



CHURCH OF THE
ASSUMPTION

2020 Christmas Concert

Toccata on Divinum Mysterium
Sharon Kleckner, Organ

John McCreary

O Come All Ye Faithful
Lisa Habeck, Soprano
Aaron Humble, Tenor
Richard Duncan, Organ

John Francis Wade

A Greeting from Father Paul Treacy

Away in a Manger
Peg Sutherland, Soprano
Richard Duncan, Organ

William J. Kirkpatrick
Arranged by Raymond Haar

Tu Scendi Dalle Stelle
Jackie Edwards, Mezzo-Soprano
Sharon Kleckner, Organ

Alphonsus Maria de Liguori

Shepherds Shake Off Your Drowsy Sleep
Lisa Habeck, Soprano
Richard Duncan, Organ

Besançon Tune
Arranged by G. Winston Cassler

Gesu Bambino
Aaron Humble, Tenor
Sharon Kleckner, Organ

Pietro A. .Yon

Go Tell It On the Mountain
Jackie Edwards, Mezzo-Soprano
Sharon Kleckner, Organ

Traditional African American Spiritual
Adapted by John W. Work Jr.

Laudamus Te from *Gloria*
Lisa Habeck and Peg Sutherland, Soprano
Sharon Kleckner, Organ

Antonio Vivaldi

O Holy Night Peg Sutherland, Soprano Richard Duncan, Organ	Adolphe Adam
Still, Still, Still Richard Duncan, Organ	Austrian Carol Arranged by David Cherwin
An Old Carol Aaron Humble, Tenor Richard Duncan, Organ	Roger Quilter
Maria Wiegenlied Lisa Habeck, Soprano Richard Duncan, Organ	Max Reger
Stille Nacht Lisa Habeck, Soprano Jackie Edwards and Sharon Kleckner, Alto Aaron Humble, Tenor Richard Duncan, Baritone	Franz Gruber

Program Notes from the Musicians:

Toccata on Divinum Mysterium

Composer John McCreary was Organist/Choirmaster at St. Andrew's Episcopal Cathedral in Honolulu for 35 years. He was a personal friend of our very own Sharon Kleckner and a multi-talented musician. As composer, organist and choirmaster he left a memorable footprint wherever he went. The text is the familiar "Of the Father's Love Begotten."

O Come All Ye Faithful

This quintessential Christmas hymn dates back to the 17th or 18th century and whether or not John Francis Wade wrote the tune, we may never know. Wade was certainly the first to publish it but the origins are said to date back to Cistercian Monks or even King John IV. But no matter who wrote it, it sums up the end of our Advent journey as we once again celebrate the glorious arrival of the Blessed Babe.

Away in a Manger

This simple solo was originally composed for the organ by Raymond Haan. An English teacher by profession, Mr. Haan has successfully pursued his life-long passion for church music in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Hopefully, he won't mind the addition of words. There is a musical figure in the piece that suggests rocking and I like to imagine Mary rocking Jesus, singing this lovely melody as a lullaby. Relating to Mary's motherhood can bring us closer to the beauty of the Nativity.

Tu Scendi Dalle Stelle

Scarlatti, Respighi, Pavarotti, Sergio Franchi and Andre Bocelli are among a long list of composers and vocalists to perform Italy's most popular Christmas Carol, Tu Scendi Dalle Stelle (You Come Down from the Stars). Written in 1732 by a Neapolitan priest, Alphonsus Liguori the carol was originally written for zampogna, or large-form Italian bagpipes. Tu Scendi Dalle Stelle has been performed in a variety of formats but you can still hear the tradition of children singing in a piazza on Christmas Eve. What a treat to share a song in Italian!

Shepherds Shake Off Your Drowsy Sleep

An ancient carol from the eastern part of France, this tune first appeared with these words in 1871 in a collection of carols entitled *Christmas Carols Old and New*. In all, it takes the angels a full five verses to rouse the shepherds from their confused slumber. For our purposes, three will have to suffice. How could anyone possibly resist moving to the almost jig-like quality of this melody? G. Winston Cassler was a distinguished professor of music at St. Olaf College.

Gesu Bambino

Composed in 1917, Gesu Bambino has stood the test of time and has now been part of the Christmas repertoire for more than 100 years. Using some of the original Latin text from *Adeste Fideles*, the lilting melody has been sung by choirs and soloists around the world. Tenor, Aaron Humble reflects, "I'll never forget hearing Pavarotti sing it with the Vienna Boys Choir when I purchased that album as a young singer in High School. That recording inspired me and encouraged me to keep practicing!"

Go Tell It On the Mountain

John Wesley Work, Jr. did not originate the song Go Tell It On the Mountain but was the first African American collector of African American spirituals. It was a daunting task because most spirituals were passed down orally and never written down. He did not want them to be lost or forgotten as they tell vital stories. Go Tell It On the Mountain came from the fields of the South and was born from inspiration. Most spirituals centered on earthly pain and the joy that only heaven could offer. Go Tell It On the Mountain embraces the wonder of lowly shepherds touched by God at the very first Christmas.

Laudamus Te from *Gloria*

While not a Christmas song per se, the text lends itself perfectly to the joy of Jesus's birth: We praise you, We bless You, We adore You, We glorify You! Vivaldi, called the Red Priest of Venice for his fiery hair, composed the Gloria for a girls' orphanage and music school around 1715. This third movement of the work features two sopranos in joyful duet.

O Holy Night

No Christmas would be complete without Adolphe Adam's lilting melody. Soprano, Peg Sutherland agrees, "My lifelong favorite Christmas song! The line that has always struck me is 'A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices, for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!' Every year it seems appropriate and timely, bringing us the one true hope in a dark world. This year is particularly poignant."

Still, Still, Still

David Cherwien is the organist at Mt. Olive Lutheran Church in Minneapolis and has set this beautiful melody with great care. Organist Richard Duncan remembers this special connection between this Austrian Carol and the Assumption:

When I was first asked to play the organ at Assumption many years ago, I immediately went to the church website to see what I could learn about the place. There I found a video recording of the choir singing Still, Still, Still. The church was fully decorated for Christmas and the choir was up in the loft. It was stunningly beautiful, both visually and musically. being so moved that I listened to it over and over. That was in 2011, and every Christmas that I've been here since that time, this beloved melody has floated out over the congregation on Christmas Eve. I didn't want this year to be any different.

Olde Carol

This beautiful Marion text has been part of the Assumption Christmas Concert for several years now. Using some words from Middle English, the text praises Mary as the mother of God and is set to a beautiful, lilting melody. Typical of Roger Quilter, the harmony is lush and even occasionally adventurous as he finds his way through several key areas—but like many of us, he finds his way back home eventually.

Maria Wiegenlied

Mary's Lullaby is a beloved German Christmas song composed in the early 1900s. It depicts Mary rocking Jesus to sleep with the company of a little bird. It's often referred to as "The Virgin's Slumber Song". It is so sweet and gentle, and one of Lisa Habeck's favorite pieces to sing.

Stille Nacht

No Christmas Eve is complete at the Assumption without the singing of Stille Nacht. While we may not be able to experience the intimacy of a crowded space, illuminated by candle light, we hope you will close your eyes and sing along from the warmth and comfort of your home.

From all of us at the Church of the Assumption, we wish you a Merry Christmas and look forward to the time when we can gather and lift our voices in song.

Audio and Video Produced by Jeffrey Fuchs and Northern Lights Video
A Special Thank You to the Assumption Parish Staff