

# The Christmas Revels®

IN CELEBRATION OF THE WINTER SOLSTICE  
2006



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THE 36TH ANNUAL PRODUCTION OF

# The Christmas Revels

IN CELEBRATION OF THE WINTER SOLSTICE



PATRICK SWANSON  
DIRECTOR

GEORGE EMLÉN  
MUSIC DIRECTOR

VIRGINIA MORTON  
PRODUCER

WITH

DAVID COFFIN

DEBRA WISE\*

RICHARD SNEE

THE WEIHNACHTS CHORUS

DIE FRÖHLICHEN KINDERLEIN

AND

THE BREMEN TOWN MUSICIANS

CAMBRIDGE SYMPHONIC BRASS ENSEMBLE

ORION LONGSWORD

THE SILVESTERCHLAUSEN MUMMERS

THE LORD OF THE DANCE

THE PINWOODS MORRIS MEN

DECEMBER 15TH – 30TH, 2006

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Boston, November 15, 2006  
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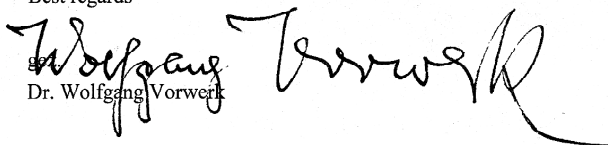
Ms Gayle Rich  
Executive Director of Revels  
80 Mt. Auburn Street  
Watertown, MA 02477

Dear Gayle,

Congratulations to Revels on the 36th anniversary. What a charming invitation: "Travel with us to old Germany to find the roots of modern Christmas and to meet the real Saint Nikolaus."

Indeed, also nowadays Germany at Christmas time is a country filled with wonderful music, customs and the sweet smell of Christstollen and gingerbread in the air. We are honored that you have chosen to represent our country this year, as you continue your travels across the globe celebrating so many different cultures. Have a joyful "Weihnachten Revels" at Harvard University's Sanders Theatre in Cambridge. What a great place to celebrate the most wonderful season of the year!

Best regards

  
Dr. Wolfgang Vorwerk

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{ **90.9wbur** }

*Public radio news for Boston*



**W**ELCOME to the 36th annual Christmas Revels! This darkest time of the year casts a powerful spell over nearly every culture in the northern hemisphere and has given birth to countless ways of celebrating the shortest day. Many of our present-day holiday rituals in this country originate in the Nordic/German traditions and come flavored with the spices of Europe. We invite you to take a little journey with us to the Rhineland at Yuletide to explore the roots of modern Christmas and then to climb with us to a snowy Swiss village where your every breath will hang in glittering crystals in the cold Alpine air. Your guides will be familiar (well, maybe not so familiar) and of course we promise good carols, a little contemplation and the blessings of children and laughter.

## Program ❄️ Part One

### 1 OVERTURE

“Canzona Bergamasca” by Samuel Scheidt, one of Germany’s greatest organists in the 17th century and a major influence on J.S. Bach.

CAMBRIDGE SYMPHONIC BRASS ENSEMBLE

### 2 FRAU HOLLE AND HER FEATHERBED

Appearing early in German mythology, Frau Holle is a wild, elemental and frequently destructive figure who creates great snowstorms when she shakes out her featherbed.

RENNI BOY, *Frau Holle*

### 3 SANKT NIKOLAUS AND KNECHT RUPRECHT

The popular saint appears at Christmas to reward those who have been good throughout the year. He is accompanied by Knecht Ruprecht, who carries a switch and lumps of coal to reward those unfortunates who have slipped from grace.

#### 4 O TANNENBAUM (O Fir Tree)

The symbol of a tree that bears its needles all year long has deep roots in European pagan religions. It first appeared as a Christmas tree in medieval times in Germany, and by the mid-19th century it was popular throughout the country. The tune was first published in 1799.

THE WEIHNACHTS CHORUS  
DIE FRÖHLICHEN KINDERLEIN  
THE BREMEN TOWN MUSICIANS  
CAMBRIDGE SYMPHONIC BRASS ENSEMBLE

ALL SING

O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,  
How lovely are thy branches!  
They're green when summer days are bright,  
They're green when winter snow is white.  
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,  
How lovely are thy branches!

O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,  
Thou tree most fair and lovely!  
The sight of thee at Christmastide  
Spreads hope and gladness far and wide.  
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,  
Thou tree most fair and lovely!

#### 5 O DU FRÖHLICHE! O DU SELIGE! (O Joyful, O Blessed)

Widely known as "The Sicilian Mariner's Hymn," with a tune probably of Italian origin, this carol is commonly sung in Germany throughout the year, as well as during the Christmas season, to various texts.

THE WEIHNACHTS CHORUS  
DIE FRÖHLICHEN KINDERLEIN  
CAMBRIDGE SYMPHONIC BRASS ENSEMBLE

ALL SING *See music on next page*

#### 6 ACHTERRÜM

A traditional dance from the heather country in the North German province of Hannover. "Acterrüm" means "hinter herum" or "going behind," which refers to a move in the chorus of the dance.

THE WEIHNACHTS DANCERS

#### 7 VINUM SCHENK EIN (Pour out the Wine)

A choral drinking song composed in the early 17th century by Erasmus Widmann.

THE WEIHNACHTS CHORUS



O du fröh - li - che! O du se - li - ge!  
Sing this bles - sed day! Sing this ho - ly day!

Sing of joy, all ye na - tions.  
Sing the joy of cre - a - tion.

Star ap - pear - ing, shep - herds a - fear - ing.  
Won - der at this ti - ny king, earth's hopes a - wa - ken - ing.

Hal - le - lu - ia, glo - ry hal - le - lu - ia!  
Hal - le - lu - ia, glo - ry hal - le - lu - ia!

## 8 MUTH (Courage)

Among Franz Schubert's many *lieder* is this ebullient setting of Wilhelm Müller's poem from the song-cycle *Die Winterreise* (The Winter Journey). Like much composed music, this song draws on a folkier musical idiom. "When the snow flies in your face, shake it off; cheerfully defy the wind and weather!"

JANINE WANÉE, *soprano*  
THE BREMEN TOWN MUSICIANS

## 9 AUF NEUJAHR (To the New Year)

Folksong from Westphalia bestowing good luck for the coming year.

THE WEIHNACHTS CHORUS

## 10 TWO LEGENDS OF SANKT NIKOLAUS

The first of these stories, while a little gruesome, in the tradition of German folktales, links the Christian Sankt Nikolaus to the ancient pagan rituals of death and rebirth. The second story emphasizes the theme of the "secret benefactor," which survives to the present day.

SARAH HEBERT-JOHNSON AND GILES HOLT, *strolling players*

## 11 A SET OF DANCES FROM MICHAEL PRAETORIUS

Praetorius was a prolific 17th-century composer, collector and arranger of dance music, as well as the author of a detailed treatise on music theory. The dances here—a bourrée, a pavane, and a canary—are from his 1612 collection *Terpsichore*. The part-song “Der Winter ist ein strenger gast” (The winter is a stern guest) was originally a sacred work from *Musae Sionae*, 1610.

THE BREMEN TOWN MUSICIANS

## 12 THE HOLLY AND THE IVY

Robert Schumann’s “Sylvesterlied” (New Year’s Song) comes from his piano collection *Jugendalbum* (Album for the Young). We have paired the melody with a slightly modified version of the ancient English carol text.

THE WEIHNACHTS WOMEN  
THE BREMEN TOWN MUSICIANS

## 13 CHILDREN’S SONGS

LASST UNS FROH UND MUNTER SEIN (Let’s Be Joyful and Lively)

IHR KINDERLEIN, KOMMET (Come, Little Children)

Two songs traditionally sung during the Christmas season.

JOSEPH DEAREST, JOSEPH MINE

One of the oldest of German Christmas songs, possibly before the 14th century, historically performed in a manger tableau.

DIE FRÖHLICHEN KINDERLEIN  
THE BREMEN TOWN MUSICIANS

## 14 RESONET IN LAUDIBUS (Let Resound in Praises)

This 14th-century carol is a classic example of the close relationship between composed and traditional music. The “Joseph” setting (above) and the “Resonet” setting of this lilting cradle song have equally long histories. Both were used in medieval Christmas services and pageants, and both were often performed antiphonally, as we are doing here in a 17th-century setting by Jacob Handl (Jacobus Gallus). In the medieval German tradition of cradle songs, a priest would rock, in time to the music, a cradle conspicuously placed before the altar of the church. (The refrain “Eia!” is associated with other lullaby carols.) In this carol we also clearly hear the dance-like quality that is at the root of the ancient *carole*.

THE WEIHNACHTS CHORUS  
CAMBRIDGE SYMPHONIC BRASS ENSEMBLE

## 15 SANKT NIKOLAUS

This 20th-century song by Heinz Lau, based on a folk custom, welcomes in Saint Nicholas but implores him to leave his *Rute*, a bundle of twigs, outside by the door.

DIE FRÖHLICHEN KINDERLEIN  
THE WEIHNACHTS CHORUS  
THE BREMEN TOWN MUSICIANS

## 16 SCHUHPLATTLER — REIT IM WINKLER

A *Schuhplattler* dance from the town of Reit Im Winkl, on the Bavaria/Austria border. The *Schuhplattler* (translated roughly as “shoe-slapper”) arose about 200 years ago in the Tyrol, Austria, as improvised slapping of the thigh and sole of the shoe during folk dances. By 1850 it had spread to Bavaria in southern Germany, where it became a formalized part of a dance called the *Langaus*, which in turn became blended with the *Ländler*. The *Ländler*, with its 3/4 time rhythm, is the prototype of the waltz. The *Ländler* remains the basic musical form for the *Schuhplattler* today.

THE WEIHNACHTS DANCERS  
THE BREMEN TOWN MUSICIANS

## 17 SALUTATION

An excerpt of a letter written by the Franciscan friar Fra Giovanni on Christmas Eve, 1513, to his friend the Countess Allagia degl’Aldobrandeschi in Florence.

RICHARD SNEE

## 18 THE LORD OF THE DANCE

Sydney Carter’s modern lyrics to the Shaker song “Simple Gifts” are here translated into dance using a compilation of traditional morris steps by Carol Langstaff, Martin Graetz and Jonathan Morse.

DAVID COFFIN, *singer*  
THE PINWOODS MORRIS MEN  
CAMBRIDGE SYMPHONIC BRASS ENSEMBLE

ALL SING AND DANCE:

“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

# Program ❄️ Part Two

## 19 STILL, STILL (Softly, Softly)

A lullaby from Salzburg for the Christ child.

THE WEIHNACHTS WOMEN

## 20 ABBOTS BROMLEY HORN DANCE

An ancient ritual dance for good luck in hunting the stag, still danced every year in the village of Abbots Bromley in England. Its four supernumerary characters link it with the mumming traditions of Christmas.

DAVID COFFIN, *recorder*  
ABBOTS BROMLEY DANCERS

## 21 CHLAUSEZÄUERLI (Yodel Song)

On the “old” New Year’s Eve of January 13th, in the rural villages of Outer Appenzell, Switzerland, strangely costumed figures laden with large bells sing their haunting songs in front of farmhouses and in taverns from pre-dawn to midnight, in return for a glass or two of wine.

THE REVELS SILVESTERKLÄUSE

## 22 DANCE OF THE UGLIES AND THE BEAUTIFULS

THE SILVESTERCHLAUSEN MUMMERS (PLAYED BY ORION LONGWORD)  
THE BREMEN TOWN MUSICIANS

## 23 WELCOME WINTER

A modern celebration of winter by Cesar Bresgan of Salzburg.

THE WEIHNACHTS CHORUS  
THE BREMEN TOWN MUSICIANS  
CAMBRIDGE SYMPHONIC BRASS ENSEMBLE

## 24 ROUNDS FOR ALL TO SING

ALLELUJA

1.  
Al - le - lu - ja, al - le - lu - ja.

2.  
A - - - men, a - - - - men.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first staff is for the first round, starting with a treble clef and a common time signature. It contains the melody for 'Al - le - lu - ja, al - le - lu - ja.' The second staff is for the second round, also starting with a treble clef and a common time signature. It contains the melody for 'A - - - men, a - - - - men.' The lyrics are written below the notes.

### DANKET DEM HERRN

Thank the Lord for he is truly kind; his grace and truth last forever  
(Psalm 106).

1. 2.  
Dan - ket, dan - ket dem Herrn, denn er ist sehr freund - lich;  
3. 4.  
Sei - ne Güt' und Wahr - heit währ - et e - wig - lich.

The musical score for 'DANKET DEM HERRN' is written in G major (one sharp) and common time. It consists of two staves. The first staff has two measures, labeled 1. and 2., with the lyrics 'Dan - ket, dan - ket dem Herrn, denn er ist sehr freund - lich;'. The second staff has two measures, labeled 3. and 4., with the lyrics 'Sei - ne Güt' und Wahr - heit währ - et e - wig - lich.'.

### DONA NOBIS PACEM

Give us peace.

1. 2. 3.  
Do - na no - bis pa - cem, pa - cem,  
Do - na no - bis pa - cem,  
Do - na no - bis pa - cem,  
Do - na no - bis pa - cem.  
do - na no - bis pa - cem.  
do - na no - bis pa - cem.

The musical score for 'DONA NOBIS PACEM' is written in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. It consists of six staves. The first three staves are for three different voices, each with two measures. The lyrics are 'Do - na no - bis pa - cem, pa - cem,' for the first voice, 'Do - na no - bis pa - cem,' for the second, and 'Do - na no - bis pa - cem,' for the third. The next three staves are for a single voice, each with two measures. The lyrics are 'Do - na no - bis pa - cem.' for the first, 'do - na no - bis pa - cem.' for the second, and 'do - na no - bis pa - cem.' for the third.

## 25 STILLE NACHT, HEILIGE NACHT (Silent Night, Holy Night)

Often called the world's favorite Christmas carol, this carol was first sung in Obendorf, Austria, on Christmas Eve 1818, to a melody by Franz Gruber and text by Joseph Mohr.

CLAIRE DICKSON OR MAYA DOMESHEK, *solo*  
THE WEIHNACHTS CHORUS  
CAMBRIDGE SYMPHONIC BRASS ENSEMBLE

ALL SING

Stille Nacht! heilige Nacht!  
Alles schläft, einsam wacht  
Nur das traute hochheilige Paar,  
Holder Knabe im lокkigem Haar.  
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh',  
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh'.

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!  
Shepherds quake at the sight;  
Glories stream from heaven afar,  
Heavenly hosts sing "Alleluia!"  
Christ the Savior is born,  
Christ the Savior is born!

## 26 THE KINGS

Written in 1871 by Peter Cornelius, with English translation by William Mercer. The chorale melody is "How Brightly Shines the Morning Star," by the 16th-century composer Philipp Nicolai, translated by H.N. Bate. The brass arrangement is by Brian Holmes.

DAVID COFFIN, *soloist*  
THE WEIHNACHTS CHORUS  
CAMBRIDGE SYMPHONIC BRASS ENSEMBLE

## 27 MORE CHILDREN'S SONGS

ICH GEH' MIT MEINE LATERNE (I Go with my Lantern)

## LATERNE, LATERNE

German children celebrate the winter feast of Saint Martin on November 11th with a lantern processional.

## FUCHS, DU HAST DAS GANS GESTOHLN

(Fox, You Have Stolen the Goose)

DIE FRÖHLICHEN KINDERLEIN  
THE BREMEN TOWN MUSICIANS

## 28 GERMAN DANCE TUNES

THE BREMEN TOWN MUSICIANS

## 29 ES IST EIN ROS' ENTSPRUNGEN

(There Is a Flower Springing)

This beloved carol began as a folk carol in the 15th century and was harmonized by Praetorius and included in his 1609 *Musae Sioniae*. The text, here in a translation by Ursula Vaughan Williams, refers to the messianic prophecy in Isaiah and compares Mary to a branch stemming from the root of Jesse, the father of King David.

THE WEIHNACHTS CHORUS  
CAMBRIDGE SYMPHONIC BRASS ENSEMBLE

ALL SING

3. There is a flow - er spring - ing from ten - der roots it  
from E - den beau - ty bring - ing from Jes - se's stem a

4. Pure Mar - y, mai - den ho - ly, the dream of pro - phets  
who in a sta - ble low - ly a - bove her child did

grows,  
rose. On his green branch it blows: a bud that  
seen,  
lean So gen - tle and se - rene: this was I -

in cold win - ter at mid - night will un - close.  
sa - iah's vis - ion, the tree of liv - ing green.

The image shows a musical score for the carol 'Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen'. It consists of three staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff has two verses of lyrics. The second staff continues the lyrics. The third staff concludes the lyrics. The music is simple and melodic, typical of a folk carol.

### 30 MARIA IN THE GARDEN STANDS

A call-and-response folk song from the Taunus Mountains in central Germany.

DIE FRÖHLICHEN KINDERLEIN  
THE WEIHNACHTS CHORUS  
THE BREMEN TOWN MUSICIANS

### 31 SIEGFRIED AND THE DRAGON

In the style of many European folk plays, this year's offering by Patrick Swanson has a hero combat at its core. In this setting the hero is from German mythology with shameless borrowings from Wagner and Freud. The sword dance performed here uses the traditional costume of the Unterwössen (Germany) dancers, along with figures common to German, Austrian, and Italian sword dances, performed in the style of the dance from Ebensee (Austria). Flag-waving, speeches and plays are traditional parts of the ceremony.

DAVID TORREY, *Fool*  
GILES HOLT, *the Bear*  
SARAH HEBERT-JOHNSON, *Bear handler*  
RICHARD SNEE, *Sankt Nikolaus*  
DONALD A. DUNCAN, *Brunnhilda*  
MARTY TULLOCH, *Fafner the Dragon*  
LINNEA COFFIN, *Fafner's Tail*  
DAVID COFFIN, *Siegfried*  
DEBRA WISE, *Doctor Frood*

### 32 DANK SAGEN WIR ALLE, GOTT (God, We All Thank Thee)

The final movement from Heinrich Schütz's *Weihnachtshistorie*, or Christmas Oratorio, published in 1664.

THE WEIHNACHTS CHORUS  
CAMBRIDGE SYMPHONIC BRASS ENSEMBLE

### 33 THE SHORTEST DAY

This poem, written for Revels by Susan Cooper in 1977, has become a traditional part of Christmas Revels performances throughout the country.

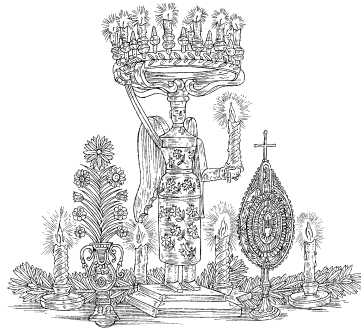
RICHARD SNEE

### 34 THE SUSSEX MUMMERS' CAROL

This traditional carol is sung as an ending to the folk play in Horsham, Sussex. Similarly, in each of the eight other American cities where Revels is produced annually, this carol is sung with the audience at the conclusion of each performance. The brass arrangement is by Brian Holmes, with descant and final verse harmonization by Ralph Vaughan Williams.

CAMBRIDGE SYMPHONIC BRASS ENSEMBLE

ALL SING



God bless the mas - ter of this house with  
 God bless the mis - tress of this house with  
 God bless your house, your chil - dren too, your

hap - pi - ness be - side; Where - e'er his bo - dy  
 gold chain round her breast; Where - e'er her bo - dy  
 cat - tle and your store; The Lord in - crease you

rides or walks, his God must be his guide, his  
 sleeps or wakes, Lord send her soul to rest, Lord  
 day by day, and send you more and more, and

God must be his guide, his guide,  
 send her soul to rest, to rest,  
 send you more and more.

## *Just Arrived at the Revels Dock!*



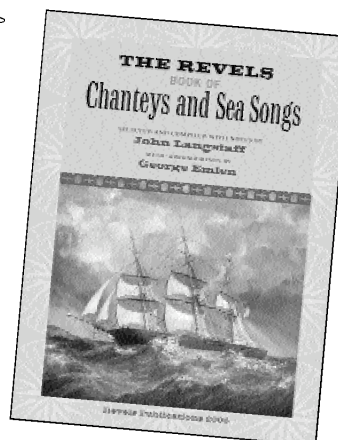
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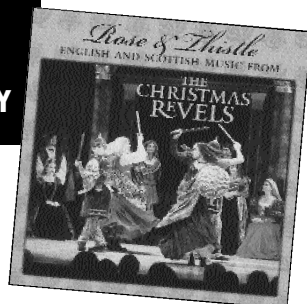


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# The Players



David Coffin, *songleader*  
Debra Wise, *Knecht Ruprecht*  
Richard Snee, *Sankt Nikolaus*

## THE WEIHNACHTS CHORUS

Benjamin B. Bath \* †  
Jim Beardsley †  
David Blodgett  
Renni Boy \* †  
Jim Congo †  
Cristina Corwin \* †  
Donald A. Duncan  
David Fleischmann-Rose \* †  
James Henderson \* †  
Sarah Higginbotham \* †  
Barbara Hill  
Mark Kmetz  
Jim Lawton  
Wendy Loomis  
Elizabeth McCreless \* †  
Laura McCusker  
Eric McDonald \* †  
Milva McDonald  
Joshua Mackay-Smith \* †  
Jessica Nahigian  
Linda K. Olivier †  
Haris Papamichael \* †  
Flora Pirquet  
Jessica Raine  
Willow Randles \* †  
Chris Ripman  
Michelle Roderick \* †  
Daniel Salomon  
Mayhew Seavey †  
Victoria Thatcher  
Beth Thompson †  
Marty Tulloch  
Susan Turner †  
Janine Wanée

## DIE FRÖHLICHEN

### KINDERLEIN

Jennifer Baatz \*  
Leah Brams  
Linnea Coffin \*  
Benjamin Costa \*  
Michael Costello  
Abigail Dickson  
Claire Dickson  
Maya Domeshek  
Alexandra Domeshek  
Carla Forbes \*  
Cora Katz \*  
David Kotlikoff \*  
Graeme Mills \*  
John B. Newhall  
Yael Rothman  
Jesse Simmons

## THE BREMEN TOWN

### MUSICIANS

David Coffin, *recorder*,  
*pennywhistle*  
Michael Cicone,  
*hammered dulcimer*  
Neal MacMillan, *bagpipes*,  
*fiddle, guitar, concertina*  
Andrea Larson, *violin*  
Doug Freundlich, *violone*

## THE PINEWOODS

### MORRIS MEN

Frank Attanasio  
Jerry Callen  
Adam Cole-Mullen  
David Conant  
Bill Cronin  
Peter Kruskal  
Dave Overbeck  
Steve Roderick  
Nathaniel Smith

## ORION LONGSWORD

Alyssa Browne  
Sonja Boet-Whitaker  
Liza Carter  
Jeremy Carter-Gordon  
Judy Erickson  
Sue Jick  
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Deborah Kruskal  
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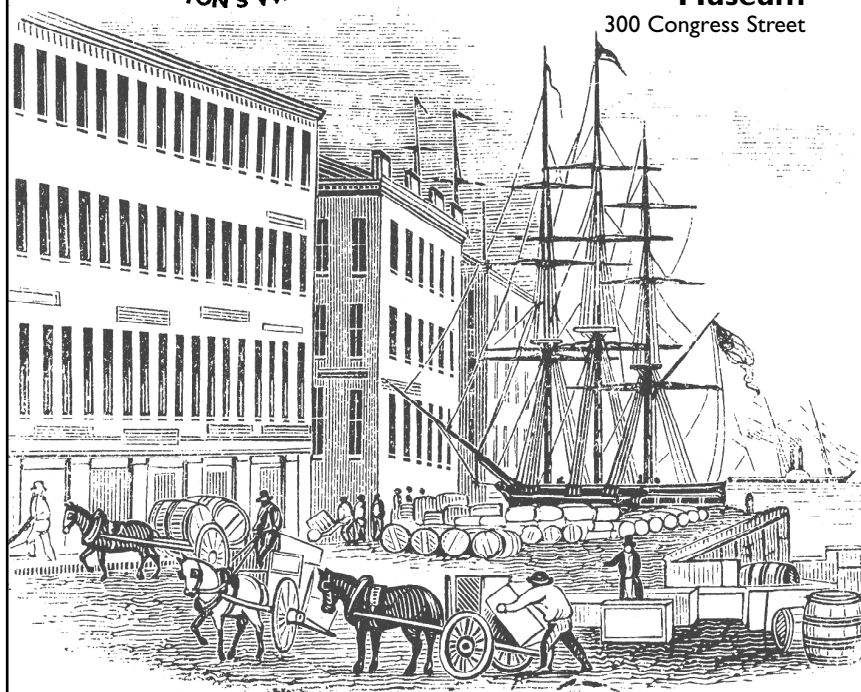
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## THANKS

Many people helped us with research, translating and teaching in the development of this production. One of the earliest of these was Joan Sindall, who enthusiastically introduced us to the haunting and compelling Swiss Sylvesterchlausen tradition from Appenzell. Her friend Hansueli Müller from Urnäsch, in Appenzell, graciously helped us with the details of this custom. Samvedam Randles is responsible for bringing several of the songs in this program to our attention, especially for children. Chorus member Flora Pirquet has been an invaluable source for translations and cultural background. Friedrich and Ingeborg von Huene have been very generous in lending their German books and suggesting songs and dances, as have Gerta Conant and Michelle Roderick.

We are also grateful to Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany for sponsoring the Wassail party; Consul General Dr. Christoph von Arb and Deputy Director Emil Wyss of the Consulate of Switzerland; and to Annette Klein, the Music & Information Coordinator, and Karin Oehlenschläger, Program Coordinator for Film, at the Goethe-Institut. Thanks to Daniel Horton and the members of the Pawtucket Alpenblumen Bavarian Folk Dance Group for teaching the Schuhplattler. Our notes on the dance are from "Unsere Schuhplattler" (Our Schuhplattler), by Erwin Salzer, *Zeitung der Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Österreichischer Volkstanz*, December 2001. Thanks to John Cary, Professor Emeritus of Haverford College, for translation of materials on folk dancing; to Steve Corrsin for material on German and Austrian sword dancing; thanks to Mick Spence and John Hastie for set building consultation; and thanks to Bruce Pratt and his crew for our cast feast and the Marblehead Little Theatre for loan of props.

All musical arrangements are by George Emlen except where noted.

Complete music texts and translations are included in the on-line version of this program book at [www.revels.org](http://www.revels.org).

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# Tradition and the Roots of Modern Christmas

*Patrick Swanson*

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So, what are these traditional elements of Christmas and where did they come from? An interviewer on the street who asked that question might hear about the decorated Christmas tree, the cards, the presents, and undoubtedly the children's favorite, Santa Claus. No doubt, some would claim that these elements obscure the underlying seasonal religious celebration of Christ's birth. Surprisingly, history indicates that what we think of as "traditional" Christmas is a fairly recent construction although many of its elements have links to ancient customs.

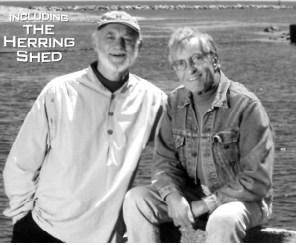
Christ's birth was not celebrated on December 25th until the 4th century. On December 25th in A.D. 274 the Emperor Aurelian instituted the feast of the Birth of the Unconquered Sun. The church fathers had no exact references to the birthday of Jesus, so two hundred years later they utilized the popular midwinter feast and in a brilliant stroke of appropriation declared it the Birth of the Unconquered *Son*. In America, Christmas was not celebrated in any special way by the Puritans, who disapproved of the drinking and revelry associated with the feast. In fact Christmas was legally prohibited for 22 years because of the occasional violence associated with "wassailing" when the poorer classes visited their richer employers to demand money or food in exchange for drinking their good health.

In England as recently as 1840, it was Queen Victoria's German consort, Prince Albert, who popularized Christmas cards, the exchange of

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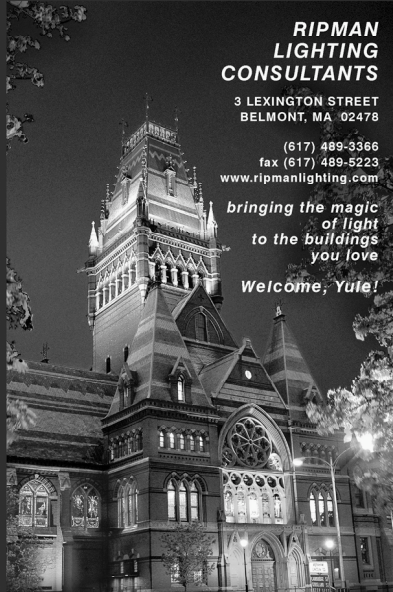


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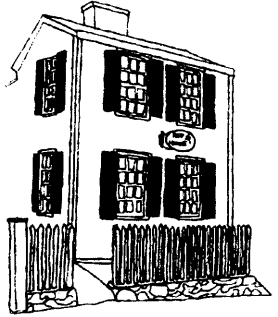
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presents and the Christmas tree. He also introduced the custom of “carol” singing (carols were originally repetitive dance tunes).

And what of the old gent in the red suit? The prototype of Santa Claus, the benevolent white-whiskered gentleman with the sleigh and the reindeer, first appeared in a book called *Father Knickerbocker’s History of New York*, published on Saint Nicholas day by the great American humorist Washington Irving and was later refined by Clement C. Moore in 1882 in his poem “The Night before Christmas.” Santa’s ancestor Saint Nicholas of Myra was a 4th-century bishop alleged to have saved three maidens from prostitution by a surreptitious midnight gift of dowry money. This and other legends, blended with Scandinavian and Russian tales of North-Pole-dwelling wizards, eventually gave us the modern supernatural being welcomed by all—Father Christmas, alias Santa (Nick) Claus.

Christmas as we know it is a mixture of three distinct elements: the Roman feasts around Saturnalia, Christ’s nativity and the heathen Nordic/Germanic midwinter feast of Yule. Saturnalia was a riotous time of fun, laughter and gift giving, which sets the tone of our modern celebration; the Nativity brings a sense of sacred mystery around Christ’s birth and a rich legacy of sacred music and drama, but the underpinning of the ancient Yuletide feasts is the secular mystery of death and rebirth in nature, the great cycles of the seasons and the magical progress of life in all its forms. This mystery is also the subject of our Revels variations on the theme of the “shortest day.”

This year as we celebrate the 36th Christmas Revels, we will be singing some songs in German and emphasizing more of the Yuletide elements, but trusting that the balance of the children’s street songs, the play of Sankt Nikolaus, the audience carol singing, the dances, the mix of the wild and the sacred will still appeal to what Susan Cooper refers to as “that deep yearning for ritual” that is part of the human condition and that is triggered at this magical time of year.



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# The Silvesterchlausen of Appenzell

*This article is excerpted, with permission, from the liner notes for a field recording of the Swiss New Year's tradition known as the Silvesterchläuse, or New Year's mumming. The recording, Chlausezäuerli, or Chlause Songs, was made by members of the Chlause group in the village of Stein, located in Outer Appenzell. It captures not only the unique singing style but also the mesmerizing, rhythmic ringing of the many-sized bells strapped to the Chläuse. Translated by Flora Piquet and Joan Sindall.*

The origins of this fascinating New Year's custom go far back in time, and precise knowledge of its development, meaning, and practice is not clearly documented. What is interesting is that in the interior of Appenzell Ausserhoden, especially in Urnäsch, two *Silvesters* (New Year's Eve and "old" *Silvester*) are customarily celebrated. The actual *Silvester* is on December 31st, according to the Gregorian calendar in common use. Old *Silvester*, observed on January 13th, refers to the Julian calendar, used by the Protestant population until the Napoleonic occupation of the area. The true meaning of the custom is to bring New Year's greetings to households with song and the ringing of bells. During lean times, the *Chlausen* was combined with collecting all kinds of gifts from more prosperous households for more needy families.

The *Chlausen* begins with participants getting into costumes after a common breakfast, usually before dawn. Many houses are visited, including those in remote areas, and the inhabitants are treated to *Zäuerli* songs and the pealing of bells. Over and over "Happy New Year" is heard coming from behind the masks. In the evening, until midnight, the *Chlausen* goes on in many country inns, where locals and visitors can compare and enjoy the different groups in all their variety of costumes, hats, headgear, songs, and bells.

Today there are three main forms of the *Silvesterchläuse* (the New Year's mummers):

*Die Schöne* (the beautiful ones)

They wear brightly colored velvet costumes that contrast with the light, delicate colors of the usually snow-covered landscape. The beautifully decorated hats of the *Schellenchläuse* (figures with big

cow bells) and of the *Rollenweiber* (figures with sleigh bells), showing scenes from rural life, are worn proudly.

*Die Wüeschte* (the ugly, scary ones)

The materials used for their wild, demonic costumes vary—holly, bark, roots, and fir branches are used primarily, but also fur and pelts. The masks are often decorated with cow horns, antlers, or whole rootstocks, forming a wild hairstyle.

*Die Schö-wüeschte* (the beautiful uglies)

The materials used for their masks and costumes also come from nature. The harmonious structures of branches, juniper, leaves, straw, snail shells, and fir-cone scales reveal subtle surfaces and ornaments.

A special form, the *Spaschläuse* (joke figure), is used when the weather forces the beautiful ones to wear their fallback costumes. These figures are often quite humorous.

#### BELL RINGING, DANCE, AND MOVEMENT

Although there are different types of *Chläuse*, one thing remains constant: the group is always lead by the *Rollenwiib*, a female figure with round bells. The *Vorrolli*, or first *Rollenwiib*, (*vor*=before) always leads the procession; the *Noerolli*, or second *Rollenwiib*, (*noe*=after) always brings up the rear. Between these figures are the *Schellenchläuse*, with bells of varying sizes.

The *Rollenwiib*'s instrument is the *Rollen* (round sleigh bell) carrier, holding 8 to 13 spherical metal bells. These are made to ring by rhythmic dancing movements. The *Schellenchlaus* carries either a single cowbell in front or a pair hung over his shoulders. Swinging body movements while walking or standing cause these bells to sound. The bells are chosen for their rich sound and harmonious blending; some are made especially for this occasion. The leader of the *Schellenchläuse* carries the smallest bell, the last carries the largest, so that the pealing begins with the highest tone and dies away with the lowest. A well-tuned set of bells can produce an affecting, primitive music that gives listeners chills unrelated to the often low winter temperatures.

#### THE ZÄUERLI

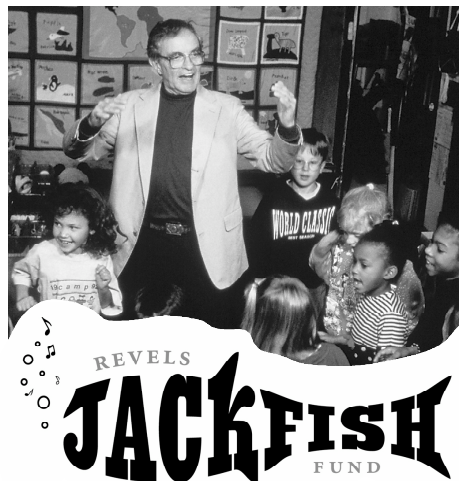
In the silence after the ringing of cowbells or sleigh bells, a wordless song is heard, called a *Zäuerli*. A single voice begins, subtly joined by other voices creating a full, lush chord. The more pure and discreet the modu-

lations and dynamics, the greater the wordless song's effect. The mystical effect is strengthened by the wearing of masks, which also changes the timbre of the voices. This quiet, solemn aspect of the *Zäuerli* finds its counterpart in the whooping, joyful quality of livelier melodies.

We wish you many lovely *Silvesters* and  
*E guets Neus!* (A good New Year!)

---

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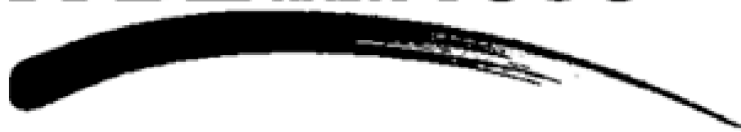
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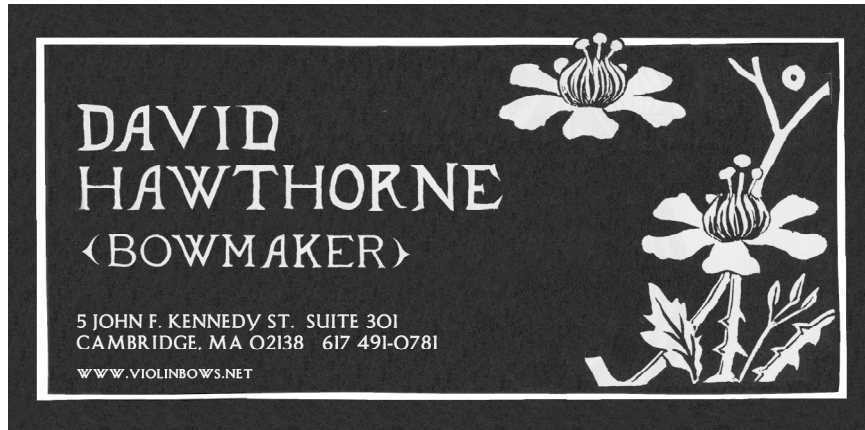
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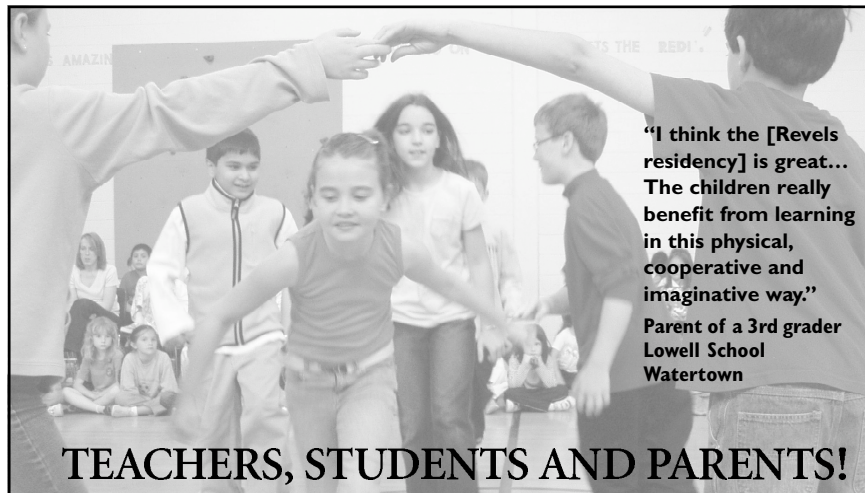
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Sunday December 17, 3PM, Marsh Chapel, Boston University

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Saturday March 24, 7:30PM, Sanders Theatre, Cambridge

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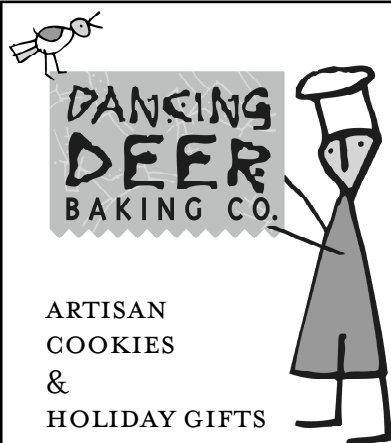
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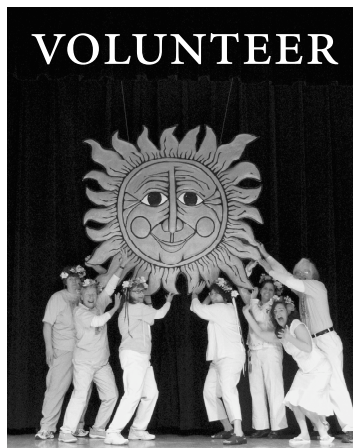
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## PATRON INFORMATION

Sanders Theatre in Memorial Hall is operated by the Office for the Arts at Harvard. All inquiries should be addressed to: Memorial Hall/Lowell Hall Complex  
45 Quincy Street, Room 027, Cambridge, MA 02138-3003  
Phone: 617.496.4595 Fax: 617.495.2420

### Calendar of Events

Available at the Harvard Box Office web site: [www.boxoffice.harvard.edu](http://www.boxoffice.harvard.edu)

### Smoking

There is no smoking allowed in Memorial Hall.

### Restrooms/Public Telephones

Located on the Lower Level.

### Parking: THERE IS NO PARKING AT SANDERS THEATRE.

Free parking for Sanders Theatre events is available at the Broadway Garage, corner of Broadway and Felton Streets, from one hour pre-performance to one hour post-performance. For some student events, patrons will be asked to park at 38 Oxford Street.

### Lost and Found

Call 617.496.4595 or visit the Administrative Offices, Memorial Hall room 027. Memorial Hall and Harvard University are not responsible for lost or stolen property.

### Latecomers

Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of the management.

### Photography and Recording

Use of cameras and audio and video recording equipment is prohibited. Film and tape will be confiscated.

### Access for Patrons with Disabilities

Wheelchair accessible seating is available through the Harvard Box Office, telephone 617.496.2222 (TTY 617.495.1642), or in person. Sanders Theatre is equipped with Assistive Listening Devices, available at the Box Office one-half hour before performance time. For information about parking for disabled patrons, call Marie Trottier, *University Disability Coordinator*, Monday through Friday, 9 am to 5 pm at 617.495.1859 (TTY 617.495.4801). Please call at least two business days in advance.

### The Harvard Box Office

Ticketing for Sanders Theatre events and more. Phone: 617.496.2222 (TTY 617.495.1642)

Advance Sales: Holyoke Center Arcade, Harvard Square, 1350 Massachusetts Avenue

Open Tues.-Sun., 12 noon to 6 pm. Closed Mondays, some holidays, with limited summer hours.

Pre-Performance Sales: Sanders Theatre at Memorial Hall

Open performance days only, at 12 noon for matinees and 5 pm for evening performances.

Open until one-half hour after curtain.

### Ushering

To inquire about ushering opportunities, contact the Production Office at 617.495.5595.

### Memorial Hall/Lowell Hall Complex Staff

*Director:* Eric C. Engel

*Assistant Director:* Raymond C. Traietti

*Program Manager:* Ruth A. Polleys

*Staff Assistant:* Jaclyn Campbell

*Production Manager:* Tina Bowen

*Senior Production Associate:* Jonathan Salz

*Production Service Coordinator:* Ilya Luvish

### Harvard Box Office Staff

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