

# *Chromatic Christmas*

## The Polyphonists

**Emmanuel Episcopal Church**  
**Tuesday, December 21, 2021 at 6:00PM**

<i>Prophetiae Sibyllarum</i> Prologue I. Sibylla Persica II. Sibylla Libyca	Orlande de Lassus (1530-1594)
<i>Adam Lay Ybounden</i>  III. Sibylla Delphica IV. Sibylla Cimmeria	Boris Ord (1897-1961)  Orlande de Lassus
<i>Bethlehem Down</i>  V. Sibylla Samia VI. Sibylla Cumana	Peter Warlock (1894-1930)  Orlande de Lassus
<i>In the bleak midwinter</i>  VII. Sibylla Hellaspontica	Gustav Holst (1874-1934) Arr. Alice Parker (b. 1925)  Orlande de Lassus
<i>Lo, how a rose e'er blooming</i>  VIII. Sibylla Phrygia	Michael Praetorius (1571-1621) Arr. Hugo Distler (1908-1942)  Orlande de Lassus
<i>Gloria (Missa O magnum mysterium)</i>  IX. Sibylla Europaea	Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548-1611)  Orlande de Lassus
<i>Here is the little door</i>  X. Sibylla Tiburtina XI. Sibylla Erythraea	Herbert Howells (1892-1983)  Orlande de Lassus
<i>O magnum mysterium</i>  XII. Sibylla Agrippa	Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)  Orlande de Lassus

**Prologue**

Carmina chromatico quae audis modulata tenore,  
Haec sunt illa quibus nostrae olim arcana salutis  
Bis senae intrepido cecinerunt ore Sibyllae

These songs which you hear, sung with chromatic progressions,  
are those in which the twelve Sibyls once  
with confident voice sang the secrets of our salvation.

**I. Sibylla Persica**

Virgine matre satus,  
pando residebit asello  
Iucundus princeps,  
unus qui ferre salutem  
Rite queat lapsis; tamen illis forte diebus  
Multi multa ferent, immensi facta laboris.  
Solo sed satis est oracula prodere verbo:  
Ille Deus casta  
nascetur virgine magnus.

Born of a virgin mother,  
he will sit on a sway-backed ass,  
A pleasant prince,  
the one who can properly bring salvation to sinners;  
In those days it will chance that many people pronounce many  
sayings of great weight.  
But it is enough to give the oracle in just one word:  
He, the great God himself,  
will be born of a chaste virgin.

**II. Sibylla Libyca**

Ecce dies venient,  
quo aeternus tempore princeps,  
Irradians sata laeta,  
viris sua crimina tollet,  
Lumine clarescet cuius synagoga recenti:  
Sordida qui solus reserabit labra reorum,  
Aequus erit cunctis,  
gremio rex membra reclinet  
Reginae mundi,  
sanctus, per saecula vivus.

Behold the days will come,  
in which time an eternal prince  
shining over the fertile fields,  
will take men's crimes from them;  
His synagogue will shine with fresh light.  
He alone will unseal the unclean lips of sinners.  
He will be just to all;  
as king he will rest his limbs  
in the lap of the Queen of the world,  
The holy one living for ever.

**Adam Lay Ybounden**

Boris Ord (1897-1961)

Adam lay ybounden,  
Bounden in a bond;  
Four thousand winter,  
Thought he not too long.

Adam lay bound,  
Bound in a bond  
Four thousand winters  
Didn't seem a long time to him.

And all was for an apple,  
An apple that he took.  
As clerkes finden,  
Written in their book.

And all because of an apple,  
An apple that he took.  
As clerks find written,  
written in their book

Ne had the apple taken been,  
The apple taken been,  
Ne had never our ladie,  
Abeen heav'ne queen.

Had not the apple been taken,  
the apple been taken,  
Then Never would our Lady  
have become heaven's Queen.

Blessed be the time  
That apple taken was,  
Therefore we moun singen.  
Deo gratias!

Blessed be the time  
That apple taken was,  
Therefore we must sing:  
Thanks be to God!

### III. Sibylla Delphica

Non tarde veniet,  
tacita sed mente tenendum  
Hoc opus; hoc memori semper  
qui corde reponet,  
Huius pertentant  
cor gaudia magna prophetarum  
Eximii, qui virginea conceptus ab alvo  
Prodibit, sine contactu maris,  
omnia vincit hoc naturae opera:  
at fecit, qui cuncta gubernat

This work will not be slow in coming,  
but should always be held in a quiet mind;  
he who will always keep it  
in his memory and his heart,  
to his heart will proceed  
the great joy of an outstanding prophet,  
who, conceived without contact with a man, will go forth  
from a virgin womb:  
this overcomes all the works of nature;  
and he who reigns over all things has done this.

### IV. Sibylla Cimmeria

In teneris annis facie praesignis, honore  
Militiae aeternae regem sacra virgo cibabit  
Lacte suo; per quem gaudebunt pectore summo  
Omnia, et Eo lucebit sidus ab orbe  
Mirificum; sua dona Magi cum laude ferentes,  
Obiicient puero myrrham, aurum, thura Sabaea.

In her tender years, distinguished with beauty, in honor  
the holy virgin will feed the king of the eternal host  
with her milk; through whom all things will rejoice  
with uplifted heart, and in the east will shine  
a marvelous star: Magi bringing their gifts with praise  
shall present to the child myrrh, gold, Sabaeen frankincense.

#### *Bethlehem Down*

Peter Warlock (1894-1930)

When He is King we will give him the King's gifts,  
Myrrh for its sweetness, and gold for a crown,  
Beautiful robes", said the young girl to Joseph  
Fair with her first-born on Bethlehem Down.

When He is King they will clothe Him in grave-sheets,  
Myrrh for embalming, and wood for a crown,  
He that lies now in the white arms of Mary  
Sleeping so lightly on Bethlehem Down.

Bethlehem Down is full of the starlight  
Winds for the spices, and stars for the gold,  
Mary for sleep, and for lullaby music  
Songs of a shepherd by Bethlehem fold.

Here He has peace and a short while for dreaming,  
Close-huddled oxen to keep Him from cold,  
Mary for love, and for lullaby music  
Songs of a shepherd by Bethlehem fold.

### V. Sibylla Samia

Ecce dies, nigras quae tollet laeta tenebras,  
Mox veniet, solvens nodosa volumina vatum  
Gentis Judaeae, referent ut carmina plebis.  
Hunc poterent clarum vivorum tangere regem,  
Humano quem virgo sinu inviolata fovebit.  
Annuit hoc coelum, rutilantia sidera monstrant.

Behold, the joyful day which shall lift the black darkness  
will soon come and unravel the knotty writings of the prophets  
of the Judean tribe, as the people's songs tell.  
They shall be able to touch this glorious ruler of the living,  
whom an unstained virgin will nurture at a human breast.  
This the heavens promise, this the glowing stars show.

### VI. Sibylla Cumana

Iam mea certa manent, et vera, novissima verba  
Ultima venturi quod erant oracula regis,  
Qui toti veniens mundo cum pace, placebit,  
Ut voluit, nostra vestitus carne decenter,  
In cunctis humilis, castam pro matre puellam  
Deliget, haec alias forma praecesserit omnes.

Now my most recent words shall remain certain and true,  
because they were the last oracles of the king to come,  
Who, coming for the whole world with peace, shall be pleased,  
as he intended, to be clothed fitly in our flesh,  
humble in all things. He shall choose a chaste maiden for his  
mother; she shall exceed all others in beauty.

*In the bleak midwinter*

Gustav Holst (1874-1934)  
Arr. Alice Parker (b. 1925)

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 ago.

Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him,  
nor 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.

Enough for Him, whom cherubim, worship night and day,  
Breastful of milk, and a mangerful of hay;  
Enough for Him, whom angels fall before,  
The ox and ass and camel which adore.

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.

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 I can I give Him: give my heart.

**VII. Sibylla Hellaspontica**

Dum meditor quondam vidi decorare puellam,  
Eximio, castam quod se servaret, honore,  
Munera digna suo, et divino numine visa,  
Quae sobolem multo pareret splendore micantem:  
Progenies summi, speciosa et vera Tonantis,  
Pacifica mundum qui sub ditione gubernet.

*Lo, how a rose e'er blooming*

Es ist ein Ros entsprungen  
Aus einer Wurzel zart.  
Wie uns die Alten sungen,  
Aus Jesse kam die Art  
Und hat ein Blümlein bracht,  
Mitten im kalten Winter,  
Wohl zu der halben Nacht.

Once while I was reflecting, I saw him adorn a maiden  
with great honor (because she kept herself chaste);  
She seemed worthy through his gift and divine authority  
to give birth to a glorious offspring with great splendor:  
the beautiful and true child of the highest Thunderer,  
who would rule the world with peaceful authority.

Michael Praetorius (1571-1621)  
Hugo Distler (1908-1942)

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming  
From tender stem hath sprung!  
Of Jesse's lineage coming  
As men of old have sung.  
It came, a flower bright,  
Amid the cold of winter  
When half-gone was the night.

**VIII. Sibylla Phrygia**

Ipsa Deum vidi summum, punire volentem  
Mundi homines stupidos, et pectora caeca, rebellis.  
Et quia sic nostram complerent crimina pellem,  
Virginis in corpus voluit demittere coelo  
Ipse Deus prolem,  
quam nunciet angelus almae  
Matri, quo miseros contracta sorde lavaret.

I myself have seen the greatest God wishing to punish  
The foolish men and blind hearts of a rebellious world.  
And because sin so fills our hides.  
God himself wished to send his son from heaven  
into the body of a virgin,  
whom the angel announces to his dear mother,  
to wash the wretched from their suffocating fate.

**Gloria (*Missa O magnum mysterium*)**

Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548-1611)

Gloria in excelsis Deo.  
Et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis.  
Laudamus te; benedicimus te;  
adoramus te; glorificamus te.  
Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.  
Domine Deus, Rex coelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens.

Glory be to God in the highest.  
And in earth peace to men of good will.  
We praise Thee; we bless Thee;  
we worship Thee; we glorify Thee.  
We give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory.  
O Lord God, Heavenly King, God the Father Almighty.

Domine Fili unigenite Jesu Christe.  
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.

Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.  
Qui tollis peccata mundi,  
suscipe deprecationem nostram.  
Qui sedes ad dextram Patris,  
O miserere nobis.

Quoniam tu solus Sanctus, tu solus Dominus,  
tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe.  
Cum Sancto Spiritu in gloria Dei Patris.  
Amen.

### **IX. Sibylla Europaea**

Virginis aeternum veniet de corpore verbum  
Purum, qui valles et montes transiet altos.  
Ille volens etiam stellato missus Olympo,  
Edetur mundo pauper,  
qui cuncta silent rexerit imperio.  
Sic credo, et mente fatebor:  
Humano simul ac divino semine natus.

#### ***Here is the little door***

Here is the little door,  
lift up the latch, oh lift!  
We need not wander more,  
but enter with our gift;  
Our gift of finest gold.  
Gold that was never bought or sold;  
Myrrh to be strewn about his bed;  
Incense in clouds about His head;  
All for the child that stirs not in His sleep,  
But holy slumber hold with ass and sheep.

### **X. Sibylla Tiburtina**

Vera ipse Deus dedit haec mihi munia fandi,  
Carmine quod sanctam potui monstrare puellam,  
Concipiet quae Nazareis in finibus, illum,  
Quem sub carne Deum Bethlemica rura videbunt.  
O nimium felix, coelo dignissima mater,  
Quae tantam sacro lactabit ab ubere prolem.

### **XI. Sibylla Erythraea**

Cerno Dei natum, qui se dimisit ab alto,  
Ultima felices referent cum tempora soles  
Hebraea quem virgo feret de stirpe decora,  
In terris multum teneris passurus ab annis,  
Magnus erit tamen hic divino carmine vates,  
Virgine matre satus, prudenti pectore verax.

O Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son.  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.

Thou that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.  
Thou that takest away the sins of the world,  
receive our prayer.  
Thou that sittest at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy upon us.

For thou only art holy, thou only art the Lord,  
thou only art the most high, Jesus Christ.  
Together with the Holy Ghost in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.

From the body of a virgin shall come forth the pure  
word eternal, who shall cross valleys and high mountains.  
He, willingly sent even from starry Olympus,  
will be sent into the world a pauper,  
who shall rule all creation with silent power.  
Thus I believe and shall acknowledge in my heart:  
He is the child of both divine and human seed.

Herbert Howells (1892-1983)

Bend low about His bed,  
For each He has a gift;  
See how His eyes awake,  
Lift up your hands, O lift!  
For gold, He gives a keen-edged sword.  
(Defend with it thy little Lord!)  
For incense, smoke of battle red,  
Myrrh for the honored happy dead;  
Gifts for His children, terrible and sweet;  
Touched by such tiny hands, and Oh such tiny feet.

The truthful God himself gave me these gifts of prophecy,  
that I might proclaim in song the holy virgin  
who shall conceive in Nazareth's bounds  
that God whom Bethlehem's lands shall see in the flesh.  
O most happy mother, worthy of Heaven,  
who shall nurse such a child from her holy breast.

I behold the son of God, who sent himself from on high,  
when the joyful days shall bring the last times.  
He whom the comely virgin shall bear from the Hebrew lineage,  
he who shall suffer much on earth from his tender years on,  
he shall nevertheless be here a great seer in godly prophecy,  
the son of a virgin mother, truthful and of a wise heart.

*O magnum mysterium*

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

O magnum mysterium, et admirabile sacramentum,  
ut animalia viderent Dominum natum,  
jacentem in praeseptio!  
Beata Virgo, cujus viscera  
meruerunt portare Dominum Christum.

O great mystery, and wonderful sacrament,  
that animals should see the new-born Lord,  
lying in a manger!  
Blessed is the Virgin whose womb  
was worthy to bear Christ the Lord.

**XII. Sibylla Agrippa**

Summus erit sub carne satus, charissimus atque,  
Virginis et verae complebit viscera sanctum  
Verbum, consilio, sine noxa, spiritus almi.  
Despectus multis tamen ille, salutis amore,  
Arguet et nostra commissa piacula culpa.  
Cuius honos constans, et gloria certa manebit.

The highest and dearest shall be born in the flesh the son  
of the true virgin, and the holy word shall fill the womb  
of the maiden through the pure intention of the nurturing spirit;  
although contemptible to many, he, for love of our salvation,  
will censure the sins committed by our guilt;  
his honor shall remain constant and his glory certain.

**The Polyphonists** are a quartet in two households: soprano Amy Broadbent and tenor Matthew Hill in D.C., and mezzo-soprano Sylvia Leith and bass-baritone Edmund Milly in Baltimore. The word “polyphony” describes many independent voices interwoven in harmony, and that is our ethos: We are four soloists, but we come together to create music that transcends our individuality. Each Polyphonist brings a lifetime of solo and choral experience to the group, and our repertoire includes classics of the choral canon as well as little-known gems and new compositions.

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