

25th Anniversary Season



John W. Ehrlich, *Music Director*



A CHRISTMAS PRELUDE

BRITTEN: A CEREMONY OF CAROLS

RESPIGHI: LAUD TO THE NATIVITY

Saturday, November 20, 2004 at 8:00 p.m.

Emmanuel Church

15 Newbury Street, Boston

From the Board of Directors

Good evening, and welcome to the opening performance of The Spectrum Singers' 25th Anniversary Season! We thank you for choosing The Spectrum Singers tonight, and hope you will be drawn back here to Emmanuel Church for the remaining three programs Music Director John W. Ehrlich has planned for the 2004-2005 season. The richness and broad spectrum of these musical offerings represent the essence of the mission of this chorus.

It's not too late to purchase a subscription – please see the page in this program book which outlines several attractive ticket purchase options.

We hope we'll see you often!

—Christopher M. Keppelman, *Board Chair*

*Please join The Spectrum Singers
at a post-concert reception
in the Library/Parish Hall,
located through the right-hand door
at the front of the sanctuary.*

**Please see an usher if you would like a
large-print program**



**Kindly turn off all cell phones, pagers,
and wristwatch prompters.**

The Spectrum Singers
John W. Ehrlich, *Music Director*

A CHRISTMAS PRELUDE

Saturday, November 20, 2004

A Ceremony of Carols, op. 28 (1942) Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

1. Procession
2. Wolcum Yole!
3. There is no Rose
- 4a. That yongë child
Lori Seitz Rider, soprano
- 4b. Balulalow
Sheri Ann Cheng and Lori Seitz Rider, sopranos
5. As Dew in Aprile
6. This little Babe
7. Interlude
Judy Saiki, harp
8. In Freezing Winter Night
Ann Ferentz, Kathi Tighe, Ree-Ven Wang, sopranos
Peter Belknap, Tom Best, John Schumacher, tenors
9. Spring Carol
Ann Ferentz, soprano, Megan Orwig, mezzo-soprano
10. Deo Gracias
11. Recession

Judy Saiki, harp

☾ INTERMISSION ☽

Lauda per la Natività del Signore (1930) Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936)
(Hymn of Praise for the Birth of the Lord)

The Angel: Laura Serafino Harbert, soprano
Mary: Lynn Torgove, alto
A Shepherd: Rockland Osgood, tenor

Members of The Orchestra of Emmanuel Music

JOHN W. EHRLICH, Founder and Music Director of The Spectrum Singers, has been active as a singer and conductor in the Boston and Cambridge areas for more than thirty years. Son of a concert pianist and a microbiologist, Mr. Ehrlich was born in Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan, and prepared for higher education at Grosse Pointe University School and the New Hampton School. He studied music and conducting while attending the Hartt School of Music, Trinity College, and both Harvard and Boston Universities. His teachers were Robert Shaw, Gregg Smith, G. Wallace Woodworth, Vytautas Marijousius, Iva Dee Hiatt, and Margaret Hillis. Also a singer, Mr. Ehrlich has sung with the Hartford Chamber Choir, Tanglewood Festival Chorus, Cambridge Society for Early Music, John Oliver Chorale, The Chicago Symphony Orchestra Chorus, Boston Baroque, and the Emmanuel Church choir. For eight seasons he was Music Director of the Master Singers of Worcester. This is Mr. Ehrlich's 25th season as Music Director of The Spectrum Singers.

LAURA SERAFINO HARBERT, soprano, has a Bachelor of Science from Simmons College and a Bachelor Degree in Vocal Performance from the New England Conservatory of Music. She has been a finalist in the Boston NATS Vocal Song Festival and Competition for both Division 3 in 2000 and Division 4 in 2003. Ms. Harbert has performed with many organizations including Longwood Opera, New England Conservatory Youth Chorale, NEC Camerata, and Wakefield Repertory Theater, and has appeared as a soloist at many area churches. She has performed leading roles in productions of *West Side Story*, *Carousel*, *Oklahoma*, *Brigadoon*, *The King and I*, and *Guys and Dolls*, many of which have won her E.M.A.C.T. awards. Ms. Harbert has also served as Music Director for many area community theaters, school systems, and musical theater performance schools. She has been a private vocal instructor and coach since 1996.

LYNN TORGOVE, mezzo-soprano, was an original member of the Peter Sellars/Craig Smith production of *The Marriage of Figaro*, broadcast on PBS. Other operatic roles include the Son/Juniper Bird in the world premiere of the Philip Glass/Robert Moran opera, *The Juniper Tree* and Polly Peachum in *The Threepenny Opera* with the American Repertory Theater. She has appeared with the Saint Louis Symphony, Portland (Maine) Symphony Orchestra, Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra, Springfield (Ohio) Symphony, Berkshire Choral Festival, Boston Lyric Opera, and the Masterworks Chorale. Recent engagements have included a national tour with the Boston

Camerata, performances and a recording of Lukas Foss' *Griffelkin* with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project. Ms. Torgove is also known as a recitalist who, with pianist Kayo Iwama, has toured in a series of concerts performing and premiering works by John Harbison and Andy Vores. She recently appeared as the Old Lady in Opera Boston's production of *Candide*. Increasingly known as a stage director, Ms. Torgove has worked with Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Opera Boston and at the Walnut Hill School for the Performing Arts. She is on the opera faculties of New England Conservatory, Boston University School of Music, and the Walnut Hill School.

ROCKLAND OSGOOD, tenor, has distinguished himself in a wide variety of musical idioms from the baroque to contemporary compositions. He is frequently praised for his exemplary musicianship, eloquence of expression and immaculate diction. Past performances include *L'Enfance du Christ* with Chorus Pro Musica, *Carmina Burana* at Avery Fisher Hall, *Elijah* with the Calvin Oratorio Society, and *St. John Passion* with the Orchestra of St. Luke's. Two seasons ago he was heard at Lincoln Center in *Messiah* and at the Northwest Bach Festival in *Christmas Oratorio* in addition to performances of Mozart's *Requiem*, Orff's *Carmina Burana* and Finzi's *Ode to St. Cecilia*. Highlights of previous years have included Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Berlioz's *Te Deum*, Verdi's *Requiem*, Britten's *War Requiem* and, at the Northwest Bach Festival, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* and Bach's *Mass in B minor* with Gunther Schuller conducting. He has appeared at New York's Lincoln Center in Vivaldi's *L'Olimpiad* and *Arsilda, Regina di Ponto*, Bach's *Mass in B minor* as well as Mozart's *Mass in C minor*. Mr. Osgood's Carnegie Hall performances have included Haydn's *The Creation* and Handel's *Messiah*. Mr. Osgood has been a featured soloist with the Monterey County Symphony, Berkshire Choral Festival, North Carolina Symphony, Hartford Symphony, West Virginia Symphony, Boston Cecilia, Fredonia Chamber Players, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Oregon Symphony, Brevard Music Festival, Newport Music Festival, and the Spoleto Festival USA. His operatic roles include Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*, Belmonte in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, and Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* with opera companies including Anchorage Opera, Mobile Opera, and Syracuse Opera.

THE SPECTRUM SINGERS gave their first concert under Music Director John W. Ehrlich in December of 1980. Mr. Ehrlich chose the group's name to highlight what he hoped would be the chorus's primary mission: to perform works from all periods of music history — pre-Renaissance through the present day — at a high level of historically-informed professionalism.

From its beginnings, the Spectrum Singers have embraced “amateur singers” — gifted vocalists who willingly perform without pay. Today, people from all walks of life sing with the chorus, many bringing significant experience and skills as choral and solo vocal artists. As a result, the chorus has prospered artistically, and today is widely regarded as one of the finest choral ensembles in the region. In addition to its own annual subscription concert series, the 40-voice chorus has been called upon by composers and several musical ensembles to collaborate in premiere performances of significant choral works and in other concerts. Recent joint ventures have included appearances with the Cantata Singers, the Indian Hill Symphony Orchestra, Boston Landmarks Orchestra, and Emmanuel Music's widely acclaimed presentation of Schubert's opera *Alfonso und Estrella* in February, 2003.

The Spectrum Singers are admired for their nimble flexibility in performance of the entire choral spectrum. While renowned for the special skills they bring to very demanding *a cappella* repertoire, the chorus is also praised for the rich and robust tone and fleet virtuosity it brings to works accompanied by orchestra. Of equal interest is the chorus's breadth of repertoire. Music Director John W. Ehrlich is widely admired for his intriguing and adventuresome programming.

Now in their 25th season, The Spectrum Singers and Music Director John W. Ehrlich continue their mission of performing familiar and less-well-known works in programs of compelling depth and professional execution to a broad audience of appreciative listeners.



PROGRAM NOTES

Benjamin Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols* enjoys such popularity that it has run the danger of becoming a “chestnut” of the holiday season. Its surface felicities are many and create immediate accessibility. But when one examines the care and craftsmanship in the setting of the poetry employed, it becomes clear that there is much more here to be reckoned with than just a pleasant set of Christmas carols.

Written originally for a chorus of treble voices in 1942, it was later recast for SATB chorus by Julius Harrison, a friend and associate of the composer. In this form, the work gains color and richness of sonority without sacrificing one iota of poignancy. In fact, there are several differences between the two versions beside the obvious ones necessitated by the expansion of the vocal range. Certain vocal doublings are altered, voice leadings strengthened, and harmonies more solidly fixed — all changes which enrich the overall impression of the work. While some listeners may prefer the cool and chaste sound inherent in treble voices, the SATB setting offered tonight surely allows a broader range of expression and sonority.

Beginning with a procession in chant and in Latin, the text tells of the rejoicing of the angels and archangels in the birth of Christ. The first somewhat secular carol, “Wolcum Yole!” depicts a procession of revelers welcoming the holiday season. “There is no Rose” is a ravishing setting of the familiar rose-as-symbol-for-Mary metaphor, alternately employing English and Latin, and sensuously swinging between duple and triple meter. A medieval tone pervades “That yongë child,” set hauntingly for soprano solo and harp. It is followed immediately by the richly harmonized lullaby “Balulalow” in a gently rocking 6/4 – 3/2 meter. “As Dew in Aprille” is a joyful waltz-like hymn of praise to Mary, which segues to “This little Babe,” an exciting, strettò-filled portrait of Christ as valiant warrior and stalwart guardian against sin.

The following “Interlude,” an ethereal solo for harp, provides welcome respite from the bustle of the previous carol. An ingenious variation on the theme heard first in the Procession, this brief moment of repose suspends time and creates a palpably still and meditative atmosphere with the harp's stopped harmonics and light, rippling arpeggios.

Britten has set this mood for a reason: the next carol, “In Freezing Winter Night,” is perhaps the emotional core of the work. It begins with a chilly depiction of the frosty evening in Bethlehem with a crystalline *ostinato* accompaniment. The choir reflects this chill at first, then warms toward the middle and end of the carol as the poignant text refers to the humble pomp brought from heaven by the Child.

“Spring Carol” and “Deo Gracias” bring us back to earth with an almost Orff-like rhythmic intensity: first, a swaying 6/8 welcome to Spring, and then a driving, jazzy and joyful romp which celebrates the fall of Adam and Eve as the seminal event for a much more propitious occasion – in fact, the ultimate reason for Christ’s birth – the redemption of mankind.

Therefore, as the text demands, we should sing “Deo gracias” – Thanks be to God! But the work is not yet finished. As he had in his *Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings*, Britten brings us back to the music that began the *Ceremony*, the Latin chant *Hodie Christus natus est*. And as the choir recedes into the distance we are left to contemplate in their haunting echoes the richness and variety that came before.

One word about language: Dr. Eugene Green of the English Department at Boston University has helped coach The Spectrum Singers in the pronunciation of three types of early English in the poetry employed by the composer. If the language you hear is not quite what you might have expected, you’re right, and this is why.

Ottorino Respighi’s reputation as a first-class composer has often been held suspect by certain self-styled high-minded observers due, in no small part, to the composer’s two most popular and often-heard works, *The Fountains of Rome* (1914-16) and *The Pines of Rome* (1923-24). These admittedly “Technicolor” tone poems are extremely well crafted, gorgeously orchestrated, and deftly planned for full dramatic and atmospheric impact. These attributes are often admired and applauded in other composers, yet in the case of Respighi, they are occasionally cited perjoratively, as if his music were somehow not worthy of serious consideration. Why might this be?

Blame it, to a certain degree, on Hollywood. Much of the film music from the cinema’s “golden age” of the 30s and 40s is rife with over-the-

top romantic excess — skillfully crafted, it’s true — to mirror and enhance equally melodramatic performances played out in front of the camera. There is nothing innately “wrong” with this music. Hollywood has indeed given us some first-class musical talent. But what then had evolved into over-familiar and clichéd film music had, perhaps retroactively and unfairly, affected the “reception” of Respighi, who, truthfully, first created many of these so-called “cinematic” musical effects BEFORE many of these traits were adopted by Hollywood.

What irony, then, if this thesis is accurate. Respighi’s music is heard as clichéd because certain ears hear it as “too Hollywood.” Yet it was Respighi’s music which served as a model for Hollywood – not the other way around!

Whether or not the foregoing is plausible, early on Respighi attracted no less a champion of his scores than Arturo Toscanini, who regularly programmed the composer’s music, recorded it brilliantly, and performed it with a passionate zeal equal to the attention to detail he lavished on Cherubini, Boito, Verdi, and Puccini. So here, perhaps, is the true root of Respighi’s inspiration: Italian opera, with all its attendant color, characterizations, atmosphere, and abundant drama.

Lauda per la Natività del Signore exhibits all of these “operatic” traits, and yet Respighi achieves this with modest musical forces. The instrumentation is as unusual as it is ingenious: flutes, English horn, oboe and bassoons contribute plangent pastoral color, piano four-hands lends sonorous weight for the finale, and triangle during that finale adds joyful brilliance. Soprano, tenor and alto solo voices sing The Angel, A Shepherd, and The Virgin Mary, respectively, the three roles perfectly matched to their vocal *tessiturae*. The chorus, acting as “narrator” and shepherds, completes the cast. Reflecting Respighi’s fascination and respect for early musical forms, the music comfortably oscillates between 20th-century and Renaissance style with, as *The New Grove* notes, allusions to 16th-century madrigals and Monteverdian arioso.

The result is as charming, touching, and quietly joyful a depiction of the Nativity as one might imagine, enriched with a particularly personal degree of intimacy that remains in memory long after the final measures of this delicate music spin into silence.

A CEREMONY OF CAROLS

1. Procession

*Hodie Christus natus est:
Hodie Salvator apparuit:
Hodie in terra canunt angeli:
Laetantur archangeli:
Hodie exsultant justi dicentes:
Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Alleluia!*

2. Wolcum Yole!

Anonymous

Wolcum be thou hevenè king,
Wolcum Yole!
Wolcum, born in one morning,
Wolcum, for whom wesall sing!

Wolcum be ye, Stevene and Jon,
Wolcum, Innocentes everyone,
Wolcum, Thomas marter one,
Wolcum be ye, good Newe Yere,
Wolcum, Twelfth Day
both in fere,
Wolcum, seintes lefe and dere,
Wolcum Yole, Wolcum!

Candelmesse,
Quene of bliss,
Wolcum bothe to
more and lesse.

Wolcum be ye that are here,
Wolcum Yole!

Wolcum alle and make
good cheer.
Wolcum alle another yere.
Wolcum Yole! Wolcum!

3. There is no Rose

Anonymous

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

For in this rose containèd was
Heaven and earth in litel space,
Res miranda.

By that rose we may well see
There be one God in
persons three,
Pares forma.

The aungels sungen the
shepherds to:
Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Gaudeamus.

Leave we all this werldly mirth,
And follow we this joyful birth.
Transeamus.

*Alleluia, res miranda,
Pares forma, gaudeamus,
Transeamus.*

4a. That yongè child

Anonymous

That yongè child when
it gan weep
With song she lulled him asleep:
That was so sweet a melody
It passèd alle minstrelsy.
The nightingalè sang also:
Her song is hoarse and
nought thereto:
Whoso attendeth to her song
And leaveth the first then
doth he wrong.

4b. Balulalow

*James, John and
Robert Wedderburn*

O my deare hert,
young Jesu sweit,
Prepare thy creddil in my spreit,
And I sall rock thee to my hert,
And never mair from thee depart.

But I sall praise thee evermoir
With sanges sweit unto thy gloir;
The knees of my hert sall I bow,
And sing that richt Balulalow.

5. As Dew in Aprille

Anonymous

I sing of a maiden
That is makèles:
King of all kings
To her son she ches.

He came al so stille
There his moder was,
As dew in Aprille
That falleth on the grass.

He came al so stille
To his moder's bour,
As dew in Aprille
That falleth on the flour.

He came al so stille
There his moder lay,
As dew in Aprille
That falleth on the spray.

Moder and mayden
Was never none but she:
Well may such a lady
Goddess moder be.

6. This little Babe

Robert Southwell

This little Babe so few days old,
Is come to rifle Satan's fold;
All hell doth at his
presence quake,
Though he himself for
cold do shake;
For in this weak unarmèd wise
The gates of hell he will surprise.

With tears he fights and
wins the field,
His naked breast stands
for a shield;
His battering shot are babish cries,
His arrows looks of weeping eyes,
His martial ensigns Cold and Need,
And feeble Flesh his
warrior's steed.

His camp is pitchèd in a stall,
His bulwark but a broken wall;
The crib his trench,
haystalks his stakes;
Of shepherds he his
muster makes;
And thus as sure his foe to wound,
The angels' trumps alarum sound.

My soul, with Christ join
thou in fight;
Stick to the tents that he
hath pight.
Within his crib is surest ward;
This little Babe will be thy guard.
If thou wilt foil thy foes with joy,
Then flit not from this
heavenly Boy.

7. Interlude

8. In Freezing Winter Night

Robert Southwell

Behold, a silly tender babe,
In freezing winter night,
In homely manger trembling lies;
Alas, a piteous sight!

The inns are full; no man will yield
This little pilgrim bed.
But forced he is with silly beasts
In crib to shroud his head.

This stable is a Prince's court,
This crib his chair of State;
The beasts are parcel of his pomp,
The wooden dish his plate.

The persons in that poor attire
His royal liveries wear;
The Prince himself is
come from Heav'n;
This pomp is prizèd there.

With joy approach,
O Christian wight,
Do homage to thy King;
And highly praise his humble pomp,
Wich he from Heav'n doth bring.

9. Spring Carol

William Cornish

Pleasure it is
To hear iwis,
The Birdès sing.

The deer in the dale,
The sheep in the vale,
The corn springing.

God's purvayance
For sustenance,
It is for man.

Then we always
To give him praise
And thank him than.

10. Deo Gracias

Anonymous

Deo gracias! Deo gracias!
Adam lay ibounden,
Bounden in a bond;
Four thousand winter
Thought he not to long.

Deo gracias! Deo gracias!
And all was for an appil,
An appil that he tok,
As clerkès finden
Written in their book.

Deo gracias! Deo gracias!
Ne had the appil takè ben,
The appil takè ben,
Ne haddè never our lady
A ben hevenè quene.

Blessèd be the time
That appil takè was.
Therefore we moun singen.
Deo gracias! Deo gracias!

11. Recession

*Hodie Christus natus est:
Hodie Salvator apparuit:
Hodie in terra canunt angeli:
Laetantur archangeli:
Hodie exsultant justi dicentes:
Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Alleluia!*

LAUDA PER LA NATIVITÀ DEL SIGNORE

Hymn of Praise for the Birth of our Lord

Words attributed to Jacopone da Todi (13th century)
(vertical lines indicate text sung concurrently)

L'Angelo (ad Pastores)
Pastor, voie che vegghiate
sovra la greggia en quista regione;
i vostr'occhi levate,
ch'io son l'Agnol de
l'eternal magione.
Ambasciaria ve fone
ed a voie vangelizzo gaudio fino,
ch'é nato el Gesuino
figliuol de Dio, per voie
salvar mandato.

Coro (Angeli)
E de ciò ve dò en segno
ch'en vile stalla è
nato el poverello,
e non se fa desdegno
giacere en mezzo al buove
e l'asenello.
La mamma en vil pancello
l'ha rinchinato sopra
el mangiatoio.
De fieno è'l covertoio,
ed è descieso così humiliato.

L'Angelo
Pastor, voie che vegghiate, *etc.*

Coro (Angeli)
E de ciò ve do en segno, *etc.*

The Angel (to the Shepherds)
Shepherds, you who watch
your flocks as they graze here,
lift up your eyes,
for I am the Angel of the
eternal mansion.
I bring you a message,
the joyful news
that little Jesus has been born,
the son of God, sent for
your salvation.

Chorus (Angels)
As a sign of this,
in a humble stable the
poor baby was born,
and he does not mind
lying between the ox
and the ass.
His mother, very poorly clad,
has laid him
in the manger.
Of hay is all his coverlet,
so humbly came he down.

The Angel
Shepherds, you who watch, *etc.*

Chorus (Angels)
As a sign of this, *etc.*

Pastore

Segnor, tu sei desceso
de cielo en terra
sico l'Agnol parla,
e haine el cuore acceso
a retrovarte
in cosi vile stalla;
lasciane ritrovala
che te vediam vestito
en carne humana.

Pastores ante Praesepio

Ecco quilla stallecta,
vedemce lo fantino povero stare.
La Vergin benedecta
non ha paceglie nè fascia
per fasciare.
Joseppe non la po' 'itare
ch'è desvenuto per
la gran vecchiezza.
A povertà s'avvezza,
quel ch'è Signor
senza niun par trovato.

Pastore

Segnor, tu sei desceso, *etc.*

Maria

O car dolce mio figlio,
da me se'nato si poverello!
Joseppe el vecchiarello,
quil ch'è tuo bailo,
qui s'è adormentato.

Figliuol, gaudio perfecto,
ched i sentie a la tua nativitate!
Strengendomet' al pecto,
non me curava de nulla povertade,
tanta sua vitade
tu si me daie de quil gaudio eterno,
O figliuol tenerello!

Coro

O fonte d'aolimento,
co'tanta povertà te se'inchinato.

Shepherd

Lord, you have descended
from heaven to earth,
as the Angel says,
and our hearts burn
to find you in such
a lowly cattle-shed;
guide us to the place,
so that we may see you clothed
in human flesh.

The Shepherds at the Manger

Lo, here is the little stable,
and we see in it the poor baby.
The blessed Virgin
has neither food nor clothes
in which to swaddle him,
Joseph cannot help her,
for he is old and feeble.

He accustoms himself to poverty,
he who, though Lord,
seems to have nothing.

Shepherd

Lord, you have descended, *etc.*

Mary

O sweet and darling son of mine,
you were born of me so poor!
Joseph the old man,
who is your guardian,
has fallen asleep here.

My son, perfect joy
I felt at your birth!
As I hugged you,
I did not care about poverty,
for you gave me so much sweetness
with your eternal joy.
O tender little son!

Chorus

O fountain of all bounty,
to such poverty you have stooped.

Maria

Figliuol, t'ho partorito!
En tanta povertà te veggio nato!

Coro

Toglie nostre manteglie...

Maria

Tu se' l'Edio infinito,
che per l'humana gente
s'è'ncarnato.
Non ho dua sie fasciato:
Te vo io lasciare
con quisto mio pancello.
O figliuolo poverello,
co l'ha promesso il pate tuo biato.

Coro

...O Madre santa,
e non te fare schifa, O Madre santa,
vestir di povereglie
che stanno in selva
colla greggia tanta.
El figliuol ammantata,
che non alita el fieno,
sua carne pura.

Coro (Angeli)

Gloria, laude e onore a te,
Sire del cielo onnepotente.

Pastores

Segnor, puoie ch'hai degnato
di nascere oggi si poveramente
dà lume a tutta gente
che null'omo sia
de tal dono engrato.

(ad Mariam)

Contenti n'andremo
se un poco noie lo
podessemo toccare;
E però te ne pregamo
quanto noie siam pastori
de poco affare.

Mary

My son, I gave birth to you!
In such poverty I see you born!

Chorus

Take our cloaks...

Mary

You are the infinite God,
who for humans has
become flesh:
As I have no swaddling clothes
I will wrap you
in my own dress,
O poor little son of mine,
the promise of your blessed father.

Chorus

...O holy Mother,
do not be repelled, O holy Mother,
by these poor garments,
worn in our work
with the flocks in the fields.
Wrap your son in them,
so that his pure flesh will not
smell of hay.

Chorus (Angels)

Glory praise and honor to you,
omnipotent Lord of heaven.

Shepherds

Lord, since you have deigned
to be born today in such poverty,
give light to all people,
and none will be ungrateful
for such a gift.

(to Mary)

Joyful will we leave
if we can touch him
for a moment;
This favor we ask of you,
we who are only shepherds,
men of humble calling.

Maria

Vogliove consolare
perchè torniate lieti
a vostra gregge,
quel ch'è fatto legge
acciò che il servo sia recomparato.

Coro

Laude, gloria e onore a te.
Gloria a te,
O Sire del ciel onnepotente.
Ah, Gloria! Gloria! Gloria!
Gloria in excelsis Deo
e in terra pace
a chi ha el buon volere.
Al mondo tanto reo
tu se' donato,
non per tuo dovere,
ma sol per
tuo piacere.
Noi te laudiam, Signore,
glorificando la tua maestade...

L'Angelo

Gloria in excelsis Deo. Ah!

Coro

...glorificando la tua maestade.
Gloria in excelsis Deo
e in terra pace
a chi ha el buon volere.

Maria

Tenuta so a Dio patre
rendere onore e gloria in sempiterno,
pensando ch'io son matre
del suo figliuolo,
el quale è Dio eterno.
E tanto è il gaudio superno
basciando ed abbracciando
sì caro figlio,
bello sovr'onne giglio
che'a me el cuore è sì de stemperato.
Io sento un gaudio nuovo,
e tutta renovata
io so en fervore!

Mary

I want to comfort you,
so you may return joyful
to your flocks,
for it is now disposed
that the servant be redeemed.

Chorus

Glory, praise and honor to you.
Glory to you,
O omnipotent Lord of heaven.
Ah, Glory! Glory! Glory!
Glory to God in heaven
and on earth peace to
men of good will,
To a guilty world
you have given yourself,
not out of duty,
but because such
was your pleasure.
We praise you, Lord,
and glorify your majesty...

The Angel

Glory to God in heaven. Ah!

Chorus

...and glorify your majesty.
Glory to God in heaven
and on earth peace
to men of good will.

Mary

To God the father I am bound
to give honor and glory for ever,
as I am the mother
of his son,
who is the eternal God.
And such is the sublime joy
of kissing and hugging
so dear a son,
more beautiful than any lily,
that I cannot control my heart.
I feel a new joy,
and seemingly reborn
I thrill with fervor!

Coro

Amen, amen, amen.

L'Angelo

Or ecco ch'è nato il Salvatore!

Coro

Amen, amen.

Chorus

Amen, amen, amen.

The Angel

Hail, now, the birth of our Savior!

Chorus

Amen, amen.

English translation by Marcello Maestro, edited by John W. Ehrlich



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