



LUX

My Lord Has Come

CHRISTMAS CLASSICS BY
Lauridsen, Gjeilo, Howells, and others

Director's Notes

My Lord Has Come marks Lux's third release, as we finally venture into the world of Christmas. Many of these recordings represent some of our own favorite Christmas songs and arrangements for choir, including beautiful, gushing settings of well-known carols, as well as more traditional choral pieces which have become standards of the Christmas choral repertoire.

With *My Lord Has Come*, we hoped to blend the known and lesser known choral pieces that we've come to love into one release; using simple arrangements of classic hymns like "In the Bleak Midwinter" and "Es ist ein Ros entsprungen" next to more dense arrangements of classic melodies like Rathbone's soaring arrangement of "Silent Night" and Carter's take on "I Wonder As I Wander" (one of my personal favorites), as well as bringing in other Christmas pieces which might be less familiar, like Howells's "Sing Lullaby" or Pärt's "O Weisheit".

The album begins with the first two pieces from Pärt's *Sieben Magnificat-Antiphonen*—"O Weisheit", and "O Adonai", which display Pärt's classic style of part-writing, for which he coined the term "tintinnabuli." This seemingly simple style brings the ability to express many different emotions, even just between two short pieces like the two which open this release.

After three lesser-known settings of Christmas texts, we come to Tallis' serene *O Nata Lux*, which then brings us to a string of familiar tunes, set with familiar and unfamiliar harmonies. Interspersed among these is Ola Gjeilo's setting of the *Coventry Carol*, in which he treats the haunting melody with a waltz-like accompaniment. Between these familiar carols is the Biebl *Ave Maria*, which has become a

standard in the choral repertoire, with much thanks to American choral groups Chanticleer and Cantus.

We then come to Howells' *Sing Lullaby*—a lesser-known piece which, in classic Howells fashion, takes the listener on a harmonic journey. It showcases the basses as the upper voices float above them, growing into a completely new harmonic world, and gradually unraveling back to its original theme.

Finally, we round out the album with two very different settings of the *O Magnum Mysterium* text: one by Brian Schmidt, and one by Morten Lauridsen. Each uses dissonance in very different ways, yet to the same purpose—Schmidt uses sharp dissonances and resolves them to more consonant triads while using declarative unisons to signify an unwavering belief in the great mystery that is Jesus' birth, while Lauridsen uses less harsh dissonances to paint a serene picture of the Christmas story, never straying from the original key but once, to foreshadow the pain of Mary at Jesus' death.

We give our deepest gratitude to everyone who aided in the creation of this album—Frank & Kathy Napoli, John Vengrouskie, St. Jerome's Parish, The Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in America, and so many more; not to mention you! Your support assists us in the continuation and expansion of our recording projects, concerts, and much more. For that, we are forever thankful. We sincerely hope you enjoy *My Lord Has Come*.

—Robby Napoli, Director



1	O Weisheit Arvo Pärt	1:30
2	O Adonai Arvo Pärt	2:37
3	There Is No Rose Jonathan Lane	2:20
4	O Nata Lux de Lumine Thomas Tallis	1:49
5	Silent Night [Live] Jonathan Rathbone	3:44
6	There Is A Flower John Rutter	4:04
7	Maria durch ein Dornwald ging arr. Stefan Claas	2:01
8	Ave Maria (Angelus Domini) [Live] Franz Biebl	6:50
9	Es ist ein Ros entsprungen Michael Praetorius	2:15
10	Coventry Carol arr. Ola Gjeilo	3:17
11	My Lord Has Come Will Todd	3:18
12	I Wonder As I Wander arr. Andrew Carter	2:50
13	In The Bleak Midwinter Gustav Holst	4:04
14	Sing Lullaby Herbert Howells	3:01
15	O Magnum Mysterium Brian A. Schmidt	3:17
16	O Magnum Mysterium Morten Lauridsen	6:10

Texts and Translations

1. O Weisheit

O Weisheit, hervorgegangen aus dem Munde des
Höchsten,
die Welt umspannst du einem Ende zum andern,
in Kraft und Milde ordnest du alles:
O komm und offenbare uns den Weg der Weisheit und
der Einsicht,
O Weisheit.

—*German from traditional Latin text.*

Translation: John Mullan

2. O Adonai

O Adonai, der Herr und Führer des Hauses Israel, im
flammenden Dornbusch bist du dem Mose erschienen
und hast ihm auf dem Berg das Gesetz erschienen und
hast ihm auf dem Berg das Gesetz gegeben: o komm und
befreie uns mit deinem starken Arm.

—*German translation of traditional Latin prayer*

3. There Is No Rose

There is no rose of such virtue as is the rose that bare
Jesu. *Alleluia*. For in this rose contained was heaven and
earth in little space. *Res miranda*. [Marvelous thing.]
By that rose we may well see that he is God in persons
three. *Pares forma*. [Equal in form.] The angels sung the
shepherds to, “Gloria in excelsis Deo.” *Gaudeamus*. [Let
us rejoice.] Leave we all this worldly mirth and follow we
this joyful birth. *Transeamus*. [Let us turn.]

—*Anonymous English Text*

4. O Nata Lux de Lumine

O nata lux de lumine, Jesu redemptor saeculi,
Dignare clemens supplicum, laudes precesque sumere.

Qui carne quondam contegi, dignatus es pro perditis,
Nos membra confer effici, tui beati corporis. Amen.

—*Lauds for the Feast of the Transfiguration.*

Translation: John-Paul Teti

O wisdom, proceeding from the mouth of the most high,
You encircle the world from one end to the other.
You order all things with might and mercy.

O come to us and reveal the way of wisdom and
understanding,

O wisdom.

O Adonai* and leader of the House of Israel, who
appeared to Moses in the fire of the burning bush and
gave him the law on Sinai: come and redeem us with an
outstretched arm.

*Adonai = Hebrew name for God

O light born of light, Jesus, redeemer of the world,
With loving kindness deign to receive suppliant praise
and prayer.

You who once deigned to be clothed in flesh for the sake
of the lost, Grant to us that we may be members
of your blessed body. Amen.

Texts and Translations

5. Silent Night

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, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night, holy babe, smiles alight radiant
from thy innocent face in this saving hour of thy grace;
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

—*Joseph Mohr, translated by J.F. Young (verse 1 and 2) and
Elizabeth Poston (verse 3)*

6. There Is A Flower

There is a flower sprung of a tree
The root thereof is called Jesse,
A flower of price;
There is none such in paradise.

The seed thereof was Goddes sand [God's gift],
That God himself sowed with his hand,
In Nazareth that holy land,
Amidst her arbour a maiden found;
This blessed flower
Sprang never but in Mary's bower.

When that fair flower began to spread
And his sweet blossom began to bed [bud],
Then rich and poor of every land,
They marvelled how this flower might spread
Till kinges three
That blessed flower came to see.
—*Traditional English text*

Silent night, holy night; shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing
“Alleluia!” Jesus the savior is born, Jesus the savior is
born.

This flower is fair and fresh of hue,
It fadeth never, but ever is new;
The blessed branch this flower on grew
Was Mary mild that bare Jesu; A flower of grace;
Against all sorrow, it is solace.

When Gabriel this maid did meet,
With ‘Ave Maria’ he did her greet;
Between them two this flower was set
And safe was kept, no man should wit,
’Til on a day in Bethlem it could spread and spray.

Angels there came from heaven's tower
To look upon this freshele [fresh] flower,
How fair he was in his colour
And how sweet in his savour
And to behold how such a flower might spring in gold.

Texts and Translations

7. Maria durch ein Dornwald ging

Maria durch ein Dornwald ging. *Kyrie eleison.*
Maria durch ein Dornwald ging,
der hat in sieben Jahr kein Laub getragen.
Jesus und Maria.

Was trug Maria unter ihrem Herzen? *Kyrie eleison.*
Ein kleines Kindlein ohne Schmerzen, das trug Maria
unter ihrem Herzen: Jesus und Maria.

Da haben die Dornen Rosen getragen. *Kyrie eleison.*
Als das Kindlein durch den Wald getragen,
da haben die Dornen Rosen getragen. Jesus und Maria.
—*Traditional German text. Translation by Lucas Barkley
and John Mullan.*

8. Ave Maria (Angelus Domini)

Angelus Domini nuntiavit Mariae et concepit de Spiritu
Sancto: *Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum,*
Benedicta tu in mulieribus et benedictus fructus ventris tui,
Jesus.

Maria dixit: “Ecce ancilla Domini. Fiat mihi secundum
verbum tuum.” *Ave Maria...*

Et verbum caro factum est et habitavit in nobis. *Ave Maria.*
... Sancta Maria, mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus,
nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.

—*Traditional Catholic text. Translation by John-Paul Teti.*

Mary walked through a thorny wood. *Lord, have mercy.*
Mary walked through a thorny wood,
That had not borne leaf for seven years.
Jesus and Mary.

What did Mary bear under her heart? *Lord, have mercy.*
A little child without pains—
That is what Mary bore under her heart: Jesus and Mary.

Then the thorns bore roses. *Lord, have mercy.*
As the child [traveled] through the wood,
Then did the thorns bear roses. Jesus and Mary.

The angel of the Lord announced to Mary, and she
conceived through the Holy Spirit: *Hail Mary, full of grace,*
the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women, and
blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.

Mary said: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Let this be
done to me according to your word.” *Hail Mary...*

And the word was made flesh and lived among us. *Hail
Mary...* Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners,
now and in the hour of our deaths. Amen.

Texts and Translations

9. Es ist ein Ros entsprungen

Es ist ein Ros entsprungen aus einer Wurzel zart, wie uns die Alten sungen, von Jesse kam die Art und hat ein Blümlein bracht mitten im kalten Winter wohl zu der halben Nacht.

Das Röslein, das ich meine, davon Jesaia sagt, hat uns gebracht alleine Marie, die reine Magd. Aus Gottes ewgem Rat hat sie ein Kind geboren wohl zu der halben Nacht.

Das Blümelein so kleine, das duftet uns so süß, mit seinem hellen Scheine vertreibt die Finnsternis: Wahr' Mensch und wahrer Gott, hilft uns aus allem Leide, rettet von Sünd und Tod.

—*Traditional German text. Translation by John Mullan.*

10. Coventry Carol

Lully, lullay, 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 sing, 'By by, lully, lullay'?

Herod the King, in his raging, charged he hath this day
His men of might in his own sight all children young to slay.
Then woe is me, poor child, for thee, and ever mourn and say:
For thy parting, nor [i.e. neither] say nor sing, 'By by, lully lullay'.

Lully, lullay, Thou little tiny Child, by, by, lully, lullay.

—*Traditional English text*

A rose has sprung up from a tender root,
As the old ones sang to us, its strain came from Jesse, and
it has brought forth a flower in the middle of the cold
winter at half the night.

The little rose that I mean, of which Isaiah told, is Mary,
the pure, who brought us the flower. Through God's
eternal counsel, she has borne a child at half the night.

The flower, so small, that smells so sweet to us—with its
bright gleam, it dispels the darkness. True man and true
God, it helps us from all trouble, saves us from sin and
death.

Texts and Translations

11. My Lord Has Come

Shepherds, called by angels, called by love and angels;
No place for them but a stable. *My Lord has come.*

His love will hold me, his love will cherish me, love will
cradle me.

—*Will Todd*

12. I Wonder As I Wander

I wonder as I wander out under the sky,
How Jesus the savior did come for to die
For poor orn'ry people like you and like I,
I wonder as I wander out under the sky.

If Jesus had wanted for any wee thing:
A star in the sky or a bird on the wing
Or all of God's angels in heaven for to sing
He surely could have it, for he was the king.

— *Based on an Appalachian folk carol*

13. In The Bleak Midwinter

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone.
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter, long, long ago.

Angels and archangels, may have gathered there;
Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air.
But his mother only, in her maiden bliss,
worshipped the beloved with a kiss.

— *Christina Rossetti*

Sages, searching for stars, searching for love in heaven;
No place for them but a stable. *My Lord has come.*

Lead me, lead me to see him, sages and shepherds and
angels; no place for me but a stable. *My Lord has come.*

When Mary birthed Jesus, all in a cow's stall
Came wise men and farmers and shepherds and all.
Then high from God's heaven a star's light did fall
And the promise of ages it then did recall

God, heaven cannot hold him, nor the Earth sustain;
Heaven and Earth shall flee away when he comes to
reign.

In the bleak midwinter, a stable place sufficed:
the Lord God almighty, Jesus Christ.

What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.
If I were a wise man, I would do my part.
Yet what can I give him? Give my heart.

Texts and Translations

14. Sing Lullaby

Sing lullaby, while snow doth gently fall,
Sing lullaby to Jesus, born in an oxen stall.
Sing lullaby to Jesus, born now in Bethlehem.
The naked blackthorn's growing to weave his diadem.
Sing lullaby to Jesus, while thickly snow doth fall.
Sing lullaby to Jesus, the Savior of all.
Sing lullaby.
— *F.W. Harvey*

15 and 16. O magnum mysterium

O magnum mysterium et admirabile sacramentum
ut animalia viderent Dominum natum jacentem in
praesepio. Beata Virgo cujus viscera meruerunt portare
Dominum Christum. Alleluia!
— *Office of Matins for Christmas. Translation by
John-Paul Teti*

O great mystery and wondrous sacrament that animals
should see the newborn Lord lying in their manger.
Blessed [is] the virgin whose womb merited to carry
Christ the Lord. Alleluia!

Program Notes

The O antiphons are one of the most well-known Christian liturgical texts. They are a set of short verses prayed as part of the Vespers (evening prayer) service in the 7 days before Christmas in many Christian traditions. Because the verses are recited before the Magnificat prayer (which Pärt has also famously set to music), they are sometimes known as the Magnificat Antiphons, and it is under this title that Arvo Pärt set all seven (in German translation from the original Latin). **O Weisheit** (O Wisdom) and **O Adonai** are the first two. The pieces are classic Pärt: the choir is treated almost like bells and the rhythm is simple and in full service to the text.

The text of **There is No Rose** is taken from the Trinity carol roll (a manuscript of 13 English carols), where it appears along with a melody and harmonization. The 13 carols on the roll are the oldest surviving polyphonic music (music with multiple voices) in English. Although Lane takes only the words from the Trinity carol version, this composition is similarly light and simple.

Thomas Tallis is one of the most prolific composers of his era, and is often credited with beginning the long and rich history of choral music in the United Kingdom. Aside from William Byrd, he was the only composer in England in his lifetime granted the privilege of publishing his music. In **O Nata Lux de Lumine**, Tallis sets a prayer to Jesus, the “light born of light”, a reference to the Transfiguration, in which Christ appeared with Moses and Elijah, all cloaked in light, in front of three of his disciples.

Silent Night is one of the most famous carols of all time. The lyrics were written by Joseph Mohr, who walked 3 kilometers from his home on Christmas Eve to bring it to his friend Franz Gruber and asked him to compose a simple melody for it that could be played on the guitar. The piece was premiered at mass that night and has been of the most beloved Christmas carols ever since. This gorgeous and lush arrangement by Jonathan Rathbone begins with the sopranos and altos, then migrates to the tenors and basses before combining in 8 parts for the incredibly rich third verse.

John Rutter’s **There is a Flower** was written for George Guest and the choir at St. John’s College in Cambridge to be performed for an Advent carol service. The opening soprano solo recalls the English tradition of young boy sopranos. The piece then ‘blossoms’ while recounting the story of Jesus from his conception, through his birth and the visit of the three kings. In the fifth verse, the piece grows again into the angels’ song of ‘Alleluia’ at the birth of Christ.

Maria durch ein Dornwald ging is a German Christmas carol of murky origins, published no later than 1850. Stefan Claas’s setting of his home country’s carol sets three verses, featuring just the tenors and basses, then only the sopranos and altos, and finally the full choir in the last verse. This final verse begins on the same note, and gradually peels off into a robust major chord on the Greek liturgical phrase “Kyrie eleison”—“Lord, have mercy.”

Program Notes

German composer Franz Biebl's **Ave Maria** is really a setting of a longer traditional Catholic prayer called the Angelus, which includes the full text of the Ave Maria interwoven with other texts depicting Mary's agreement to be the mother of God. The composition was brought to the U.S. by the Cornell University Glee Club after they met Biebl at a radio station while on tour in Germany and has enjoyed widespread popularity ever since.

Though the author of **Es ist ein Ros entsprungen** is unknown, we do know that this Christmas hymn first appeared in print in 1599. Based on the text of Isaiah 11:1, the text references Isaiah foretelling the birth of Jesus. The most popular harmonization was written in 1609 by German composer Michael Praetorius; the piece can also be sung as a canon. The melody has been used as the base for many choral and instrumental works, including one of Brahms's 11 Chorale Preludes, op. 122. The hymn is more commonly known to English speakers as "Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming," or "A Spotless Rose".

The **Coventry Carol** is an English carol that dates to the 16th century. It gets its name from the town of Coventry, where it was originally performed as part of a mystery play. The text refers to the Massacre of the Innocents, in which King Herod, feeling threatened after the Magi informed him that they have come to worship a king, decides to have all children under the age of three executed. The original music contains an extremely jarring dissonance in one line, unusual for music of the day

but quite fitting for the horrifying subject matter. Here, however, Gjeilo takes the melody and writes a waltz-like choral accompaniment around it, which eventually grows into his trademark thick eight-part texture, though it retains the coldness necessary for the brutal text.

My Lord Has Come is a heartfelt setting of words by the composer. It begins with a very soft drone over which the sopranos introduce the expressive melody. This melody is passed around the choir throughout the piece, never straying from its calm and content nature except to accentuate God's love for the speaker, further brought out by the poet by breaking the strophic form of the text.

I Wonder As I Wander, one of the most beloved American carols, was constructed by prolific American folksong collector John Jacob Niles from a fragment he discovered after it was sung by a young girl at a meeting of Evangelical Christians in Murphy, North Carolina. This arrangement by British composer Andrew Carter is set in the first and third verses over choral accompaniment designed not to distract from the haunting melody, while the second verse is set in a homophonic texture, allowing the piece to breathe and expand.

Program Notes

The beloved hymn “**In The Bleak Midwinter**” portrays the birth of Christ. Christina Rossetti’s text, with its “bleak” midwinter and frozen landscape, is not representative of mild Palestinian winters, but its vivid imagery was relatable for the English parishioners it was composed for. Gustav Holst set the poem to music in 1906, and it quickly became a classic across denominations. The irregular meter requires the occasional melismatic setting, like on the word “snow” in the first verse, but Holst was able to keep all four verses almost entirely strophic, like a traditional hymn.

Herbert Howells was a British composer known for his large body of works for Anglican church choirs and services. **Sing Lullaby** comes from a set of three “Carol-Anthems.” The composer writes: “This was the third in the set. Here too a poet found the verses for me. F.W. Harvey, the Gloucestershire poet, friend of Ivor Gurney had written and published the poem only a short time before this setting was made.” The beginning of the piece creates a soothing lulling theme under the melody, contrasted by the treatment of the second stanza of the poem, which alludes to Jesus’ crucifixion.

Brian A. Schmidt’s wonderful setting for lower voices of the much-used **O Magnum Mysterium** text calls to mind the titular mysterious nature of the birth of Christ among animals, while Morten Lauridsen’s setting of the same text—this time for mixed choir—is a more serene setting. Both pieces make heavy use of musical imagery, but one feature of Lauridsen’s setting is particularly striking: on the word “virgo”, Lauridsen writes the only jarringly dissonant note in the piece, in order to foreshadow the Virgin Mary’s pain at her son’s crucifixion years after his birth.



About Lux

Lux is a chamber choir that specializes in contemporary choral music. Founded in 2014 by a small group of high school friends, the ensemble performs with a dedication to excellence, innovation, and accessibility in choral performance.

Lux has earned praise from famed composers such as Eric Whitacre, Paul Mealor, and Ola Gjeilo. Composers, music educators, performers, and listeners all over the east coast have called the group “lovely” and “wonderful”.

Lux’s singers hail from some of the finest conservatories and schools of music across the United States, and have performed everywhere from local churches to high-profile national venues. In 2019, Lux was named “Best Local Choral Group”, along with first-place 18th Street Singers and runner-up Capitol Hill Chorale, in the Best of D.C. competition held by Washington City Paper. Lux’s 2018 album *Now Ye Heavenly Powers* was met with acclaim from composers, critics, and others, becoming the Featured Choral Album on Classical MPR’s choral radio station, joining past selectees such as Voces8, Tenebrae, and The Sixteen.



Performers

Soprano

Eby Buscher^{1c}

Amanda Densmoor¹

Austin Nikirk^{1a}

Alto

Margot Cohen^{1a}

Abby Hines¹

Kimberly Parr¹

Anya Trudeau¹

Beth Ann Zinkievich¹

Tenor

Andy Boggs²

Michael Butler⁴

Anthony Jones⁵

Robby Napoli^{6b}

Zach Taylor^{7b}

John-Paul Teti³

Bass

Ben Busch³

Ciaran Cain³

Timothy Crane⁶

John Mullan^{6a}

Collin Power²

Thomas Rust^{6a}

¹All except tracks 2, 8,
and 15

⁴Track 15 only

⁵Tracks 2, 5, and 15

²All except tracks 2, 5,
and 15

⁶All tracks

⁷All tracks except 2

³All except track 8

and 15

^aQuartet, Track 3

^bSoloist, Track 8

^cSoloist, Tracks 6, 10,
and 12

LUX

Tracks 1, 3-4, 6-7, 9, 10-14, and 16 recorded at
The Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land
in Washington, DC on January 7, 2019

Producers: John Vengrouskie & Robby Napoli

Sound Engineer: John Vengrouskie

Track 2 recorded at St. Jerome's Church
in Hyattsville, MD on June 20, 2017

Producers: John Vengrouskie & Robby Napoli

Sound Engineer: John Vengrouskie

Track 5 recorded live at Maryland State Boychoir Center for the Arts
in Baltimore, MD on January 5, 2019

Producer: Robby Napoli

Sound Engineer: Robby Napoli

Track 8 recorded live at St. Jerome Academy
in Hyattsville, MD, January 2019

Producer: Robby Napoli

Sound Engineer: Robby Napoli

Track 15 recorded at St. Jerome's Church
in Hyattsville, MD on January 3, 2017

Producers: John Vengrouskie & Robby Napoli

Sound Engineer: John Vengrouskie

Photography: Frank Napoli

Design & Artwork: Robby Napoli & John-Paul Teti

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