

# EMBRACING THE LIGHT OF LIBERTY

*O Nata Lux*

*O Magnum Mysterium*

*Gloria*

Kevin Memley

Tomás Luis de Victoria

Antonio Vivaldi

*Gloria in Excelsis Deo*  
*Et in Terra Pax Hominibus*  
*Laudamus Te*  
*Gratias Agimus Tibi*  
*Domine Deus, Rex Coelestis*  
*Domine File, Unigenite*  
*Domine Deus, Agnus Dei*  
*Qui Tollis Peccata Mundi*  
*Qui Sedes Ad Dexteram Patris*  
*Quoniam Tu Solus Sanctus*  
*Cum Sancto Spiritu*

## INTERMISSION

*Come and Dance*

*Dream as an Innocent Child*

*Pat-a-pan*

*Wexford Carol*

*Deck the Halls*

*Child of Light/What Child Is This*

*A-Wassailing*

Toby Young

Brian Pappal

Shawn Kirchner

Elaine Hagenberg

Dan Davison

Daniel Kantor

Chad Weirick

*These concerts are sponsored in part by the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency, by the New York Life Foundation, and by Visit Bucks County*



# PROGRAM NOTES

Welcome to the first in-person, live concert presented by Cantus Novus in two years. We are delighted that you are joining us this evening for what we can assure you will be a feast for the soul. VERITAS, the Roman goddess of Truth, is our theme for this series of concerts as well as our offerings in the spring.

Tonight, we embark on a program entitled *Embracing the Light of Liberty*. Liberation from a crippling pandemic is just one of the many references we wish to share through our music. The members of Cantus Novus hold that there is light inside each of us, and as musicians, we feel a responsibility to share that light with each other and with our community. To that end, may our voices touch you in ways that fuel the light inside you during this holiday season.

Kevin Memley's arrangements have been a part of the Cantus Novus repertoire before. He writes with a flair for the dramatic that is both engaging and authentic. *O Nata Lux, Light Born of Light* is a musical setting of the sun rising, soaring and setting, using both ancient and modern texts: a point of contact connecting generations. Listen for the lengthy suspensions in six-part chords, and for the balance between haunting oboe solo, the choir and piano.

Immediately following is the awe-inspiring motet by Tomás Luis de Victoria, *O Magnum Mysterium*. Composed during the height of the Golden Age of the Renaissance, Victoria's treatment of the Nativity text is pristine. Changes of texture, the rise and fall of polyphonic melodies, the introduction of homophonic structure at the most precious point in the text combine to make this not just a choral favorite but a true gem in the a cappella choral repertoire.

Having emerged from the darkness of the past two years, we wanted to bring light to the world by preparing a beloved choral orchestral work in the form of Antonio Vivaldi's *Gloria*. Recognized universally as bright, cheery, and energetic, this twelve movement work features a small string orchestra, oboe, trumpet, continuo, SATB chorus and a variety of soloists. The work sparkles with joy, is exuberant in rhythmic intensity, and just is simply delightful.

Is there a more perfect human expression of liberty than dance? Toby Young's *Come and Dance* is a masterpiece of lightness, freedom (from instrumental accompaniment) and joy. Jazzy in nature, this arrangement invites us all to dance with abandon this Christmas season. And dance we should!

*Dream as an Innocent Child* touches our hearts each and every time we sing it in rehearsal. We suggest that you read the text slowly, carefully, and thoughtfully. No matter your age, the poetry here should wrap you in a warm embrace with feelings, perhaps melancholy,

perhaps even wistfulness. A light shining in the darkness can bring hope, the hope inspired by the dreams of a innocent child.

Up next is not your average arrangement of the Burgundian Carol *Pat-a-Pan*. Shawn Kirchner demonstrates a real knack for engaging a choir with his thoughtful creativity. You will hear three verses, each treated with various dynamic shifts, different textures, and modes, ending in a jubilant and powerful finale.

We are excited to offer a truly wonderful arrangement of the 12<sup>th</sup> century Irish carol, *The Wexford Carol*. Elaine Hagenberg, who appears have a golden pencil for everything she composes, has done it again. Scored for string orchestra, oboe and chorus, the lilting melodies and simple harmonies make anyone want to sing along.

In the history of Cantus Novus, whenever the choir has performed a version of this carol, we take note that the lyrics read *Deck the Hall with Boughs of Holly*. Imagine our collective surprise to find Dan Davison's arrangement which asks the choir to sing *halls* – plural. We are embracing this change, freeing ourselves from the tyranny of other composers and their insistence on a singular hall. In this spirit, you will enjoy a fresh, exciting and sprightly well-known Christmas song, with four-hand piano accompaniment and mixed metered “fa-la-las” to boot!

We have arrived at a point where you are invited to join with us. Carefully read the text of *Child of Light* and reflect a moment on our own need for light in our life. Daniel Kantor's setting is an exquisite pairing of an original four-part chorale with the English folk song Greensleeves (*What Child is This*). Please join us in singing the carol at the appropriate time.

A year ago, the members of Cantus Novus had finished a season of recording ten Christmas songs from their home as we presented *From Our Homes to Yours*. It was a massive undertaking of which we are most proud. The finale of that video concert was *A Wassailing*, a rollicking English carol that just begs to be repeated this year. Its message of *love and joy come to you, and a Happy New Year*, is one we wish for you, your family, and friends. Together let us embrace our light and be free to spread that light to others. Happy Holidays.

---