



BAROQUE ORCHESTRA
jeannette sorrell

a co-presentation with



DECEMBER 21 & 22, 2022

Wassail!

An Irish-Appalachian Christmas

Directed by Jeannette Sorrell





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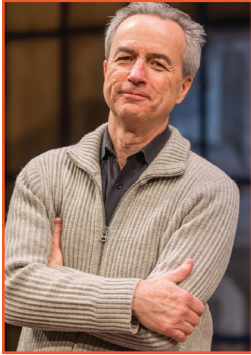
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IT'S ALWAYS ABOUT COMMUNITY



Welcome to the Allen Theatre, the primary home of Cleveland Play House — in the heart of Playhouse Square. It is our pleasure to share this holiday time with you, and to share the Allen with our friends at Apollo's Fire.

The many performing arts events in Cleveland during December all seem to have the same goal: to bring people together, live and in-person, and strengthen the bonds of our collective humanity. The creative expressions of drama, music, and dance inspire us to see the world anew, to understand ourselves better, and to celebrate our differences. It can be a time of rebirth and emotional expansion. It can remind us of past lessons even as we gaze into a hopeful future. Ultimately, we use performance to make a singular community, if just for a couple of hours, but carry its effects back to our personal communities in a rippling wave of empathy.

My thanks to Jeannette Sorrell and her team for the musical journey of *Wassail!* Our staffs have collaborated closely together to bring you this holiday gift. And the talent onstage is the star that crowns our theatrical tree.

Enjoy!

Mark Cuddy

Interim Artistic & Managing Director

CLEVELAND PLAY HOUSE, founded in 1915 and recipient of the 2015 Regional Theatre Tony Award, is America's first professional regional theatre. Throughout its rich history, CPH has remained dedicated to its mission to inspire, stimulate, and entertain diverse audiences across Northeast Ohio by producing plays and theatre education programs of the highest professional standards. CPH has produced more than 100 world and/or American premieres, and over its long history more than 12 million people have attended over 1,600 productions. Today, Cleveland Play House celebrates the beginning of its second century of service while performing in three state-of-the-art venues at Playhouse Square in downtown Cleveland.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The cast, crew, and creative team of this production and the CPH staff would like to acknowledge those of the Shawnee, Miami, Erie, Ottawa, Potawatomi, and Haudenosaunee peoples, whose lands we stand on, and the nearly 28,000 Native American people who live in Northeast Ohio today who represent over 100 tribal nations. For information about the lands on which you reside, visit native.land.ca.

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jeannette sorrell

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An Irish-Appalachian Christmas

Directed by Jeannette Sorrell



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ABOUT APOLLO'S FIRE

Named for the classical god of music, healing, and the sun, Apollo's Fire is a GRAMMY®-winning ensemble. The period-instrument orchestra was founded by award-winning harpsichordist and conductor Jeannette Sorrell. Dedicated to the baroque ideal that music should evoke the various

Affekts or passions in the listeners, Apollo's Fire brings to life the music of the past for audiences of today, with *Passion. Period.* The Apollo's Fire musicians are creative artists who share Sorrell's passion for drama and rhetoric.

In Europe and the UK, Apollo's Fire has performed 5 tours including sold-out concerts at the BBC Proms in London, the Aldeburgh Festival (UK), Madrid's Royal Theatre, and Bordeaux's Grand Théâtre de l'Opéra; with concerts at the Irish National Concert Hall (Dublin) and the Irish National Opera House (Wexford), as well as venues in France, Italy, Austria, and Portugal. The ensemble has had many live radio broadcasts across Europe. AF's London 2014 concert was chosen by the *Daily Telegraph* as one of the "Best Five Classical Concerts of 2014," with their critic writing, "An evening of superlative music-making... the group combines European stylishness with American entrepreneurialism."

North American tour engagements include Carnegie Hall (2018 and 2022), the Tanglewood Festival (2015, 2017, and 2021), the Ravinia Festival (2017, 2018, and 2021), the Metropolitan Museum of Art in NY (numerous times), the Boston Early Music Festival series, the Library of Congress, the Aspen Music Festival, Caramoor Festival, and major venues in Toronto, Los Angeles and San Francisco. Most of these concerts have been sold out. In 2021, Apollo's Singers made their debut with the New York Philharmonic under the baton of Jeannette Sorrell, winning rave reviews.



At home in Cleveland, Apollo's Fire frequently enjoys sold-out performances at its subscription series, which has drawn national attention for creative programming.

With over 10 million views (total) of its YouTube videos, Apollo's Fire is one of the most popular baroque orchestras on the worldwide internet.

The ensemble also launched a "Worldwide Watch-at-Home Series" in 2020, bringing its subscription concerts into the homes of patrons around the world.

Apollo's Fire has released 30 commercial CDs and won a GRAMMY® award in 2019 for the album *Songs of Orpheus* with tenor Karim Sulayman. AF's recordings of the Bach *St. John Passion*, Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, and the Monteverdi *Vespers* have been chosen as best in the field by the *Sunday Times of London* (2020 and 2021) and *BBC Magazine* (2022). Ten of the ensemble's CD releases have become best-sellers on the classical *Billboard* chart: Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* (*Billboard Classical* No. 2, 2021), the Monteverdi *Vespers*, Bach's *Brandenburg Concertos* and *Harpsichord Concertos*, a disc of Handel arias with soprano Amanda Forsythe titled *The Power of Love* (*Billboard Classical* No. 3, 2015), *Songs of Orpheus* (*Billboard Classical* No. 5, 2018), and Jeannette Sorrell's five cross-over programs: *Come to the River — An Early American Gathering* (*Billboard Classical* No. 9, 2011); *Sacrum Mysterium — A Celtic Christmas Vespers* (*Billboard Classical* No. 11, 2012); *Sugarloaf Mountain — An Appalachian Gathering* (*Billboard Classical* No. 5, 2015); *Sephardic Journey — Wanderings of the Spanish Jews* (*Billboard World Music* chart No. 2 and *Billboard Classical* No. 5, 2016); and *Christmas on Sugarloaf Mountain* (*Billboard* No. 3, 2018).

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ARTIST PROFILES



Jeannette Sorrell,
Artistic Director

GRAMMY®-winning conductor Jeannette Sorrell is recognized internationally as one of today's most compelling interpreters of Baroque and Classical repertoire. She is the subject of the 2019 documentary by Academy award-winning director Allan Miller, titled *Playing With Fire*.

Sorrell studied conducting at the Aspen and the Tanglewood music festivals under Leonard Bernstein and Roger Norrington and harpsichord with Gustav Leonhardt in Amsterdam. She won First Prize in the Spivey International Harpsichord Competition, competing against over 70 harpsichordists from Europe, Israel, the U.S., and the Soviet Union.

As founder and conductor of Apollo's Fire, she has led the renowned ensemble at London's BBC Proms, Carnegie Hall, Madrid's Royal Theatre, London's Wigmore Hall, and the Tanglewood, Ravinia, and Boston Early Music festivals, among others. Sorrell and Apollo's Fire have released 30 commercial CDs, including 10 best-sellers on the *Billboard* classical chart and a 2019 GRAMMY® winner. Her CD recordings of the Bach *St. John Passion*, Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, and the Monteverdi *Vespers* have been chosen as best in the field by the *Sunday Times of London* (2020 and 2021) and *BBC Magazine* (2022).

In demand as guest conductor with symphony orchestras and period groups, Sorrell made her New York Philharmonic debut to rave reviews in 2021. She has repeatedly conducted the Pittsburgh Symphony, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Utah Symphony, Florida Chamber, and New World Symphony, and has also led the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic (Bach's *St. John Passion*), the National Symphony at the Kennedy Center, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Seattle Symphony, Opera St Louis with the St. Louis Symphony, and Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra in San Francisco, among others. Upcoming debuts include the Philadelphia Orchestra (Handel's *Messiah*) and the Orquesta Sinfónica de Castilla y León (Spain).

Sorrell has attracted national attention and awards for creative programming, using contextual and dramatic elements. She received an

honorary doctorate from Case Western University and an award from the American Musicological Society.



TINA BERGMANN, *hammered dulcimer*, was hailed by Pete Seeger as "the best hammered dulcimer player I've heard in my life."

A fourth-generation musician, Bergmann began playing music at age eight, learning the mountain dulcimer from her mother in the aural tradition and learning the hammered dulcimer at the knee of West Virginianative builder and performer Loy Swiger. Demonstrating gifts for both performance and teaching, she has been a featured performer across the United States, performing solo; as a duo with her husband, bassist Bryan Thomas; with her stringband Hu\$hmoney; and as a featured soloist with Apollo's Fire and Canadian early music group, La Nef.



ALAN CHOO, *fiddle*, "was a dynamo, delivering lines with panache. He exemplified virtuosity" (*Cleveland Plain Dealer*). The Concertmaster and Assistant

Artistic Director of Apollo's Fire, he made his debut with the ensemble as a soloist at the Tanglewood and Ravinia Music Festivals in 2017. He is also Founder and Artistic Director of Red Dot Baroque, Singapore's first professional period group and Ensemble-in-Residence at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory. He completed his Doctorate in Historical Performance Practice from Case Western Reserve University and holds degrees from Peabody Conservatory and Yong Siew Toh Conservatory.



IAN CRANE, *bagpipes & vocals*, has performed with Apollo's Fire since 2005. In 2018 he toured Britain and Ireland as part of the popular Sugarloaf Mountain cross-over series. He is a founding mem-

ber of Quire Cleveland and, in the summer of 2021, he co-founded the Cleveland Celtic Ensemble where he performs as a piper and vocalist.



FIONA GILLESPIE, *soprano vocals*, is a classically-trained soprano, folk singer, instrumentalist, and songwriter based in Philadelphia. Raised in a family of Celtic musicians, she splits her

time singing with professional chamber and choral ensembles around the nation, touring with her folk band, The Chivalrous Crickets, and producing recordings and events with her early music/folk crossover ensemble, Makaris. Commercial releases include *Wisps in the Dell*; *Tam Lin*; *The Galant David Rizzio*; and *A Chivalrous Cricketmas*. Select upcoming featured appearances include the Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, Celtic Classic Festival, The Baroque Chamber Orchestra of Colorado, and Choral Arts Philadelphia.



ELORA KARES, *soprano vocals*, is a Young Artist Apprentice with Apollo's Fire. Passionate about baroque music, Elora is a homeschool high school junior and a scholarship student in voice, cello, and composition at the CIM Academy. She has been featured on NPR's national young artist showcase, *From the Top*, and has performed as soloist in Apollo's Fire's "Lift Ev'ry Voice" concerts.



BRIAN KAY, *lute, guitar, & vocals*, is a multi-instrumentalist, arranger, and historical music specialist. He has performed throughout the world at venues including the National Concert Hall of Dublin,

Belfast Castle, Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, and the Folger Theater. He is a core member and artistic leadership fellow with Apollo's Fire, and in 2019, he won a GRAMMY® Award for his work on their album *Songs of Orpheus*. Recently he was a featured soloist on the soundtrack of *The Witcher* on Netflix.



BRADLEY KING, *tenor vocals*, is emerging as one of the most versatile young singers on the East coast. As an early-music tenor, he has performed with the Boston Early Music Festival, the Rose

Ensemble, and the renowned renaissance vocal ensemble Pomerium, among others. He was a featured soloist in AF's "Road to Dublin" concerts

in 2022. On the opera and musical theatre stage, he has performed diverse roles ranging from baroque opera to Sondheim. Bradley holds degrees in vocal performance and choral conducting from DePauw University and the University of North Texas.



ANNA O'CONNELL, *harp & vocals*, is a doctoral student in historical performance practice at Case Western Reserve University. She has researched performance practice and self-accompaniment

on harps ranging from medieval to modern folk instruments. As a vocalist, she has sung with the Hong Kong Early Music Society, Cleveland Chamber Choir, and Quire Cleveland. She also holds degrees in Choral Music from the University of Southern California and Music Education from Providence College. She currently studies voice with Ellen Hargis and Dina Kuznetsova, and historical harps with Maxine Eilander.



RENÉ SCHIFFER, *cello*, is praised for his "interpretive imagination and patrician command of the cello" (*Cleveland Plain Dealer*). A native of Holland, he was a member of La Petite Bande for sixteen

years, and has also performed with the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra, Les Musiciens du Louvre, and Tafelmusik. As a concerto soloist, he has appeared internationally, and can be heard on over forty commercial recordings across six labels.



EMI TANABE, *fiddle*, enjoys a multi-faceted career as a baroque violinist and a solo crossover artist. In addition to being a core member of Apollo's Fire, she performs with the Chicago-based period groups

Haymarket Opera and Third Coast Baroque. Her facility with world music styles and improvisation has led to many solo violin performances with Tango, Flamenco, Celtic, and jazz ensembles across the country. She has appeared with such groups as the renowned Surabhi Ensemble, the GRAMMY®-nominated children's music band Wendy&DB, and the theater/dinner production "Teatro ZinZanni." Emi is a native of Japan and holds degrees in violin performance from the University of North Texas and Roosevelt University.

THEATRE FORWARD 2022 FY FUNDERS LIST

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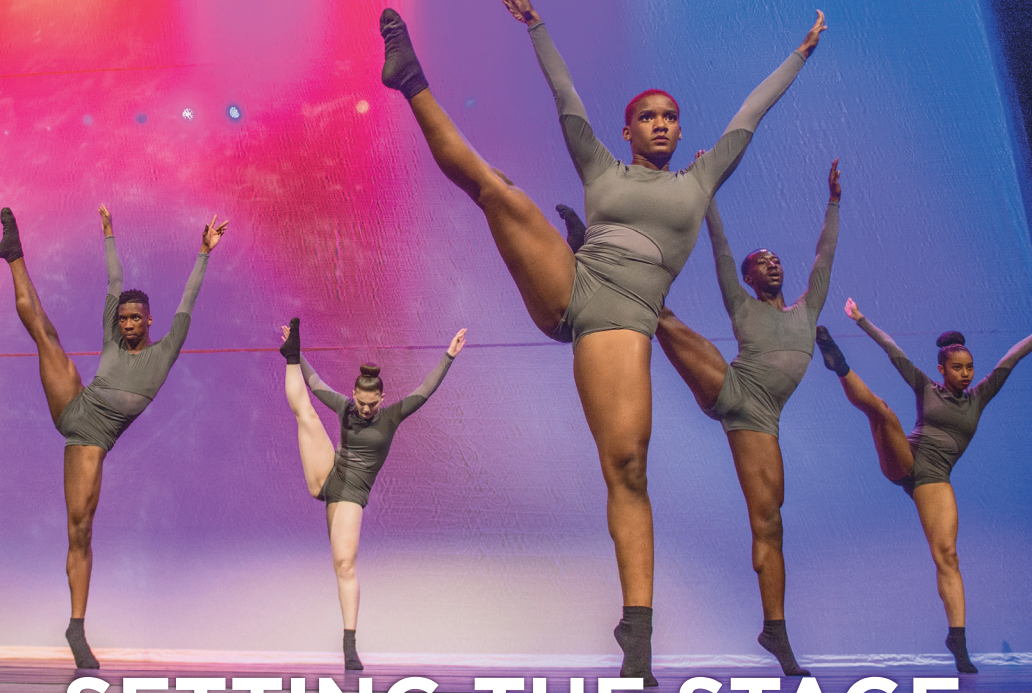
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Wassail!

An Irish-Appalachian Christmas Program

Part I: Christmas Eve in Ireland, 1849

I. Wassail!

GLOUCESTERSHIRE WASSAIL & YORKSHIRE CAROL

trad. British Isles, arr. J. Sorrell

Wassail, wassail, all over the town!
Our toast it is white and our ale it is brown.
Our bowl it is made of the white maple tree.
With a wassail bowl we'll drink to thee!

Come butler, then fill us a bowl of the best.
Then we hope that your soul
in heaven may rest.
But if you do draw us a bowl of the small...
Then down shall go butler, bowl and all!

**Refrain: Drink to thee, drink to thee,
With a wassailing bowl we'll drink to thee.**

Then here is to Colly and to her long tail.
Pray God bless our Master, may he never fail.
A bowl of strong beer, I pray you draw near
And our jolly wassail it's then you shall hear.

Refrain.

Then here's to the maid
in the lily-white smock,
Who tripped to the door
and slipped back the lock.
Who tripped to the door
and pulled back the pin,
For to let these jolly wassailers in.

Refrain.

Here we come a-wassailing,
among the leaves so green.
Here we come a wand'ring,
so fair to be seen.
Love and joy come to you,
and to you your wassail too.

And God bless you
and send you a happy new year,
and God send you a happy new year.

Call up the butler of this house,
put on his golden ring.
Let him bring us up a glass o' beer
And better we shall sing.
Love and joy come to you...

God bless the master of this house,
likewise the mistress too.
And all the little children
that round the table go.
Love and joy come to you...

CHRISTMAS EVE REEL – *trad. Irish*

II. Winter by the Hearth

BLOW, NORTHERN WIND – *Medieval English Lyric, arr. B. Kay*
Brian Kay, vocals & lute

Middle English

Modernization

Burthen:

*Blou northerne wynd!
Send thou me my suetyng!
Blou northerne wynd, blou!*

Refrain:

Blow, northern wind,
Send thou me my sweetheart,
Blow, northern wind, blow!

*Ichot a burde in boure bryht
That fully semly is on syht
Mensful mayden of myth,
Feir ant fre to fonde.*

I know of a bird in bower bright
That is beautiful upon sight.
Noble maiden of might,
Fair and honest I find her.

*In al this wurliche won
A burde of blod ant of bon
Never yete y nuste non
Lussomore in londe.*

In all this worthy world,
A bird of blood and of bone
Never yet I know another
Lovelier on land (earth).

Blou, northerne wynd...!

Blow, northern wind...!

*Hire lure lumes liht
Ase a launterne a-nyht
Hire bleo blykyeth so bryht
So feyhr heo is ant fyn.*

Her face illumined and alight
As a lantern in the night.
Her color shines so bright,
So fair she is and fine.

*A swetly swire heo hath to holde,
With arms, shuldre ase mon wolde,
Ant fingers feyre to folde,
God wolde hue were myn!*

A sweetly neck she hath to hold,
With arms and shoulders as man would,
And fingers fair for to fold,
God, would she were mine!

Blou, northerne wynd...!

Blow, northern wind...!

DRIVE THE COLD WINTER AWAY – *Elizabethan Carol, c. 1625*

All hail to the days that merit more praise
Than all the rest of the year,
And welcome the nights that double delights,
As well for the poor as the peer!
Good fortune attend each merry man's friend,
That doth but the best that he may;
Forgetting old wrongs, with carols and songs,

To drive the cold winter away.
This time of the year is spent in good cheer,
And neighbours together do meet,
To sit by the fire, with friendly desire,
Each other in love do greet;

Old grudges forgot, are put in the pot,
All sorrows aside they lay,
The old and the young doth carol his song,
To drive the cold winter away.

To mask and to mum
kind neighbours will come
With wassails of nut-brown ale,
To drink and carouse to all in the house,
As merry as bucks in the dale;
Where cake, bread and cheese
is brought for your fees,
To make you the longer stay;
At the fire to warm will do you no harm,

III. A Babe is Born

WHAT CHILD IS THIS? (MY LAGAN LOVE) – *trad. Irish*

Fiona Gillespie, vocals

WHAT CHILD IS THIS? (Greensleeves)

variations by Playford, The Division Violin, 1685

What child is this, who laid to rest
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
While shepherds their watch are keeping.
This, this is Christ the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing,
Haste, haste to bring him laud –
The babe, the son of Mary!

WEXFORD CAROL – *trad. Irish*

I SAW THREE SHIPS – *trad. British Isles (17th. c.), lyrics by William Sandy, 1833*

Good people all, this Christmas time,
Consider well and bear in mind
What our good God for us has done
In sending his beloved son
With Mary holy we should pray,
To God with love this Christmas Day
In Bethlehem upon that morn,
There was a blessed Messiah born

Near Bethlehem did shepherds keep
Their flocks of lambs and feeding sheep
To whom God's angel did appear
Which put the shepherds in great fear
Arise and go, the angels said
To Bethlehem, be not afraid
For there you'll find, this happy morn
A princely babe, sweet Jesus, born

I saw three ships come sailing in
On Christmas day, on Christmas day;
I saw three ships come sailing in
On Christmas day in the morning.

Pray whither sailed those ships all three,
On Christmas day, on Christmas day?
Pray whither sailed those ships all three,
On Christmas day in the morning?

And what was in those ships all three,
On Christmas day, on Christmas day?
And what was in those ships all three,
On Christmas day in the morning?

O they sailed into Bethlehem,
On Christmas day, on Christmas day;
O they sailed into Bethlehem,
On Christmas day in the morning.

Our Saviour Christ and his lady,
On Christmas day, on Christmas day;
Our Saviour Christ and his lady,
On Christmas day in the morning.

And all the Souls on Earth shall sing,
On Christmas day, on Christmas day;
And all the Souls on Earth shall sing,
On Christmas day in the morning.

NEW CHRISTMAS REEL – *trad. Irish*

IV. Travelers Following a Star

O'CAROLAN'S FAREWELL – *Turlough O'Carolan (1670-1738)*
Anna O'Connell, harp

THE PARTING GLASS – *trad. Scottish/Irish (Skene Manuscript, early 17th c)*
Fiona Gillespie & Bradley King, vocals

Oh, all the money that e'er I spent
I spent it in good company.
And all the harm that e'er I've done,
Alas, it was to none but me.
And all I've done for want of wit
To memory now I can't recall.
So fill to me the parting glass,
Good night and joy be with you all!

Oh, all the comrades that e'er I've had
Are sorry for my going away.
And all the sweethearts that e'er I've had
Would wish me one more day to stay.
But since it falls unto my lot
That I should rise and you should not.
I'll gently rise and I'll softly call
Good night and joy be with you all!

MASTERS IN THIS HALL

Lyrics: William Morris, c. 1850's; Melody: French 17th c. dance tune

Masters in this hall, hear ye all the news today
Brought from over sea, and ever you I pray.

Refrain:

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell! Nowell, sing we clear!
Holpen are all folk on earth,
born the Son of God so dear.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell! Nowell, sing we loud!
God today hath poor folk raised
and cast a-down the proud.
Quoth the shepherds then, "To Beth'lem town we go,
To see a mighty lord lie in manger low."

Then to Beth'lem town went we two by two,
In a sorry place we heard the oxen low.

Refrain.

Ox and ass Him know, kneeling on their knee,
Wonderous joy had I this little babe to see.
This is Christ, the Lord, masters be ye glad!
Christmas is come in, and no folk shall be sad!

Refrain.

– INTERMISSION –

Part 2: Christmas Day in Appalachia, 1850

V. Son of Stars, Son of Sky

COLD IS THE NIGHT (*trad. Isle of Skye - Ian Crane, bagpipes*)

BRIGHT MORNING STARS

Southern folk hymn, arr. The Chivalrous Crickets

Bright morning stars are rising, We are down in the valley a-prayin'.
Day is a-breakin' in my soul. Day is a-breakin' in my soul.

We are goin' up to heaven, shoutin' –
Day is a-breakin' in my soul.

STAR IN THE EAST –*Shape-note Hymn, The Southern Harmony, 1835* Bradley King & Company

Hail, blessed morn! See the great mediator
Down from the regions of glory descend!
Shepherds, go worship the Babe in the manger.
Lo, for a guard the bright angels attend.

Refrain:

**Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid.
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.**

Cold on his cradle, the dew-drops are shining;
Low lies his bed with the beasts of the stall.
Angels adore him, in slumbers reclining.
Wise men and shepherds before him do fall.

Refrain.

JOSEPH & MARY/I WONDER AS I WANDER

trad. English & Appalachian (J. J. Niles), arr. J. Sorrell

When Joseph and Mary to Bethl'em did come,
The inns they were filled, both all and some.
And Joseph entreated them, ev'ry one.
They did wander and seek,
but rooms there were none.
They did wander but found
the doors closed, ev'ry one.
"Wander elsewhere!" 'twas said,
"For rooms we have none."

I wonder as I wander out under the sky,
How Jesus the Savior did come for to die
For poor, ord'n'ry people like you and like I.
I wonder as I wander out under the sky.

When Mary birthed Jesus, 'twas in a cow's stall,
Wish wise men and farmers and shepherds and all.
But high from God's heaven a star's light did fall,
And the promise of ages it then did recall.

If Jesus had wanted for any wee thing,
A star in the sky, or a bird on the wing,
Or all of God's angels in heav'n for to sing,
He surely could have it, 'cause he was the King.

FROST & SNOW/28TH OF JANUARY

trad. Celtic & Appalachian, arr. J. Sorrell, T. Bergmann

Tina Bergmann, hammered dulcimer

CHRIST CHILD LULLABY (TALLADH CHRIOSTA)

trad. Scottish, arr. J. Sorrell

Fiona Gillespie, vocals

My love, my pride, my treasure, oh,	And though you are the King of all,
My wonder new and pleasure, oh!	They sent you to a manger stall,
My son, my beauty ever you,	When at your feet they all should fall
Who am I to bear you here?	And glorify my child, the King.

The cause of talk and tale am I,	My love, my pride, my treasure, oh...
The cause of greatest fame am I,	
The cause of proudest care on high,	
To have for mine the King of all!	

VI. Christmas Barn Dance – arr. J. Sorrell

THE OLD YEAR NOW AWAY IS FLED – *trad. English carol, c. 1642*

The old year now away is fled,
The new year it is entered;
Then let us all our sins down tread,
And joyfully all appear.
Let's merry be this holiday,
And let us run with sport and play,
Hang sorrow, let's cast care away
God send us a merry new year!

And now with New-Year's gifts each friend
Unto each other they do send;
God grant we may our lives amend,
And that truth may now appear.

Now like the snake cast off your skin
Of evil thoughts and wicked sin,
And to amend this new year begin:
God send us a merry new year!

And now let all the company
In friendly manner all agree,
For we are here welcome all may see
Unto this jolly good cheer.

I thank my master and my dame,
The which are founders of the same,
To eat, to drink now is no shame:
God send us a happy new year!

SOMERSET WASSAIL – *trad. English*

Wassail and wassail, all over the town!
The cup it is white, and the ale it is brown.
The cup it is made of the good ashen tree,
And so is the malt of the best barley.

Refrain:
For it's your wassail and it's our wassail,
And it's joy be to you, and a jolly wassail!

There was an old man and he had an old cow,
And how for to keep her, he didna' know how.
He built up a barn for to keep his cow warm,

And a drop or two of cider will do us no harm!
No harm, boys, harm! No harm, boys, harm!
And a drop of two of cider will do us no harm!

The girt dog of Lamport, he burnt his long tail
And this is the night we go singing Wassail.
Oh Master and Missus, now we must be gone.
God bless all in the house till we do come again.
No harm, boys, harm! No harm, boys, harm!
And a drop of two of cider will do us no harm!
Refrain.

OLD CHRISTMAS EVE REEL/ KENTUCKY WASSAIL

trad. Celtic & Appalachian

Wassail, wassail, all over the town!
Our cup is white and our ale is brown.
The cup is made of the old oak tree,
And the ale is made in Kentucky.
So it's joy be to you, and a jolly wassail!

Oh, good man and good wife, are you within?
Pray lift the latch and let us come in.
We see you a-sitting at the boot o' the fire,
Not a-thinkin' of us in the mud and the mire.
So it's joy be to you, and a jolly wassail!

There was an old maid and she lived in a house,
And she had for a pet a tiny wee mouse,
Oh, the house had a stove
and the house was warm,
And a little bit of liquor won't do no harm!
So it's joy be to you, and a jolly wassail!

Oh, a man in York drank his sack from a pail,
But all we ask is a wee wassail.
Oh, husband and wife, alack, we part,
God bless this house
from the bottom of our heart!
So it's joy be to you, AND A JOLLY WASSAIL!

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

*I wonder as I wander, out under the sky,
How Jesus our saviour did come for to die.
For poor, ord'n'ry people like you and like I.*

Irish music and its offspring, Appalachian music, are the voice of "the poor, ordin'ry people." When the Irish immigrants crossed the Atlantic, leaving their lives of poverty and starvation in the British Isles, they brought their music with them.

They left Ireland due to endless years of unemployment and hunger. Though called the "Potato Famine," the Great Famine that struck Ireland in the 1840s was not simply a natural disaster. Ever since the British had conquered Ireland in 1536, the Irish peasants had been forced to pay rent to their British landowners. By the 1800s, the Irish could not afford to purchase the foods their farms produced. Instead, their grain and meat crops were exported to the wealthy ruling classes in Britain, while the people subsisted increasingly on potatoes – the only thing they could afford.

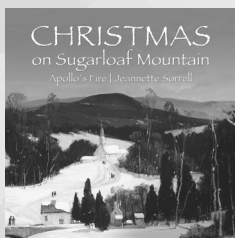
When a blight killed the potato crops in the 1840s, the Irish people were starving and could not pay their rent. Hundreds of thousands of them were evicted. About one million people died. It is believed that nearly two million people emigrated from Ireland in desperation during this time. Many of these became the Appalachian immigrants of America.

This is why Celtic carols so often emphasize the plight of the poor. The message that Jesus came to poor people – that he was born to a humble couple in an oppressed nation, forced to travel as migrants – this theme runs strong through Celtic music.

We dedicate this concert to Wanderers everywhere – those seeking shelter in Bethlehem 2000 years ago, those seeking a home in America 200 years ago, and those seeking shelter from violence and oppression today. Their inextinguishable spirit inspires our music – reminding us that immigration is a beautiful part of our shared heritage in America.

Jeannette Sorrell
Cleveland, December 2022

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