YORK
EARLY MUSIC
CHRISTMAS
FESTIVAL
2025

Joglaresa

Here we come a-Carolling!

National Centre for Early Music

Sunday 14 December 6.30pm

Joglaresa

Elisabeth Flett *fidel, chorus*
Elsa Bradley percussion, dulcimer, chorus
Jeremy Avis *voice*
Jonny Akerman *percussion, dulcimer, fidel, chorus*
Louise Anna Duggan *percussion, dulcimer, harp, chorus*
Victoria Couper *voice, harp*

Here we come a-Carolling!

Make We Myrth for Chrystes Byrth	**Belinda Sykes** 1966-2021 *Text*: England,15th century
The Hern	**John Fleagle** d.1999 Corpus Christi Carol
A Lovely Rose	**Belinda Sykes** *Text*: England, 15th century
The Bore's Heed Carol *	England, 16th century
In Dulcio Jubilo *	adapted by **Belinda Sykes** Germany, 14th century
Mi Levedie, Ich Thonke Thee	**Traditiona**l, France *Text*: England,15th century
Lullay My Chyld *	**Belinda Sykes** *Text*: England, 15th century
Instrumental Medley	
Now Bring us in Good Ale *	England, 15th century

INTERVAL

Instrumental Medley

Nay, Ivy Nay!	**Traditional** *Text*: England, 15th century
Masters in this Hall	**Traditional**, France *Text*: William Morris 1834-96
Personent Hodie *	**Piae Cantiones** Scandinavia, 16th century
Unto Us is Born a Son *	**Moosburg Gradule**, Germany, 14th century & **Piae Cantiones** Scandinavia, 16th century
The Coventry Carol *	Based on an English 16th century source
As I in Hoary Winter's Night	**Traditional** *Text*: Robert Southwell (1561-95)
Gloria 'n cielo e pace n' terra *	**Laudario di Cortona**
Salve, Salve, Virgo Pia *	Italy, late 13th century
Magno gaudens gaudio; Hush; Trotto	England, 13th century; 1967; Italy 14th century
The Gower Wassail *	**Traditional** The Gower Peninsula

* *Please join in singing these carols*

Since its founding in the 1990s under the peerless direction of the late Belinda Sykes, Joglaresa has followed the journey of modal music from the 'Dark' Ages to the present day.

It can be tempting to think of this journey as a search merely for 'differences' or 'progress'. However Joglaresa always celebrates the connections and continuities within this music and, by so doing, hopes to highlight our shared humanity and culture through the ages and across cultures and continents.

Joining hands with musicians, composers and poets is at the centre of Joglaresa's music-making. Our modern-but-modal arrangements are the essence of our singing and playing, making 'all time…eternally present'. We therefore invite fellow

minstrels from across time and space to step out of the history books and join us on stage right here right now.

Written evidence of medieval carolling is intriguingly scarce, although we do know something about how musicians went about composing and performing, for example, taking existing tunes and adding new words and vice versa (*contrafactum*), with no concerns about sacred/secular crossover.

Joglaresa follows these practices too and relishs preserving the flavour and feel of the many musical styles of the time. The short programme notes that follow give you an indication of sources and of medieval practice at work in the construction of the songs.

A word about the 'carol'

The carol flourished in fifteenth-century England, when the word was first used in the way we use it now (previously, the word *carole* had been used to indicate round-dance songs). Both polyphonic and monophonic carols were composed and preserved in manuscripts, though usually without attribution to any particular composer.

Make We Myrth for Chrystes Byrth

This survives as text only, so Belinda contrafacted it to the music of the contemporary carol *Nowell sing we both and som*e, and then added additional vocal lines for the full sound.

The Hern

Tonight's setting of *The Hern* is by the contemporary American bard John Fleagle. The text is one of the versions of *The Corpus Christi Carol* or *The Falcon Carol*. *The Corpus Christi Carol* survives in many sources – all with slight variations: the sixteenth-century manuscript version (held in Balliol College, Oxford) has been used as a basis for compositions by Benjamin Britten and Peter Warlock, and the version best known in English folk clubs (with its *Bells of Paradise* refrain) was collected by Ralph Vaughan Williams from a Mr Davis in Derbyshire and is known as *Down in yon Forest*. This version of *The Hern* contains the mysterious blend of pagan and grail-myth imagery characteristic of all the versions. However, there are no overt references to the nativity, unless it is implied in its 'Lullay' refrain.

A Lovely Rose

A traditional Marian text found in Bodleian Library (MS. Eng. poet. e. 1.) and modernised by Edith Ricket (1871-1938) in *Ancient English Christmas Carols: 1400-1700* (pub.1910), in keeping with the practice of these songs often being written in simple plain language so they were accessible to all. Set to music by our founder, Belinda Sykes.

The Bore's Heed Carol

In addition to being part of the traditional Yuletide feast held at The Queen's College, Oxford, this carol is an English folk club classic, particularly following acclaimed performances by groups such as Steeleye Span and The Young Tradition. Hailed as the oldest printed Christmas carol, the fragment was found by Thomas Herne, and can be traced back to Wynkyn de Worde, 1520.

In Dulcio Jubilo

This song survives in a fourteenth-century German manuscript known as Codex 1305. It can also be found in the *Piae Cantiones*, a collection of Latin songs published in sixteenth-century Sweden. They come from a variety of older sources and include many Christmas songs. Joglaresa perform some in the original Latin (*Personent hodie*) and some in the English translations by which they are better known today (*In dulci jubilo*, *Unto Us Is Born a Son*).

Mi Levedie, Ich Thonke Thee

Another Marian carol, part of the hugely popular cult of devotional works dedicated to the Virgin Mary at the time.. Belinda's arrangement of this song mentions Les Moissoneurs (Trad., France), though we're still hunting for the original tune that inspired her.

Lullay My Chyld

The English text comes from a manuscript of poetry found in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. There is some notation for this song found in the British Library manuscript Add. 5666, but the tune for this Joglaresa song is Belinda's own.

Now Bring us in Good Ale

There are no English song collections to match those of Spain and Italy, and the surviving English language repertoire is often notated in only partial musical manuscripts instead of in large formal musical collections. However, the shortage of songs in English does not mean that the nation lacked music; it simply reflects the fact that in medieval England it was French culture and language that were

favoured by the nobility. *Nowell, Nowell: Tydynges trew* is one of the few extant monophonic songs – Joglaresa perform it with its contemporary contrafacted text, *Now Bring Us in Good Ale*.

Nay, Ivy Nay! &
Masters in this Hall

A number of books and articles make reference to the fact that this first song is from a manuscript in the British Museum written during the reign of Henry VI, where the first mention of it is to a W. Copeland who paid the Company of Stationers 4*d*. for a license to print 'A ballette entitled *holy and hyve*' in 1561. Discussion of the line 'Holly standeth in the hall' while 'Ivy stands without the door' concludes that while both were festive decorations at Christmas time, holly was only used to festoon interiors, while ivy was also used as a vintner's sign and among the evergreens at funerals. The second song that we segue straight into is a Joglaresa arrangement of this classic carol with text by William Morris: the tune comes from a timeless folk tune from Northern France.

Personent Hodie &
Unto Us is Born a Son

Here are two more pieces found in this wonderful collection that we would love you to join us in singing. The English translation from the Latin for *Puer nobis nasictur* was made by George Ratcliffe Woodward (1848-1934).

The Coventry Carol

Mystery plays were often performed at church festivals throughout the year. This song *Lully lulla* (*The Coventry Carol*) is from the Coventry cycle, originally called 'The Pageant of the Shearmen and Taylors' (1591) that was sadly lost in a fire at the Birmingham free reference library in 1879. Fortunately, Thomas Sharp, a Coventry antiquarian, had liked the manuscript enough to make some copies for his friends and thus this carol survives.

As I in Hoary Winter's Night

Taken from the Revd Robert Southwell's poem *The Burning Babe* – a poem for which Ben Jonson declared he would readily forfeit any of his own poems to have written. Southwell was a priest, poet and martyr who was beatified in 1929 and canonised in 1970 by Pope Paul VI as one of the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales. Arranged by Belinda to the tune of *The Lyke Wake Dirge* – a song that was first officially documented in the early sixteenth century.

Gloria 'n cielo e pace n' terra &
Salve, Salve, Virgo Pia

Laude spirituali (literally 'spiritual praises') form the main part of Italy's medieval secular monophony. While these songs are religious in nature they do not form part of the liturgy and are written in the vernacular Italian, not Latin. *Laude* were performed by *Laudesi* – lay fraternities which sprang up throughout northern Italy from about 1260. These groups gathered together to perform various charitable works, to sing and pray, and express their faith more freely outside of the liturgy. Both of these songs are found in the *Laudario di Cortona*, discovered 150 years ago in the small Tuscan town of Cortona. *Gloria 'n cielo* survives in both the *Laudario di Firenze* and the *Laudario di Cortona*, albeit with different melodies. Tonight's version is that of Cortona.

Magno gaudens gaudio

Magno gaudens gaudio is from a few leaves of recently found parchment that were saved from oblivion as a result of their use as flyleaves within another manuscript. The song commemorates the Massacre of the Innocents (28 December), and celebrates the downfall of King Herod. It is associated with the Feast of Fools – a medieval New Year's feast day at which an inversion of social roles fleetingly took place.

The Gower Wassail

The English tradition of Wassailing (from the Old Norse and literally meaning 'be in good health' or 'be fortunate') had spread to this area of South Wales by the nineteenth century and usually occurs on Twelfth Night as locals pass from house to house singing songs and receiving small gifts or food for their trouble. This version comes from a field recording by Phil Tanner captured in the 1930s.

Joglaresa

Founded in 1992 by the unforgettable Belinda Sykes, Joglaresa is a band of musicians from all walks of life who share a passion for medieval music. Sadly, Belinda died in 2021, leaving the band with an invitation to carry the band's spirit onwards into the future, keeping its signature anarchic energy whilst remaining true to a scholarly understanding of the medieval sources.

Joglaresa was the first medieval band to develop a programme of songs entirely devoted to Mary Magdalene, and pioneered the programming of medieval Jewish

and Arabic texts for otherwise more-commonplace Iberian and Crusades programmes.

The band's work focuses on connecting ancient and traditional musics but, rather than create a 'fusion' or a surreal mix of these styles, they aim to use their combined experiences (upbringings drenched in traditional Irish, English, Maghrebi, Balkan and Middle Eastern music) to create a homogenous and authentic sound.

Performances have included the Aldeburgh Festival, York Early Music Festival, London's Lufthansa Festival, the Queen Elizabeth Hall (London), St David's Hall and the Millenium Centre (Cardiff), London's Barbican Centre, Sana'a & Aden (Yemen), Brezice Early Music Festival (Slovenia), Istanbul, Amsterdam International Festival of Jewish Music, Chinchilla Early Music Festival; tours in Germany, Belgium, Italy, and Holland and numerous radio broadcasts – the world over.

Myrth for Chrystes Byrth

And sing we Yule til Candlemass.
The first day of Yule have we in mind,
How God was born of mankind;
For He would the bonds unbind
Of all our sin and wickedness.
The second day we sing of Steven,
Who was stoned, and said up even
With God there he would stand in heaven,
And crowned was for his prowess.
The third day belongeth to St. John,
Who was Christ's darling, dearer none,
Whom he entrusted, when He was gone,
His mother, for his pureness.
The fourth day of Yule of children we sing,
That by Herod's wrath to death were thrown,
Of Christ they could not tell with tongue,
But with their blood bare him witness.

The Hern flew East, the hern flew west
Lully , lullay, lully, lullay
She bare her o'er the fair forest
The falcon hath borne my mate away

She bare her o'er the meadows green
All to espy what might be seen

Oh, then she saw an orchard fair
Where grow'th the apple and the pear

And in that orchard stands a hall
Was clad all o'er with purple and pall

And in that hall there stands a bower
Was covered o'er with periwink flower

And in that bower there stands a bed
With silken sheets of gold so red

And in that bed that lies a knight
Whose wounds do bleed both day and night

Under that bed there runs a flood
One half runs water, the other runs blood

By the bedside there stands a stone
A leal maiden was sat thereon

With silver needle and silken thread
She stems the wounds where they do bleed.

A Lovely Rose

Of a rose, a lovely rose,
And of a rose I sing a song.

Hearken to me, both old and ying,
How a rose began to spring;
A fairer rose to my liking
Sprang there never in the kinges land.

The first branch was of great might,
That sprang on Christmas night.
The star shone over Bethlehem bright,
That men might see both broad and long.

The second branch was of great honour,
That was sent from heaven's tower;
Blessed be that fair flower,
Break it shall the fiendes bonds.
The fourth branch sprang into hell,
The fiendes boast for to fell,
There might no soule therein dwell,
Blessed be that time that branch sprang.

The sixth branch by and by,
It is the five joys of mild Mary.
Now Christ save all this company,
And send us good life and long!

The Bore's Heed Carol

The boar's head in hand bear I
Bedecked with bays and rosemary
I pray you, my masters, be merry

Quot estis in convivio.
Caput apri defero, Reddens laudes Domino
The boar's head, as I understand,
Is the rarest dish in all the land,
Which thus bedecked with a gay garland
Let us servire cantico.

Our steward hath provided this
In honour of the King of bliss
Which on this day to be served is
In Reginensi Atrio:

The boar's head, I dare well say,
Anon after the eleventh day,
He takes his leave and goes away,
Exivit tum de patria.

In dulci jubilo Let us our homage show;
Our heart's joy reclineth in praesepio
And like a bright star shineth, Matris in gremio.
Alpha es et O, Alpha es et O.

O Jesu parvule! I yearn for thee alway!

Hear me, I beseech thee, O puer optime!
My prayer let it reach thee, O Princeps gloriae!
Trahe me post te! Trahe me post te!
O Patris caritas, O Nati lenitas!
Deeply were we stained Per nostra crimina;
But thou hast for us gained Coelorum gaudia.
O that we were there! O that we were there!

Ubi sunt gaudia, if that they be not there?
There are angels singing - Nova cantica,
And there the bells are ringing In Regis curia:
O that we were there, O that we were there.

Mi levedie ich thonke thee
Lady, I thank you With heart; so very mild
[For] that good; you have done for me
With your sweet child.

You are good; delightful;
bright of all others chosen.
From you; sweet one was Jesus born.

Maiden mild, I pray you with your sweet child to shelter me;
have God's mercy.

Mother, look upon me with beloved (gracious) eyes.
Give me rest and joy, my lady, when I die.

Lullay my Chyld, and weep no more,
Sleep and be now still;
The King of bliss thy Father is,
As it was His will.
This endernight I saw a sight,
A maid a cradle keep,
And ever she sang and said among, 'Lullay, my child and sleep.'

'I may not sleep, but I may weep,
I am so woebegone;
Sleep I would, but I am cold,
And clothes I have none.'
'A spear so sharp shall pierce my heart,
For deeds that I have done.
Father of grace, whether Thou hast Forgotten Thy little son?

Now Bring Us in Good Ale*,* and bring us in good ale;
For our Blessed Lady's sake, bring us in good ale.

Bring us in no brown bread, for that is made of bran,
Nor bring us in no white bread, there therein is no game;
Bring us in no bacon, for that is passing fat,
But bring us in good ale, and give us enough of that;
Bring us in no mutton, for that is often lean,
Nor bring us in no tripes, for they be seldom clean;
Bring us in no butter, for therein are many hairs;
Nor bring us in no pig's flesh, for that will make us boars;
Bring us in no puddings, for therein is all God's good;
Nor bring us in no venison, for that is not for our blood;
Bring us in no capon's flesh, for that is often dear;
Nor bring us in no duck's flesh, for they slobber in the mere.

Nay, Ivy, nay, it shall not be, I wis,
Let Holly have the mastery as the manner is.

Holly standeth in the hall fair to behold,
Ivy stands without the door; she is full of a cold.

Holly and his merry men, they dance and they sing;
Ivy and her maidens, they weep and they wring.

Ivy hath a sore, she caught it with the cold,
So may they all have, that with Ivy hold.

Holly hath berries, as red as any rose,
The foresters, the hunters, keep them from the does.

Ivy hath berries as black as any sloe,
There comes the owl and eats them as she goes.

Holly hath birds a full fair flock,
The nightingale, the poppinjay, the gentle laverock.

Good Ivy, what birds hast thou,
None but the owlet that cries How! How!

Masters in this Hall, hear ye news today
Brought from overseas, and ever you I pray
Nowell, nowell, nowell! Nowell sing we clear
Holpen all are folk on earth, born is God's son so dear!

Personent Hodie
On this day earth shall ring
with the song children sing
Praising the young King,
who was born to save us
And the maiden who brought Him forth to save us.

His the doom, ours the mirth,
when he came to earth,
Bethlehem saw his birth,
ox and ass beside him,
He came to vanquish the Prince of Darkness.

God's bright star o'er his head,
Wise men come seeking Him,
They kneel and lay their gifts
beside Him and adore Him,
They offer gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

On this day angels sing;
with their song earth shall ring,
praising Christ, heaven's King,
born on earth to save us;
peace and love he gave us.
Ideo! Glory to God in the highest!

Unto us is born a son,
King of choirs supernal:
See on earth his life begun,
Of lords the Lord eternal.

Christ, from heav'n descending low,
Comes on earth a stranger;
Ox and ass their Owner know
Be cradled in the manger.

This did Herod sore affray,
And grievously bewilder,
So he gave the word to slay,
And slew the little childer.

Of his love and mercy mild
This the Christmas story:
O that Mary's gentle Child
Might lead us up to glory!

O and A and A and O, *Cum cantibus in choro,*
Let our merry organ go, *Benedicamus Domino.*

The Coventry Carol

Lullay, Thou little tiny Child,
By, by, lully, lullay.
Lullay, Thou little tiny Child.
By, by, lully, lullay.

O sisters, too, how may we do,
For to preserve this day;
This poor Youngling for whom we sing,
By, by, lully, lullay.

Herod the King, in his raging,
Charged he hath this day;
His men of might, in his own sight,
All children young, to slay.

Then woe is me, poor Child, for Thee,
And ever mourn and say;
For Thy parting, nor say nor sing,
By, by, lully, lullay.

As I in Hoary Winter's Night

stood shivering in the snow,
Surprised I was with sudden heat
which made my heart to glow,

And lifting up a fearful eye
to view what fire was near,
A pretty babe all burning bright
did in the air appear,

'Alas,' quoth he, 'but newly born,
in fiery heats I fry,
Yet none approach to warm their hearts
or feel my fire but I.

‘For which, as now on fire I am
to work them to their good,
So will I melt into a bath
to wash them in my blood.’

Gloria ‘n cielo e pace ‘n terra
Glory in heaven and peace on earth,
our Saviour is born.

The glorious Christ is born,
the marvellous high God;
the benign Creator
has become man, long desired.

A child is born from the flower,
born of the sovereign virgin,
shining morning star,
polestar for the errant.

Let us sing peace on earth,
let us desire glory in heaven;
the sacred maiden
gave birth to the Saviour.

Salve, Salve, Virgo Pia
Hail, hail, holy virgin,
gleaming jewel, Mary.

Let us now sing with great delight
of that perfect love of ours
who prays to Christ for us,
who is our light and our way.

You who have set heaven in your mind,
now sing sweetly
Christ will justly represent you,
and the virgin Mary.

High glorious woman,
compassionate mother of Jesus
Rose of paradise,
the most beautiful that exists.

Magno gaudens gaudio

Let our company of boys, rejoicing with great joy,
celebrate in song and dance this anniversary feast!

In honour of the Innocents let harps and drums sound!
Let songs and instruments witness to a happy mind!
Rightly festive, let us rejoice and be merry with the court of heaven, Eia!
Let sport and gladness, laughter, peace and courtesy make up our household!

Boys, let us rejoice! Herod is dead,
we have conquered, our enemy is overcome.
Suffering eternal torment, he will not be able to rise again,
and we shall follow the immortal Lamb wherever he may go.

The Gower Wassail

A-wassail, a-wassail throughout all the town
Our cup it is white and our ale it is brown
Our wassail is made of the good ale and true.
Some nutmeg and ginger, the best we could brew.

Our wassail is made of an elderberry bough,
And so my good neighbours we'll drink unto thou.
Besides all on earth, you have apples in store.
Pray let us come in for it's cold by the door.

There's a master and a mistress sitting down by the fire,
While we poor wassailers do wait in the mire.
So you, pretty maid, with your silver headed pin,
Please open the door and let us come in.

We know by the moon that we are not too soon.
We know by the sky that we are not too high.
We know by the stars that we are not too far.
And we know by the ground that we are within sound.

Here's we jolly wassail boys growing weary and cold,
Drop a bit of silver into our old bowl.
And, if we're alive for another new year,
Perhaps we may call and see who does live here.

YORK EARLY MUSIC CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL is directed by Delma Tomlin MBE and administered by the National Centre for Early Music through the York Early Music Foundation (registered charity number 1068331)

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A date for your diary!

Saturday 14 March 2026, 7.30pm

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Piers Adams *recorders*
Lyndy Mayle *keyboards*

Ancient and modern meet in a spectacular musical fusion! Piers Adams – regarded as one of the greatest recorder players of our age – presents a stunning new project with his keyboardist partner Lyndy Mayle, turning the traditional early music recital on its head and transporting it into a new dimension for the 21st century.

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