, lu,
Osculatur parvulum
By, by, by, by, by, by,
Et adorat dominum
Lully, lully, lu.

In sempiterna saecula,
Lully, lully, lu,
In eternum et ultra
By, by, by, by, by, by,
Det nobis sua gaudia,
Lully, lully, lu.

Translation:
He who created the heavens
Lully, lully, lu,
Is born in a stable
By, by, by, by, by, by,
The King who rules the ages.
Lully, lully, lu.

Joseph bought the swathing bands,
Lully, lully, lu,
The mother embraces the child
By, by, by, by, by, by,
And places him in the manger.
Lully, lully, lu.

Among the animals
Lully, lully, lu,
Lie the joys of the world,
By, by, by, by, by, by,
Sweet above all.
Lully, lully, lu.

The mother nurses the Lord,
Lully, lully, lu,
She kisses the little one
By, by, by, by, by, by,
And worships the Lord.
Lully, lully, lu.

For ever and ever
Lully, lully, lu,
To eternity and beyond
By, by, by, by, by, by,
Give to us his joys.
Lully, lully, lu.

Chester MS, c. 1425

15 When Christ was born of Mary free

Christo paremus cantica,
In excelsis gloria.
[Let us raise a song to Christ
Glory in the highest.]

When Christ was born of Mary free
In Bethlehem that fair city,
Angels sang ever in mirth and glee,
In excelsis gloria.

Herdmen beheld these angels bright,
And kings that saw the shining light,
And said "God's son is born tonight
In excelsis gloria".

Then dear Lord, for thy great grace,
Grant us the bliss to see thy face,
Where we may sing to thy solace:
In excelsis gloria.

13th-century English

Texts of *The Nativity* 15–15 compiled and edited by Terrence Tiller
(1916–1987). Reproduced with permission.

16 Sheepfolds

The shepherds are stricken; the sheep have fled;
Their folds are broken, their watchfires dead.
Not only the lost and wayward one;
The ninety-nine, they, too, are undone.

The laden ewes, the driven sheep,
Where can they lay their young to sleep?
The Lamb, newborn, and weak and cold,
This Lamb of God, will you be his fold?

Sister Mary Madeleva Wolff, C.S.C. (1887–1964)
Reprinted by kind permission of the Congregation of the
Sisters of the Holy Cross, Notre Dame, Indiana, USA.

17 Balulalow

O my deir hert, young Jesus sweat,
Prepare thy cradle in my spreit,
And I shall rock thee in my hert,
And never more from thee depart.

But I shall praise thee evermore,
With songès sweat unto thy gloir;
The knees of my hert shall I bow,
And sing that right Balulalow.

*James Wedderburn (1495–1533), John Wedderburn (1505–1556),
Robert Wedderburn (1510–1555)*

18 The Dormouse's Carol

In a thorny bramble patch,
Where no dog can come to scratch
For rabbit, mole or mouse,
I wrapped myself in moss and hay
To dream the winter months away.

There in the middle of my sleep,
I felt a scaly lizard creep
Excited round my house
'Wake up,' he flicked me with his tail,
'Summer, summer in the vale!'

'In a stable by the Inn
Summer, summer doth begin.'
In haste I left my nest,
I raced the lizard down the hill
And to the stable windowsill.

There in the manger on the wall,
Slept the Summer of us all,
And in a Maid's caress.
O Summer in a Winter Sun!
O Son, made flesh for everyone
To worship and confess.

Hilary Pepler (1878–1951)

19 Salve Jesus, little Lad

Salve Jesus [*Hail Jesus*], little Lad,
Smile, little Sir, and make us glad.
Flageolet, Bagpipe,
And hautbois,
Nascitur Jesus Christ pro nobis.
[Jesus Christ is born for us.]

Shepherd he blew his frozen fingers,
Gloria, In the height.
Shepherd is off to Bethlem stable.
Merrilie he is so able.
Between the downs and skye.

Mother she watched her Babe in Manger,
Talbot he barked, he thought it danger,
Omnibus Pax [*Peace to all*], say I.
Mary she took her tiny Baby,
Lifted Him up as soft as maybe.
Domini Filium.
[Son of God]

Shepherd his speech he so did make it
As 'Hail, little Sir', That is I take it,
Redentor Omnium.
[Redeemer of all]

Shepherd is off, his small lambs call so,
Farewell, Joseph and Mary also,
Et Rosa Mundi Tu.
[And you are the rose of the world.]

Anonymous – Old English

20 The Princesses' Carol

Elizabeth of Hungary
Who wore a golden crown
Loaves for the poor ones
Carried in her own.

Once when she went
Their hunger to fulfil
The loaves were changed to roses
By heaven's will.

Sweet Saint Elizabeth
Let your rose light
On all young Elizabeths
Come Christmas night.

Margaret of Scotland
Who wore a golden dress
Looked to the little ones
In loneliness.

Nine small orphans
Daily ere noon
She fed on her knees
from a porridge spoon.

Dear Saint Margaret
Let your light stay
By all small Margarets
Come Christmas night.

Eleanor Farjeon (1881–1965)

'The Princesses' Carol' from *The Children's Bells*
by Eleanor Farjeon (Oxford University Press),
reproduced by permission of David Higham Associates.

21 In Bethlehem Town

On Christmas Eve in Bethlehem town
The shadows fall; the night comes down;
The stars shine clear; the winds grow mild;
An inn stands open for a Child
On Christmas Eve in Bethlehem town.

In Bethlehem on Christmas Day
One manger is fresh strewn with hay,
And you will find a young Child there,
And you will find a Lady fair
In Bethlehem on Christmas Day.

All roads must lead to Bethlehem;
All men at last must follow them,
And be you great or be you small
The sweet Lord Jesus bless you all
Upon the roads to Bethlehem.

Sister Mary Madeleva Wolff C.S.C.

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Sisters of the Holy Cross, Notre Dame, Indiana, USA.

22 Sing unto the Lord

Sing unto the Lord; Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion. Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth. For ye shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. The watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing. Ye shall have a song, a song as in the night. The earth is at rest, the whole earth is at rest and is quiet: they break forth into singing. Break forth into joy, sing together, sing, ye waste places of Jerusalem. The redeemed of the Lord shall come with singing unto Zion.

Isaiah 12: 5–6; 49:13; 55:12; 52: 8; 30:29; 14:7; 52:9; 51:11
(King James Version)

23 The Queen of Sheba's Song

It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and behold, the half was not told me of the greatness of thy wisdom.

1 Kings 10: vv. 6–7 (King James Version)

24 Happy are thy men

Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants.
Blessed be the Lord thy God which delighteth in thee.
Alleluia.

1 Kings 10: vv. 8–9 (King James Version)

25 Song of Wisdom

Get wisdom. Keep troth. Get understanding.
Wisdom is the principal thing: Therefore get wisdom.
and with all thy getting, get understanding.
Exalt her and she shall promote thee,
She shall give in thine hand an ornament of grace.
A crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.

*from Proverbs 4:5, 7–9 (King James Version);
Yardley Grammar School motto ('Keep Troth')*

Wisdom is better than rubies; and all things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.

Proverbs 8:11 (King James Version)

Righteousness exalteth a nation,
Children's children are the crown of old men,
and the glory of children are their fathers.

Proverbs 14:34 and 17:6 (King James Version)

Our Father, by whose servants
Our house was built of old,
Whose hand hath crowned her children
With blessings manifold,
For Thine unfailing mercies
Far strewn along our way.
With all who passed before us
We praise Thy name today.

The changeful years unresting
Their silent course have sped,
Now comrades ever bringing
In comrades' steps to tread;
And some are long forgotten,
Long spent their hopes and fears;
Safe rest they in Thy keeping,
Who changest not with years.

They reap not where they laboured,
We reap what they have sown;
Our harvest may be garnered
By ages yet unknown.
The days of old have dowered us
With gifts beyond a praise:
Our Father, make us faithful
To serve the coming days.

Before us and beside us,
Still holden in thine hand,
A cloud of unseen witness,
Our elder comrades stand:
One family unbroken,
We join with one acclaim,
One heart, one voice uplifting
To glorify Thy name.

G.W. Briggs (1875–1959)

'Our Father, by whose servants' by G.W. Briggs.
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Let us now praise famous men
And our fathers that begat us,
Their seed shall remain for ever,
and their glory shall not be blotted out.
Their bodies are buried in peace,
But their name liveth for evermore.

Ecclesiasticus 44: 1, 13 and 14

Get wisdom. Get understanding.
Keep troth. Alleluia.

Antiphon and Psalm – Laudate Dominum

26 Antiphon

It came even to pass as the trumpeters and singers were as one to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth forever: that then the house will was filled with a cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God.
Alleluia.

2 Chronicles 5: vv. 13 and 14 (King James Version)

27 Psalm – Laudate Dominum

O praise God in his holiness:
Praise him in the firmament of his power.
Praise him in his noble acts:
Praise him according to his excellent greatness.
Praise him in the sound of the trumpet:
Praise him upon the lute and harp.
Praise him upon the strings and pipe.
Praise him upon the well-tuned cymbals:
Praise him upon the loud cymbals.
Let everything that hath breath:
Praise the Lord.

Psalm 150 (Book of Common Prayer, 1662)

Alexandra McPhee



Photo: Paul Harrison

Soprano Alexandra McPhee is a graduate of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. She previously gained a music degree from the University of Nottingham and has held choral scholarships at St Martin-in-the-Fields, Glasgow Cathedral and St Mary's Church, Nottingham. She now sings for various professional choirs and session groups in and around London, and as a soloist for many local choral and operatic societies. McPhee teaches Singing at St Albans High School for Girls, Haberdashers' Girls' School and Beechwood Park School and for the St Albans Cathedral Girls Choir.

Nina Vinther



Photo: Holly Holt

British-Danish mezzo-soprano Nina Vinther began singing as a chorister at St Albans Cathedral. She studied French and German at Trinity College, Cambridge, during which time she was an alto choral scholar at Trinity College Choir, and at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland where she received an MMus in vocal performance. Operatic roles have included the Witch in Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel*, Nireno in Handel's *Giulio Cesare*, and Juno in *Semele*. She is also in demand as an art song and oratorio soloist, a consort singer, and a member of staff for young singers' choral courses.

Izzi Blain



Alto Izzi Blain is a freelance musician based in London, specialising in ensemble singing. She has performed with groups including the BBC Singers, The English Concert, Corvus Consort, Echo and Shards, and sings frequently in many of London's leading church choirs. After three years as a choral scholar at Merton College, Oxford, she was selected for the Genesis Sixteen young artists programme, and was a choral apprentice at the Southwell Music Festival in 2022. Blain grew up in St Albans, spending six years as a chorister at St Albans Cathedral.

Oliver Martin-Smith



Tenor Oliver Martin-Smith graduated from The Guildhall School of Music and Drama in 2014. He has performed with ensembles including The Britten Sinfonia, The Sixteen, The London Choral Sinfonia and The London Contemporary Orchestra, and is part of the professional a cappella group Apollo5. His oratorio highlights include Handel's *Israel in Egypt*, Mozart's *Coronation Mass* and *Requiem*, and Handel's *Messiah*. Operatic roles include The Mayor in *Albert Herring*, Acis in Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, Ferrando in *Così fan tutte* and Count Almaviva in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*.

Ciaran Yeo



Bass Ciaran Yeo studied music at Cardiff University, during which time he performed at St David's Hall, Hoddinott Hall and made recordings for the BBC Choral Evensong and Sunday Worship. Yeo has held Lay Clerk positions at Christ Church Cathedral Dublin, Guildford Cathedral and is currently a Lay Clerk at St Albans Cathedral. He regularly undertakes solo work with a variety of choral societies. Notable engagements include Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Stainer's *Crucifixion* and Rossini's *Petite Messe solennelle*. Yeo is currently director of music at St Columba's College, St Albans.

Oliver Morrell



Oliver Morrell has been organ scholar at St Albans Cathedral since September 2022. He also conducts the Abbey Singers and accompanies the St Albans Bach Choir. Previously he was acting sub-organist at Croydon Minster. He graduated in 2021 with first-class honours from Durham University, and has been awarded performance diplomas from the Royal College of Organists and the London College of Music. He is a keen composer and his music has been premiered at the London Festival of Contemporary Church Music.

St Albans Cathedral Girls Choir

Formed in 1996, St Albans Cathedral Girls Choir sings Evensong twice a week and consists of 26 girls aged 8 to 14 who attend local schools. Primarily an upper-voice choir, for certain weekend services each term and for other special events the girls sing with the Lay Clerks of the Cathedral Choir. The choir has broadcast Choral Evensong on BBC radio, and has made several recordings for Naxos including music by Felix Mendelssohn (8.572836), William Mathias (8.573523), Michael Haydn (8.574163) and, jointly with St Albans Cathedral Choir, two recordings of music by John Rutter (8.572653 and 8.573394). The choir has made concert tours to Denmark, Sweden, Ireland, France and the US, while concerts closer to home have included Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and *St Paul, ripieno* chorus in J.S. Bach's *St Matthew Passion* at the Royal Festival Hall, and John Rutter's Christmas concerts at the Royal Albert Hall. The choir has given regular first performances, including of works by Judith Weir, Cecilia McDowall, Carl Rütti, Alec Roth and Judith Bingham. www.stalbanscathedral.org

St Albans Cathedral Girls Choir

Director: Tom Winpenny

Organ Scholar: Oliver Morrell

Kayla Aaron
Alisha Ardeshna
Nova Balasuriya
Erica Charters
Sarah Collyer
Amelia Crook
Gabriella Delderfield
Imogen Dimock

Zinachim Echetabu
Elsie Keen
Beau Kemp
Elizabeth Kennedy
Grace Kent
Emily Klemming
Selma Klemming
Pratyusha Mukherjee

Anisha Narula
Delilah Pedley
Eva Powell
Sophie Roberts
Sophia van Rooijen-Din
Romilly Veal
Clara Webb
Rebecca Whitehouse

Lay Clerks of St Albans Cathedral Choir

St Albans Cathedral Choir was re-founded in 1877 when the Abbey church became a Cathedral. Unlike many English Cathedral choirs, there is no choir school; the choristers of the Cathedral Choir and the Cathedral Girls Choir rehearse before and after attending many different schools in the local area and sing Evensong on weekdays. The Lay Clerks (the adult lower voices) of the Cathedral Choir sing with the choristers at weekend services: they are a dedicated group of musicians who, in the main, earn their living outside the music profession. Under the direction of Andrew Lucas they have made numerous concert tours, many broadcasts on radio and television and several commercial recordings. The Cathedral Choir's recording of motets by Anton Bruckner (First Hand Records) was selected as Editor's Choice in *Gramophone* in July 2023. Previous releases for Naxos include music by Rutter (8.572653 and 8.573394), Mozart (8.573092) and William Mathias (8.573253).

Lay Clerks of St Albans Cathedral Choir

Master of the Music: Andrew Lucas

Alto

Neil Baker
Simon Barton
Derek Harrison
Roger Mullis
Tony Price

Tenor

Simon Colston
William Glendinning
Philip Salmon
Alistair Walker

Bass

Christopher Head
William Houghton
Owen Hughes
Geoff McMahon
Ciaran Yeo



Tom Winpenny



Photo: Graham Lacro

Tom Winpenny is assistant master of the music at St Albans Cathedral, where he accompanies the daily choral services and directs the Cathedral Girls Choir. He previously served as sub-organist at St Paul's Cathedral, London. He is currently a trustee of the Royal College of Organists. Winpenny has broadcast frequently on BBC radio and featured on American Public Media's *Pipedreams*. He was an organ scholar at King's College, Cambridge, twice accompanying A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols. As a soloist, he has performed internationally, with recent engagements in Sweden, Germany, Italy and the US. His wide-ranging discography includes music by Mozart, Liszt, Lutyens, McCabe, Joubert and Francis Grier. For Naxos, his solo recordings include Messiaen's *La Nativité du Seigneur* (8.573332) and *L'Ascension* (8.573471), music by Judith Bingham (8.572687 and 8.574251), Williamson (8.571375–76), and Francis Pott's monumental Passion symphony *Christus* (8.574252–53). His

recording of Elgar (8.574366) was awarded Critic's Choice in *Gramophone*. Winpenny directs St Albans Cathedral Girls Choir in recordings of music by Mendelssohn (8.572836), Mathias (8.573523) and Michael Haydn (8.574163).

For more information, visit www.tomwinpenny.org.

Elizabeth Poston's long and distinguished career included significant work for the BBC during the Second World War, where she performed as a respected pianist and later composed scores for numerous radio and television productions. Describing herself as 'a littlemonger' who never wanted to write big pieces, Poston's supreme talent for composing vocal and choral miniatures is fully represented in this recording, the first to be dedicated entirely to her work. Poston's music reveals timeless melodic charm, a great sensitivity of word setting and her profound appreciation of ancient folk-song traditions.

**ST. ALBANS
CATHEDRAL**
Music Trust

Elizabeth
POSTON
(1905–1987)



1	The Boar's Head Carol	3:08	20	The Princesses' Carol*	2:12
2–3	Two Carols in Memory of Peter Warlock*	4:25	21	In Bethlehem Town*	1:38
4	Jesus Christ the Apple Tree	3:39	22	Sing unto the Lord*	3:32
5–15	The Nativity*	30:17	23	The Queen of Sheba's Song: It was a true report...*	2:22
16	Sheepfolds*	1:37	24	Happy are thy men*	2:29
17	Balulalow*	1:58	25	Song of Wisdom*	7:53
18	The Dormouse's Carol*	2:05	26–27	Antiphon and Psalm – Laudate Dominum*	4:39
19	Carol: Salve Jesus, little Lad*	5:48			

***WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING**

Alexandra McPhee, Soprano **7 9 12**

Nina Vinther, Mezzo-soprano **5 6 9 10 19 23** • **Izzi Blain, Alto** **7 9 10 19**

Oliver Martin-Smith, Tenor **7 9 10 12** • **Ciaran Yeo, Bass** **1 9**

Oliver Morrell, Organ **3 5–7 9 10 12 15 20–27**

St Albans Cathedral Girls Choir **1–7 9–12 14–18 20–22 24–27**

Lay Clerks of St Albans Cathedral **1 2 4–7 9–12 14 15 21 22 24–27**

Tom Winpenny, Piano **16–19**, **Conductor** **1–7 9–12 14–18 20–22 24–27**

A detailed track list and recording and publishers' details can be found inside the booklet • The sung texts are included in the booklet and may also be accessed at www.naxos.com/libretti/574576.htm

This recording has been generously supported by St Albans Cathedral Music Trust, the Fraternity of the Friends of St Albans Abbey, Dr Stephen and Mrs Margaret Leese, Mandy Tompkins Delderfield, and Anna and Fredrik Klemming • Booklet notes: Tom Winpenny

Cover photo: St Albans Cathedral by Toby Shephard

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