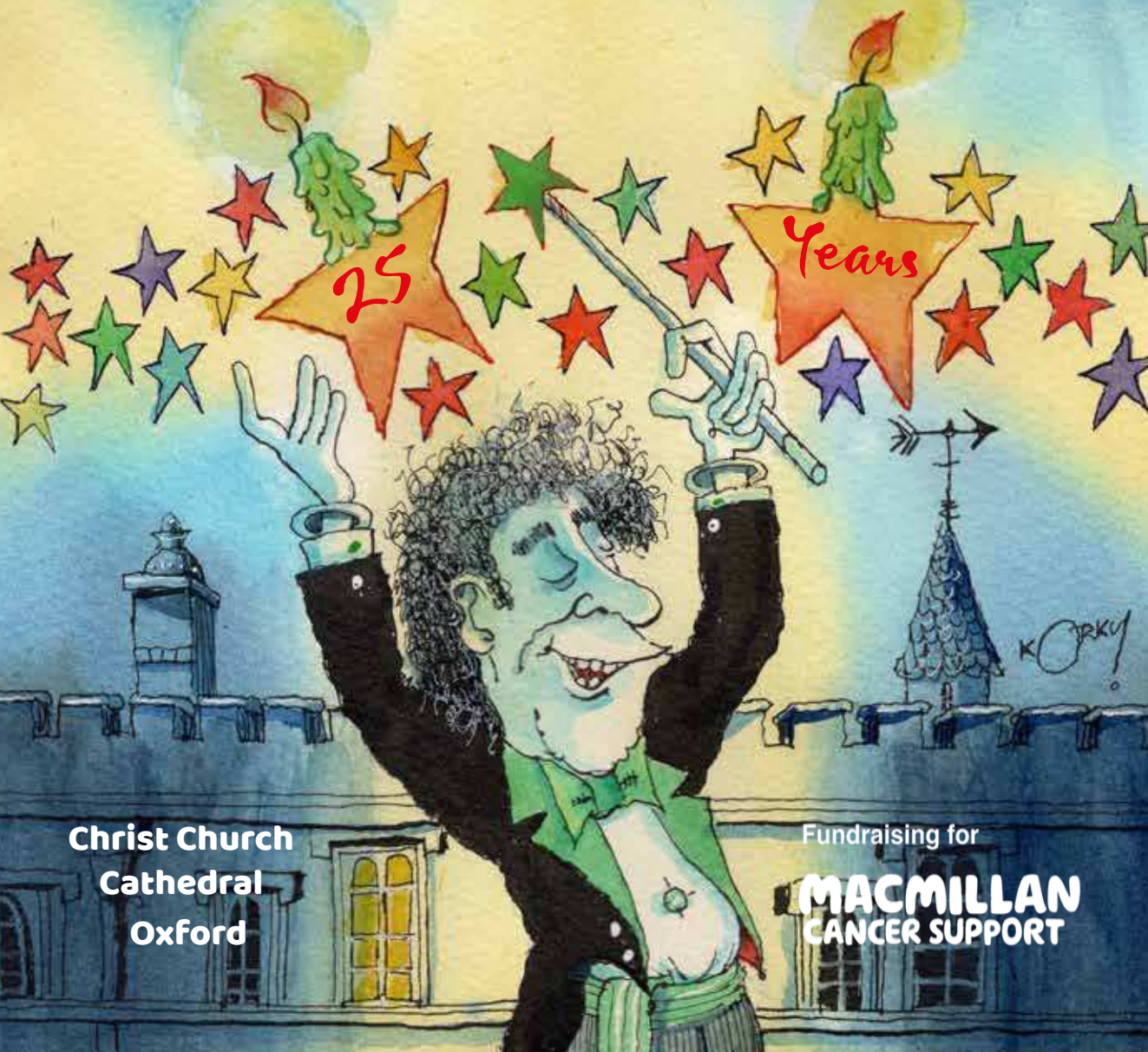


Follow the Stars

MACMILLAN CAROLS

25th ANNIVERSARY CONCERT
10 December, 2021 8pm



Christ Church
Cathedral
Oxford

Fundraising for

MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT



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FOLLOW THE STARS
MACMILLAN CAROLS

25TH ANNIVERSARY CONCERT

Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford
Friday 10th December 2021

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CANCER SUPPORT

Proud to support Macmillan Carols 2021

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Welcome from Lynda Thomas, Chief Executive, Macmillan Cancer Support



It is my pleasure on behalf of Macmillan Cancer Support, to welcome you to the 25th Anniversary of Follow the Stars - Macmillan Carols. A wonderful evening which, for many, marks the start of the Christmas season in Oxford. It is a time to come together and remember loved ones and those living with cancer.

I would like to add my grateful thanks to the committee of dedicated volunteers who have organised this event and who have raised over £500,000 for Macmillan since the first carol concert in 1996.

This year we are honoured that the internationally renowned composer, John Rutter, has created a new Christmas carol especially for this Anniversary Concert. This new composition will be performed for you by the beautiful voices of the Oxford Bach Soloists.

Since March 2020, coronavirus has created a ticking time bomb of undiagnosed and untreated cancer in the UK. Your support tonight is needed more than ever to provide urgent funding for Macmillan so they can address the impact this has had on thousands of vital cancer treatments, appointments and care which have been postponed or cancelled. You can help today by giving what you can.

In Oxfordshire there are, on average, 3,700 people diagnosed with cancer each year. In addition to this, there are over 24,300 people living with cancer. We know we are not reaching them all with the personal support at the times when they need us, and we know we need to react now to ensure we can help everyone who needs us, when they need us most.

Being told “you have cancer” can affect so much more than your health – it can affect your family, your job, even your ability to pay the bills. Our freephone helpline, which provides both practical and emotional support, has received over 64,000 phone calls this year. As well as helping to answer questions, provide reassurance and expert guidance, we are there to help access benefits when they are entitled. We also provided direct financial support to 212 families, awarding over £68,900 to local people in 2020.

Without the generosity of our incredible supporters and spectacular events like tonight, Macmillan simply could not provide this vital support to people living with cancer. Thank you so much for your support.

I would like to make special mention and thanks to all our guest readers, musicians, sponsors and advertisers for their contributions to this wonderful evening.

Lynda Thomas
Chief Executive



FOLLOW THE STARS - MACMILLAN CAROLS COMMITTEE

Dame Hilary Boulding (President)
Sandra Devaney (Chair)
Jenny Barr, Niamh Merrigan, Phillipa Rooney, Jessica Stobart,
Helen Warr and Suzette Wilson-MacDonald

**The committee would like to extend their warm thanks to the following
sponsors, donors and contributors:**

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and everyone who has supported us by advertising in the programme

The Right Reverend Dr Steven Croft, Bishop of Oxford
The Dean and Chapter of Christ Church Cathedral
Joseph Denby, Operations Manager, Paul Harris, Dean's Verger
and the Vergers of Christ Church Cathedral

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GUEST READERS

Dame Mary Berry, Toby Jones OBE, Gugu Mbatha-Raw MBE and Aimee Lou Wood

PODCAST CONTRIBUTORS

Sinead Cusack, Tom Hollander, Jeremy Irons, John Lloyd CBE and Greg Wise

MUSICIANS

Choir

The Oxford Bach Soloists
Conducted by Tom Hammond-Davies

Sopranos

Jessie Edgar
Caroline Halls
Loren Kell
Melissa Talbot

Tenors

Will Anderson
Joe Hancock
Sebastian Hill
Louis Watkins

Altos

Austin Haynes
Karol Jozwik
Sam Mitchell
Meg Tong

Basses

Charlie Baigent
Daniel Gilchrist
Florian Störtz
Benjamin Watkins

Organist

Steven Grahl, Christ Church Cathedral

Solo Chorister

Maurits Branderhorst, Christ Church Cathedral Choir

Brass Band

Magdalen College School Brass Ensemble
Directed by Duncan McNaughton

You are kindly requested to turn the pages of the programme quietly during the course of the concert



PROGRAMME

Organ music before the concert

IX Noël, sur les Flûtes
Louis-Claude Daquin (1694-1772)

from the Orgelbüchlein: Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ (BWV 604)
Der Tag, der ist so freudenreich (BWV 605)
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

XI Noël, en Récit en Taille, sur la Tierce du Positif, avec la Pédalle de Flûte, et
en Duo
L.C. Daquin

from the Orgelbüchlein: Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her (BWV 606)
Christum wir sollen loben schon (BWV 611)
J.S. Bach

XII Noël Suisse, Grand jeu, et Duo
L.C. Daquin

PLEASE REMAIN SEATED

Welcome on behalf of Christ Church Cathedral

Choir Introit

IN THE BLEAK MID-WINTER

choir and solo chorister, Maurits Branderhorst
solo tenor: Sebastian Hill

Music: Harold Darke (1888-1976)
Words: Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

PLEASE STAND

SOLO

Once in royal David's city
Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby
In a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.



CHOIR He came down to earth from heaven
 Who is God and Lord of all,
 And his shelter was a stable,
 And his cradle was a stall;
 With the poor, and mean, and lowly,
 Lived on earth our Saviour holy.

ALL And through all his wondrous childhood
 He would honour and obey,
 Love, and watch the lowly maiden,
 In whose gentle arms he lay;
 Christian children all must be
 Mild, obedient, good as he.

ALL For he is our childhood's pattern,
 Day by day like us he grew,
 He was little, weak and helpless,
 Tears and smiles like us he knew;
 And he feeleth for our sadness,
 And he shareth in our gladness.

ALL And our eyes at last shall see him,
 Through his own redeeming love,
 For that child so dear and gentle
 Is our Lord in heaven above;
 And he leads his children on
 To the place where he is gone.

ALL Not in that poor lowly stable,
 With the oxen standing by,
 We shall see him; but in heaven,
 Set at God's right hand on high;
 Where like stars his children crowned
 All in white shall wait around.

Solo: Maurits Branderhorst
Music: Henry John Gauntlett (1805-76)
vv. 1-5 harmonized by A. H. Mann (1850-1929)
v. 6 arranged by David Willcocks (1919-2015)
Words: Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-95)



PLEASE SIT

Introduction

Dame Hilary Boulding, President of the Follow the Stars committee

Bidding Prayer

The Right Reverend Dr Steven Croft, Bishop of Oxford

Choir

SUSSEX CAROL

On Christmas night, all Christians sing,
To hear the news, the angels bring-
News of great joy, news of great mirth,
News of our merciful King's birth,

Then why should men on Earth be sad,
Since our Redeemer made us glad?
When from our sin he set us free
All for to gain our liberty?

When sin departs before his grace,
Then life and health come in its place;
Angels and men with joy may sing,
All for to see the newborn King.

All out of darkness we have light,
Which made the angels sing this night:
'Glory to God and peace to men,
Now and for evermore. Amen.'

English traditional carol arranged by David Willcocks (1919-2015)

Reading by Toby Jones and Gugu Mbatha-Raw

THE OXEN

Toby Jones

In the bleak midwinter of 1915 a short poem was published in The Times on Christmas Eve. The simplicity and poignancy of The Oxen touched the hearts of that and future generations, and it was to become one of the most well-loved and famous of Thomas Hardy's poems. Apparently he had been asked in 1914 to



write a Christmas greeting for a national newspaper, but could not bring himself to do so whilst witnessing humanity tearing itself apart in the tragedy of war. By the following year he was able to express this yearning for the solace some found in traditional beliefs.

Gugu Mbatha-Raw

Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock.

“Now they are all on their knees,”

An elder said as we sat in a flock
By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where
They dwelt in their strawy pen,
Nor did it occur to one of us there
To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave
In these years! Yet, I feel,
If someone said on Christmas Eve,
“Come; see the oxen kneel,

“In the lonely barton by yonder coomb
Our childhood used to know,”
I should go with him in the gloom,
Hoping it might be so.

Thomas Hardy (1840 - 1928)
Introduction by Roger Deats

Choir
THE OXEN

Jonathan Rathbone (b. 1957)

Gugu Mbatha-Raw

Hardy had long been aware of the widespread folklore, across Dorset and beyond, that oxen and other farm animals might be seen to kneel on Old Christmas Eve, witnessed only by people with the faith to believe it. Indeed, some 25 years earlier he had used this idea, to affectionate comic effect, in chapter XVII of his novel *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. In the heart of his native Dorset, a dairyman recounts to Tess, who he is training to be a milkmaid, the story of a local fiddler who saved himself from certain death by fooling a bull that it was Old Christmas Eve:



Toby Jones

‘Oh yes; there’s nothing like a fiddle,’ said the dairyman. ‘Though I do think that bulls are more moved by a tune than cows – at least that’s my experience. Once there was a old aged man over at Mellstock – William Dewy by name. Coming home-along from a wedding where he had been playing his fiddle, one fine moonlight night, and for shortness’ sake he took a cut across Forty-acres, a field lying that way, where a bull was out to grass. The bull seed William, and took after him, horns aground, begad; and though William runned his best, and hadn’t *much* drink in him (considering ‘twas a wedding, and the folks well off), he found he’d never reach the fence and get over in time to save himself. Well, as a last thought, he pulled out his fiddle as he runned, and struck up a jig, turning to the bull, and backing towards the corner. The bull softened down, and stood still, looking hard at William Dewy, who fiddled on and on; till a sort of a smile stole over the bull’s face. But no sooner did William stop his playing and turn to get over hedge than the bull would stop his smiling and lower his horns towards the seat of William’s breeches. Well, William had to turn about and play on, willy-nilly; and ‘twas only three o’clock in the world, and ‘a knowed that nobody would come that way for hours, and he so leery and tired that ‘a didn’t know what to do. When he had scraped till about four o’clock he felt that he verily would have to give over soon and he said to himself, “There’s only this last tune between me and eternal welfare! Heaven save me, or I’m a done man.” Well, then he called to mind how he’d seen the cattle kneel o’ Christmas Eves in the dead o’night. It was not Christmas Eve then, but it came into his head to play a trick upon the bull. So he broke into the ‘Tivity Hymn, just as at Christmas carol-singing; when, lo and behold, down went the bull on his bended knees, in his ignorance, just as if ‘twere the true ‘Tivity night and hour. As soon as his horned friend were down, William turned, clinked off like a long-dog, and jumped safe over hedge, before the praying bull had got on his feet again to take after him. William used to say that he’d seen a man look a fool a good many times, but never such a fool as that bull looked when he found his pious feelings had been played upon, and ‘twas not Christmas Eve.

Choir

BLAKE’S LULLABY

Sweet dreams form a shade,
O’er my lovely infant’s head:
Sweet dreams of pleasant streams
By happy, silent moony beams.
Lullaby, sing lullaby.



Sweet sleep with soft down
Weave thy brows an infant crown.
Sweet sleep, angel mild,
Hover o'er my happy child.
Lullaby, sing lullaby.

Sweet smiles in the night,
Hover over my delight.
Sweet smiles, mother's smiles,
All the livelong night beguiles.
Lullaby, sing lullaby.

Sweet moans, dovelike sighs,
Chase not slumber from thy eyes.
Sweet moans, sweeter smiles,
All the dovelike moans beguiles.

Sleep, sleep, happy child,
All creation slept and smiled;
Sleep, sleep, happy sleep,
While o'er thee thy mother weep.

Sweet babe, in thy face
Holy image I can trace:
Sweet babe, once like thee
Thy Maker lay and wept for me.

Wept for me, for thee, for all
When He was an infant small:
Thou His image ever see,
Heavenly face that smiles on thee.

Smiles on thee, on me, on all
Who became an infant small:
Infant smiles are His own smiles,
Heaven and earth to peace beguiles.

*Written at the invitation of Follow the Stars – Macmillan Carols
In celebration of 25 years of fundraising for Macmillan Cancer Support
Words: from William Blake's A Cradle Song (1757-1827)
Music: John Rutter (b. 1945)*



Reading by Mary Berry

LUKE 1 - THE ANGEL GABRIEL SALUTES THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

Thanks be to God.

Luke 1.26–35, 38

Choir

GABRIEL'S MESSAGE

The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
His wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;
'All hail,' said he, 'thou lowly maiden Mary,'
Most highly favoured lady, Gloria!

'For known a blessed mother thou shalt be,
All generations laud and honour thee,
Thy Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,'
Most highly favoured lady, Gloria!

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head,
'To me be as it pleaseth God,' she said,
'My soul shall laud and magnify his holy Name.'
Most highly favoured lady, Gloria!



Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born
In Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,
And Christian folk throughout the world will ever say;
Most highly favoured lady, Gloria!

Basque carol arranged by Edgar Pettman (1866-1943)

Reading by Toby Jones

THE SHEPHERD'S TALE

Woman, you'll never credit what
My two eyes saw this night ...
But first of all we'll have a drop,
It's freezing now, all right.

It was a queerest going-on
That I did e'er behold;
A holy child out in the barn,
A baby all in gold.

Now let's get started on the soup
And let me tell it you,
For though there's not a thing made up,
It still seems hardly true.

There he was laid upon the straw,
Will you dish up the stew?
The ass did Bray, the hens did crawl,
I'll have some cabbage too.

First there was a king from Prussia,
At least that's how he looked,
Then there was the king of Russia.
This stew's been overcooked.

There they were kneeling on the ground,
Come, have a bite to eat.
First I stared and stood around.
Have just a taste of meat!



Well, one of them he ups and says
A long speech - kind of funny.
Here, what about that last new cheese,
Is it still runny?

The little 'un, wise as wise could be
Just didn't care for that.
But he was pleased as punch with me
When I took off me hat.

I took his little fists in mine,
In front of all those nobs.
Fetch us a jug of our best wine
My dear, we'll wet our gobs.

That very instant, as if I'd
Had a good swig of drink,
I felt great warm joy inside,
But why, I cannot think.

Oh, this wine is the stuff, by Mary!
When he's grown up a bit,
That little fellow, just you see,
He shall have some of it!

We might have all been knelt there yet,
Put a Yule log on the fire,
But suddenly he starts to fret –
He'd begun to tire.

Then 'Sirs,' his mother she did say,
'It grieves me to remind
You that it's time to go away
When you have been so kind.

'But see, how sleepy he's become,
He's crying, let him rest.
You all know how to find our home
Each one's a welcome guest.'



And so in silence we went out,
But the funniest thing –
Those three fine kings,
Did wish me good-morning!

You see, love, that's how it began.
The God born on the earth
This night's no ordinary one.
Let's celebrate his birth!

*James Kirkup (1918-2009)
From the French of Raoul Ponchon*

Choir

WHITE CHRISTMAS

I'm dreaming of a white Christmas
Just like the ones I used to know
 Where the tree tops glisten
 And children listen
To hear sleigh bells in the snow.

I'm dreaming of a white Christmas
With every Christmas card I write
May your days be merry and bright
And may all your Christmasses be white.

*Music and Lyrics by Irving Berlin (1888-1989),
arranged by Jonathan Rathbone (b. 1957)*

Reading by Aimee Lou Wood

DECK THE HALLS

During the weeks running up to Christmas, I always experience a certain queasy foreboding at the thought that at any moment my wife would step into the room and announce that the time had come to get out the Christmas decorations.

Well, here we are, just eighteen fleeting days till Christmas, and still not a peep from her. I don't know how much more of this I can take.



I hate doing the Christmas decorations because, for a start, it means going up into the loft. Lofts are dirty, dark, disagreeable places. You always find things up there you don't want to find – lengths of gnawed wiring, gaps in the slates through which you can see daylight and sometimes even pop your head, and crates full of useless oddments that you must have been out of your mind ever to have hauled up there. Three things alone are certain when you venture into a loft: that you will crack your head on a beam at least twice, that you will get cobwebs draped over your face, and that you will not find what you went looking for.

The worst part about going into a loft is knowing that when the time comes to climb down you will find that the stepladder has mysteriously moved three feet towards the bathroom door. I don't know how that happens, but it always does.

So you lower your legs through the hatch and blindly go for the ladder with your feet. If you stretch your right leg to its furthest extremity, you can just about get a toe to it, which is not much good, of course. Eventually, you discover that if you swing your legs back and forth, like a gymnast on parallel bars, you can get one foot on top of the ladder, and then both feet on. This, however, does not represent a great breakthrough because you are now lying at an angle of about 60 degrees and unable to make any further progress. Grunting softly, you try to drag the ladder nearer with your feet, but succeed only in knocking it over, with a crash.

Now you really are stuck. You try to wriggle back up into the loft, but haven't the strength, so you hang by your armpits. You call to your wife, but she doesn't hear you. This is both discouraging and strange. Normally, your wife can hear things that no one else on earth can hear. She can hear a dab of jam fall onto a carpet two rooms away. She can hear spilled coffee being furtively mopped up with a good bath towel. She can hear dirt being tracked across a clean floor. She can hear you just thinking about doing something you shouldn't do. But get yourself stuck in a loft hatch and suddenly it is as if she has been placed in a soundproof chamber.

So when eventually, an hour or so later, she passes through the upstairs hallway and sees your lags dangling there, it takes her by surprise. "What are you doing?" she says at length.

You squint down at her. "Loft hatch aerobics," you reply with just a hint of sarcasm. "Do you want the ladder?" "Oh, now there's an idea. Do you know, I've been hanging here for ages trying to think what it is that's missing, and here you've cracked it straight off."



You hear the sound of the ladder being righted and feel your feet being guided down the steps. The hanging has evidently done you good because suddenly you remember that the Christmas decorations are not in the loft – never were in the loft – but in the basement, in a cardboard box. Of course! How silly not to have recalled! Off you dash.

Two hours later, you find the decorations hidden behind some old tyres and a broken pram. You lug the box upstairs and devote two hours more to untangling strings of lights. When you plug the lights in, naturally they do not work, except for one string that hurls you backwards into a wall with a lively jolt and a shower of sparks, and then does not work.

You decide to leave the lights and get the tree in from the garage. The tree is immense and prickly. Clutching it in a clumsy bear hug, you gruntingly manhandle it to the back door, fall into the house, get up and press on. As branches poke your eyes, needles puncture your cheeks and gums, and sap manages somehow to run backwards up your nose, you blunder through rooms, knocking pictures from walls, clearing tabletops, upsetting chairs. Your wife, so recently missing and unaccounted for, now seems to be everywhere, shouting confused and lively instructions – “Mind the thingy! Don’t go that way – go that way! To the left! Not your left – my left!” and eventually, in a softer voice, “Oooh, are you all right, honey? Didn’t you see those steps?” By the time you reach the living room, the tree looks as if it has been defoliated by acid rain, and so do you.

It is at this point that you realise that you have no idea where the Christmas tree stand is. So, sighing, you hike up to town to the hardware store to buy another, knowing that for the next three weeks all the Christmas tree stands you have ever purchased – twenty-three in all – will spontaneously reappear in your life, mostly by dropping onto your head from a high shelf when you are rooting in the bottom of a cupboard, but occasionally in the middle of darkened rooms or lurking near the top of the hall stairs. If you don’t know it already, know it now: Christmas tree stands are the work of the devil, and they want you dead.

While you are at the hardware store you buy two additional strings of lights. These will not work either.

Eventually, exhausted in both mind and body, you manage to get the tree up, lit and covered with baubles. You stand in the posture of Quasimodo regarding it with a kind of weak loathing.

“Oh, it’s *lovely!*” your wife cries, clasping her hands ecstatically beneath her



chin. "Now let's do the outside decorations," she announces suddenly. "I bought a special treat this year – a life-sized Father Christmas that goes on the chimney. You fetch the 40-foot ladder and I'll open the crate. Oh isn't this so much fun!" And off she skips.

Now you might reasonably say to me: "Why put yourself through all this? Why go up to the loft when you know the decorations won't be there? Why untangle the lights when you know they haven't a chance of working?" And my answer to you is that this is part of the ritual. Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without it.

Which is why I decided to make a start now, even though Mrs B hasn't ordered me to. There are some things you just have to do in life, whether you want to or not.

If you need me for anything, I'll be hanging from the loft.

Bill Bryson OBE (b. 1951)

Extracted from 'Notes from a Big Country', published by Doubleday.

Choir

THE THREE KINGS

Three kings from Persian lands afar
To Jordan follow the pointing star:
And this the quest of the travellers three,
Where the newborn King of the Jews may be.
Full royal gifts they bear for the King;
Gold, incense, myrrh are their offering.

The star shines out with a steadfast ray;
The kings to Bethlehem make their way,
And there in worship they bend the knee,
As Mary's child in her lap they see;
Their royal gifts they show to the King;
Gold, incense, myrrh are their offering.

Thou child of man, lo, to Bethlehem
The kings are travelling, travel with them!
The star of mercy, the star of grace,
Shall lead thy heart to its resting place.
Gold, incense, myrrh thou canst not bring;
Offer thy heart to the infant King.



CHORALE:

How brightly shines the morning star!
With grace and truth from heaven afar
Our Jesse tree now bloweth.

Of Jacob's stem and David's line,
For thee, my Bridegroom, King divine,
My soul with love o'erfloweth.

Thy word, Jesu,
Inly feeds us,
Rightly leads us,
Life bestowing.
Praise, O praise such love o'erflowing.

Words and music by Peter Cornelius (1824-74)

arranged by Ivor Atkins (1869-1953)

Chorale text by Philipp Nicolai (1556-1608)

Choir

COVENTRY CAROL

Lully, lulla, 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 do sing,
By by, lully lullay?

Herod, the king,
In his raging,
Chargèd he hath this day
His men of might,
In his own sight,
All young children to slay.



That woe is me,
Poor child for thee!
 And ever morn and day,
For thy parting
Neither say nor sing
 By by, lully lullay!

*from the Pageant of
the Shearmen and Tailors (1591 version)*

Reading by Gugu Mbatha-Raw

CHRISTMAS IS TWO-FACED OF COURSE

Christmas is two-faced of course. A great double-festival which the ages rolled into one. Part an act of bravado held in the teeth of winter, part the Christian celebration of birth. The old pagan part always seemed reasonable to me - a raising of spirits when things looked black... Eat, drink and be merry it seemed to say; the sun is extinguished and tomorrow we die. But the newer part - the festival of birth - seemed somehow to have got there by accident. Surely the spring, I thought, was the proper time for all this and not the bleak mid-winter - April or May when everything on earth was being born and life was bursting out all round us? I realise now that things are quite right as they are; that spring can look after itself; that the holy child was born in the pit of winter because it was the time of our greatest need, when the search had been longest and hope almost abandoned and all other signs of life obscured.

Others may have known all this for two-thousand years, but we each need our own personal revelation. And I am seeing it now for the first time in my life - and a long-ish life at that - because after twelve years of marriage, and a long winter of doubt, my first child has just been born.

Nothing is as remarkable as that which happens to oneself, commonplace as it may be to others. The truth of a love-story never quite makes sense until you yourself are in love. For Christmas is the family and the family is the child, and without the child the light of Christmas is blurred. And now that this light for me has suddenly been switched on I see all I'd forgotten, or never knew. For the birth of a child saves us all from extinction - is in fact almost a resurrection - still more precious perhaps, in my case at least, for having been so long and coldly awaited. So as a brand-new parent and in spite of all the years I've lived through, this is the first true Christmas of my life. Until now it was a feast without a blessing, a candle without a flame, and now I can see round its gaudy



commercial drapes and through its stupors of over-eating, back to the original child whose feast this is, standing - smiling - at the beginning of things.

And everything now falls sparkling into place. The carols seem written for us alone, and my child stares at the tree, her eyes full of lights, and it's the first Christmas tree for us both. This moment can't last. My child will grow up I suppose and the lights of this tree will fade. But it doesn't matter. Christ is born every year and remains the point of our return: the chance to revisit this day, its star and its cradle, the miracle lying within in it and to share together - mortal though we both may be - this moment of brief eternity.

Laurie Lee MBE (1914-1997)

Choir

IN DULCI JUBILO

In dulci júbilo

Let us our homage shew;

Our heart's joy reclineth

In præsepio

And like a bright star shineth

Matris in gremio.

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 gloriæ!

Trahe me post te!

O patris caritas,

O Nati lenitas!

Deeply were we stained

Per nostra crimina;

But thou for us hast gained

Coelorum gaudia.

O that we were there!



Ubi sunt gaudia,
If that they be not there?
There are angels singing
Nova cantica,
There the bells are ringing
In Regis curia;
O that we were there!

Old German carol arranged by Robert Pearsall (1795-1856)

Reading by Mary Berry

**TO MRS K, ON HER SENDING ME AN ENGLISH CHRISTMAS
PLUM-CAKE AT PARIS**

What crowding thoughts around me wake,
What marvels in a Christmas-cake!
Ah say, what strange enchantment dwells
Enclosed within its odorous cells?
Is there no small magician bound
Encrusted in its snowy round?
For magic surely lurks in this,
A cake that tells of vanished bliss;
A cake that conjures up to view
The early scenes, when life was new;
When memory knew no sorrows past,
And hope believed in joys that last! —
Mysterious cake, whose folds contain
Life's calendar of bliss and pain;
That speaks of friends for ever fled,
And wakes the tears I love to shed.
Oft shall I breathe her cherished name
From whose fair hand the offering came:
For she recalls the artless smile
Of nymphs that deck my native isle;
Of beauty that we love to trace,
Allied with tender, modest grace;
Of those who, while abroad they roam,
Retain each charm that gladdens home,



And whose dear friendships can impart
A Christmas banquet for the heart!

Helena Maria Williams (1759-1827)

Choir

CHRISTMAS IS COMING

Christmas is coming, the geese are getting fat,
Please to put a penny in the old man's hat.

If you haven't got a penny, a ha' penny will do.
But a penny's better, a penny or two are better, or three, or four!

Christmas is coming, the geese are getting fat,
Please to put a penny in the old man's hat.

If you haven't got a penny, a ha' penny will do,
If you haven't got a ha' penny, a farthing'll do,
If you haven't got a farthing, God bless you!

God bless the master of this house,
Likewise the mistress too,
And all the little children
That round the table grow.

Love and joy come to you
And to you your wassail too,
And we wish you a happy New Year.

Traditional arranged by Henry Walford Davies (1869-1941)

THANK YOU

Roxane Heaton, Chief Information Officer, Macmillan Cancer Support



Reading by Toby Jones

THE CHRISTMAS SPIDER

YOU KNOW how it is, on those enchanted early mornings with the sun still low, when you take a turn around the garden to let the muesli settle, and the corner of your eye catches a mundane bush suddenly breeze-twinkled with iridescent jewellery, like a homely dowager transformed by shimmering diamonds, every wobble of her flaccid balcon offering a yet more fulgent facet? And you stop, and peer close, and, for the thousandth time, marvel at the flawless fusion of art, craft, effort and technology that is a web?

And next thing you know, a bluebottle, beguiled no doubt by the glitter, sends the dewdrops flying, eight horrible legs spring from beneath a leaf, and the peristaltic muesli churns in your gut as Mother Nature's magical vignette becomes just another munchy footnote to Sir David Attenborough's CV.

Overwritten, yes, but who could blame me? This morning, I am that fly. Hitherto circumspect and cautious to a fault, I dropped my guard last week, having trudged my feet raw in the vain search for Mrs Coren's Christmas present, and did what I swore I never would: I hit the world wide web. And today I am done for: enmeshed in its internet, I have been nailed by the spider. Yes, last week, there on my screen was exactly the wild goose I had chased throughout London; and yes, today, there on my doorstep was the dead duck the postman had just delivered. I have been sent the wrong thing. Out there, in the alien ether, I hear the spider laugh.

I can't tell you what the thing on the step is — or even what the thing that wasn't on the step was, since there is an outside chance that Mrs Coren's eye will inadvertently stray to this page, should today's Su Doku fall into the pushover category, and obviously I want her gift to be a surprise. God knows, it'll be a surprise to me, if it's the one I may be compelled to give her; not only because it is not the thing that was not on the step, but also because, having brought it in from the step and stared at the picture on the box, I still have no idea what it is. It is quite unlike the thing that was not on the step, and though it says on the box what it is, it says it in Chinese: this is doubly puzzling, as well as doubly infuriating, because I don't understand Chinese so utterly that I do not even know whether the writing is up or down, and if you turn the box the other way up (or down) the picture of the thing is, of course, different. It looks vaguely familiar when it stands on its bottom, or top, but also vaguely familiar when it stand on its top, or bottom. Worse yet, depending on which way up or down it is, it looks as if it can be used for two entirely different things, neither of which is apparent.



What I do not know, and cannot even guess, is which of the two things Mrs Coren would want to use it for; if either. I'm sure she would have loved the thing that was not on the step, and known precisely what to use it for; but if I give her the one that was on the step, and if when she takes it out of the box on Christmas morning it looks exactly the way it looks on the box, neither of us will know what it is, or what to use it for. Especially if the writing on the inside is the same as the writing on the outside. There may be a translation on the inside, of course, but you can't tell that from the outside unless you can read Chinese, and if the people who put it in the box assume you can read Chinese and don't need anything but Chinese on the outside, then they probably assume that you don't need anything but Chinese on the inside, either.

Yes, I am not a (complete) fool, I have just spent a jolly hour going back to the website to find out what happened to the thing that wasn't on the step, but all the website will say is that it has been dispatched, and I have no way of telling the website that what has arrived wasn't what it says it dispatched, since I don't know what it is that it did dispatch, because I can't read Chinese. Not that it'd do any good, because what the website does say is that it is now too late for Christmas delivery, so that even if I found out how to change what was on the doorstep for what wasn't, I couldn't.

from Alan Coren's column in The Times (1938-2007)

Choir

SIR CHRISTÈMAS

Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell.
Who is there that singeth so,
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell?
I am here, Sir Christèmas.

Welcome, my lord Sir Christèmas!
Welcome to all, both more and less,
Come near.
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell.

Dieu vous garde, beaux sieurs, tidings I you bring:
A maid hath born a child full young,
which causeth you to sing:
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell.



Christ is now born of a pure maid:
In an ox-stall he is laid,
Wherefore sing we at a brayde:
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell.

Buvez bien par toute la compagnie.
Make good cheer and be right merry,
And sing with us now joyfully:
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell!

William Mathias (1934-92)
Words anon (c. 1500)

READING by Aimee Lou Wood

I HEARD THE BELLS ON CHRISTMAS DAY

I heard the bells on Christmas day
Their old familiar carols play,
 And wild and sweet
 The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
 Had rolled along
 The unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Till ringing, singing on its way
The world revolved from night to day,
 A voice, a chime,
 A chant sublime
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Then from each, accursed mouth
The cannon thundered in the South
 And with the sound
 The carols drowned
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!



It was as if an earthquake rent
The hearth-stones of a continent,
 And made forlorn
 The households born
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And in despair I bowed my head
“There is no peace on earth,” I said,
 “For hate is strong
 And mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!”

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
“God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
 The Wrong shall fail,
 The Right prevail
With peace on earth, good-will to men!”

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882)

Choir and Congregation

JOY TO THE WORLD

Joy to the world! The Lord is come;
 Let earth receive her King.
Let every heart prepare him room;
 And heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the world! The Saviour reigns;
 Let men their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
 Repeat the sounding joy.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
 And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness
 And wonders of his love.

*Lowell Mason (1792-1872) based on Handel,
 arranged by John Rutter (b. 1945)*

Traditional

Words by Isaac Watts (1674-1748)



PLEASE SIT

Final prayers and blessing by the Bishop

Organ Voluntary

In dulci jubilo, BWV 729
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

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Friday 9th December 2022



The Rt Revd Dr Steven Croft, Bishop of Oxford



The Rt Revd Dr Steven Croft became Bishop of Oxford in 2016 and was previously the Bishop of Sheffield. He has been a member of the House of Lords since 2013, is a member of the Lords Select Committee on Artificial Intelligence, the Board of the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation and of the Advisory Board of the Oxford Environmental Change Institute. Co-author of *Emmaus: the Way of Faith* (1996-2003), and one of four lead authors of the *Pilgrim* resource to help adults explore faith. He is author of a number of books including *Ministry in Three Dimensions* (1999 and 2008). His most recent book is *Rooted and Grounded: Faith Formation and the Christian Tradition*. (2019) Bishop Steven's blog is at <https://blogs.oxford.anglican.org> and Twitter (@Steven_Croft).

John Rutter CBE



© Photo by Nick Rutter
nickrutter.co.uk

John Rutter CBE was born in London and studied music at Clare College, Cambridge. He first came to notice as a composer during his student years; much of his early work consisted of church music and other choral pieces including Christmas carols. From 1975–79 he was Director of Music at his alma mater, Clare College, and directed the college chapel choir in various recordings and broadcasts. Since 1979 he has divided his time between composition and conducting. Today his compositions, including such concert-length works as *Requiem*, *Magnificat*, *Mass of the Children*, *The Gift of Life*, and *Visions* are performed around the world. His music has featured in a number of British royal occasions, including the two most recent royal weddings. He edits the Oxford Choral Classics series, and, with Sir David Willcocks, co-edited four volumes of *Carols for Choirs*. In 1981 he formed his own choir The Cambridge Singers, with whom he has made numerous recordings, and he appears regularly in several countries as guest conductor and choral ambassador. He holds a Lambeth Doctorate in Music, and in 2007 was awarded a CBE for services to music.

Aimee Lou Wood

Aimee Lou Wood made her screen debut on the Netflix comedy-drama series *Sex Education*, which earned her a BAFTA Television Award for Best Female Comedy Performance. Aimee will also appear in *Louis Wain*, a feature starring Benedict Cumberbatch, Claire Foy and Andrea Rainsborough. Aimee is a 2017 RADA graduate with stage credits such as Sonya in *Uncle Vanya* at the Harold Pinter, and *Downstate* at the National Theatre. Aimee is currently shooting a feature called *Living* - opposite Bill Nighy - to be directed by Oliver Hermanus.



© Photo by Matt Holyoak



Gugu Mbatha-Raw MBE

Gugu Mbatha-Raw can currently be seen in *Loki* for Disney+. In 2020 Gugu starred in the British comedy-drama *Misbehaviour* alongside Keira Knightley and in Jessica Swale's *Summerland* with Gemma Arterton. Her previous film and TV credits include the acclaimed Apple TV+ series *The Morning Show*, Warner Bros *Motherless Brooklyn*, *Beyond The Lights* and the Emmy award winning episode of *Black Mirror*, *San Junipero*. Gugu has worked on a number of Disney productions, including the smash hit *Beauty and the Beast* and Ava DuVernay's *A Wrinkle in Time*. She will next be seen in the BBC/HBO series *The Girl Before*. Gugu has also received multiple award nominations throughout her career, winning the BIFA Award for Best Actress in 2013 for her role in *Belle* directed by Amma Asante. She received an MBE in January 2018.



© Photo by Michael Wharley

Dame Mary Berry



© Photo by Georgia Glynn Smith

One of the country's best loved cookery writers and television personalities, Mary was awarded a damehood in the 2020 birthday honours list for services to broadcasting, the culinary arts and charity work. Amongst her many TV appearances last Christmas she presented the fantastically festive *A Berry Royal Christmas* where Mary met the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, helping them prepare a festive feast to thank all those working and volunteering over the Christmas period.

Mary trained at *The Cordon Bleu* in Paris and *Bath School of Home Economics*, and in the swinging '60s became the cookery editor of *Housewife* magazine, and later, *Ideal Home* magazine. She first appeared on television in the 1970s when she became the resident cook on *Afternoon Plus* with Judith Chalmers. Mary is a Patron of the Child Bereavement Trust, an Ambassador for the RHS and President of the National Garden Scheme. She has won many awards including Good Housekeeping Award for Food Book of the Year and an NRTA for Best Television Chef. In 2012 Mary was honoured with a CBE for services to culinary arts and in 2017 she won the title of Best TV Judge at the National Television Awards.



Toby Jones OBE



© Photo by Seamus Ryan

BAFTA Award winning actor Toby Jones OBE, is known for his roles both in the theatre and on screen. He was most recently seen in BBC Two's *Danny Boy* (2021), and in the critically acclaimed feature film, *First Cow* (May 2021). Additionally, Toby has written and narrated *Marcovaldo* for BBC Radio 4.

Last year he returned to the stage in Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* (2020), to high acclaim. Further notable roles include *Don't Forget The Driver* (2019), a series he co-wrote, *Journey's End* (2017) and *Infamous* (2006), where Toby played 'Truman Capote' winning Best British Actor at the London Film Critics Circle Awards. In 2011, Toby starred in the Oscar-nominated *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* (2011) and received BAFTA Golden Globe and Emmy nominations as Alfred Hitchcock in *The Girl* (2012). Toby played the lead in *Berberian Sound Studio* and in the BBC Two BAFTA winning *Marvellous*.

This winter Toby Jones joins his *Detectorist* co-star Mackenzie Crook in *Worzel Gummidge*, playing six characters in the 'Guy Forks' episode and as Father Topo in *A Boy Called Christmas*, a Sky Original family film released on 26th November.

Tom Hammond-Davies - Conductor



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nickrutter.co.uk

The Oxford Bach Soloists was founded in 2015 by Tom Hammond-Davies (Artistic Director). Winner of multiple awards, Hammond-Davies has worked with Lorin Maazel, Peter Manning, James Gilchrist, Dame Ann Murray, Roderick Williams, and conducted premières of works by Colin Riley, Paul Spicer, and Sir James MacMillan. Appearances include the BBC Proms at the Royal Albert Hall, Three Choirs Festival, Oxford Lieder Festival, Three Palaces Festival Malta, and as guest conductor with the New Mozart Orchestra, International Baroque Players, Oxford Bach Choir, New Chamber Singers in Rome, and Music Nova in Antwerp.

www.tomhammonddavies.com



Choir - The Oxford Bach Soloists



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www.oxfordbachsoloists.com

Organist - Steven Grahl

Steven Grahl is Director of Music and Tutor in Music at Christ Church, Oxford. He is also an Associate Professor of Music at Oxford University, and Conductor of Schola Cantorum of Oxford. Steven served as Director of Music at Peterborough Cathedral from 2014 to 2018, where he was responsible for training the Cathedral Choir, and for the re-pitching of the Hill Organ, on which instrument he has recently recorded a solo CD. Peterborough Cathedral Choir's recording of Cheryl Frances Hoad's *Even You Song*, made under Steven's direction, was released to critical acclaim in December 2017. Steven was an interpretation finalist in the International Organ Competitions at St Albans (UK) in 2011, and in Dudelange (Luxembourg) in 2013, and has just completed his term as President of the Incorporated Association of Organists. He is a prize-winning graduate of Magdalen College, Oxford, and the Royal Academy of Music, gained the top prizes in the FRCO examination, and is also a holder of the Worshipful Company of Musicians' Silver Medallion. In 2010, he was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music.





Magdalen College School Brass Ensemble

With its collegiate connections, Magdalen College School has a long tradition of nurturing musicians and music making of a very high standard. Music is an important aspect of the school's life and in the past few years, the entire school has given rousing performances of Orff's *Carmina Burana* and Rutter's *Gloria*. Large numbers of pupils are involved in some way in the Music Department's activities with

most pupils learning at least one instrument during their time at the school.

The Senior School has two full symphony orchestras (the more advanced one plays standard orchestral repertoire such as Tchaikovsky's *Symphony no.5* and Dvorak's *Symphony no.9*). There is also a String Orchestra, two jazz bands, three choirs, close harmony groups and numerous chamber ensembles, including string quartets, piano trios, guitar, 'cello, wind, brass and percussion ensembles. There are over 70 concerts held during the course of the school year in SJE Arts, The Sheldonian Theatre, Magdalen College Chapel and various venues across the city. The school is also committed to working musically in the community and we regularly team up with local charities such as the Parasol Project, Moving Music and Macmillan Cancer Support. In addition, we have regular partnerships with Primary Schools in the form of our weekly Concert Party and our recent Multilingual Concert with 500 primary school children as part of the Oxford Festival of the Arts in collaboration with the University's Creative Multilingualism project.

Our most talented brass players make up the The Brass Ensemble. They perform a range of music from Renaissance masterpieces to contemporary arrangements at concerts throughout the year, including on the last night of the school year at the 'Madrigals on the River' event. The pupils, aged from 14 to 18, form the brass section of the school Symphony Orchestra and many of the players also perform in the County Orchestras, the National Youth Jazz Orchestra, and various local Brass groups.

Chorister - Maurits Branderhorst

Maurits Branderhorst is a Cathedral Chorister at Christ Church, Oxford. In addition to his love of singing, Maurits, 13, is a talented pianist and cellist. He is a keen sportsman, and is particularly interested in Athletics. He is intending to move on next year to Magdalen College School, Oxford, once his time as a Cathedral Chorister comes to an end.



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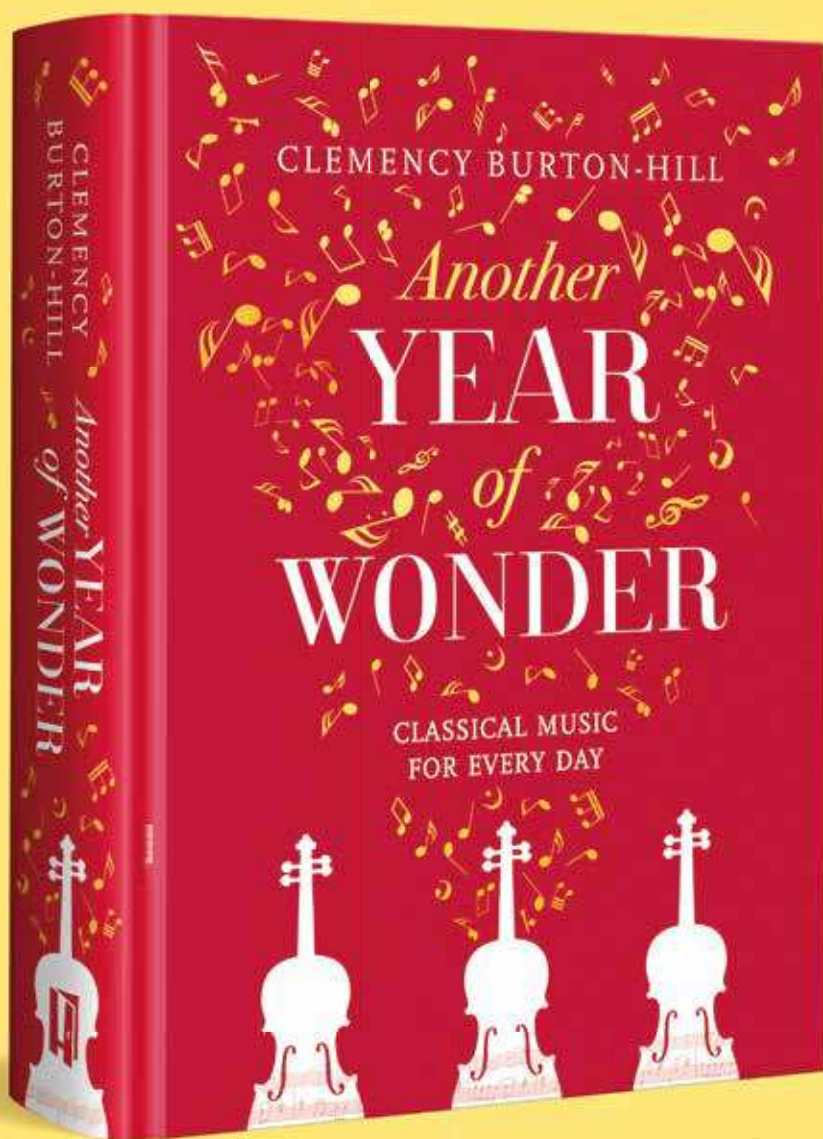
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