



A Bit of History

Christmas Revels performances at Sanders Theatre by year and theme

Year	Theme	Description
1971	Medieval/Renaissance	Two performances directed by Carol Langstaff and her father Jack, who created the Revels concept back in the 1950's.
1972	Medieval	First official appearance of the Pinewoods Morris Men.
1973	Medieval	Three performances directed by Carol Langstaff. With Alexander's Feast and the Cambridge Mummers Troupe.
1974	Medieval	Tickets cost \$3.50/\$2.00 for children under 12. With May Gadd, Director Emeritus of the Country Dance and Song Society.
1975	Medieval	With The Quadrivium and Alexander's Feast.
1976	Medieval	With The Quadrivium and Alexander's Feast, features Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.
1977	Victorian	London, England, from street cries to parlour dances. The first appearance of Susan Cooper's poem, The Shortest Day. With David Jones and Maggi Pierce.
1978	Medieval	Set in Derbyshire, this show marks the first appearance of Haddon Hall in <i>a Christmas Revels</i> . With John Fleagle and Alexander's Feast.
1979	French/English Middle Ages	Directed by John Langstaff with The Quadrivium, The Voice of the Turtle and Le Mime d'Arterberry.

1980	Appalachian	10 th anniversary show. A traditional Appalachian Christmas with Jean Ritchie, Stan Strickland, Janice Allen and the Big Gap String Band. This show marked David Coffin's first appearance as a musician.
1981	Anglo-Celtic	A trip through Ireland and Scotland with the Stuart Highland Pipe Band, the Straw Boy Mummers, and Keohane Irish Dancers.
1982	Victorian	Directed by John Langstaff and Ronald Smedley with quadrilles, music hall songs, The Lord of Misrule, and a Victorian ghost story.
1983	Slavic	Ten performances directed by Carol Duveneck highlighting Russian and Eastern European culture. With Libana, Koliada Mummers, and Cambridge Symphonic Brass Ensemble.
1984	Medieval	The traditional rites and revelry of the British Isles set in Haddon Hall. Featuring the Feast of Fools, the Boar's Head Carol, and the Abbots Bromley Horn Dance. Directed by Ron Jenkins, Of note: George Emlen makes his debut as music director for <i>The Christmas Revels</i> .
1985	French – Middle Ages	Featuring Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, with Trent Arterberry, Melody Arterberry and Youth pro Musica.
1986	Appalachian	Christmas in Appalachia with Jean Ritchie, Stan Strickland, Tony Saletan, and clog dancer Ira Bernstein.
1987	The Dark and the Light	A mix of electronic sound and instruments with earthy medieval song and dance. Let's call this an interesting experiment. With percussionist David Moss and the wizardry of light/sound artist Christopher Janney.
1988	Storybook Revels	Script by Susan Cooper with voice-over narration by Hume Cronyn. Set design by illustrator Trina Schart Hyman.
1989	Victorian	"A Victorian Celebration of Carols, Comedy, Melodrama and Sentiment." Of note: This show marked Patrick "Paddy" Swanson's debut as a Revels Director.

1990	Russian & American	An historic show juxtaposing familiar American material with unfamiliar Russian music and dance. With John Langstaff, the Dimitri Pokrovsky Ensemble, Janice Allen, and the Buck and Wing Band. This was Jack's last year as host/song leader in Cambridge.
1991	Medieval/Renaissance	Directed by Patrick Swanson in collaboration with John Langstaff and Susan Cooper. Featuring Voice of the Turtle plus Merry Conway, Susan Dibble and Arawana Hayashi as "The Celestial Fools." Of note: David Coffin takes over the "Jack role" (song leader and Lord of the Dance).
1992	Celtic	With Norman Kennedy, Sheela-na-Gig, Irish tunes and step-dances, and the Straw Boy Mummers.
1993	Northlands	Inspired by Finland's epic creation myth, <i>The Kalavala</i> , and Scandinavian culture. With the Karelian Folk Music Ensemble, Karin Brennesvik and halling dancer, Sigbjorn Rua, and the Boston Spelemannslag.
1994	Meso-American	Based on an original concept by Patrick Swanson and Juan Pedro Gaffney R., Revels explored Latin American and Mesoamerican holiday traditions from Mayan times to the present. With Angélica Aragón, Heuhuetl. Special Highlight: The Yaqui Deer Dance.
1995	Medieval	25 th anniversary production featuring John Langstaff, John Fleagle, and Cambridge Symphonic Brass Ensemble. With Patrick English as "The King" and Larry Pisoni as "The Fool." This was Jack's last appearance onstage with us in a <i>Christmas Revels</i> in Cambridge.
1996	Breton	In 1996 we traveled to the northwest corner of France to celebrate the solstice in Breton fashion. With John Fleagle, Les Petite Chanterelles, and Les Cornemuses de Cornouaille.
1997	Romany (Gypsy)	Jay O'Callahan as "Old Rom" narrated this production that followed the gypsy migration out of India and into Central and Western Europe over a thousand years ago. With the New England Romanian Ensemble, Neena Gulati and Trevani Dance, and El Arte Flamenco.

1998	Victorian	It's back to Victorian England for a Cinderella Panto, music hall songs, parlour dances and more! With David Jones, Sarah deLima, Patrick English, and Richard Snee.
1999	Italian Renaissance	An exploration of Italian culture set in Leonardo da Vinci's 16 th -century workshop. Featuring Tapestry, the Renaissance, and Patrick English as Leonardo.
2000	Appalachian	Our 30 th annual production featured Appalachian storyteller Sheila Kay Adams, Janice Allen, David Coffin, the Roaring Gap Chorus, and the Silver Leaf Gospel Singers.
2001	Elizabethan/Tudor	Our Elizabethan Revels centered on Shakespearean actor Will Kemp and his famous "Nine Daies Wonder" – his epic morris dance from London to Norwich. With Ken Baltin as Will Kemp, Jim Klimek as Young Kemp, and David Coffin as Master of the Musick.
2002	Armenia/Georgia	A sumptuous show featuring Armenian music, songs and folktales led by the Arev Ensemble and the Revels Chorus of adults and children. Highlight: Sam Johnson and The Slackrope
2003	Scottish	Pipes and fiddles shared the stage as Revels explored the winter music and customs of Scotland. With Highland Dance Boston, The Great Highland Pipes and Drums, The Auld Reekie Singers, and the Revels Bairns.
2004	French Canadian	With wild dancing and "kitchen music" our 2004 Christmas Revels took us to Quebec. With Debra Wise, Danse Cadense, Le Choeur de Noel, and featuring "The Legend of the Flying Canoe."
2005	Medieval	Our 35 th anniversary show was once again set in England's Haddon Hall which was soon filled with visitors, troubadours – and an ass named Fauvel. With Debra Wise, narrator; Martin Tulloch as <i>Fauvel</i> , and David Torrey as <i>Lord of the Manor</i> .
2006	German/Bavarian	Exploring the many holiday rituals we now celebrate that began in Scandinavia, this light-hearted production featured Richard Snee as Sankta Nikolaus and Debra Wise as his not-so-nice assistant, Knecht Ruprecht.

2007	Balkan	The glorious sound of Balkan voices filled Sanders Theatre as world music specialists Libana led us in an unforgettable <i>Christmas Revels</i> featuring music from Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, and Bulgaria.
2008	Thomas Hardy's England	It's Christmas Eve in Wessex with the Mellstock Band, David Coffin, Mary Casey, Richard Snee, and Tim Sawyer.
2009	American	Appalachian tradition-bearer Susannah Park helped us knit together a few of the musical patches that make up the American cultural quilt. With Janice Allen, David Coffin, Leon Joseph Littlebird, and the Smoky Mountain Dancers.
2010	England through time	40 th anniversary show. Will the current Duke of Rutland allow the now-abandoned Haddon Hall to be torn down to make way for a highway? Not if the ghosts of the Manor have anything to say about it! With Mark Jaster, Sabrina Mandell, and Nigel the Dragon!
2011	French	It's 16 th -century France and pilgrims from all over Europe stream towards a small fishing village and its annual Christmas pageant. Only problem: Three Fools are in charge. With Tim Sawyer, Mark Jaster and Sabrina Mandell as the Fools. Also David Coffin, Linnea Coffin (as "Boney") and Jacob Kiely-Song.
2012	Irish Emigration	Searching for a better life, a group of Irish emigrants steam towards New York aboard the RMS Carpathia circa 1907. With Steven Barkhimer, Billy Meleady, Mary Casey, and the O'Shea-Chaplin Academy of Irish Dance.
2013	Galician	Revels follows the Road to Compostella with actors Jay O'Callahan, Angélica Aragón and Billy Meleady, and musician/soloist Salomé Sandoval.
2014	Victorian England	Revels travelled to Victorian London, and the Crystal Palace, the remarkable glass building erected for the Great Exhibition of 1851. Inside we found a colorful cast of character including a harried producer, cheeky street performers (Billy Meleady, Marge Dunn, Mark Jaster and Sabrina Selma Mandell), a music hall singer (Sarah deLima), and even composer Sir Arthur Sullivan, all caught up in a scheme to produce a whirlwind Christmas performance fit for a Prince.

2015	Wales	Set in a village not too different from the one described in Dylan Thomas' <i>A Child's Christmas in Wales</i> , this show leapt into the past to access the world of Celtic legend and song. We spun tales of shape-changers and dragons, of ghostly white horses and of the little wren, king of the birds, enjoyed Welsh anthems and wild border Morris dancing. Featuring actors Emma Crane Jaster, Billy Meleady and Noni Lewis and soloist Cristi Catt.
2016	Acadian	Set in the 1700's this production followed the original French settlers in Acadia (the Canadian Maritimes) who were forced to leave their homes by the British and eventually settled in Louisiana where the "Acadians" became "Cajuns". With musicians Josee Vachon, Lisa Ornstein, Keith Murphy, Tom Pixton and David Greely.
2017	Venice	The Doge of Venice has had it. It is time for the solstice and the Feast of the Seven Fishes and everyone wants his opinion - merchants, lawyers, politicians, artists, even the fishwives want him to rule on who makes the best spaghetti bolognese. So he is going to take a little unauthorized vacation and meet some of his more lowly subjects. The wild adventures ahead involve reckless actors, jailbreaks, itinerant musicians, English Morris men and maybe even the Spanish Armada! With musician and song leader David Coffin; The Revels Chorus of adults and children; a brilliant group of vocalists and musicians from the Early Music community (Sophie Michaux, Gideon Crevoshay, Lysander Jaffe, Daniel Meyers, Simon Martyn-Ellis, Nathaniel Cox, and Fabio Pirozzolo); and our acting troupe, Commedia Buffo (old friends Noni Lewis, Billy Meleady, Mark Jaster and Sabrina Selma Mandell), with Richard Snee as the Doge. The Cambridge Symphonic Brass Ensemble and The Pinewoods Morris Men also join us onstage at Sanders this year.