

A Holiday Tradition Returns!

THE CHRISTMAS REVELS²⁰²⁰

Virtual
A 50TH ANNIVERSARY ^ CELEBRATION

DECEMBER 18-31, 2020

WE'VE SEEN ALL OF THEM

VIRTUALLY
ALL OF THEM.

A Holiday Tradition Returns!

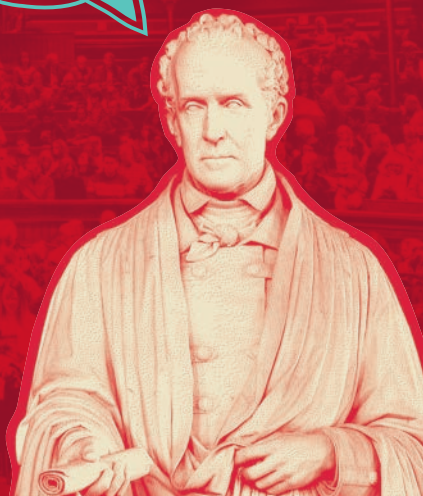
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REVEL WITH US IN 2021!

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Musical Connections
produced in collaboration
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Join us January through June for our new monthly
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Enjoy virtual performances by treasured tradition-bearers plus
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Balkan and Scottish folk musician **Tom Pixton** • West African musician
and tradition-bearer **Balla Kouyaté**

Revels is grateful to the Ithaka Foundation for its generous support
of our #RevelsConnects: Musical Connections series.

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THE CHRISTMAS REVELS 2020

A 50TH ANNIVERSARY ^{Virtual} CELEBRATION
DECEMBER 18-31, 2020

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY PATRICK SWANSON
GEORGE EMLÉN, MUSIC DIRECTOR

FEATURING

SPECIAL GUEST

Yo-Yo Ma

WITH

Paula Plum

Richard Snee

David Coffin

Carolyn Saxon

Johnny Nichols, Jr.

George Emlén

Patrick Swanson

Guest Artists

from Revels Past

**The Revels
Virtual Chorus**

**The Revels
Virtual Audience**

And YOU!

THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT:



The Boston Globe



Dear Fellow Revelers,

Welcome to our 2020 *Christmas Revels*! Revels has always been a joyful, noisy, and communal experience, powered by the energy of the audience, the professional performers and tradition-bearers, our volunteer adult and children's choruses, and the staff and crew that put it all together. Each of us enters Sanders Theatre in anticipation, happily suspending our disbelief, eager to join in the magical annual journey to a different time and place.



Over the years, *The Christmas Revels* has traveled to many places — India, Brittany, Ireland, Mexico, Medieval England, and 1930's America, to name a few — but this year represents one of the most unfamiliar: the virtual world. For this year's *Christmas Revels*, with the help of Josiah and James, the Sanders stage statues, over 200 community voices, and a few very special guests, we are embarking on a virtual journey through the ages and across the globe, revisiting some of the more memorable moments from nearly five decades of *Christmas Revels* productions and lifting our voices together to welcome in a new year.

As we mark the beginning of our next 50 years, we see a compelling need for what Revels can do. In today's dramatically charged and changing world, the transformative power of immersive performance and storytelling can build bridges, lead to new ways of thinking, and ground us in what it means to be human. The traditional music, dance, and stories passed down through generations embody a collected wisdom that can illuminate the past and inform the future. By connecting the common strands of diverse cultures, we help to build understanding; by celebrating the differences that make people and cultures unique, we help to create a more resilient society that values learning and harmony.

This vision is what drew me to Revels, and it powers our ongoing commitment to create joy and build community that transcends age, culture, class, and geography. We will continue to bring together different cultures and genres in unexpected and unpredictable ways. We will continue to create joy and connection through performance and shared experiences. And we will continue to look to you, our community, for inspiration and partnership in all that we do.

On behalf of everyone at Revels, thank you for being such an integral part of our journey. We couldn't do any of this without you.

Welcome Yule!

A handwritten signature in purple ink, reading "Kate".

KATE STOOKEY, Executive Director

WITH JOYOUS GRATITUDE TO OUR REVELS WASSAIL PARTY SPONSORS

and our **WASSAIL PARTY GUESTS** for helping us celebrate our 50th *Christmas Revels* and founder Jack Langstaff on the centennial of his birth! Welcome Yule!

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REVELS BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Kristine O'Brien, Ned Gulley,
Brian Horrigan, Simon Horsburgh, Jamie Jaffe, Cindy Joyce,
Joan Kennedy, Edward Kerslake, Amey Moot, F. Thompson Reece



REVELS WITHOUT BORDERS

It is 50 years since Jack Langstaff first strode onto the stage in Sanders Theatre and invited, nay, commanded the audience to “Sing!” and yet in that venerable old building his voice echoes still.

Jack’s big idea was to utilize his prodigious knowledge of classical and traditional music performance to create a hybrid communal celebration out of two powerful elements — the oldest known festival in the northern hemisphere, the winter solstice, and a festival that was a very big deal in the Langstaff family — Christmas. Strikingly, he chose the stage over the concert hall as a venue, mixing theater and music professionals with gifted and enthusiastic amateur singers of all ages to create a unique form of music theater.

The solstice, the longest and darkest night of the winter, was a time of anxiety for Neolithic farmers and hunters, an inflection point that concentrated their hopes and fears. Some of these were practical — would the light die this time? Would the sun come back to warm the earth and grow the crops? As a reminder to the sun to return, successive communities performed associative magic, burning yule logs and hanging their homes with evergreen in order to display the magical resilience of the holly and the ivy that thrive in the freezing cold. They incorporated the mistletoe (which defiantly puts out its fruit in the depth of winter) into dramatic rituals of death and rebirth. They sang and noisily feasted. They danced, stamping the ground to wake up the earth.

Christmas was something of a Johnny-come-lately to the solstice shenanigans. 400 years after the birth of Jesus, with no exact references to his birthdate, Pope Julius I borrowed the Roman feast of Sol Invictus (the Birth of the Unconquered Sun), which fell on December 25, to become the official celebration of the Nativity. Since then centuries of sacred music and rituals have been devoted to the midwinter festival alongside the more earthy celebrations of

Yuletide and other pagan and secular festivities. Christmas has always been a volatile mixture of the wild and the holy. It was the whiff of licentiousness that prompted the Puritans to ban it outright in 17th-century America. It took two more centuries before Queen Victoria’s consort Prince Albert brought respectability to many of the Germanic Yuletide elements, bringing the Christmas tree inside the house for decoration, popularizing the exchange of gifts, launching the idea of genteel Christmas cards and turning the raucous feasting into a civilized Christmas dinner. Charles Dickens provided magical narrative detail in “A Christmas Carol”, and the whole package was sent back to America for commercial embellishment. Clement Moore introduced the legendary character of Saint Nick to American families in his poem “A Visit from St. Nicholas,” and Thomas Nast’s illustrations brought him to life. A 1931 advertising campaign by Coca Cola was largely responsible for transforming the saint into the jolly, white-bearded, plump and decidedly secular red-coated Santa of today.

The first *Christmas Revels* in Sanders Theatre had no Santa, but it had carols, children’s singing games, ritual dance, social dance, sacred and secular choral music and a mummers’ play featuring Father Christmas (a figure with folk pedigree and no commercial ties). Jack’s love of English traditional song and dance inspired the program and established the ritual touchstones that survive to the present day. The “Abbots Bromley Horn Dance” is a relic of what centuries ago might have been a traditional folk play performed in the context of the hunt. The antlers which are stored in the local church in the Staffordshire village have been carbon dated to the 12th



“This year’s virtual Revels is not what we were planning for our 50th anniversary but comes nonetheless with some serendipitous magic of its own.”

century. Over time the play has been lost, leaving just the dancers and a handful of silent supernumerary characters following along behind. “Dona Nobis Pacem” is a peace round attributed by some to Mozart and sung by both audience and chorus. English morris dancers, heavy of feet but light of heart, link back to Elizabethan times, and the ritual sword dancers to an even earlier era. Jack once confided that the most significant moment of any Revels for him was in the mummers play when the sword dancers ritually circle the neck of the hero — the willing victim standing in for the old year — and dispatch him by pulling their swords together. For the first Victorian show in 1978 Jack commissioned Susan Cooper to write a poem to capture the theme of his creation. The recitation of “The Shortest Day” crystallized Jack’s magic potion, becoming simultaneously a description of the annual event and an integral Revels ritual that has been included every year since. For over 50 years Revels has created some of its own rituals. “The Lord of the Dance” that comes before intermission anticipates the coming together of audience and performers who dance out into the vast transept of Harvard’s Memorial Hall. Revels audiences tend to see themselves as an integral part of the celebration. The one time that “The Sussex Mummers Carol” was omitted from a French

Revels (it seemed too English for the setting), the audience stood up at the end of the show and sang it anyway.

All of which brings us to the present moment. This year’s virtual Revels is not what we were planning for our 50th anniversary but comes none the less with some serendipitous magic of its own. In the process of unlocking the “...echoes that sing the same delight...,” we were able to invite Jack and hundreds of his friends to the party, we were able to welcome chorus members and audience from around the country and around the world, and we are now able to bring Revels right into your home “ ... this shortest day.” We hope that we can bring back some happy memories, that we can demonstrate the breadth and depth of our 50 years of cultural explorations, and that for those of you who are new to this unusual organization we hope that you will join us on our future adventures in search of connections between people and cultures through music, dance, ritual and humor.

Wassail!
Be well!

PADDY SWANSON, *Artistic Director*

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PROGRAM

PART ONE


PROLOGUE

James Otis (Paula Plum), Josiah Quincy (Richard Snee), Patrick Swanson, George Emlen, David Coffin, Carolyn Saxon, Johnny Nichols, Jr.

JOY TO THE WORLD

The 2002 Christmas Revels Chorus and Children
The 2002 Sanders Theatre Audience
The 2020 Virtual Audience
Cambridge Symphonic Brass Ensemble

All sing!

- 
1. Joy to the world! The Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare him room,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.
 2. Joy to the world! The Saviour reigns:
Let men their songs employ,
While fields and floods,
Rocks, hills and plains,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

3. He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness
And wonders of his love,
And wonders of his love,
And wonders, wonders of his love.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE WASSAIL

The word "wassail" comes from the Anglo-Saxon "waes hael," meaning "be whole" — the original wish for "good health." The wassailers (and their descendants, the waits) travelled from house to house, singing, with a "wassail cup" which their hosts were expected to fill.

"The Christmas Revels" 1978 Recording Chorus
The 2002 Christmas Revels Chorus
Cambridge Symphonic Brass Ensemble

ARCHIVE BLOCK I

1977

THE FIRST NOWELL

Traditional English tune harmonized by Sir John Stainer in 1871.

John Langstaff
The Cambridge Salvation Army Sextet

BROOM DANCE

Traditional English dance from Devonshire.

J.M. (Shag) Graetz, dancer
Bruce Sagan, fiddle

1981

MORPETH RANT

A Northumberland country dance set to the music of “I Saw Three Ships,” a traditional folk carol from Cornwall.

Apple Tree Dancers
Wynter Singers
Old Tom Bells

1983

KRIVO HORO

Traditional Bulgarian tune meaning “crooked dance,” played on the *kaval* (flute), *gajda* (bagpipe), *gadulka* (rebec), *tambura* (lute) and *tapan* (drum).

Evo Nas

1984

WE’VE BEEN AWHILE A-WANDERING

A wassail song from Yorkshire.

The Children’s Waits

1986

CHRIST WAS BORN IN BETHLEHEM

A Kentucky folk carol collected from the Ritchie Family.

Jean Ritchie

APPALACHIAN CLOGGING

Ira Bernstein
The Big Gap String Band

1987

ECLIPSE FROM THE DARK AND THE LIGHT/ DONA NOBIS PACEM

Created by environmental artist Christopher Janney.

Sanders Theatre Audience

1988

THE QUEST

Trent Arterberry, The Magician
Jeremy Topitzer, The Boy
Hume Cronyn, narrator

1989

DON’T HAVE ANY MORE, MRS. MOORE

A classic song of the British music hall, a national institution which in its heyday at the turn of the 20th century was entertaining 25 million people a year.

Maggi Peirce
The Strand Singers
Fezziwig’s Parlour Orchestra

1990

COME LIFE, SHAKER LIFE

Shaker round written by Issacher Bates in 1835. Choreography by Shirley Paukulis.

The Revels Chorus

SUNSET AND POEM WITHOUT A HERO (EXTRACT)

A song in the style of Northern Russia; the lyrics describe the stillness of the forest. Anna Akhmatova’s epic poem was written between 1940 and 1962; this section is, among many other things, an elegy to “Piter” — St. Petersburg, the haunted city-soul of Russia.

The Dmitri Pokrovsky Ensemble
The Revels Women
Maria Nefiodova

CHILDREN, GO WHERE I SEND THEE

African-American cumulative carol from Southern Appalachia, with choreography by Carol Langstaff.

Janice Allen, singer
The Mountain Dancers
Stan Strickland, saxophone

GOLDEN YARN/KADRILL

A Southern Russian communal dance song popular with medieval troupes of travelling actors, and a Russian country dance, played to the American tune “Boil Them Cabbage Down.”

The Dmitri Pokrovsky Ensemble
The Revels Chorus
Buck and Wing Band

1991

NOW CHRISTMAS IS COMEN

A traditional wassail carol from Cornwall.

The Revels Chorus

Cambridge Symphonic Brass Ensemble

HALILEM

Sephardic processional from Bulgaria.

Voice of the Turtle

1992

GHILLIE CALLUM

The traditional Scottish Highland sword dance.

Karen Campbell, dancer

Stuart Campbell, piper

HE MANDU

A Scottish waulking song, sung while working to shrink the fibers of hand-woven tweed.

Norman Kennedy, leader

The Revels Women

THA MI'N DUIL

A traditional Scottish spinning song.

Norman Kennedy

1993

KUKKU

An old Karelian dance.

The Karelian Folk Ensemble

NUMEDALSGANGAR

A Norwegian dance dating back to the Renaissance and beyond.

Karin Brennesvik and Sigbjørn Rua, dancers

Toby Weinberg, Hardanger fiddle

HODIE CHRISTUS NATUS EST

Composed by Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck in the 16th century.

The Revels Chorus

Cambridge Symphonic Brass Ensemble

Old Tom Bells

ARCHIVE BLOCK II

1994

ALLÁ EN EL RANCHO GRANDE

A Zapateado dance to a popular Mariachi song from Northern Mexico.

Melissa and Hamlet Ferreira

The Revels Chorus

Orquesta Hispana

YAQUI DEER DANCE

ABBOTS BROMLEY HORN DANCE

Two ritual deer hunting dances, one from Sonora in Northern Mexico, the other from the village of Abbots Bromley in England.

Isaac Ceacatl Borsegui A. and Isaac Topilzin

Borsegui A., dancers

Huehuatl

David Coffin, recorder

Pinewoods Morris Men

ESA NOCHE YO BAILA

A spirited call-and-response dance in African-dialect Spanish.

Marshall Hughes, singer

The Revel Chorus

1995

THE HERN

A medieval English ballad with many variants about a slain knight.

John Fleagle, troubadour

Arawana Hayashi, Jill Gleim and Mark Ward, herons

DANSE MACABRE

A variant on the medieval dance of death which underscored the cycle of life, death and rebirth.

Larry Pisoni, Fool

Instruments of Joy

1996

LE SEMEUR

A traditional Breton song on sowing and reaping.

David Coffin, singer and concertina

Les Cornemuses de Cornouaille

Le Choeur de Quimper

Jennifer Bliss, Michael Ide and Ross Congo,

woodcut figures

1997

NIŠKA BANJA

A traditional song in Serbian and Rom dialects, popular throughout the Balkans.

*The Revels Women
New England Romanian Ensemble
Cambridge Symphonic Brass Ensemble*

THE ROM AND THE RABBIT

A cautionary tale featuring the native cunning of the Rom people.

Jay O'Callahan, Old Rom

CĂLUȘ

A dance from Romania similar to English morris dance, adapted here by Steve Roderick.

*Pinewoods Morris Men
David Torrey, Fool
New England Romanian Ensemble*

1998

HAIL TO BRITANNIA

A Victorian children's song published in Boston in 1833.

*The Pudding Lane Waits
The Strand Singers
Fezziwig's Parlour Orchestra
Cambridge Symphonic Brass Ensemble*

MY OLD DUTCH

In Cockney rhyming slang, "Dutch" goes to "Duchess of Fife" and thence to "wife."

*David Jones, singer
Jacqueline Schwab, piano*

1999

SCARAMELLA

A street song by Renaissance composer Josquin des Prés.

*Tapestry with David Coffin
Il Coro Toscano
Renaissomics
Pamela Rosin and Nicoletta Vicentini, zanni*

GALLIARDA FERRAREZE

A galliard, one of the most popular and vigorous dances of the Renaissance.

*Il Coro Toscano Dancers
Renaissomics*

2000

COLONEL CROCKET

A popular tune in the rural American South during and following the Civil War.

Stony Point String Band

AMAZING GRACE

Two verses from the famous hymn.

*Janice Allen
Silver Leaf Gospel Singers*

SHIVA DANCING/LORD OF THE DANCE (1997)

Shiva is the Hindu "Lord of the Dance," representing the enduring cycle of life. Here we see Eastern and Western interpretations of the same theme. The poem "Shiva Dancing" is by Patrick Swanson; "Lord of the Dance" is based on the Shaker tune "Simple Gifts" with lyrics by Sydney Carter.

*Neena Gulati, reciter
Triveni Dance
Vadyam Brindam
David Coffin, singer
The 1997 and 2015 Christmas Revels Choruses
and Sanders Theatre Audiences
Pinewoods Morris Men
Cambridge Symphonic Brass Ensemble*

All Sing!

Dance, then, wherever you may be;
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he,
And I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,
And I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.



INTERMISSION

PART TWO

GO, TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN

A gospel treatment of the stirring African-American spiritual.

*Janice Allen, singer
Stan Strickland, saxophone
Carl Corey, piano
The 1990 and 2020 Christmas Revels Choruses*

ARCHIVE BLOCK III

2001

BUFFENS

A courtly sword dance to the music of Thoinot Arbeau, whose dance manual *Orchésographie* was first printed in 1589.

The Younge Blaydes
The Nonesuch Consort

DEO GRATIAS

A short antiphon by William Byrd, who along with Thomas Tallis were the supreme English composers of the Elizabethan era.

The Hampton Court Chorus
Cambridge Symphonic Brass Ensemble

2002

USTI KUGAS

An Armenian love song from the repertoire of legendary musician Sayat Nova.

The Ararat Women
The Arev Armenian Folk Ensemble

KASLETILA

The music of this courtship dance is from Guria, in southwestern Georgia.

The Nor Serund Dancers
The Arev Armenian Folk Ensemble

2003

PAPA STOUR SWORD DANCE

A dance from the Shetland Islands, one of the few known Scottish hilt and point sword dances.

Pinewoods Morris Men
Andrea Larson, fiddle

CA' THE YOWES

One of the best-loved songs by Scotland's national poet, Robert Burns, set to an older tune.

Jayne Tankersley
The Auld Reekie Singers
The Laird's Consort

2004

LA CHASSE-GALERIE

In Québec, legend has it that a flying canoe is bearing voyageurs from the north woods home to their families for Christmas.

Bernard Simard and David Coffin, singers
Le Choeur de Noël
Danse Cadence

2005

KING HEROD AND THE COCK

This legendary ballad of a miraculous happening at the table of Herod has been traced to early Danish sources from 1200 CE.

The Children's Waits
The Haddon Hall Noyse

2006

A LEGEND OF SANKT NIKOLAUS

One of many German folktales linking the Christian Sankt Nikolaus to the ancient pagan rituals of death and rebirth.

Renni Boy
Richard Snee
Die Fröhlichen Kinderlein

THE KINGS

Written in 1871 by German composer Peter Cornelius. The chorale melody is "How Brightly Shines the Morning Star," from the 16th century.

David Coffin, singer
The Weihnachts Chorus
Cambridge Symphonic Brass Ensemble

2007

DUMBOKO YE

A Croatian love song from the island of Krk in the northern Adriatic.

Libana

SHOPSKO

Bulgarian dance choreographed by Petar Petrov.

Petar Petrov
Mladost
The Village Band
Cambridge Symphonic Brass Ensemble

2008

HOW HAPPY'S THE MAN

A convivial drinking song found in the manuscripts of Thomas Hardy.

*David Coffin
The Mellstock Band
The Village Men*

SANS DAY CAROL

Traditional carol from the village of St. Day in Cornwall.

*Mary Casey, singer
The Mellstock Band*

ARISE AND HAIL THE JOYFUL DAY

A characteristic blend of voices and instruments in the “west gallery” style. This carol is mentioned in Thomas Hardy’s novel *Under the Greenwood Tree*.

*The Village Choir
The Mellstock Band, with Bruce Randall*

2009

COLEMAN'S MARCH/COUSIN SALLY BROWN

A traditional Appalachian slow march segues into an uptempo clogging tune.

*The Stony Point String Band
Eden MacAdam-Somer and Suzannah Park,
cloggers*

SPRING DEFEATS WINTER

A Seneca Iroquois story as told by Abenaki author Joseph Bruchac.

Leon Joseph Littlebird

YONDER COME DAY

A “ring shout”; here the participants include the African American disguised figures known as the Jonkonnu.

*Janice Allen, singer
The Roaring Gap Chorus*

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD (2000)

The series of routes and safe houses that enabled escaped slaves to freedom in the North became known as the Underground Railroad. Songs contained code words and images that were used as cues and warnings. Quilts had patterns that relayed messages when displayed outside “stations.”

We link the narrative via Maya Angelou’s poem “Still I Rise”^{*} and two iterations of the spiritual “Hold On” to the ongoing journey towards justice and equity.

*Sheila Kay Adams and Janice Allen, Jordan Ashwood and Cyrus Brooks, Silver Leaf Gospel Singers, Roaring Gap Chorus, Rocky River Children Carolyn Saxon
Johnny Nichols, Jr.*

DONA NOBIS PACEM

Our traditional round for peace is led this year by the world-famous cellist Yo-Yo Ma. Featured in his album *Songs of Joy and Peace*, this round has been sung by Revels audiences for half a century. Revels founder Jack Langstaff always urged everyone to join in, especially with a hushed pianissimo at the end, citing the paradoxical principle that the more people singing, the softer the sound possible.

*Yo-Yo Ma
The 1991 Revels Chorus and Revels Children
The 1991 Christmas Revels Audience
The 2020 Virtual Audience*

All sing!



ARCHIVE BLOCK IV

2010

MORRIS DANCE

The stick dance is from the village of Upton-on-Severn in Worcestershire.

Pinewoods Morris Men

2011

MARCH OF THE KINGS

A 17th-century march from Provence that the French composer Georges Bizet used in his opera *Carmen*.

*The Chanterelles Children
The Chorale Céleste
The Bandelette of Strings
Cambridge Symphonic Brass Ensemble*

2012

SÍ BHEAG, SÍ MHÓR

A slow air composed by the famed Irish harper Turlough O’Carolan.

Maeve Gilchrist

THE SOUL CAGES

A story by the 19th-century Irish antiquarian T. Crofton Croker.

Billy Meleady

Steven Barkhimer

THE LOBSTER QUADRILLE

Crustaceans dance to the tune “Master McDermott’s Reel.”

The Wild Geese Dancers

The Rattling Brogues

2013

REY A QUIEN REYES ADORAN

An anonymous Spanish *villancico* from the 16th century.

The Coro de Compostela

The Pilgrim Band

Cambridge Symphonic Brass Ensemble

2014

ROSY APPLE, LEMON AND A PEAR

A “choosing” game played throughout the British Isles.

The Cheapside Children

MUSICAL SAW/TEETH OF STEEL

Popular in the early 1900s, the musical saw was a staple music hall act. The axe-in-the-teeth routine added a spice of danger to audience involvement.

Mark Jaster

Sabrina Selma Mandell

DOWN AT THE OLD BULL AND BUSH

A popular English Victorian song by Harry von Tilzer that celebrates a famous Hampstead pub.

Sarah de Lima, singer

The Royal Albert Chorus

The Crystal Palace Orchestra

Cambridge Symphonic Brass Ensemble

2015

Y GELYNEN

A popular Welsh homage to the holly tree, with many titles, this one from the Isle of Anglesey, off the northwest coast.

Noni Lewis and Edward Kerslake, singers

The Castell Emlyn Band

THE BIRTH OF TALIESIN

Taliesin was a Welsh poet from around the 6th century who is sometimes conflated with Merlin, King Arthur’s bard.

Billy Meleady, narrator

Noni Lewis, Ceridwen

David Coffin, concertina

DAFYDD Y GARREG WEN

Composed by the North Wales harper David (Dafydd) Owen on his deathbed at age 29 in the early 18th century.

Billy Meleady, narrator

Emma Crane Jaster, Taliesin

Haley Hewitt, harp

David Coffin, singer

2016

LE DÉPART DU CANADA

A song of forced departure in a version by Acadian singer and fiddler Joseph Athanase Larade.

Keith Murphy, singer and jaw harp

Lisa Ornstein, fiddle

MARDI GRAS SONG

This Cajun song is commonly played as “runners” go from house to house during Mardi Gras asking for charity.

The Grand Pré Traveling Band

LES VEUVES DE LA COULÉE

This Cajun two-step was learned from Dewey Balfa.

Jamie Jaffe, singer

David Greely and Lisa Ornstein, fiddles

The Grand Pré Traveling Band

NOUVELLE AGRÉABLE

A Christmas song written by Swiss composer Jean-Georges Nægeli.

Josée Vachon, singer

Les Voix d’Acadie Chorus

Les Petits Voyageurs Children

The Grand Pré Traveling Band

2017

DAMIGELLA TUTTA BELLA

A secular song by the Italian Renaissance composer Claudio Monteverdi.

Sophie Michaux, Gideon Crevoshay and Lysander

Jaffe, singers

Coro San Marco

Concerto Incognito

ENTRANCE OF THE MORRIS MEN

Michael Chase, Magistrate
Ben Horsburgh, dancer

ARIA DI FIRENZE

Written by Renaissance composer
Emilio de' Cavalieri. Choreography is by
Kelli Edwards.

Coro San Marco Dancers
Nathaniel Cox, cornetto
Simon Martyn-Ellis, Baroque guitar
Fabio Pirozzolo, percussion

AVE MARIA

This 16th-century motet is by Flemish
composer Jacob Arcadelt.

Coro San Marco Donne

2018

VILLEMANN OG MAGNHILD

The tune of this 14th-century Norse ballad
is based on the 12th-century troubadour
song "Kalenda Maya."

The Kalevala Chorus
Abe Finch, percussion

POLONĀS FROM SEXDREGA

A traditional 18th-century tune
from Sweden.

The Briljant String Band

2019

AIN'T GOT TIME TO STOP AND TARRY

An old-time American gospel song.

Squirrel Butter
Tui

CIRCULAR MARCH

FOLLOWERS OF THE LAMB

A Shaker song paired with a Revels version
of a Shaker dance. Choreography by Kelli
Edwards based on traditional figures.

The Crossroads Chorus
The Shaker Dancers

MY LORD'S BEEN WRITING

First published in 1880 and attributed to
the singing of the Jubilee Singers.

Carolyn Saxon, singer
Men of the Crossroads Chorus

CAN THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND

"Circle" is based on a gospel hymn rewritten
and popularized by the famous Carter
family. "This Land" is the best known in the
repertoire of Woody Guthrie.

The 2019 Christmas Revels Company

MUMMERS PLAY

The mummers play is at the heart of every
Christmas Revels. A crude drama performed
by stock characters, it presents in allegorical
form the death of the old year and the birth
of the new. This year we offer a collage of
mummers characters selected from our
archives engaged in the performance of this
crucial and mysterious duty.

THE SHORTEST DAY

This poem, written by Susan Cooper in
1977, has become a traditional part of *The
Christmas Revels* performances in each of
the nine Revels cities around the country.
This special year they can all join with us,
our founder Jack Langstaff, and you in the
audience, in an affirmation of hope for the
new year that transcends both time and
geography. *Welcome Yule!*

THE SUSSEX MUMMERS' CAROL

The 1991 Christmas Revels Chorus and Children
The 1991 Christmas Revels Audience
The 2020 Virtual Audience
Cambridge Symphonic Brass Ensemble

All sing!

1. God bless the master of this house
With happiness beside;
Where'er his body rides or walks
His God must be his guide,
His God must be his guide.
2. God bless the mistress of this house
With gold chain round her breast;
Where'er her body sleeps or wakes,
Lord, send her soul to rest,
Lord, send her soul to rest.
3. God bless your house, your
children too,
Your cattle and your store;
The Lord increase you day by day
And send you more and more,
And send you more and more.



THE LIGHT ALWAYS RETURNS

DONA NOBIS PACEM



THE CHRISTMAS REVELS

ALL
SHALL BE
WELL AGAIN

A SHORT FILM
COMING TO YOUR HOME
THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

REVELSNORTH.ORG

PARTICIPANTS

THE PLAYERS

David Coffin
George Emlen
Noni Lewis (Voiceover)
Johnny Nichols, Jr.
Paula Plum
Carolyn Saxon
Richard Snee
Patrick Swanson
and
Yo-Yo Ma

THE VIRTUAL CHORUS

Linda Lee Baker
Jennifer Felton Bhujel
Jane Fisher Carlson
Ian Carroll
Marina Rebecca Chan
Paula Clough
Nym Cooke
Sarah L. Crowder
Ben Dooley
Annemieke Farrow
Carlough
Faulkner-Carroll
Tomas S. Forman
Mark Franke
Gary Gengo
Rachael Johnson
Ali Jordahl
Richard Kovar
Eleanor Langstaff
Tommy Linden
Robert M. Lockwood
Capen Low
Grace Lowman
Ian McGullam
Marc Nicolas
Jim Peale
Ana Rito
Eugenia Sackson
Gary E. Schroller

Jon Skillman
Laura B. Smith
Linda Snorek
Mary Swope
Amy Beth Treciakas
Amy van Meteren
Hannah Wellman
Susanne Wiggins
Kate Hubbard Woll
John Yannis

THE VIRTUAL AUDIENCE

Richard Adams
Frannie Ames
Mary Ames
Will Ames
Katie Anderson
Anna M. Beecher
Joan Beskinis
Francesca Bester
Lyle Bibler
Georgia Bills
Mary Bilunas
Julia Bloom
Sarah Boswell
Renni Boy
Marie Kropa
Breitenbach
Susan Brewster
Nick Browse
Katherine Bryant
Dorothy Devine
Burdine
Molly Burdine
Natalie Burdine
Michael Burke
Maura Burns
Janet Buttenwieser
Stephen Campbell
Michael Chase
Ned Cheesman
Erika Clerceri
Rita Conley
Michele Corbeil

Christopher Cratsley
Holly Cratsley
John Cratsley
Laiya Cratsley
Rose Cratsley
Joanne E. Crowell
Mary Cunningham
Shannon K. Danforth
Amanda Denney
Bryce Denney
Kathryn Denney
Lianna Denney
Sara Dewey
Eckford Family
John Emerson
Patti Emerson
Hannah Emlen
Jan Emlen
Jay Emlen
Juniper Emlen
Sasho Emlen
Michele Eva
Charles D. Feldman
Elizabeth Judge Feldman
Robert Feldman
Ona Ferguson
John Ficarelli
Haley Fisher
Mary French
Charlie Friou
Joan Garuti
Lisa Gay
Richard Gentilman
Jill Gleim
Richard Goettle
Bjorn Goldstein
Garth Goldstein
Soren Goldstein
David Gordon
Caroline Gulley
Ned Gulley
Nicole Haas-Loomis
Alexander Hall
Bonnie Martha Hall
Ross Hall
Teddy Hansen-Dewar
Louise Hardigg

James Henderson
Sarah Higginbotham
Barbara Hill
Lucinda Hill
Kathy Hodge
Amanda Holmes
Martha Sandman
Holmes
Elizabeth Hopkins
Michael Horn
Nina Horner
Amy Horsburgh
Simon Horsburgh
Mac Howland
Elizabeth Huebner
Birte Jackson
Jamie Jaffe
David Jay
Leigh Jomini
Lisa Keegan
Melissa M. Kelly
Joan Kennedy
Bridget Kent
Odette Kent
Patrick Kinney
James Klimek
Mary McDonald Klimek
Jennifer Kobayashi
Heather Koerber
Anneke Langstaff
Baby Langstaff
Gary Langstaff
Molly Lanzarotta
Bruce Lauterwasser
Karen Viglione
Lauterwasser
Allyson Lazar
Lily Leahy
Paul Leahy
Lynne Levine
Paul Levitt
Chris Lewis
Elsa Lichman
Henry Liu
Linda Liu
Terry Lockhart

Kelsey London
 Lilah London
 Nadia London
 Adlin Loud
 Andrea Loughry
 Megan Low
 Joshua Mackay-Smith
 Jamie Mailhot
 Laura Malkin
 David Mansur
 Rebecca Marks
 Aurora Martens
 Susan Mason
 Beverley Matthews
 Sarah May
 Becca F. McCann
 Connor McCann
 Milva McDonald
 Emily McGinnis
 Dan Meyers
 Miriam Michel
 Tim Molokov
 Aleka Molokova
 M Moore
 Diane Muffit
 Linda Murdoch
 Ronald Nath
 Lakshmi Nayak
 Sam North
 Tomi North
 Jake Nunes
 Chris O'Brien
 Kristine O'Brien
 Nora O'Brien
 Silas O'Brien
 Laurie Otten
 Haris Papamichael
 Anna Parker
 Karen Parsons
 Carol Peale
 Beth Pendery
 Nancy Petaja
 Patrese Pierson
 Jeanne Pounder
 Jessica Raine
 Susie Rioff
 Chris Ripman
 Melissa Robie
 Erika Roderick
 Michelle Roderick
 Pippa June Roderick
 Steve Roderick
 Virginia Rundell
 Peg Schadelbauer

Mayhew Seavey
 Daniel Sheldon
 Max Sheldon
 Sarah Sheldon
 Theodore Sheldon
 Chelsea Shenker
 Lucy Sinclair
 Div Slomin
 Kari R. Smith
 Nathaniel Smith
 Ben Sniffen
 Brian Sniffen
 Emi Sniffen
 Josh Sniffen
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 Bobbie Sproat
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 Alyssa Wilk
 Brian Wilson
 Suzanne Wones
 Janet Yeracaris
 Kira Young

JOIN US for some “Downtown Holiday Magic” now through January! Thanks to our fabulous production team for creating a mini-*Christmas Revels*/Winter Wonderland at 395 Washington Street in Downtown Crossing courtesy of the Downtown Boston Improvement District (Boston BID): Heidi A. Hermiller, *Designer*; Lynda Johnson, *Production Manager*; Andrew Hebert-Johnson, *Technical Director*; Andrew Barnett, *Master Carpenter*; Cameron Porter, *Carpenter*; Amanda Holt, *Electrics*; Lynn Jeffery, *Costumes*; Susan M Hunziker, *Costumes*; Ruth Heespelink, *Decorations*; Michael Kolowich, *Video*; John Porter, *Crew*; Slava Tchoul, *Crew*

ARTISTIC STAFF

Stage Director:

Patrick Swanson

Music Director:

George Emlen

Costume Design:

Heidi A. Hermiller

Make Up/Wigs:

Seth Bodie

Video Producer:

Michael Kolowich

Virtual Chorus Effects:

Sid Levin

Video Editing:

Emma Stickgold

Program Notes:

George Emlen,

Patrick Swanson

Script by

Patrick Swanson

PRODUCTION TEAM

Production Manager:

Lynda Johnson

Set:

Andy Barnett

Sound:

Kern Stewart

Virtual Studio:

DigiNovations

Studio Production:

Chuck Scott

Videographers:

Shawn Whitaker

Michael Kolowich

Nicole Albee

Christopher Mackos

Bill Aydelott

Photographer:

Paul Buckley

Program Design:

Springtide Studio



JOHN LANGSTAFF LEGACY SOCIETY

In 2011, Revels' Board of Directors established the John Langstaff Legacy Society to recognize those donors who have remembered Revels in their estate planning or with current planned gifts such as retirement distributions. Making a planned gift to Revels will ensure that celebratory music, dance, and joyful theater will continue for at least another 50 years!

For additional information, contact Diane Kennedy, Director of External Relations, dkennedy@revels.org

“AS JACK LANGSTAFF
USED TO SAY,
THERE IS A SONG
IN EVERYONE.
IT IS UP TO US TO
BRING IT OUT.
REVELS DOES THIS
SO VERY WELL,”

—RON & KATHLEEN NATH

THANK YOU

This 2020 *Christmas Revels* would not have been possible without the imagination, ingenuity, and passion of Michael Kolowich and his team at DigiNovations — thank you!

The video magic skills of **SID LEVIN** and **NANCY MAURER** of **FIRSTFRAME** were also central to this innovative production, as were the editing skills of **EMMA STICKGOLD**. Thanks to the Langstaff family for early photographs and to **HEIDI HERMILLER** and **SETH BODIE** for the creation of our living statues. Thanks to **PAUL BUCKLEY** for his photographs of our beloved Sanders Theatre and the statues.

A special thank you to **YO-YO MA AND HIS FAMILY** for their ongoing support of Revels.

Thanks to the estate of **DR. MAYA ANGELOU** for permission to include her poem “Still I Rise.”*

Thanks as always to the indomitable **REVELS TEAM** for pulling the virtual rabbit out of the hat this year! And a hearty thank you to the **REVELS BOARD** for their continued guidance and support.

Our deep and heartfelt gratitude to the countless **MUSICIANS, ACTORS, DANCERS, DESIGNERS, TECHNICIANS, VOLUNTEERS, MANAGERS, CHORUS SINGERS, CHILDREN, PARENTS, BOARD MEMBERS, LOYAL SUPPORTERS**, and **AUDIENCE MEMBERS** who pour their hearts into making every successful Revels production — you helped Revels grow into what it is today. Your names alone, stretching back decades into our misty past, would fill its own sizable program book!

*“Still I Rise” by Maya Angelou

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PROGRAM BOOK PHOTOGRAPHS: Roger Ide, Eric Levenson, Sam Sweezy, and The Langstaff Family

FEATURED ARTISTS



YO-YO MA SPECIAL GUEST

Yo-Yo Ma was born in 1955 to Chinese parents living in Paris. He began to study the cello with his father at age four, and three years later moved with his family to New York City. There, he continued his studies at the Juilliard School. After his conservatory training, he sought out a liberal arts education and graduated from Harvard with a degree in anthropology. Yo-Yo's career is testament to his faith in culture's power to generate the trust and understanding essential to a strong society. This belief inspired Yo-Yo to establish the global cultural collective Silkroad, and, more recently, to set out on the Bach Project — a six-continent tour of J. S. Bach's suites for solo cello and an invitation to a larger conversation about culture, society, and the themes that connect us all.



PAULA PLUM (JAMES OTIS)

This season, Paula appeared at SpeakEasy Stage in *The Children* and at Greater Boston Stage Company in *The Last Night* at Bowl-Mor Lanes, both directed by Bryn Boice. She is the recipient of seven IRNE awards, the 2007, 2017 & 2020 Eliot Norton Award for Outstanding Actress, the 2004 Eliot Norton Award for Sustained Excellence, and the 2003 Distinguished Alumni Award from Boston University. In 2009 she was one of five actors nation-wide to receive the Fox Actor Fellowship in association with SpeakEasy Stage. As a founding member of Actors' Shakespeare Project, she has played Cleopatra, Beatrice, Lady Macbeth, and Phèdre. She has appeared regionally at the Lyric Stage, the American Repertory Theatre, the New Repertory Theatre, Merrimack Repertory, the Huntington Theatre, Gloucester Stage Company, and Elm Shakespeare. Film credits include: *Mermaids*, *Malice*, *Next Stop Wonderland*, and *Irrational Man* directed by Woody Allen. Television: *Science Court* (three seasons ABC) and co-creator and star of *The Dick & Paula Celebrity Special* for FX. Ms. Plum is a cum laude graduate of Boston University and has studied at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art, the Dell'Arte Institute, and École Philippe Gaulier, Paris. She has been published in American Theatre magazine and is married to actor Richard Snee. Paula is a professional acting coach @paulaplum.com and is currently the visiting Monan Professor at Boston College for the 2020-21 Academic Year.



RICHARD SNEE (JOSIAH QUINCY)

Richard Snee appeared in *The Christmas Revels* in 1998, 2006, 2008, and 2017. If you can discern a pattern there please let him know. He is a founding member of The Actors' Shakespeare Project where he was last seen last spring as Malvolio in their Lyric Stage production of *Twelfth Night*, directed by the lovely and talented Paula Plum. He also performed last summer in The Gloucester Stage's *Barefoot in the Park*, with the lovely and talented Paula Plum, and appeared last fall in Speakeasy Stage's *Choirboy*, but without the lovely and talented Paula Plum.



DAVID COFFIN SONGLEADER

David is celebrating 40 years of performing with Revels. He just released a compilation 2 CD set *David Coffin Live from the Revels Stage* representing his favorite songs with various guest artists, the Revels Choruses, and most importantly, you, the Revels audience. Widely known for his rich baritone voice, David performs on an impressive array of musical instruments, including concertinas, recorders, penny whistles, bombardes, gemshorns, shawms, rauschpfeffes, or, as he explains, "Generally anything that requires a lot of hot air". At the heart of David's work is his extensive collection of songs from the Maritime Tradition. When he's not on the Revels stage David is presenting his signature Enrichment Programs (a history of Wind Instruments and an imaginary 18th Century Whaling Program) in New England schools as the Revels-Artist-in-Residence. In the Spring, Summer, and Fall he can be found on a boat in Boston Harbor either narrating history tours for Boston Harbor Cruises where he manages the narration program, or taking over 10,000 inner-city kids out to a harbor island through Save the Harbor Save the Bay. www.davidcoffin.com



JOHNNY NICHOLS, JR. **PERFORMER**

Johnny Nichols, Jr. has stage directed and music directed over 30 shows in his professional career including *Shout*, *The Mod Musical*, *Legally Blonde*, *Urinetown*, *25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Madagascar*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, and more. Johnny is an active vocal coach, clinician, and adjudicator for theater programs in New England and the South. He has a host of professional stage, opera, and film credits, participating in productions such as *RENT*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, *Anything Goes*, *Hello Dolly*, *Chicago*, *Cabaret*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, and *La Boheme*. Johnny is the Artistic Director for the Ipswich River Community Chorus and a guest conductor for choirs and orchestras across the country, as well as a renowned performing arts educator for area public schools and after school organizations. In spring 2020, Johnny became the Education Director of Revels. Most recently, Johnny presented a concert of spirituals and stories as part of the #RevelsConnects Musical Connections Series on Facebook Live.



CAROLYN SAXON **PERFORMER**

Carolyn is a lifelong performer who tells stories and sings songs all over the world. A longtime member of Actors Equity, her theatrical credits include Broadway, Broadway National Tours and regional theatres throughout the United States including Papermill Playhouse (NJ), Alliance Theatre in Atlanta, Actors Theatre of Louisville and Connecticut Repertory. Now based in Boston, she's worked with Greater Boston Stage, Front Porch Arts Collective, New Repertory Theatre, *The Christmas Revels* @ Sanders Theatre, Wheelock Family Theatre, SpeakEasy Stage, Central Square Theater, North Shore Musical Theatre, Lyric Stage Company, Queen Mab Micro-Theatre, Starlight Square in Cambridge, the Outside the Box Festival and the Emerson Paramount. Her orchestral work includes the Boston Pops, Carnegie Hall, Teatro Colon, Boston Landmarks Orchestra, Indianapolis Symphony, and the Buffalo Philharmonic. She is a member of the Boston Pops Gospel Choir, Millennium Choir, Sharing a New Song and the One City Chorus. An avid traveler who believes in the power of music to unite, she's entertained audiences throughout Japan, Colombia, South Africa, Argentina and Uruguay. Film credits include 'Sweet & Lowdown', 'Small Time Crooks' and 'The Curse of the Jade Scorpion'.



PATRICK SWANSON ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Patrick Swanson began his career in London as an actor at the Arts Theatre in the West End. In 1969 following a European tour with the La MaMa Plexus Troupe he moved to New York and received his world theater education as a resident actor at La MaMa E.T.C. His numerous directing projects include opera, ensemble, music -theater and circus. He was a founding stage director of Circus Flora and is currently Artistic Director of Revels. Paddy taught acting and improvisation at the London Academy of Dramatic Art (L.A.M.D.A.), the London Drama Centre, and New York University. He served as artistic director of the Castle Hill Festival at Castle Hill in Ipswich, Massachusetts, directing and co-producing opera and theater works, including the premieres of Julie Taymor's *Liberty's Taken* and Peter Sellars' production of *Così fan Tutte*. Locally he has directed for the Spoleto USA festival; Gloucester Stage, The Alley Theatre Houston and the Charles Playhouse as well as numerous productions in the U.K. and Europe. His Actors' Shakespeare Project production of Shakespeare's *King Lear* with Alvin Epstein was nominated for three 2006 Elliot Norton awards and subsequently transferred to Off-Broadway. Paddy's most recent acting role was as Father Jack in Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa* at Gloucester Stage. He currently researches, writes and directs all Cambridge Revels scripts and serves as consultant to the other eight Revels production companies performing in the U.S.A.



GEORGE EMLÉN MUSIC DIRECTOR

George Emlen is a conductor, composer, arranger and music educator. He was music director of Revels from 1984 to 2016 and has recently returned to that position in an interim capacity after a four-year hiatus. George currently teaches a leadership course, "Conducting Your Chorus," at the Harvard Kennedy School for senior executives in state and local public office. Previously he was on the faculty of the New England Conservatory, where he directed the Conservatory Camerata; Lesley University in the Creative Arts in Learning program; the College of the Atlantic, and the University of Maine. He also taught at Noble and Greenough School and the Putney School. In recent years George has worked with Bobby McFerrin in the vocal improvisatory genre of Circlesinging, which he incorporates into his conducting and teaching. George's compositions and arrangements are published by Lawson-Gould, Thorpe, Lorenz/ Sacred Music Press, and Redwing Press. George is a graduate of Dartmouth College and the New England Conservatory, where he earned an advanced degree in choral conducting. In Maine he founded and conducted the Acadia Choral Society, while also conducting the Oratorio Chorale and the Mount Desert Summer Chorale.

Welcome Yule!

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MISSION

Revels engages today's audiences in theatrical and musical experiences that bring the world's cultural traditions and celebrations to life.

The Christmas Revels is also presented in Tacoma, WA; Portland, OR; Oakland and Santa Barbara, CA; Boulder, CO; Houston, TX; Lebanon, NH; and Washington, DC.

Revels was founded in Cambridge, MA in 1971 and established as a non-profit, tax-exempt organization in 1974. *The Christmas Revels* program © 2020 Revels, Inc. "Christmas Revels," "Sea Revels," "Midsummer Revels" and "Revels" are ® service marks of Revels, Inc., Watertown, MA. All rights reserved.

STAY IN TOUCH

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HOW THE 2020 VIRTUAL CHRISTMAS REVELS WAS MADE

Revels has been characterized as high-touch rather than high-tech, so inevitably the task of constructing a virtual *Christmas Revels* was going to be a challenge, and with Covid-related restrictions in place the task was greatly magnified.

Early in the pandemic Sanders Theatre was closed to the public and accessibility restricted to three people at a time, so our initial plans for videotaping had to be recalculated. In the end a little stage magic had to be employed. Using green screen technique and still photography we were able to record individuals in a studio and then magically position them in a virtual Sanders Theatre. Wooden plinths were created to match the bases of the statues of Josiah Quincy and James Otis, and elaborate costumes and makeup converted our actors into their marble counterparts.

In rehearsal and in the studio we used a combination of tight scheduling (separating family units and social groups), along with self-assessment screening, universal Covid swab testing, daily thermal checks and social

distancing as operational safety measures. Live studio recording was accomplished in a single day and handed over for editing in post-production.

Meanwhile, we solicited individual videos from scores of chorus members and hundreds of volunteer audience members. All of these were painstakingly stitched together in order to convincingly populate the stage and fill up the seats in the empty theatre. Of course what you see on your screens is a two dimensional version of Revels. Our greatest challenge is to break through that screen to connect with you. The avatars that you see in Sanders Theatre are waiting to be animated by a live presence and (no surprise to a Revels audience), that “live” presence is ... you!

We hope that you will enjoy this unique Revels experience!

Because joy is
a gift that every
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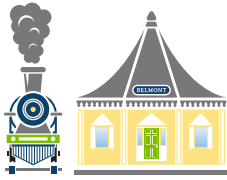
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JACK LANGSTAFF: A MUSICAL LEGACY

Revels founder John Meredith Langstaff, known to everyone as Jack, was first and always a musician. He loved theater, he loved dance, and he loved poetry, but music ran through his veins. When Revels officially launched in 1971 at Harvard University's Sanders Theatre, it was no less than a confluence of many tributaries in the musical life of Jack Langstaff.



The earliest of these was his life as a choirboy. His parents recognized early on his naturally sweet singing voice and accurate sense of pitch. They sent him to Grace Church Choir School in Manhattan where he became a star soprano soloist. This exposure to sacred choral music made a lasting

impression on the youngster. He never lost the sense of wonder and awe that came from singing his solos into the lofty spires of the church, and the conviction that he was singing directly to God.

The Langstaff family delighted in all things musical. Jack and his siblings grew up in Brooklyn Heights in an environment of music-making. His mother, an accomplished pianist, played for family singing, organized and led by his father. Every December they hosted festive Christmas carol parties that included "Good King Wenceslas," with parts acted out, and "The Boar's Head Carol," complete with a roasted boar's head on a platter.

At age 15, Jack's life was changed forever when he was taken to a folk festival in Virginia, where he was deeply affected by the primal energy of English morris dancing and by the beauty and simplicity of unaccompanied folk song. He never lost his belief in the power of traditional song, even as he built a foundation of artistry and classical vocal repertoire at the Curtis Institute and the Juilliard School.

Jack's subsequent recital career as a baritone soloist took him around the world and brought him into collaboration with many

notable pianists, conductors and composers. He made recordings of classical works and at the same time recorded the British and American folk songs that he found so compelling. In London he made recordings for children with Beatles producer George Martin, with whom he maintained a lifelong friendship.

Jack's career took a significant turn when he accepted a teaching position at the Potomac School in Virginia. There he entranced students with his infectious, childlike enthusiasm for song, both folk and classical. In a stroke of boldness, he mounted a production of the recently composed Benjamin Britten opera *Noyes Fludde*, in which he sang the role of Noah. This proved so successful that he repeated it for several years, and when he shifted his teaching to The Shady Hill School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, he continued the *Noyes Fludde* tradition, to the delight of children and adults alike.

All of these chapters in Jack's life — the sacred choral, the singing parties, the classical training and performing career, his discovery of folk song and dance, his experience with children, his love of the stage — were converging on a Big Idea: to present a multi-genre stage production that celebrated the Christmas season. In the 1950s he rented Town Hall in New York for his own "Christmas Masque," which later resurfaced as a TV special for NBC. The seeds of Revels, planted over the decades of his life, were beginning to sprout and flower.

Then came the decisive moment: Jack and his daughter Carol persuaded Harvard to rent out Sanders Theatre for the maiden voyage of the Cambridge *Christmas Revels*. History was made.



What distinguished this holiday performance from all others was its unpredictable mélange of classical and folk music, of high art and low art, in a joyous celebration. It featured adult and children's choruses, vocal soloists, instrumentalists, a splendid brass ensemble, dancers, actors, storytellers — and a whole-hearted dose of audience participation. A mysterious, dimly-lit troupe of dancers and odd characters, accompanied by a haunting tune, reenacted an ancient English deer hunting ritual. A ribald-yet-serious mummers' play, with a mesmerizing sword dance at a crucial moment, dealt with the theme of the death and rebirth of the year as the northern hemisphere approached the winter solstice. Revels was unlike anything that had ever been seen before, and people loved it.

Above all, Jack's remarkable vision was fueled by his passionate conviction that music has the power to bring people together in community as nothing else can. That conviction was the foundational wellspring of *The Christmas Revels*.

Jack's remarkable vision was fueled by his passionate conviction that music has the power to bring people together...

Now we are celebrating not only 50 years of Revels but also what would have been Jack's 100th birthday — on Christmas Eve! There is no better time to stop and pay tribute to the man whose formative life experiences, formidable musical talent, deep artistic instincts, visionary ideas, boundless energy and love of people — especially of people singing together — have brought us to this historic moment.

What a beautiful gift he has given us all.

GEORGE EMILEN, Music Director 1984-2016

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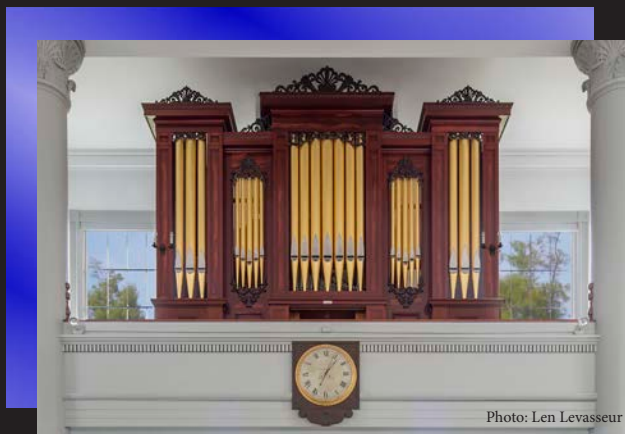


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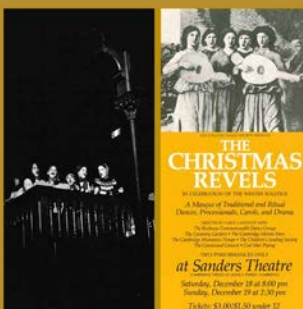
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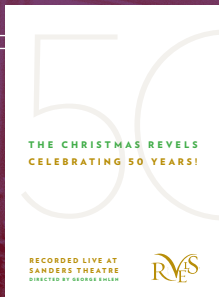
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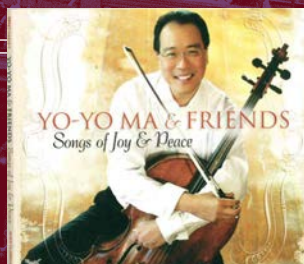


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