

A CHANTICLEER CHRISTMAS

from darkness to light

**Cortez Mitchell, Gerrod Pagenkopf*, Kory Reid,
Alan Reinhardt, Logan Shields, Adam Ward – countertenor
Brian Hinman*, Matthew Mazzola, Andrew Van Allsburg – tenor
Andy Berry*, Zachary Burgess, Matthew Knickman – baritone and bass**

Tim Keeler – Music Director

Khorhurd Khorin	Komitas Vardapet (1869-1935)
Praeter rerum seriem	Josquin des Prez (ca.1450-1521)
Noe, noe, noe!	Antoine Brumel (1460-1512)
Een kindeken is ons geboren	Cornelis de Leeuw (ca.1613-ca.1661)
A Babe is Born	George Walker (1922-2018)
Noël nouvelet†	Trad. French, arr. Joseph H. Jennings and Matthew Oltman
Gaude virgo, mater Christi†	Josquin (c. 1450/1455-1521)
Gaudete!, from <i>Two Medieval Lyrics</i>†	Steven Sametz (b. 1954)
<i>Commissioned in 1995 by Marshall Rutter and Terry Knowles</i>	
Noel Canon†	Sametz
Count Your Blessings	Irving Berlin (1888-1989), arr. Andrew Van Allsburg
Silent Night†	Franz Xaver Gruber (1787-1863), arr. Gene Puerling
Barekhosutyamb	Komitas
Ave Maria†	Franz Biebl (1906-2001)
Oh, Jerusalem in the Morning†	Trad. Spiritual, arr. Jennings

†These pieces have been recorded by Chanticleer.

*Andy Berry occupies *The Eric Alatorre Chair* given by Peggy Skornia. Brian Hinman occupies the *Tenor Chair*, given by an Anonymous Donor. Gerrod Pagenkopf occupies *The Ning G. Mercer Chair for the Preservation of the Chanticleer Legacy*, given by Ning and Stephen Mercer.

The holiday season usually finds Chanticleer touring around the country, singing concerts to audience members who brave the winter cold to see us in churches and halls as we pass through their hometowns. But this year, things are different. As the days grow colder and the nights longer, we find ourselves not on tour but at home, trying like so many around the world to find the joy in this transformed Christmas season.

But neither winter nor isolation last forever. The darkness of our current world will eventually give way to light and warmth and connection. Our Christmas program this year, recorded by following strict safety measures and with the help of our friends at Stanford Live, reminds us that night is transitory. We meditate on the darkness, isolation, and mystery of Christmas Eve. We learn from it and grow in it, until the morning comes and light shines once more.

We begin by candlelight with *Khorhurd khorin*, a procession from the Armenian Divine Liturgy set by the father of modern Armenian music, Komitas Vardapet. Born Songhomon Songhomonian, Komitas studied traditional Armenian liturgical singing in school and developed a life-long interest in Armenian folk music. In 1894, Songhomonian became a priest, taking the name “Komitas” from a 7th century Armenian hymnodist. That same year he earned the degree of *vardapet*, or Doctor of Theology, thus acquiring the name and title we know today.

His efforts to introduce traditional Armenian folk and sacred music to the Western world were cut short by the Armenian genocide and the deportation of Armenian intellectuals in April of 1915. Komitas was arrested and sent to the interior of the Ottoman Empire, where many of his colleagues and friends were killed. Over the next eight years, 1.5 million Armenians would die. Komitas survived the ordeal and was allowed to leave the country in 1919. But the experience left a profound impact on him; he spent the remaining 16 years of his life in a mental hospital in Paris. In his music, one hears the tragedy, the sincerity, but also the resilient hope of the Armenian people.

Variouly translated as “Beyond the natural order of things” and “This is no normal scheme of things,” the text of Josquin’s motet *Praeter rerum seriem* could be interpreted today as a meditation on the current state of the world: life for the past year has followed no normal scheme of things. The otherworldly rumblings, swirling canons, and structural sonic pillars that appear throughout *Praeter rerum seriem* lend the piece a sense of profound mystery and, indeed, confusion. While originally about the mystery of the virgin birth, when heard today, the piece comments more on the rumbling and swirling of the current moment. Antoine Brumel’s *Noe, noe, noe* ends this first set with an exclamation of intense joy amidst the darkness.

*From the abyss of glory rang the voice:
"From heaven to earth, from earth once more to heaven,
Shall Truth, with constant interchange, alight
And soar again, an everlasting link
Between the world and sky."
And man was born.*

(from “The Birth of Man” by Emma Lazarus)

In the middle of the night, a child was born. In the middle of the darkness, a small light appeared. The Dutch song *Een kindeken is ons geboren* contains an incredibly sweet Christmas melody. It is a lullaby as much as it is a carol. George Walker's *A babe is born* tells the same story from another perspective. It's a setting of a 15th century English text, with each verse ending in a borrowed Latin phrase that comments on the English narrative. A native of Washington, D.C., and the first Black American to win the Pulitzer Prize for Music, Walker's setting of this ancient text oscillates between feelings of wonder, joy, mystery, and fright. The thorny harmonic language of the English story gives way to pure and open sonorities for the Latin commentary. Walker takes us back and forth between the two. We're never sure whether we should be excited or terrified. Such variety also appears in *Noël nouvelet*, another 15th century retelling of the Christmas story. Joseph H. Jennings and Matthew Oltman, two former Chanticleer music directors, arranged this familiar and sinewy tune to be at times playful, at times regal, and at times mysterious.

*Though Darkness still her empire keep,
And hours must pass, ere morning break;
From troubled dreams, or slumbers deep,
That music kindly bids us wake:
It calls us, with an angel's voice,
To wake, and worship, and rejoice.*

(from "Music on Christmas Morning" by Anne Brontë)

Also by Josquin, *Gaude virgo mater Christi* is a joyful celebration of Mary and the life of her son. While written with the same care and craftsmanship as *Praeter rerum seriem* – imitation and madrigalisms abound – this work contrasts the brooding nature of the opening motet with an air of excitement and expectation. The excitement boils over in Steven Sametz's setting of the ancient text *Gaudete*: "Rejoice! Christ is born of the Virgin Mary! Rejoice!" Sametz sets the original carol melody with rapidly changing meters and neighboring chromatic triads. These traits lend the work a medieval flare, while also highlighting the excitement and mystery of Christmas Eve. Finally, Sametz's *Noel Canon*, also with text from a Medieval carol, rings in the season with a triumphant shout.

*The angels came from heaven high,
And they were clad with wings;
And lo, they brought a joyful song
The host of heaven sings.*

*The kings they knocked upon the door,
The wise men entered in,
The shepherds followed after them
To hear the song begin.*

*The angels sang through all the night
Until the rising sun,
But little Jesus fell asleep
Before the song was done.*

(from "Christmas Carol" by Sara Teasdale)

The world settles as the night lingers and the moon rises. Joyful reverie gives way to the comfort of the dark. *Count your blessings* comes from the classic Bing Crosby film, *White Christmas*. Arranged by one of our tenors, Andrew Van Allsburg, the piece is a reminder of all the good things that remain in our lives, despite the darkness closing in. The arrangement moves from an intimate bedside reflection, to the sound-world of Hollywood magic, and back again, to a gentle, sleepy, ending. The stillness and calm of Christmas Eve finds its culmination in *Silent Night*, here arranged by the master of vocal jazz, Gene Puerling. This special adaptation of Franz Gruber's original melody begins with simple harmonies. The middle section, however, is full of lush chords that represent the true warmth, splendor, and magic of Christmas. Then, it closes as it began: in stillness and calm.

*Let placid slumbers sooth each weary mind,
At morn to wake more heav'nly, more refin'd;
So shall the labours of the day begin
More pure, more guarded from the snares of sin.
Night's leaden sceptre seals my drowsy eyes,
Then cease, my song, till fair Aurora rise.*

(from "A Hymn to the Evening" by Phillis Wheatley)

The final set begins with another excerpt from the Divine Liturgy by Komitas. *Barekhosutyamb* is a prayer for intercession to the Virgin Mary. It starts with a reverential tone; one envisions bowed heads and earnest pleading. The continuous, chant-like vocal lines ebb and flow as the text moves from supplication to declamation. The final climax is a grand plea for assurance and acceptance. It is a plea that rings true for us today, and it has rung true for the Armenian people throughout their tumultuous history.

This Armenian prayer to the Virgin Mary transitions seamlessly to Franz Biebl's *Ave Maria*, which asks Mary to "pray for us now and at the hour of our death." Biebl's setting is actually a version of the "Angelus" Catholic devotional prayer, which tells the story of the annunciation and incarnation. Biebl's *Ave Maria* is synonymous with Chanticleer. We perform it every Christmas, and every time we sing it, it feels like coming home.

With the dawn comes assurance and hope. A new day brings new possibilities. It brings warmth and light and connection and joy. *Oh, Jerusalem in the Morning*, arranged by music director emeritus Joseph H. Jennings, captures the radiance of Christmas morning. Such radiance and warmth is often hard to remember these days. But while the darkness feels close, and the wait feels long, the dawn will come. Life will return, and music will ring again.

Program notes by Tim Keeler

Khorhurd Khorin – Komitas Vardapet (1869-1935)

Khorhurd khorin, anhas, anəskizbən,
Vor zardaretser zverin petutyund
I haragast anmatuyts lusuyñ,
Gerapantz paroq, zdasəs hreghinats.

Mystery profound, unfathomable, without beginning,
You adorned your supernal realm,
A chamber of unapproachable light,
In splendid glory, with the ranks of fiery spirits.

Ancharahrash zorutyamb
Steghtzer zAdam, patker tirakan,
Yev nazeli paroq zgestavoretser
I drakhtn Adeni, teghi berkrants.

With ineffably wondrous power
You created Adam, in lordly image,
And vested him with gracious glory
In the paradise of Eden, the place of delights.

Charcharanoq qo surb miyatznid
Norogetsan araratzq amenayñ,
Yev verəstin mardn anmahatsav,
Zardaryal i zgest ankoghopteli.

Through the passion of your Only-begotten
You renewed all creatures;
And man was restored in immortality
Appareled in unspoilable raiment.

Tagavor yerknavor,
Yekeghetsi qo ansharzh pahya,
Yev zerkərpagus anvanəd qum
Pahya i khaghaghutyan.

Heavenly King,
Preserve your Church unshaken,
And keep in peace
The worshipers of your name.

Khachatur of Taron (13th century)

Praeter rerum seriem – Josquin Des Prez (ca.1450-1521)

Praeter rerum seriem
parit deum hominem
virgo mater.
Nec vir tangit virginem
nec prolis originem
novit pater.

Beyond the natural order of things
A virgin mother
Gave birth to God as man.
No man touched the virgin
Nor did the father of the child
Know the mother.

Virtus sancti spiritus
opus illud coelitus
operatur.
Initus et exitus
partus tui penitus
quis scrutatur?

The power of the holy spirit
Accomplished
This heavenly work.
The ins and outs
Of your birth, who
Can examine them wholly?

Dei providentia
quae disponit omnia
tam suave.
Tua puerperia
transfer in mysteria.
Mater ave.

By the providence of God,
So sweet,
Which arranges all things,
Convert into a holy mystery
This childbirth of yours,
Mother, hail.

Translation by David Wyatt

Noe, noe, noe! – Antoine Brumel (1460-1512)

Noe, noe, noe! Noël, Noël, Noël!

Een kindeken is ons geboren – Cornelis De Leeuw (ca.1613-ca.1661)

Een kindeken is ons geboren in Bethle'em,
des hadd' Herodes t'oren, dat bleek aen hem,
die Wijzen sonder schroomen quamen te Jerusalem,
toen Jezus was gekomen na(ar) der Propheten stem:
geen moeyten zij ontzaghén, noch kosten groot,
haer gaven sach men dragen in haeren schoot.

A child was born to us in Bethlehem,
and Herod learned about him, as all could tell,
yet the wise men came to Jerusalem unafraid,
after Jesus had been born according to the prophecy:
they did not spare efforts nor expense,
and all could see the gifts in their laps.

Translation by André Vierendeels

A Babe is Born – George Walker (1922-2018)

A Babe is born all of a may,
Who brings salvation unto us,
To them we sing both night and day,
Veni Creator Spiritus.
[Come, Creator Spirit]

At Bethlehem that blessed place,
The child of bliss now born He was,
And Him to serve God give us grace,
O lux beata Trinitas.
[O Trinity of blessed light]

There came three kings out of the East,
To worship the King that is so free,
With gold and myrrh and frankincense,
A solis ortus cardine.
[From the rising of the sun]

The herdsmen heard an angel cry,
A merry song that night sang he,
O why are you so sore aghast?
Iam ortus solis cardine.
[Now the rising of the sun]

The angel came down with a cry,
A lovely song sang he,
In worship of that darling child,
Gloria tibi domine.
[Glory to you, Lord]

Noël Nouvelet – Traditional French, arr. Joseph H. Jennings and Matthew Oltman

Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici;	A new Noël, now let us sing Noël;
Dévotes gens, criens à Dieu merci!	Devout people, cry to God your thanks!
Chantons Noël pour le Roi nouvelet:	Sing Noël for the new-born King,
Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici.	A new Noël, now let us sing Noël.

D'un oiselet après le chant ouïs.	Then I heard the song of a little bird,
Qui, aux pasteurs, disait: «Partez ici!	Who, to the shepherds, said: "Go there!
En Bethléem trouverez l'Agnelet.»	In Bethlehem you will find the little Lamb."
Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici.	A new Noël, now let us sing Noël.

En Bethléem Marie et Joseph vis,	In Bethlehem I saw Mary and Joseph,
L'âne et le boeuf, l'Enfant couché parmi.	The ass and ox, the Infant sleeping among them.
La crèche était au lieu d'un bercelet.	The manger was there instead of a cradle.

Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici.	A new Noël, now let us sing Noël.
L'étoile y vis, qui la nuit éclaircit, Qui d'Orient dont elle était sortie, En Bethléém les trois rois conduisait. Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici.	I saw a star, illuminating the night, That came from out of the East, Leading the three kings to Bethlehem. A new Noël, now let us sing Noël.

L'un portait l'or, l'autre la myrrhe aussi. L'autre l'encens qui faisait bon senti. Du Paradis semblait le jardin. Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici.	One carried gold, another also brought myrrh. The third brought incense, which made a pleasing smell. Like Paradise seemed the garden. A new Noël, now let us sing Noël.
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Gaude virgo, mater Christi – Josquin

Gaude virgo, mater Christi, Quae per aurem concepisti, Gabriele nuntio.	Rejoice, virgin mother of Christ who has conceived by ear, with Gabriel as messenger.
Gaude, quia Deo plena Peperisti sine poena, Cum pudoris lilio.	Rejoice, for full of God you gave birth without pain, with the lily of purity.
Gaude, quia tui nati Quem dolebas mortem pati, Fulget resurrectio.	Rejoice, for the resurrection of your Son now shines, whose death you mourned.
Gaude Christo ascendente, Et in coelum te vidente, Motu fertur proprio.	Rejoice, as Christ ascends, and, in your sight, is carried into heaven by his own strength.
Gaude que post ipsum scandis, Et est honor tibi grandis, In caeli palatio.	Rejoice, you who riseth after him and to whom great honor is due in the palace of heaven.
Ubi fructus ventris tui, Nobis detur per te frui, In perenni gaudio. Alleluia.	Where the fruit of your womb is granted us, through you, to enjoy in eternal rejoicing. Alleluia.

Gaudete! from *Two Medieval Lyrics* – Steven Sametz (b. 1954)

Gaudete, Gaudete! Christus est natus Ex Maria virgine, Gaudete!	Rejoice, Rejoice! Christ is born Of the Virgin Mary, Rejoice!
Tempus ad est gratiae, Hoc quod optabamus; Carmina laetitiae, Devote redamus	It is now the time of grace that we have desired; Let us sing songs of joy, let us give devotion
Deus homo factus est, Natura mirante;	God was made man, and nature marvels;
Mundus renovatus est A Christo regnante.	The world was renewed By Christ who is King.
Ezechiellis porta Clausa pertransitur;	The closed gate of Ezechiel He has been passed through;

Unde lux est orta	From where the light rises
Salus invenitur.	Salvation is found.
Ergo nostra cantio,	Therefore let our assembly now sing,
Psallat iam in lustris;	Sing the Psalms to purify us;
Benedicat Domino:	Let it praise the Lord:
Salus Regi nostro.	Greetings to our King.

Noël Canon – Steven Sametz

Noël! Noël! Sing we Noël!
Sing we both all and some: Noël!

Out of your sleep awake!
For God mankind now hath he take
All of a maiden without any make!

Count Your Blessings – Irving Berlin (1888-1989), arr. Andrew Van Allsburg

When I'm worried and I can't sleep
I count my blessings instead of sheep
And I fall asleep counting my blessings
When my bankroll is getting small
I think of when I had none at all
And I fall asleep counting my blessings.

I think about a nursery and I picture curly heads
And one by one I count them as they slumber in their beds
If you're worried and you can't sleep
Just count your blessings instead of sheep
And you'll fall asleep counting your blessings.

Silent Night – Franz Xavier Gruber (1787-1863), arr. Gene Puerling

Silent night, Holy night!
All is calm, All is bright,
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child,
Holy Infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

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

Barekhosutyamb – Komitas

Barekhosutyamb mor Qo yev kusi	Through the intercession of your virgin mother
ənkal zaghachans Qots pashtoneyitss,	Accept the supplications of your servants,
Vor geraguyn qan zerkinəs,	O Christ, who with your blood
paytzaratsutser surb zekeghetsi aryamb Qov Qristos,	Made your holy church brighter than the heavens.
Yev əst yerknaynotsən karketser i sma	And ordained in her the orders of the apostles, prophets
ztass araqlots yev margareyits, surb vardapetats.	and the holy teachers after the pattern of the heavenly hosts.

Aysor zhoghovyal dasq qahanayits, Today we, order of priests,

sarkavagats, təprats yev kgherikosats, khunk matutsanemq araji Qo, Ter, horinak əst hənumən Zaqariya. Ənkəl, ar i menj əzkhənkənvər maghtans, vorpes patarəgn Abeli, zNoyi yev zAbrahamu.	Deacons, clerks and clerics Offer incense before you, Lord, As Zechariah did of old, Accept from us our offering, As you accepted the sacrifice of Abel, Noah, and Abraham.
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Barekhsutyamb verin Qo zorats misht ansharzh pahya zAtor Haykaznyayts.	Through the intercession of your supernal hosts, Ever unshaken maintain the throne of the Armenians.
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Ave Maria – Franz Biebl (1906-2001)

Angelus Domini nuntiavit Mariae et concepit de Spiritu sancto.	The angel of the Lord made his annunciation to Mary and she conceived by the Holy Spirit.
Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum; benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui Jesus.	Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.
Maria dixit: Ecce ancilla Domini; fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum.	Mary said, “Behold the servant of the Lord; let it be unto me according to Your word.”
Et verbum caro factum est et habitavit in nobis.	And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.
Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus. Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.	Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners. Holy Mary, pray for us now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Jerusalem in the Morning – Trad. Spiritual, arr. Jennings

Mary, Mary, what's the matter?
Oh Jerus'lem in the mornin'
I said my po' Mary, what's the matter?
Oh Jerus'lem in the mornin'

Oh Joseph, Joseph, what is the matter?
Oh Jerus'lem in the mornin'
Well now Joseph, Joseph, what's the matter?
Oh Jerus'lem in the mornin'

Night is chilly, what's the matter?
Oh Jeru'slem in the mornin'
The night is chilly, what is the matter?
Oh Jeru'slem in the mornin'

I hear the oxen bawlin',
Hear the lambs a-squallin'
Oh Jerus'lem in the mornin'

I hear the cattle lowin',
Rooster crowin'
Oh Jerus'lem in the mornin'

Mary, Mary, what's the matter?
Oh Jerus'lem in the mornin'

I'm singin' Oh Jerusalem, oh Jerusalem,
Oh Jerus'lem in the mornin'

Oh well now
Little baby Jesus born in a stable,
Oh Jerus'lem in the mornin'

I'm singin' oh Jerusalem, oh Jerusalem,
Oh Jerus'lem in the mornin'

Oh well now
Little baby Jesus lyin' in the manger,
Oh Jerus'lem in the mornin'

Mary baby born today, wrapped in swadlin' clothes,
Laid him in a manger Lord that's how the story goes.

Shepherds bidin' in the fields, watchin' o'er their sheep,
Angels singing loud and clear woke them from their sleep.

I'm singin' oh Jerusalem, oh Jerusalem,
Oh Jerus'lem in the mornin'

Oh well now
Little baby Jesus born in a stable,
Oh Jerus'lem in the mornin'

Wise men saw the shining star, shining in the east,
Came on camels from afar bringing gifts to the prince of peace.

I'm singin' oh Jerusalem, oh Jerusalem,
Oh Jerus'lem in the mornin'

Oh well now
Little baby Jesus born in a stable,
Little baby Jesus lyin' in a manger,
Little baby Jesus born to be our savior
Oh Jerus'lem in the mornin'

See the stars a-glowing, their lustre showin'
Oh Jerusl'em in the mornin'
I see the moon in crescent, phosphorescent,
Oh Jerusl'em in the mornin'

Mary, Mary what is the matter?
Oh Jerusl'em in the mornin'
Mary, Mary what is the matter?
Oh Jerusl'em in the mornin'

I see the
doves a-cooin'
cows a-moooin'
asses braying
horses neighing
goats a-bleating

birds a-tweeting
geese a-squawking
parrots talking
mice a-prancing
lupie dancing
heav'nly choir
singing higher

Mary, Mary
Joseph, Joseph,
Little baby Jesus
What is the matter?

Oh Jerusalem in the mornin'!
In the mornin'!

The GRAMMY® Award-winning vocal ensemble Chanticleer has been hailed as “the world’s reigning male chorus” by *The New Yorker* and is known around the world as “an orchestra of voices” for its wide-ranging repertoire and dazzling virtuosity. Founded in San Francisco in 1978 by singer and musicologist Louis Botto, Chanticleer quickly took its place as one of the most prolific recording and touring ensembles in the world, selling over one million recordings and performing thousands of live concerts to audiences around the world.

Chanticleer’s repertoire is rooted in the renaissance and has continued to expand to include a wide range of classical, gospel, jazz, popular music, and a deep commitment to the commissioning of new compositions and arrangements. The ensemble has committed much of its vast recording catalogue to these commissions, garnering GRAMMY® Awards for its recording of Sir John Tavener’s “*Lamentations & Praises*”, and the ambitious collection of commissioned works entitled “Colors of Love”. Chanticleer is the recipient of the **Dale Warland/Chorus America Commissioning Award** and the **ASCAP/Chorus America Award for Adventurous Programming**, and its Music Director Emeritus Joseph H. Jennings received the **Brazeal Wayne Dennard Award** for his contribution to the African-American choral tradition during his tenure with Chanticleer.

Named for the “clear-singing” rooster in Geoffrey Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, Chanticleer continues to maintain ambitious programming in its hometown of San Francisco, including a large education and outreach program that recently reached over 8,000 people, and an annual concert series that includes its legendary holiday tradition “A Chanticleer Christmas.”

Chanticleer is a non-profit organization, governed by a volunteer Board of Trustees, administered by a professional staff with a full-time professional ensemble. In addition to the many individual contributors to Chanticleer, the Board of Trustees thanks the following Foundations, Corporations and Government Agencies for their exceptional support:

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