A CHANTICLEER CHRISTMAS
from darkness to light

Cortez Mitchell, Gerrod Pagenkopf*, Kory Reid,
Alan Reinhardt, Logan Shields, Adam Ward – countertenor
Brian Hinman*, Matthew Mazzola, Andrew Van Allsburg – tenor
Andy Berry*, Zachary Burgess, Matthew Knickman – baritone and bass

Tim Keeler – Music Director

Khorhurd Khorin
Praeter rerum seriem
Noe, noe, noe!

Een kindeken is ons geboren
A Babe is Born
Noël nouvelle†

Gaude virgo, mater Christi†
Gaudete!, from Two Medieval Lyrics†

Noel Canon†
Count Your Blessings
Silent Night†

Barekhosutyamb
Ave Maria†
Oh, Jerusalem in the Morning†

Khorhurd Khorin
Komitas Vardapet (1869-1935)
Praeter rerum seriem
Josquin des Prez (ca.1450-1521)
Noe, noe, noe!
Antoine Brumel (1460-1512)

Een kindeken is ons geboren
Cornelis de Leeuw (ca.1613-ca.1661)
A Babe is Born
George Walker (1922-2018)
Noël nouvelle†
Trad. French, arr. Joseph H. Jennings and Matthew Oltman

Gaude virgo, mater Christi†
Josquin
Gaudete!, from Two Medieval Lyrics†
Steven Sametz (b. 1954)

Noel Canon†
Sametz

Count Your Blessings
Irving Berlin (1888-1989), arr. Andrew Van Allsburg

Silent Night†
Franz Xaver Gruber (1787-1863), arr. Gene Puerling

Barekhosutyamb
Komitas
Ave Maria†
Franz Biebl (1906-2001)
Oh, Jerusalem in the Morning†
Trad. Spiritual, arr. Jennings

†These pieces have been recorded by Chanticleer.

*Andy Berry occupies The Eric Alatorre Chair given by Peggy Skornia. Brian Hinman occupies the Tenor Chair, given by an Anonymous Donor. Gerrod Pagenkopf occupies The Ning G. Mercer Chair for the Preservation of the Chanticleer Legacy, given by Ning and Stephen Mercer.
The holiday season usually finds Chanticleer touring around the country, singing concerts to audience members who brave the winter cold to see us in churches and halls as we pass through their hometowns. But this year, things are different. As the days grow colder and the nights longer, we find ourselves not on tour but at home, trying like so many around the world to find the joy in this transformed Christmas season.

But neither winter nor isolation last forever. The darkness of our current world will eventually give way to light and warmth and connection. Our Christmas program this year, recorded by following strict safety measures and with the help of our friends at Stanford Live, reminds us that night is transitory. We meditate on the darkness, isolation, and mystery of Christmas Eve. We learn from it and grow in it, until the morning comes and light shines once more.

We begin by candlelight with *Khorkhurd khorin*, a procession from the Armenian Divine Liturgy set by the father of modern Armenian music, Komitas Vardapet. Born Songhomon Songhomonian, Komitas studied traditional Armenian liturgical singing in school and developed a life-long interest in Armenian folk music. In 1894, Songhomonian became a priest, taking the name “Komitas” from a 7th century Armenian hymnodist. That same year he earned the degree of *vardapet*, or doctor of theology, thus acquiring the name and title we know today.

His efforts to introduce traditional Armenian folk and sacred music to the Western world were cut short by the Armenian genocide and the deportation of Armenian intellectuals in April of 1915. Komitas was arrested and sent to the interior of the Ottoman Empire, where many of his colleagues and friends were killed. Over the next eight years, 1.5 million Armenians would die. Komitas survived the ordeal and was allowed to leave the country in 1919. But the experience left a profound impact on him; he spent the remaining 16 years of his life in a mental hospital in Paris. In his music, one hears the tragedy, the sincerity, but also the resilient hope of the Armenian people.

Various translated as “Beyond the natural order of things” and “This is no normal scheme of things,” the text of Josquin’s motet *Praeter rerum seriem* could be interpreted today as a meditation on the current state of the world: life for the past year has followed no normal scheme of things. The otherworldly rumblings, swirlings canons, and structural sonic pillars that appear throughout *Praeter rerum seriem* lend the piece a sense of profound mystery and, indeed, confusion. While originally about the mystery of the virgin birth, when heard today, the piece comments more on the rumbling and swirling of the current moment. Antoine Brumel’s *Noe, noe, noe* ends this first set with an exclamation of intense joy amidst the darkness.

> From the abyss of glory rang the voice:  
> "From heaven to earth, from earth once more to heaven,  
> Shall Truth, with constant interchange, alight
And soar again, an everlasting link
Between the world and sky.
And man was born.

(from “The Birth of Man” by Emma Lazarus)

In the middle of the night, a child was born. In the middle of the darkness, a small light appeared. The Dutch song Een kindeken is ons geboren contains an incredibly sweet Christmas melody. It is a lullaby as much as it is a carol. George Walker’s A babe is born tells the same story from another perspective. It’s a setting of a 15th century English text, with each verse ending in a borrowed Latin phrase that comments on the English narrative. A native of Washington, D.C., and the first Black American to win the Pulitzer Prize for Music, Walker’s setting of this ancient text oscillates between feelings of wonder, joy, mystery, and fright. The thorny harmonic language of the English story gives way to pure and open sonorities for the Latin commentary. Walker takes us back and forth between the two. We’re never sure whether we should be excited or terrified. Such variety also appears in Noël nouvelet, another 15th century retelling of the Christmas story. Joseph H. Jennings and Matthew Oltman, two former Chanticleer music directors, arranged this familiar and sinewy tune to be at times playful, at times regal, and at times mysterious.

Though Darkness still her empire keep,
And hours must pass, ere morning break;
From troubled dreams, or slumbers deep,
That music kindly bids us wake:
It calls us, with an angel’s voice,
To wake, and worship, and rejoice;

(from "Music on Christmas Morning" by Anne Brontë)

Also by Josquin, Gaude virgo mater Christi is a joyful celebration of Mary and the life of her son. While written with the same care and craftsmanship as Praeter rerum seriem – imitation and madrigalisms abound – this work contrasts the brooding nature of the opening motet with an air of excitement and expectation. The excitement boils over in Steven Sametz’s setting of the ancient text Gaudete: “Rejoice! Christ is born of the Virgin Mary! Rejoice!” Sametz sets the original carol melody with rapidly changing meters and neighboring chromatic triads. These traits lend the work a medieval flare, while also highlighting the excitement and mystery of Christmas Eve. Finally, Sametz’s Noel Canon, also with text from a Medieval carol, rings in the season with a triumphant shout.

The angels came from heaven high,
And they were clad with wings;
And lo, they brought a joyful song
The host of heaven sings.
The kings they knocked upon the door,
The wise men entered in,
The shepherds followed after them
To hear the song begin.

The angels sang through all the night
Until the rising sun,
But little Jesus fell asleep
Before the song was done.

(from "Christmas Carol" by Sara Teasdale)

The world settles as the night lingers and the moon rises. Joyful reverie gives way to the comfort of the dark. Count your blessings comes from the classic Bing Crosby film, White Christmas. Arranged by one of our tenors, Andrew Van Allsburg, the piece is a reminder of all the good things that remain in our lives, despite the darkness closing in. The arrangement moves from an intimate bedside reflection, to the sound-world of Hollywood magic, and back again, to a gentle, sleepy, ending. The stillness and calm of Christmas Eve finds its culmination in Silent Night, here arranged by the master of vocal jazz, Gene Puerling. This special adaptation of Franz Gruber’s original melody begins with simple harmonies. The middle section, however, is full of lush chords that represent the true warmth, splendor, and magic of Christmas. Then, it closes as it began: in stillness and calm.

Let placid slumbers sooth each weary mind,
At morn to wake more heav'ly, more refin'd;
So shall the labours of the day begin
More pure, more guarded from the snares of sin.
Night's leaden sceptre seals my drowsy eyes,
Then cease, my song, till fair Aurora rise.

(from "A Hymn to the Evening" by Phillis Wheatley)

The final set begins with another excerpt from the Divine Liturgy by Komitas. Barekhosutyamb is a prayer for intercession to the Virgin Mary. It starts with a reverential tone; one envisions bowed heads and earnest pleading. The continuous, chant-like vocal lines ebb and flow as the text moves from supplication to declamation. The final climax is a grand plea for assurance and acceptance. It is a plea that rings true for us today, and has rung true for the Armenian people throughout their tumultuous history.

This Armenian prayer to the Virgin Mary transitions seamlessly to Franz Biebl’s Ave Maria, which asks Mary to “pray for us now and at the hour of our death.” Biebl’s setting is actually a version of the “Angelus” Catholic devotional prayer, which tells the story of the annunciation
and incarnation. Biebl’s Ave Maria is synonymous with Chanticleer. We perform it every Christmas, and every time we sing it, it feels like coming home.

With the dawn comes assurance and hope. A new day brings new possibilities. It brings warmth and light and connection and joy. Oh, Jerusalem in the Morning, arranged by music director emeritus Joseph H. Jennings, captures the radiance of Christmas morning. Such radiance and warmth is often hard to remember these days. But while the darkness feels close, and the wait feels long, the dawn will come. Life will return, and music will ring again.

Program notes by Tim Keeler
Khorhurd Khorin – Komitas Vardapet (1869-1935)

Khorhurd khorin, anhas, anəskizban, Mystery profound, unfathomable, without beginning,
Vor zardarets zverin petutyund You adorned your supernal realm,
I haragast annatuys tsusuyun, A chamber of unapproachable light,
Gerapantz paroq, zdasos hreghinats. In splendid glory, with the ranks of fiery spirits.

Ancharahrash zorutyamb With ineffably wondrous power
Steghtzer zAdam, patker tirakan, You created Adam, in lordly image,
Yev nazeli paroq zggestvoretser And vested him with gracious glory
I drakhtn Adeni, teghi berkanrats. In the paradise of Eden, the place of delights.

Charcharanq qo surb miyatznid Through the passion of your Only-begotten
Norogetsan araratq amenayn, You renewed all creatures;
Yev verastin mardn anmahatsav, And man was restored in immortality
Zardaryal i zgest ankoghopteli. Appareled in unspoilable raiment.

Tagavor yerknavor, Heavenly King,
Yekeghetsi qo ansharzh pahya, Preserve your Church unshaken,
Yev zerkərpagus anvand qum And keep in peace
Pahya i khaghaghutyan. The worshipers of your name.

Khachatur of Taron (13th century)

Praeter rerum seriem – Josquin Des Prez (ca.1450-1521)

Praeter rerum seriem Beyond the natural order of things
parit deum hominem A virgin mother
virgo mater. Gave birth to God as man.
Nec vir tangit virginem No man touched the virgin
nee prolis originem Nor did the father of the child
novit pater. Know the mother.

Virtus sancti spiritus The power of the holy spirit
opus illud coelitus Accomplished
operatur. This heavenly work.
Initus et exitus The ins and outs
partus tui penitus Of your birth, who
quis scrutatur? Can examine them wholly?

Dei providentia By the providence of God,
quae disponit omnia So sweet,
tam suave. Which arranges all things,
Tua puerperia Convert into a holy mystery
transfer in mysteria. This childbirth of yours,
Mater ave. Mother, hail.

Translation by David Wyatt

Noe, noe, noe! – Antoine Brumel (1460-1512)

Noe, noe, noe! Noël, Noël, Noël!

Een kindeken is ons geboren – Cornelis De Leeuw (ca.1613-ca.1661)

Een kindeken is ons geboren in Bethle’em, A child was born to us in Bethlehem,
des hadd’ Herodes t’oren, dat bleek aen hem, and Herod learned about him, as all could tell,
A Babe is Born – George Walker (1922-2018)

A Babe is born all of a may,  
Who brings salvation unto us,  
To them we sing both night and day,  
Veni Creator Spiritus.  
[Come, Creator Spirit]

At Bethlehem that blessed place,  
The child of bliss now born He was,  
And Him to serve God give us grace,  
O lux beata Trinitas.  
[O Trinity of blessed light]

There came three kings out of the East,  
To worship the King that is so free,  
With gold and myrrh and frankincense,  
A solis ortus cardine.  
[From the rising of the sun]

Noël Nouvelet – Traditional French, arr. Joseph H. Jennings and Matthew Oltman

Noël nouveau, Noël chantaient ici;  
A new Noël, now let us sing Noël;  
Dévots gens, crions à Dieu merci!  
Devout people, cry to God your thanks!  
Chantons Noël pour le Roi nouveau:  
Sing Noël for the new-born King,  
Noël nouveau, Noël chantaient ici.  
A new Noël, now let us sing Noël.

D’un oiselet après le chant ouïs.  
Then I heard the song of a little bird,  
Qui, aux pasteurs, disait: «Partez ici!  
Who, to the shepherds, said: “Go there!  
En Bethléem trouverez l’Agnelet.»  
In Bethlehem you will find the little Lamb.”  
Noël nouveau, Noël chantaient ici.  
A new Noël, now let us sing Noël.

En Bethléem Marie et Joseph vis,  
In Bethlehem I saw Mary and Joseph,  
L’âne et le bœuf, l’Enfant couché parmi.  
The ass and ox, the Infant sleeping among them.  
La crèche était au lieu d’un bercelet.  
The manger was there instead of a cradle.  
Noël nouveau, Noël chantaient ici.  
A new Noël, now let us sing Noël.

L’étoile y vis, qui la nuit éclaircit,  
I saw a star, illuminating the night,  
Qui d’Orient dont elle était sortie,  
That came from out of the East,
En Bethléém les trois rois conduisait. Leading the three kings to Bethlehem.
Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici. A new Noël, now let us sing Noël.

L’un portrait l’or, l’autre la myrrhe aussi. One carried gold, another also brought myrrh.
L’autre l’encens qui faisait bon senti. The third brought incense, which made a pleasing smell.
Du Paradis semblait le jardinet. Like Paradise seemed the garden.
Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici. A new Noël, now let us sing Noël.

Gaude virgo, mater Christi – Josquin

Gaude virgo, mater Christi, Rejoice, virgin mother of Christ
Quae per aurem concepisti, who has conceived by ear,
Gabriele nuntio. with Gabriel as messenger.

Gaude, quia Deo plena Rejoice, for full of God
Peperisti sine poena, you gave birth without pain,
Cum pudoris lilio. with the lily of purity.

Gaude, quia tui nati Rejoice, for the resurrection
Quem dolebas mortem pati, of your Son now shines,
Fulget resurrectio. whose death you mourned.

Gaude Christo ascendente, Rejoice, as Christ ascends,
Et in coelum te vidente, and, in your sight, is carried
Motu fertur proprio. into heaven by his own strength.

Gaude que post ipsum scandis, Rejoice, you who riseth after him
Et est honor tibi grandis, and to whom great honor is due
In caeli palatio. in the palace of heaven.

Ubi fructus ventris tui, Where the fruit of your womb
Nobis detur per te frui, is granted us, through you, to enjoy
In perenni gaudio. in eternal rejoicing.
Alleluia.

Gaudete! from Two Medieval Lyrics – Steven Sametz (b. 1954)

Gaudete, Gaudete! Rejoice, Rejoice!
Christus est natus Christ is born
Ex Maria virgine, Of the Virgin Mary,
Gaudete! Rejoice!
Tempus ad est gratiae, It is now the time of grace
Hoc quod optabamus; that we have desired;
Carmina laetitiae, Let us sing songs of joy,
Devote redamus let us give devotion
Deus homo factus est, God was made man,
Natura mirante; and nature marvels;
Mundus renovatus est The world was renewed
A Christo regnante. By Christ who is King.
Ezechielis porta The closed gate of Ezechiel
Clausa pertransitur; He has been passed through;
Unde lux est orta From where the light rises
Salus inventur. Salvation is found.
Ergo nostra cantio, Therefore let our assembly now sing,
Psallat iam in lustro; Sing the Psalms to purify us;
Benedicat Domino: Let it praise the Lord;
Salus Regi nostro. Greetings to our King.
Noël Canon – Steven Sametz

Noël! Noël! Sing we Noël!
Sing we both all and some: Noël!
Out of your sleep awake!
For God mankind now hath he take
All of a maiden without any make!

Count Your Blessings – Irving Berlin (1888-1989), arr. Andrew Van Allsburg

When I’m worried and I can't sleep
I count my blessings instead of sheep
And I fall asleep counting my blessings
When my bankroll is getting small
I think of when I had none at all
And I fall asleep counting my blessings.

I think about a nursery and I picture curly heads
And one by one I count them as they slumber in their beds
If you’re worried and you can't sleep
Just count your blessings instead of sheep
And you'll fall asleep counting your blessings.

Silent Night – Franz Xavier Gruber (1787-1863), arr. Gene Puerling

Silent night, Holy night!
All is calm, All is bright,
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child,
Holy Infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, Holy night!
Son of God, Love’s pure light!
Radiant beams from Thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

Barehosutyamb – Komitas

Through the intercession of your virgin mother
Accept the supplications of your servants,
O Christ, who with your blood
Made your holy church brighter than the heavens.

And ordained in her the orders of the apostles, prophets
and the holy teachers after the pattern of the heavenly hosts.

Today we, order of priests,
Deacons, clerks and clerics
Offer incense before you, Lord,
As Zechariah did of old,
Accept from us our offering,
As you accepted the sacrifice of Abel, Noah, and Abraham.

Through the intercession of your supernal hosts,
Ever unshaken maintain the throne of the Armenians.
Ave Maria – Franz Biebl (1906-2001)

Angelus Domini nuntiavit Mariae et concepit de Spiritu sancto. The angel of the Lord made his announcement to Mary and she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum; et benedicta tu in mulieribus, and the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women, et benedictus fructus ventris tui Jesus. and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.

Maria dixit: Ecce ancilla Domini; fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum. Mary said, “Behold the servant of the Lord; let it be unto me according to Your word.”

Et verbum caro factum est et habitavit in nobis. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners.


Jerusalem in the Morning – Trad. Spiritual, arr. Jennings

Mary, Mary, what’s the matter? Oh Jerus’lem in the mornin’
I said my po’ Mary, what’s the matter? Oh Jerus’lem in the mornin’

Oh Joseph, Joseph, what is the matter? Oh Jerus’lem in the mornin’
Well now Joseph, Joseph, what’s the matter? Oh Jerus’lem in the mornin’

Night is chilly, what’s the matter? Oh Jeru’slem in the mornin’
The night is chilly, what is the matter? Oh Jeru’slem in the mornin’

I hear the oxen bawlin’,
Hear the lambs a-squallin’
Oh Jerus’lem in the mornin’

I hear the cattle lowin’,
Rooster crowin’
Oh Jerus’lem in the mornin’

Mary, Mary, what’s the matter? Oh Jerus’lem in the mornin’

I’m singin’ Oh Jerusalem, oh Jerusalem, Oh Jerus’lem in the mornin’

Oh well now
Little baby Jesus born in a stable, Oh Jerus’lem in the mornin’

I’m singin’ oh Jerusalem, oh Jerusalem, Oh Jerus’lem in the mornin’
Oh well now
Little baby Jesus lyin’ in the manger,
Oh Jerus’lem in the mornin’

Mary baby born today, wrapped in swadlin’ clothes,
Laid him in a manger Lord that’s how the story goes.

Shepherds bidin’ in the fields, watchin’ o’er their sheep,
Angels singing loud and clear woke them from their sleep.

I’m singin’ oh Jerusalem, oh Jerusalem,
Oh Jerus’lem in the mornin’

Oh well now
Little baby Jesus born in a stable,
Oh Jerus’lem in the mornin’

Wise men saw the shining star, shining in the east,
Came on camels from afar bringing gifts to the prince of peace.

I’m singin’ oh Jerusalem, oh Jerusalem,
Oh Jerus’lem in the mornin’

Oh well now
Little baby Jesus born in a stable,
Little baby Jesus lyin’ in a manger,
Little baby Jesus born to be our savior
Oh Jerus’lem in the mornin’

See the stars a-glowing, their lustre showin’
Oh Jerus’lem in the mornin’
I see the moon in crescent, phosphorescent,
Oh Jerus’lem in the mornin’

Mary, Mary what is the matter?
Oh Jerus’lem in the mornin’
Mary, Mary what is the matter?
Oh Jerus’lem in the mornin’

I see the
doves a-cooin’
cows a-mooing
asses braying
horses neighing
goats a-bleating
birds a-tweeting
geese a-squawking
parrots talking
mice a-prancing
lupie dancing
heav’nly choir
singing higher

Mary, Mary
Joseph, Joseph,
Little baby Jesus
What is the matter?
Oh Jerusalem in the mornin’!
In the mornin’!
The GRAMMY® Award-winning vocal ensemble Chanticleer has been hailed as “the world’s reigning male chorus” by *The New Yorker*, and is known around the world as “an orchestra of voices” for its wide-ranging repertoire and dazzling virtuosity. Founded in San Francisco in 1978 by singer and musicologist Louis Botto, Chanticleer quickly took its place as one of the most prolific recording and touring ensembles in the world, selling over one million recordings and performing thousands of live concerts to audiences around the world.

Chanticleer’s repertoire is rooted in the renaissance and has continued to expand to include a wide range of classical, gospel, jazz, popular music, and a deep commitment to the commissioning of new compositions and arrangements. The ensemble has committed much of its vast recording catalogue to these commissions, garnering GRAMMY® Awards for its recording of Sir John Tavener’s “*Lamentations & Praises*”, and the ambitious collection of commissioned works entitled “Colors of Love”. Chanticleer is the recipient of the *Dale Warland/Chorus America Commissioning Award* and the *ASCAP/Chorus America Award for Adventurous Programming*, and its Music Director Emeritus Joseph H. Jennings received the *Brazeal Wayne Dennard Award* for his contribution to the African-American choral tradition during his tenure with Chanticleer.

Named for the “clear-singing” rooster in Geoffrey Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, Chanticleer continues to maintain ambitious programming in its hometown of San Francisco, including a large education and outreach program that recently reached over 8,000 people, and an annual concert series that includes its legendary holiday tradition “A Chanticleer Christmas”.

Chanticleer is a non-profit organization, governed by a volunteer Board of Trustees, administered by a professional staff with a full-time professional ensemble. In addition to the many individual contributors to Chanticleer, the Board of Trustees thanks the following Foundations, Corporations and Government Agencies for their exceptional support:

The National Endowment for the Arts • Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund
The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation • Dunard Fund USA • The Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation
The Bernard Osher Foundation • The Bob Ross Foundation

**Chanticleer Staff**

*Philip Wilder*, President & General Director  
*Murrey Nelson*, Director of Development  
*Curt Hancock*, Director of Operations and Touring  
*Brian Bauman*, Senior Accountant/Budget Manager  
*Barbara Bock*, Development and Marketing Associate  

*Tim Keeler*, Music Director  
*Gerrod Pagenkopf*, Assistant Music Director  

*Brian Hinman*, Road Manager  

*Artist Management*: Opus 3 Artists, Ltd.

*Founder*: Louis Botto (1951 – 1997)  
*Music Director Emeritus*: Joseph H. Jennings

**Website** – [www.chanticleer.org](http://www.chanticleer.org)

**Film Credits**

Directed and Photographed by
Frazer Bradshaw
Executive Producer
Chris Lorway
Creative Producer
Elena Park
Producers
Kimberly Pross
Frazer Bradshaw

Audio Production, Engineering and Mixing by
David v.R. Bowles / Swineshead Productions, LLC

Editors
Emile Bokaer
Frazer Bradshaw

Assistant Director
Vanessa Avery

Additional Cameras
Ben Lunden
Justin Chin

Jib Operator
Joe Wolohan

Assistant Camera
Alex Zajicek

Gaffer
Frank Silva

Best Boy
Nicholas Dias

Re-recording Mixer
Dan Olmsted

Colorist
Frazer Bradshaw