

Minehead Choral Society – Christmas Concert 14<sup>th</sup> December 2019  
Programme Notes

**Karl Jenkins – Stella Natalis**

1. Celebro
2. Lullay
3. Cantus trisquestrus (The Triangle Song)
4. Only Heavenly Music
5. Wintertide
6. Sleep, child of winter
7. Make we merry
8. From our Earth
9. The Protector
10. Dona nobis pacem (Grant us peace)
11. Sing with joy at Christmas
12. Jubilate Deo (O be joyful in the Lord)

*INTERVAL*

1. **Once In Royal David's City**
2. Nativity Carol *John Rutter*
3. Shepherd's Pipe Carol *John Rutter*
4. **O Little Town of Bethlehem**
5. Mary's Lullaby *John Rutter*
6. Past Three A Clock *Traditional*
7. **Hark The Herald Angels Sing**
8. Away in a Manger *arr. Bob Chilcott*
9. Jingle Bells *arr. Bob Chilcott*
10. We Wish You a Merry Christmas
11. **O Come All Ye Faithful**
12. Twelve Days of Christmas

**Stella natalis**

**Karl Jenkins** is one of the most prolific and performed composers in the world today, the Minehead Choral Society has previously performed several of his works, including "*The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace*" and "*Stabat Mater*". Born in Wales and a graduate of Cardiff University followed by post-graduate studies at London's Royal College of Music, Jenkins was originally an oboist. It was a passion for jazz – he was a member of the bands *Nucleus* and *Soft Machine* – that led him to composition. Classically trained, but drawing on a diverse range of global influences, his composing style crosses musical boundaries, from memorable ad jingles, the global 'crossover' phenomenon *Adiemus*, more 'classical' commissions such as *Requiem*, *Stabat Mater*, *Quirk* and *The Armed Man* and television and feature film soundtracks.

The chief librettist for *Stella natalis* **Carol Barratt** is a composer, pianist, lyricist and music educator with over 70 publications in print. She has written text for many works by Karl Jenkins, to whom she has been married for 34 years.

‘Stella natalis’ means ‘star of birth’ or ‘star of origin’ and the music conveys the Christmas message of peace, goodwill, compassion and a new beginning while using a wider palette of inspiration than is usual in such treatments. Zulu texts, Hindu gods and the Old Testament all make an appearance. The libretto (for the most part) is by Carol Barratt, complemented by some established texts in Latin and English. The orchestration has the usual Karl Jenkins mix of classical sounds and ethnic percussion and our solo work tonight will be performed by **Jackie Butterworth**.

*Notes from EMI Classics*

## *INTERVAL*

Our second half follows the pattern of a traditional Christmas concert, opening with the well-loved “**Once in Royal David’s City**”, words by C.F.Alexander, tune by H.J.Gauntlett and arranged by David Willcocks. Please join in after the solo first verse!

**1. 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.**

**2. 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.**

**3. 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.**

**4. 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.**

**5. 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.**

**6. Not in that poor lowly stable,  
with the oxen standing round,  
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.**

We follow this well-known carol with two of John Rutter's own. Having performed 5 of his "10 carols for mixed voices" last year, we sing more from this lovely collection, starting with the beautiful "Nativity Carol" and the more well-known "Shepherd's Pipe Carol".

Our second participation carol is the traditional English tune, arranged by Vaughan Williams "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

**1. O little town of Bethlehem  
How still we see thee lie  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
The silent stars go by  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
The everlasting Light  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
Are met in thee tonight**

**2. O morning stars together  
Proclaim the holy birth  
And praises sing to God the King  
And Peace to men on earth  
For Christ is born of Mary  
And gathered all above  
While mortals sleep, the angels keep  
Their watch of wondering love**

**3. How silently, how silently  
The wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts  
The blessings of His heaven.  
No ear may His coming,  
But in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive him, still  
The dear Christ enters in.**

**4. O holy Child of Bethlehem  
Descend to us, we pray  
Cast out our sin and enter in  
Be born to us today  
We hear the Christmas angels  
The great glad tidings tell  
O come to us, abide with us  
Our Lord Emmanuel.**

Our next choir item is “**Mary’s Lullaby**” from John Rutter’s collection, followed by the traditional “**Past Three A Clock**”.

We then all sing the rousing “**Hark the Herald Angels Sing**”, music by Mendelssohn, arranged by David Willcocks.

1. **Hark the herald angels sing  
"Glory to the newborn King!  
Peace on earth and mercy mild  
God and sinners reconciled"  
Joyful, all ye nations rise  
Join the triumph of the skies  
With the angelic host proclaim:  
"Christ is born in Bethlehem"  
Hark! The herald angels sing  
"Glory to the newborn King!"**
  
2. **Christ by highest heav'n adored  
Christ the everlasting Lord!  
Late in time behold Him come  
Offspring of a Virgin's womb  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see  
Hail the incarnate Deity  
Pleased as man with man to dwell  
Jesus, our Emmanuel  
Hark! The herald angels sing  
"Glory to the newborn King!"**
  
3. **Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!  
Hail the Son of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all He brings  
Ris'n with healing in His wings  
Mild He lays His glory by  
Born that man no more may die  
Born to raise the sons of earth  
Born to give them second birth  
Hark! The herald angels sing  
"Glory to the newborn King!"**

We now perform a couple of new arrangements of well-loved carols by the composer Bob Chilcott , the hauntingly simple “**Away in a Manger**” and the more up beat “**Jingle Bells**”. With the concert nearly at the end, we unashamedly sing one of our favourite arrangements, a vigorous setting of the “**A Merry Christmas**”, a traditional West Country Carol arranged by Arthur Warrell. The choir, orchestra and conductor get to enjoy themselves with this piece; not as easy as it sounds, but terrific fun!

Our last participation carol is the great “**O Come all Ye Faithful**” arranged by David Willcocks. Tonight, as is traditional, we will save the last verse for Christmas Day!

**O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.  
Come and behold Him, born the King of angels;**

*O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.*

**God of God, Light of Light,  
Lo, He abhors not the Virgin's womb;  
Son of the Father, begotten, not created;**

*O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.*

**See how the shepherds, summoned to His cradle,  
Leaving their flocks, draw nigh to gaze;  
We too will thither bend our joyful footsteps;**

*O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.*

**Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;  
O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God, all glory in the highest;**

*O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord.*

Our concert concludes with “**The Twelve Days of Christmas**” by John Rutter.

We hope you enjoy the concert, have a very Happy Christmas!

Marcus Capel  
December 2019