CHRISTMAS DAYBREAK

The Crossing
Donald Nally, conductor
Scott Dettra, organ
2. Alpha and Omega (2011) James MacMillan 7:45
5. Lullay, lullay little child (1990) Jonathan Varcoe 4:01
   Three Carols for Wintertide Benjamin C.S. Boyle
8. Down with the rosemary (2009) 3:17

— 57:49 —
Dedication

Ann Stookey loved choral music. She sang in the choir of St. Paul’s Chestnut Hill in Philadelphia for 17 years. When her husband retired and they moved to Los Angeles in 2011, Ann joined the choir of All Saints Beverly Hills.

Ann particularly loved the work of contemporary composers, from Arvo Pärt to Eric Whitacre, from Morton Lauridsen to Craig Phillips, for whom she sang in California. And she relished Christmas and Easter, because they created more family time, gave her inspiration to create new floral designs (another of her avocations), and allowed her to participate in the magnificent musical traditions of these two holidays.

When The Crossing, which included several of her St. Paul’s choir colleagues, emerged as one of America’s leading ensembles dedicated to contemporary choral works, Ann became one of their biggest cheerleaders and fans.

Ann was thrilled for the opportunity to return to Philadelphia in the fall of 2011 to join the Choir of St. Paul’s for this recording at our long-time church. I was one of a handful of outsiders who sat quietly in the pews during the session – actually, I lay along one of the pews, eyes closed, while the rehearsals and takes washed over me. It was a beautiful and peaceful evening that I will never forget.

On the last day of our vacation in Europe in 2012, Ann suffered a serious stroke. She died in Paris on November 6 at age 60. The St. Paul’s choir gloriously memorialized her in Philadelphia four days later.

Ann had boundless love, radiant warmth, incredible energy, and a terrific sense of humor. It is impossible for me to imagine a world without her. But as we mourn her loss, we are committed to celebrate the things she loved, including this superb recording featuring two of her favorite ensembles.

On behalf of the Stookey and Waz families, we are honored to assist in the production of this recording and to dedicate it to Ann’s memory and in thanksgiving for her life. May this music enrich the holiday season for everyone who listens.

Joe Waz, Chair
Ann Stookey Fund For New Music
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The Crossing

Justine Aronson
Kelly Ann Bisby
Karen Blanchard 2
Steven Bradshaw 2
Maren Montalbano Brehm 6
Veronica Chapman-Smith 5
Colin Bill
Jeff Dinimore 6
Ryan Fleming 2
Anne Fuchs
Joanna Gates
Steven Gearhart
Levi Hernandez 4, 6
Chris Hodges 7
Rebecca Hoke
Daniel Hoy 1
Steven Hyder
Heidi Kurtz
Vincent Metallo
Rebecca Oehlers
Rebecca Siler 3
Stephen Spinelli
Daniel Schwartz
Karen Wapner 2
Steve Williamson
Donald Nally, conductor
Scott Drasco, organ
John Grecia and Laura Ward, rehearsal accompanists

1 solo in “What child is this”
2 quintet in “I look from afar”
3 solo in “Ane sang of the birth of Christ”
4 solo in “Down with the rosemary”
5 solo in “Gabriel’s Message”
6 solo in “Hevene Quene”
7 solo in “Tomorrow go ye forth”

The Choir of Saint Paul’s Church, Chestnut Hill
Zachary Hemenway, Music Director
Caroline J. Robinson, Organ Scholar

Tim Kiser
Lorraine Knudson
Diane Kolb
Stephen Landis
Greta Longenecker
Dale Lower
Chuck Lower
Tim Martin
Anne Martinez
Penny Meyer
Hildy Montaigne
Diana Mora
Kachryn Mulvihill
Steve Pearson
Holly Peice
Abella Pope
Pam Prior
Lindsey Reinhard
Deb Reinhard
Karen Richter
Renee Riepler
Caroline Robinson
Susan Schindler
Steve Schindler
Rebecca Siler
Ann Speath
Arthur Stokes
Ann Stookey
Stephen Stone
Tyler Tejada
Louise Thompson

1. What child is this? — Andrew Gant (b. 1963)

A conversation with Andrew in London produced this mixed-choir version of his touching motet on this familiar text (commonly associated with the tune Greensleeves). Originally for men’s choir, this version was premiered by The Crossing at Christmas 2007.

What Child is this who, laid to rest,
On Mary’s lap is sleeping?
Whom Angels greet with anthems sweet,
While shepherds watch are keeping?

This, this is Christ the King,
Whom shepherds praise and Angels sing;
Haste, haste, to bring Him praise,
Jesus, the Son of Mary.

How comes he in such mean estate,
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Yet have no fear, God’s love is here,
His love all loves exceeding.

Raise, raise your song on high,
As Mary sings a lullaby,
Praise, praise the Son of Man
Jesus, the Son of Mary.

Earth, give him incense, gold and myrrh,
Come tribes and peoples, own Him,
The King of Kings salvation brings,
So in your hearts enthrone Him.

Nails, spear shall pierce Him through,
Such pain he bare for you and you,
Praise, praise the Son of Man
Jesus, the Son of Mary.

—William Chatterton Dix (1837-1898)

2. Alpha and Omega — James MacMillan
(b. 1959)

Premiere recording

Commissioned by Soli Deo Gloria and premiered at Rockefeller Chapel at the University of Chicago in June 2011, this extended, dramatic motet is a setting of the Revelation text often heard in liturgies for the week prior to Christmas.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore. For the former things have passed away.”

And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.”

Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.”

—Revelation 21:1-6a (English Standard Version)
3. I look from afar — Gabriel Jackson (b. 1962)
   This early work of a favorite Crossing composer demonstrates the influence of medieval music in the extended, rhythmic
   melismas, punctuated with Gabriel’s engagingly dissonant harmonic world.

   I look from afar:
   And lo, I see the power of God coming, and a cloud covering the whole earth.

   Go ye out to meet him and say:
   Tell us, art thou he that should come to reign over thy people Israel?

   High and low, rich and poor, one with another,
   Go ye out to meet him and say:
   Hear, O thou Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a sheep,
   Tell us: art thou he that should come?

   Stir up thy strength, O Lord, and come to reign over thy people Israel.

   Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Spirit.

4. Ane sang of the birth of Christ — Jackson
   A gracefully embellished role for the organ joins alternating sections of solo soprano and choir in this simple work in
   which an ever-undulating metric feel gives freedom and breath to the early-Renaissance English text.

   I come fra hevin heich to tell
   The best nowells that e'er befell;
   To you thir tythinges trew I bring,
   And I will of them say and sing:

   This day to you is born ane child
   Of Marie meik and Virgin mild,
   That blissit bairn, bening and kind,
   Sall you rejoyce baith hart and mind.

   Lat us rejoyis and be blyth
   And with the Hyrd is go full swyth
   And see what God of His grace has done
   Throu Christ to bring us to His throne.

   My saull and life, stand up and see
   Wha lyis in ane cribbe of tree,
   What Babe is that, sa gude and fair?
   It is Christ, Goddis Sonne and Air.

   Bot I sall praise Thee evermoir
   With sangis sweit unto Thy gloir,
   The kneis of my hart sall I bow,
   And sing that rycht Balululow.

5. Lullay, lullay little child — Jonathan Varcoe
   Yet another English composer with a fresh idea of an ancient text, Jonathan’s carefully-placed dissonances draw focus to
   the carol’s brilliant juxtaposition of the innocent newborn and his ineluctable sacrifice.
The holly bears the crown, based on the English Carol, c. 17th century

3. Down with the rosemary
Down with the rosemary and bay,
Down with the mistletoe;
The holly hitherto did sway
Until the dancing Easter day,
Or Easter eve appear.

Then youthful box which now has grace
Your houses to renew;
Grown old, surrender must his place
Unto the crispèd yew.

Now the yew is out, then birch comes in,
Both of a fresh and fragrant kin.
Green rushes, then, and sweetest bents,
Come in for comely ornaments.

Thus times do shift;
each thing his turn doth hold.
New things succeed,
as former things grow old.

—adapted from Ceremonies for Candlemas Eve, Robert Herrick (1591-1674)

9. To Morning — Gabriel Jackson
A classic example of the high quality of anthem writing for English cathedrals, this is a far more homophonic setting than the other Jackson works heard on this recording. It demonstrates Gabriel's ability to write to the occasion (here, for the Dean Close School Chapel Choir) while capturing the essence of each text, founded on his years of choral experience; his father was an Anglican priest in Bermuda and he spent years as a chorister at Canterbury Cathedral fully absorbing the specificity and beauty of each liturgy.

O holy virgin! clad in purest white,
Unlock heaven's golden gates, and issue forth;
Awake the dawn that sleeps in heaven; let light
Rise from the chambers of the east, and bring
The honey'd dew that cometh on waking day.

O radiant morning, salute the sun
Roused like a huntsman to the chase, and with
Thy buskin'd feet appear upon our hills.

O radiant morning, appear on our hills.

—Poetical Sketches, William Blake (1757-1827)

10. Gabriel's Message — Zachary Wadsworth
(b. 1983)
This co-commission of The Crossing and The Choir of St. Paul's Church Chestnut Hill, for double choir and organ, inspired this recording, Choir I — The Crossing — sings Zach's setting of Rossetti's "Before the paling of the stars," while Choir II — the choir of our host church — responds with a kind of fantasia on the familiar Basque Carol, Gabriel's Message. The two come together in the blazingly triumphant finale.

Choir I — see text for Robert Convery's “Christmas Daybreak,” below

Choir II
The angel Gabriel from Heaven came,
His wings as drifted snow,
His eyes as flame, "All hail," said he,
"Thou lovely, maiden Mary,
Most highly favoured lady." Gloria!

"For known a blessed Mother thou shalt be,
All generations loud and honour thee,
Thy Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,
Most highly favoured lady," Gloria!

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head,
"To me be as it pleaseth God," she said,
"My soul shall laud and magnify his holy name" 
Most highly favoured lady, Gloria!
Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born
In Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,
And Christian folk throughout the world will ever say:
Most highly favoured lady, Gloria!

—Basque Carol (trans. Sabine Baring-Gould)

11. Love came down at Christmas — Edwin Fissinger (1920-1990)
Fissinger's prolific output of choral music, primarily sacred and focused on vocal textures, was largely written for his own choir at North Dakota State University in Fargo. Love came down at Christmas is one of a number of works that have established his legacy as a thoughtful, imaginative composer.

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

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

Love shall be our token,
Love be yours and Love be mine,
Love to God and all men,
Love for plea and gift and sign.

—Rossetti

12. Hevene Quene — Kerry Andrew
(b. 1978)
This British composer's eclectic and creative use of voices reflects her own journey; she sang as a child in Catholic church choirs, studied classical music, sings in an experimental trio named "Juice," and performs alone under the name "You Are Wolf." Hevene Quene is a rhapsodic reflection on the Virgin Mary that occasionally drifts from chant to a dreamlike confluence of individual voices.

O virgo splendens,
Edi beo thu, hevene quene.
Thou rose like day
from the dark night.
O queen of heaven,
    From you sprang a new sunbeam
    that has lit all the world.
My sweet lady, hear my plea
    And pity me if you so will.
O splendid virgin.

- 13th-c. English hymn

13. Tomorrow go ye forth — Gabriel Jackson
   This companion piece to I look from afar reprises the doxology of the earlier work, bringing an organic closure to the
   responsories of the day, beginning with Matins and concluding with Vespers. Gabriel's originally-composed chant has the
   austerity and beauty of Gregorian plainsong, evoking a timeless and nostalgic air.

   Judah and Jerusalem, fear not, nor be dismayed;
   Tomorrow go ye forth, and the Lord, He shall be with you.

   Stand ye still and ye shall see the salvation of the Lord.
   Tomorrow go ye forth, and the Lord, He shall be with you.

   Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Spirit.
   Tomorrow go ye forth, and the Lord, He shall be with you.

- Vesper Responsory of Advent Sunday

14. Adam lay ybounden — Colin Mawby (b. 1936)
   There are a number of familiar settings of this minstrel's song, most likely from the Christmas mystery plays and first re-
   corded in an English manuscript c. 1400; few capture the urgency of advent found in the swing and rhetorical calling of this
   eight-part motet.

   Adam lay ybounden,
   Bounden in a bond;
   Four thousand winter,
   Thought he not too long.

   And all was for an apple,
   An apple that he took,
   As clerkes finde,
   Written in their book.

   Ne had the apple taken been,
   The apple taken been,
   Ne had never our ladie,
   Abeen hev'ne queen.

   Blessed be the time
   That apple taken was,
   Therefore we moun singen,
   Deo gracias!

- 15th-c. English Carol

15. Christmas Daybreak — Robert Convery (b. 1954)
   Convery's elegant carol was composed in 1996 for The Bridge Ensemble, a Philadelphia choral ensemble that preceded
   The Crossing and featured a number of the artists heard on this recording.

   Before the paling of the stars,
   Before the winter morn,
   Before the earliest cock-crow
   Jesus Christ was born:

   Born in a stable,
   Cradled in a manger,
   In the world His hands had made
   Born a stranger.

   Priest and king lay fast asleep
   In Jerusalem,
   Young and old lay fast asleep
   In crowded Bethlehem:
   Saint and angel, ox and ass,
   Kept a watch together,
   Before the Christmas daybreak
   In the winter weather.

   Jesus on His mother's breast
   In the stable cold,
   Spotless Lamb of God was He,
   Shepherd of the fold:
   Let us kneel with Mary maid,
   With Joseph bent and hoary,
   With saint and angel, ox and ass,
   To hail the King of Glory.

- Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

Recorded by Paul Vazquez,
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Post Production by Malcolm Bruno and Paul Vazquez
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Chris Campbell: operations manager
Steve McPherson: publicist
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The Crossing’s Artistic and Community Boards of Directors: James Anderson, Maren Montalbano Brehm (General Manager), Beryl B. Byles, Colin Dill, Jeff Dinsmore (President), Steven Gearhart (Personnel Manager), Cynthia A. Jarvis, Michael Meloy, Esq., Donald Nally, Rebecca Siler (Treasurer), V. Chapman Smith, M. Kathryn Taylor, Rebecca Thornburgh, Beth Van de Water.

The Presbyterian Church of Chestnut Hill, our home: Reverend Cindy Jarvis, Church Administrator Jo Ann West, and organist Ken Lovets.

Saint Paul’s Episcopal Church, Chestnut Hill, its choir, the Rev. E. Clifford Cudler, Music Director Zachary Hemenway, Music Assistant Karen Richter, and Administrative Assistant Virginia Emlen.

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Elves: Beryl Byles, Brian Detersman, Corale & Ronald Davis, Mary & William Hanglew, Max Holmes, Richard & Grace Karschener, Deborah Siler, M. Kathryn Taylor & Jon Sprogell, Joseph & Paula Wapner


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