

MIDWINTER REVELS THE FEAST OF FOOLS

A MEDIEVAL CELEBRATION OF THE SOLSTICE

DIRECTED BY PATRICK SWANSON AND DEBRA WISE
ELIJAH BOTKIN, MUSIC DIRECTOR



DECEMBER 15-28, 2023

SANDERS THEATRE HARVARD UNIVERSITY, CAMBRIDGE, MA



GOD
RESPECTS ME
WHEN I WORK,
BUT HE
LOVES
ME WHEN I
SING!

- RABINDRANATH TAGORE

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the years ahead bring you (and us all...)
more music, more joy!

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WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY PATRICK SWANSON AND DEBRA WISE
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SANDERS THEATRE HARVARD UNIVERSITY, CAMBRIDGE, MA

FEATURING

David Coffin
René Collins
Susan Dibble
Eliza Fichter
Roger Reed
Laurel Swift

Vincent Ernest Siders
Karen Burciaga
Austin Comerford
Tom Duprey
Abe Finch

Greg Gettel
Barbara Allen Hill
Ben Matus
Philip Swanson
Hideki Yamaya

PLEASE VISIT OUR LOBBY TABLES
for Revels recordings, books, cards
and more.

INFRARED LISTENING DEVICES
and large print programs are
available at the Sanders Theatre
Box Office. **CLOSED CAPTIONING**
information is available at the
Revels product table.

PROGRAM BOOK COVER features
Mary Azarian's central Ship of Fools
surrounded by a woodcut border
created by the multi-talented Eliza
Rose Fichter who also portrays
Fiasco in this year's production!



THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS



Welcome to Revels! You play an important role in this wonderful production.

Please join us as you are able in singing, dancing, tapping your feet, enjoying the thousands of elements that knit this production together, and most of all reveling in this joyous season of celebration.

It is notable that we are here for our 53rd year and particularly remarkable that this year's production will be Artistic Director Patrick Swanson's 45th with Revels and his 34th year as artistic director of *The Christmas Revels/Midwinter Revels*. In 2024 Paddy will step back from his full-time Artistic Director role; we will celebrate his incredible imprint on Revels with a Swansong event on Saturday, June 15th in Sanders Theatre. Please save the date!

This year's *Midwinter Revels* will be one for the 'best of' lists! Paddy's vision, humor, language, and connection with our collaborators, artists, and the audience are truly magical and have been enhanced by Associate Artistic Director Debra Wise who will continue on as Interim Artistic Director when Paddy retires.

On behalf of the Revels Board and staff: **53 Cheers to Paddy** ... and thank you for being here! While the shortest day of the year may be dark and cold, it ushers in longer, brighter days ... and hope. Hope for peace, hope for community, hope for all.

Welcome Yule!



Diane Kennedy
Executive Director



Welcome to the 53rd Annual Midwinter Revels in Sanders Theatre!

This year our Revels takes us back to our medieval roots and the land of mythology and folk tales. Annually, a powerful king and his three fools visit a special village on the shortest day to participate in the ceremonial burning of the yule log and the kindling of the first light of the new year. Only a king's crown can ward off danger when the dying light is carried from the old year to the new. Simultaneously at this precarious time, the annual Feast of Fools turns everything upside down. In topsy-turvy fashion, masters become servants and servants masters. The three fools have been sent ahead to prepare for these two events. Their enthusiasm is admirable but it remains to be seen which of their tasks takes precedence and how their unique methods of preparation go down with the local constabulary.

We have a fine chorus, a spirited group of children, an excellent band of early and modern instruments, a brilliant cast of characters and voices, and we have included some of our favorite carols and lively dances. As always in Revels you will be included in the action—singing, dancing, and in this unpredictable world of folly, perhaps you will be included in other ways.

Welcome Yule!



Paddy Swanson
Artistic Director

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DECEMBER 15 AT 7:30 PM

Clark and Susana Bernard

We Honor Paddy Swanson, Whose Abilities as a Showman Always Astound! Thanks So Much for Lifting Our Spirits and Voices All These Years!

In Memory of Wendy Gulley Who Loved Revels

DECEMBER 16 AT 3:00 PM

Shippen Page and Anne St. Goar

Congratulations and Thanks, Paddy, For Your Long, Successful and Loving Stewardship of Revels' Artistic Excellence.

The Rioff Family In Grateful Memory of Brian O'Donovan and the Many Gifts He Shared

Timothy A. Taylor, Managing Trustee
Clark Charitable Trust

DECEMBER 17 AT 1:00 PM

1156 Foundation

In Honor of Linda Fosburg Lloyd

Don and Susan Ware

DECEMBER 17 AT 5:30 PM

Anne von Rosenberg In Honor of Jen Sur, My Boss in the Revels Office for 30 Years and the Woman Who Really Keeps the Place Running!

DECEMBER 21 AT 7:30 PM

In Memory of Timothy G. Taylor

Sarah G. Tenney With So Much Gratitude for Patrick Swanson's Creative Genius!

The Travis Family In Loving Memory of Lenore G. Travis and in Honor of Paddy Swanson and His Remarkable Revels Career

DECEMBER 22 AT 3:00 PM

Phyllis, Kate and Eloise Harrington

DECEMBER 22 AT 7:30 PM

The Bigley White Clan To Constance White, With Gratitude for the Revels' Memories and a Generational Tradition That Will Continue to Dance, Then, Wherever She May Be.

DECEMBER 23 AT 3:00 PM

The Jackson & O'Brien Family In Recognition of the Remarkable Staff and Volunteers of Revels Past, Present and Future!

DECEMBER 23 AT 7:30 PM

The Clapp Family In Recognition of Arline R. Greenleaf's Love of Revels and Joyous Theater

Mary Gene and Ted Myer In Honor of All the Designers, Makers, Doers and Runners Working Behind the Scenes to Support Revels Productions So Wonderfully!

DECEMBER 26 AT 3:00 PM

Jean Fuller Farrington In Honor of the Revels Staff, Cast and Crew Who Make *Midwinter Revels* possible!

DECEMBER 27 AT 7:30 PM

Michael Kolowich & Kirstin Lynde
The Soules Family

DECEMBER 28 AT 1:00 PM

A Friend of Revels With Gratitude to Paddy Swanson for So Many Years of Beautiful Shows!

The Stevens family In Memory of Norman Stevens Who Helped Fund and Secure the Whitechapel Handbells Being Used in This Year's Production

WITH JOYOUS GRATITUDE TO OUR
**PERFORMANCE
SPONSORS**

PROGRAM

PART 1

OVERTURE

By Elijah Botkin

The Revels Brass Ensemble

PERSONENT HODIE

Medieval Christmas Carol

arr. Elijah Botkin and George Emlen

The Revels Solstice Chorus

The Evergreen Children

The Revels Brass Ensemble

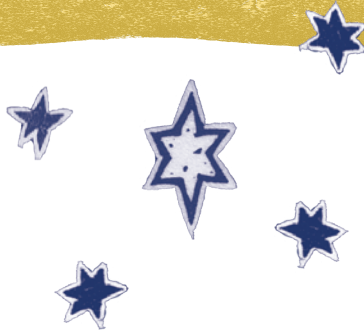
The String and Buzzy Walking Band

This jubilant Latin Christmas carol, often called "The Boys' Carol," first appeared in the *Moosburg Graduale* of 1360, although with different words. The present setting, adapted from an arrangement by Jerome Epstein, is based on the text and tune as they appeared in *Piae Cantiones*, a Scandinavian songbook published in 1582.

REFRAIN

Sing we No - ël, No - ël, No ël!

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of the following notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (half). The lyrics are written below the staff: "Sing we No - ël, No - ël, No ël!".



SING WE NOEL

Traditional French Carol

arr. Elijah Botkin

David Coffin

The Revels Solstice Chorus

The Evergreen Children

The String and Buzzy Walking Band

The Revels Brass Ensemble

This 16th-century French tune was given new words by Susan Cooper for Revels.

All Sing! Refrain



MRS. CASEY (MORRIS DANCE)

Pinewoods Morris Men

Tom Kruskal or Jan Elliott, concertina

A Morris dance in the Fieldtown tradition, "Mrs. Casey's" distinctive qualities include its "heel-and-toe" step and the hand-clapping chorus. The Pinewoods Morris Men dance a version heavily influenced by the dancing of Great Western Morris in Exeter, England.

LEEDS WAITS' WASSAIL

Traditional English Wassail

The Evergreen Children

David Coffin, recorder

Karen Burciaga, rebec

Wassail (from the Anglo-Saxon "wes hal," meaning "be well") is a spicy drink used for wishing visitors good health. Wassailers travel from house to house singing and bestowing good luck to the hosts for the coming year in return for a little food and drink.



THERE WAS A PIG WENT OUT TO DIG

Traditional English Children's Song

The Evergreen Children

David Coffin

The String and Buzzy Walking Band

An old agrarian mummers' carol linking the Christmas season to the cycle of planting and harvesting.

ALL PRAISES TO OUR NOBLE KING

arr. Elijah Botkin, words by
Patrick Swanson

The Revels Chorus

Hideki Yamaya, lute

Soloists: Athéna-Wendolyn Baptiste, Div

Slomin, Sarah Higginbotham, Samantha

Fleishman, Haris Papamichael

Child King: Paloma Ortiz or Naila Timas

Improvising a medieval entertainment, the three Fools enact the seasonal ritual that the king is required to perform every year. The tune is borrowed from the traditional Yorkshire wassail song "We've Been Awhile A-wandering."



NOEL NOUVELET

Traditional French Carol
arr. Elijah Botkin

David Coffin
The Revels Solstice Chorus
The Evergreen Children
The Revels Brass Ensemble
The String and Buzzy Walking Band

Traditional French Carol with English
verses by Susan Cooper.

★ All Sing! Verse 3

3. No ël, No-ël, No-ël, No-ël sing we here Cir-cle and re-joice with
7 those we hold so dear. High re-vels now with friends from far and near;
13 No - ël, No - ël, No - ël, No - ël sing we here.

PEASANT DANCE

By John Renbourn, arr. Elijah Botkin

The Revels Solstice Dancers
The String and Buzzy Walking Band

A dance modeled after medieval
dance patterns created by
Susan Dibble, to the 20th-century
tune "The Gypsy Dance" by
John Renbourn.

MONK'S MARCH

English Morris Tune
arr. Elijah Botkin, Marshall Barron

The Revels Brass Ensemble
A dinner entertainment accompanied
by a Morris dance tune from
Sherborne, Dorset, originally arranged
for Revels by Marshall Barron.

LORD OF MISRULE

In England, the Lord of Misrule—known
in Scotland as the Abbot of Unreason
and in France as the Prince des Sots
—was appointed by popular vote during
the Christmas season to preside over
the Feast of Fools. The Lord of Misrule
was generally a peasant or someone
of lower station appointed to be in
charge of Christmas revelries, which
often included drunkenness and
wild partying.

RIU RIU CHIU

Catalan Shepherding Song
By Mateo Flecha the Elder

Barbara Allen Hill
The Revels Solstice Chorus
The String and Buzzy Walking Band

This classic Catalan Christmas song is a
villancico—a refrain song similar to the
English carol—composed probably by
Mateo Flecha the Elder and published
in Venice in 1556. The refrain is a
metaphor; the singer asks the shepherd
to protect the ewe (Virgin Mary) from
the wolf (Devil). The verses tell of the
story of Christ's birth. "Riu riu chiu" is
the traditional call a Catalan shepherd
makes when guarding sheep.

O CRUOR SANGUINIS

By Hildegard von Bingen
Soloist, Barbara Allen Hill

This antiphon is one of many chants by
the influential German abbess,
visionary, composer, poet, artist,
theologian, and diplomat, Hildegard
von Bingen (1098-1179): "Blood that
bled into a cry! The elements felt its
touch and trembled, Heaven heard
their woe. O life-blood of the maker,
scarlett music, salve our wounds." This
hauntingly beautiful piece was,
apparently, left incomplete.

DIES IRAE (INSTRUMENTAL)

Traditional Hymn
arr. Elijah Botkin, George Emlen

The Revels Brass Ensemble
The String and Buzzy Walking Band

One of the most recognizable and
earliest of Christian hymns, part of the
Requiem Mass liturgy. The words
reflect vividly and emotionally on the
terrors of Judgement Day.

WINTER WAKENETH

By John Fleagle, arr. Barbara Allen Hill
Barbara Allen Hill
Ben Matus

One of the richest sources of medieval
English lyrics, both secular and
devotional, is the *Harley MS 2253* (c.
1320). Though there is no music which
survives with the poems, many of these
pieces were set to music popular at the
time. This setting is by John Fleagle,
arranged by Barbara Allen Hill.



LORD OF THE DANCE

Words by Sydney Carter

David Coffin
The Company
Dancers: Andrew Conant,
Clara Stefanov-Wagner, Ewan Swanson,
Kira Young

Sydney Carter's modern lyrics to the Shaker song "Simple Gifts," adapted for Revels by John Langstaff, are here translated into dance using a compilation of traditional morris steps by Carol Langstaff, J. Martin Graetz, and Jonathan Morse.

All Sing! Refrain

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

There will be no introductory remarks before Act Two, so please return to your seats promptly.

PART II

STELLA SPLENDENS (SPLENDID STAR)

Unknown

The Revels High Voices
Barbara Allen Hill
Soloists: Nancy McCarthy, Katie
Vogele-Bongiovanni, Chloe E.W. Levine

This song for two voices first appeared in the *Llibre Vermell* ("red book" in Catalan) of Monserrat. The 14th-century compilation of texts and music was intended for singing and dancing by pilgrims visiting the famous shrine near Barcelona.

ABBOTS BROMLEY HORN DANCE

David Coffin, recorder
Pinewoods Morris Men
David Torrey, fool; Tommy Linden,
man-woman; Ken Mattson, hobby horse;
Jacob Whiting / Maite Hill Gutiérrez,
boy archer

An ancient ritual dance for good luck in hunting the stag, still danced every year in the village of Abbots Bromley in Staffordshire, England. Its supernumerary characters—the folk fool, the man-woman, the hobby-horse, and the boy archer—link it with the mumming traditions of Christmas.

TRAVELER'S PRAYER

By John Renbourn, arr. Elijah Botkin

Soloists: David Coffin, Barbara Allen Hill,
Ben Matus
The Revels Solstice Chorus
Dancer: Eliza Rose Fichter

A 20th-century anthem to the moon with words and music by the English musician John Renbourn. The imagery and language are inspired by Alexander Carmichael's *Carmina Gadelica*, a collection of Scottish and Celtic poetry, runes, and incantations used by the Tinkers, or Traveling People. (Last verse written by Patrick Swanson.)

VERANO PORTEÑO

By Ástor Piazzolla, arr. Elijah Botkin

The Revels Brass Ensemble

Originally written in 1965, this tango is one part of a set of four written by Piazzolla collectively known as the *Estaciones Porteñas*, or *The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires*. Initially scored for violin, guitar, double bass, and *bandoneón* (a South American concertina), it has been rearranged here for brass by Elijah Botkin.

RETURN OF THE LIGHT

By Elijah Botkin

Angel: Athéna-Gwendolyn Baptiste



GABRIEL'S MESSAGE

Traditional Basque Carol
arr. Elijah Botkin

Barbara Allen Hill
The Revels Solstice Chorus



A Basque carol telling of the angel Gabriel's message to Mary. Our soloist, singing in Basque, follows an older version of the tune, while our chorus, singing in English, uses a more modern arrangement by Elijah Botkin, adapted from Edgar Pettman's well-known arrangement.

SICUT CERVUS

By Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina

The Revels Solstice Chorus

The late-Renaissance sacred polyphony of Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, typified in this motet setting of Psalm 42, is renowned for its graceful melodic contours, carefully balanced phrases, and restrained but sublime expression.

THE SHORTEST DAY

By Susan Cooper

Vincent Ernest Siders

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

All shout!
Welcome Yule!



VILLAGE BRANSLE (DING DONG MERRILY ON HIGH)

Traditional Christmas Carol
arr. Elijah Botkin

*The Revels Solstice Dancers
The String and Buzzy Walking Band*

A circle dance choreographed by Susan Dibble, to the traditional Christmas carol "Ding Dong Merrily on High."

DONA NOBIS PACEM

Give us peace.

All Sing!



Musical score for "Dona Nobis Pacem" in 3/4 time, featuring three vocal parts (1, 2, 3) and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: 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.

OLD ROGER IS DEAD

Traditional Children's Singing Game

*David Coffin, recorder
The Evergreen Children*

This traditional children's singing game from England has many variants. As with many nursery rhymes and games, this began as a folk ritual, the Apple Tree Wassail, woven around the theme of the renewal of life, only later to be relegated to children's play.



TOMORROW THE FOX WILL COME TO TOWN

By Thomas Ravenscroft
arr. Elijah Botkin

*The Evergreen Children
The String and Buzzy Walking Band*

Thomas Ravenscroft published this "melodius Musicke" in his 1609 collection *Deuteromelia*, which also includes the well-known children's rhyme "Three Blind Mice."

12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

arr. Elijah Botkin, Ken Pullig

David Coffin and The Company

Written around 1780, this traditional English "forfeit" carol was originally arranged for Revels by Ken Pullig in 1979.

All Sing!



**On the first day of Christmas
my true love sent to me**

A partridge in a pear tree,
Two turtle doves,
Three French hens,
Four calling birds,
Five gold rings,
Six geese a-laying,
Seven swans a-swimming
Eight maids a-milking
Nine ladies dancing,
Ten lords a-leaping
Eleven pipers piping
Twelve drummers drumming





VENI VENI EMMANUEL

Traditional Advent Hymn
arr. Elijah Botkin, George Emlen

David Coffin
The Revels Chorus
The Evergreen Children
The Revels Brass Ensemble

The words to this Advent hymn date back to the 13th century and have long been matched with this French melody, thought to be from the 15th century. The fifth verse was written by Patrick Swanson.



All Sing! Fifth Verse

5. O come, O come, you mes-sen-ger of light, a can-dle in our
6 dark - est night. To ba-nish gloom and sha-dows on earth, and
11 shine up-on the new ____ year's birth. Gau-de! gau-de! E -
16 ma - nu - el nas - ce - tur pro te, Is - ra - el.



THE MUMMERS PLAY

Room: Eliza Fichter
Father Christmas: Vincent Ernest Siders
Hobby Horse: Sam Fleishman
Hero: René Collins
Green Dragon: Heather Koerber Nunes
Red Dragon: Mark Ward
Mayonnaise: Ben Jones / Bjorn Goldstein
Father Christmas: Roger Reed

The mummers play, an essential ingredient in every Revels, concerns itself with the death of the old year and the birth of the new. A hero is challenged by an opponent, they fight, and eventually the hero is slain. Science (in the form of the doctor) fails to bring him back to life. Eventually some form of associative magic does the job. In the northern hemisphere, mistletoe, which seems to understand the trick of flourishing in the depths of winter, is a favorite restorative. The hero revives, filled with wonder after his passage from death to life, and is welcomed back into the community. Some form of this ritual enactment is shared by many cultures across the globe. This interpretation by Patrick Swanson is a distant relation to the popular version of the British hero-combat play, *Saint George and the Dragon*.

THE UPTON STICK DANCE

Pinewoods Morris Men
Tom Kruskal or Jan Elliott, concertina
Boney: Susan Dibble or Laurel Swift

Morris dancing can be traced back to the mid-15th century and has long been associated with towns and villages in the south Midlands of England. By Shakespeare's time, Morris dancing had become a highly popular form of team dancing at events such as local May Day observances, church ales, Whitsuntide celebrations, and field blessings. This Morris dance, created by Geoff Hughes of the Chingford Morris Men in 1962, is distantly related to one collected by Maud Karpeles in 1925 in Upton-upon-Severn, a small town in Worcestershire near the Welsh border.



FRA GIOVANNI'S LETTER TO A FRIEND

Folly, Fiasco, and Flop

Fra Giovanni Giocondo was a priest, scholar, architect, and teacher. This excerpt of a letter was written to his friend, Countess Allagia Aldobrandeschi on Christmas Eve, 1513.



SUSSEX MUMMERS CAROL

Traditional Carol
arr. Brian Holmes, with descant by Ralph Vaughan Williams

The Company

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



All Sing!



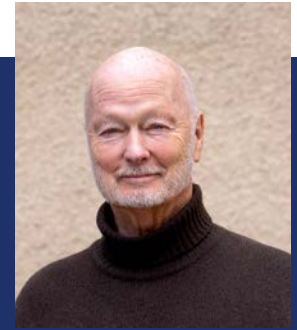
Our play is done, we_ must be gone we_ stay no lon - ger_
God bless you all with - in this house with ha - pi-ness be -
God bless your house, your child-ren too, your cat - tle and your



here. We wish you all both great and small a bless - ed bright new
side; Where e're your bo - dies ride or walk your God must be your
store. The Lord in - crease you day by day and send you more and



year, ___ a bless'd ___ and bright ___ new year.
guide, ___ your God ___ must be ___ your guide
more ___ and send ___ you more ___ and more!



Save the date! SWANSONG

SATURDAY, JUNE 15, 2023

A gala event celebrating retiring
Revels Artistic Director Patrick Swanson

SANDERS THEATRE, CAMBRIDGE

For more information: revels.org/swansong



Please be sure to look for
Paddy Swanson's book of poetry
"Swansong" with woodcuts by
artist Mary Azaria on sale at
the product table.

THE COMPANY

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

David Coffin

THE PLAYERS

René Collins, Folly
Susan Dibble or
Laurel Swift, Boney
Eliza Rose Fichter, Fiasco
Roger Reed, Flop
Vincent Ernest Siders,
The King

THE REVELS SOLSTICE CHORUS

Athéna-Gwendolyn
Baptiste*
Nick Browse*
Michael Chase+
Ned Cheesman
Vanessa Whitmore Conlon*
Julia Deininger*+
Ona Ferguson*
Samantha Fleishman*+
Mary Hamilton French*
Nicole Galland*+
Julia Gallogly*+
Ned Gulley*
James Henderson*
Sarah Higginbotham*
Chloe E.W. Levine*+
Tommy Linden*+

Joshua Mackay-Smith
Ken Mattsson*
Nancy McCarthy*
Heather Koerber Nunes*+
Jake Koerber Nunes*
Woody Nussdorfer
Luke Olivier*
Haris Papamichael*+
Jessica Raine+
Maggie Schulz*+
Nora Sotomayor*
Div Slomin*+
David W. Torrey*+
Katie Voegel-Bongiovanni

* Indicates The Revels
Solstice Dancers
+ Indicates Handbell Player

THE EVERGREEN CHILDREN

Bjorn Goldstein
Maite Hill Gutiérrez
Benjamin Jones
Marina Nugent
Paloma Mae Ortiz
Jude Schulz
Naila Timas
Evie Riordan
Nicholas Tioseco Roehl
Rowan Wallace
Bianca Weibel-Hellman
Jacob Whiting

THE STRING AND BUZZY WALKING BAND

Karen Burciaga, Strings
Barbara Allen Hill, Vocalist
Ben Matus, Reeds
Hideki Yamaya, Lute

THE REVELS BRASS ENSEMBLE

Austin Comerford, Tuba
Tom Duprey, Trumpet
Abe Finch, Percussion
Greg Gettel, Trumpet
Philip Swanson, Trombone

PINEWOODS MORRIS MEN AND LORD OF THE DANCE DANCERS

Andrew Conant
David Conant
Jan Elliott
Michael Freeman
Fred Gerhard
Daniel Groher
Tom Kruskal*
Peter Kruskal
Chris O'Brien
Sam Overbeck
Steven Roderick
Nathaniel Smith*
Ewan Swanson

* Indicates Leader

ARTISTIC STAFF

Stage Directors:
Patrick Swanson and
Debra Wise
Music Director:
Elijah Botkin
Assistant to Music Director:
Sarah Higginbotham
Children's Music Director:
Sarah Higginbotham
Set Design:
Jeremy C. Barnett
Costume Design:
Heidi Hermiller
Lighting Design:
Jeff Adelberg
Sound Design:
Bill Winn
Choreographer:
Susan Dibble
Program Notes:
Patrick Swanson, Debra
Wise and Elijah Botkin
Script written by:
Patrick Swanson with
assistance from Debra
Wise and Elijah Botkin

PRODUCTION TEAM

Production Manager:
Emilie Moore
Production Stage Manager:
Pat-rice Rooney
Props Coordinator:
Elizabeth Locke
Props Artisan:
Stephen Lewontin
Assistant Stage Manager:
Hayden Latimer-Ireland
Assistant Stage Manager:
Theo Bester
Technical Director:
Andrew Hebert-Johnson
Head Electrician /
Lightboard Operator:
John Holmes
Assistant Lighting Designer:
Amanda Fallon
Company Manager:
Caitlin Kenney
Children's Stage Manager
& Youth Coordinator:
Mari Young
Children's Dressing Room
Manager: Heather Mell
Production Assistant:
Kira Young

PRODUCTION CREW

Runners: Leo
Higginbotham, Jae Ur,
Arienne Reinhart, Clío
Reinhart, Fionn Anjou,
Nico Rosenberg
Costume Production:
Costume Works
Set Builders: Wooden Kiwi
Productions, LLC
ASL Interpreters: Katy
Burns, Joan Wattman
Revels Volunteer
Managers: Jennifer Sur/
Caitlin Kenney
Revels Records Sales and
Raffle Coordinator:
Jennifer Sur



VOLUNTEERS

Eric Baatz
Robin Baker
Elizabeth Balcom
Susan Barry
Jennifer Bester
Nick Browse
Frances Carpenter
Harvey Cohen
Mike Crawford
Joanne Crowell
Martha Curtis
Amy Davis
Ita Dennehy
Eric Francoeur
Cathie Ghorbani
Emy Goldsmith
Jim Greaney
Judy Gregg
Carol Grotrian
David Grotrian
Bonnie Hall
Ross Hall
Arthur Hardigg
Steve Harte
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Laureen McLaughlin
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Woody Nussdorfer
Tom Olivier
Susan Only
Chris Reynolds
Susie Rioff

Michelle Roderick
Denise Roehl
Christian Roehl
Bettie Rose
Karen Russo
Ava Russo
Noah Schulz
Marianna Spera
Mark St. Cyr
Gillian Stewart
Emma Stickgold
David Story
Meryl Stowbridge
Joyce Sullivan
Liam Sullivan
Kaplan Sybil
David Titus
Elizabeth Torrey
Nonie Valentine
Mira Whiting
Hannah Woodbury
Tom Yelton
Marialena Young

THANK YOU!

**AND THANKS TO ALL THE VOLUNTEERS WHO
SIGNED UP AFTER THIS BOOK WENT TO PRESS!**

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Thank you to Sarah Sheldon and the Pinewoods Camp for donating COVID tests. Thank you to Susie Rioff, Nicki Galland, Folk Hotel, and Irving House for housing visiting musicians and actors.

Thank you to Nilah MacDonald who yearly finds the perfect ornament for the show, then packages it beautifully. Thank you to the staff of Harvard Box Office and the Memorial Hall/Lowell Hall complex. Thank you to Central Square Theater for loaning out wings from *Angels in America*.

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Thank you to Jim Henderson and his family for housing and schlepping the bells during the rehearsal season.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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FEATURED ARTISTS



Patrick "Paddy" Swanson (*Co-Director, Revels Artistic Director*) 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 pieces, music-theater, and circus. He was a founding stage director of Circus Flora. Paddy taught acting and improvisation at the London Academy of Dramatic Art (L.A.M.D.A.), the London Drama Centre, and the Tisch School of the Arts at N.Y.U. He served as artistic director of the Castle Hill Festival in Ipswich, Massachusetts, directing and co-producing opera and theater works, including the premieres of Julie Taymor's *Liberty Taken* and Peter Sellars' *Cosi fan tutte*. He directed the Boston Camerata in *Tristan and Iseult* at the Spoleto USA festival and *Shirley Valentine* at the Alley Theatre, Houston. His Actor's Shakespeare Project production of Shakespeare's *King Lear* with Alvin Epstein was nominated for three 2006 Elliot Norton awards and subsequently transferred 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 throughout the United States. He is delighted to be co-directing this year's *Midwinter Revels* with his brilliant colleague and conspirator, Debra Wise.



Debra Wise (*Co-Director, Revels Associate Artistic Director*) co-founded Underground Railway Theater in Oberlin, Ohio; from 1978-2008, URT toured original works in the collaborative spirit of the Underground Railroad to venues ranging from Lincoln Center, to schools, to Symphony Hall, including *Sanctuary-The Spirit of Harriet Tubman*, *Home is Where*, *InTOXICating*, and *Christopher Columbus Follies*; with the Boston Symphony, *Firebird*, *Creation of the World*, and *Tempest*. As URT's Artistic Director, she created performances for non-traditional venues including Museum of Science, MIT Museum, Mary Baker Eddy Library, the MFA, and the streets of Cambridge. After co-founding Central Square Theater with The Nora Theatre Company in 2008, Wise co-founded Catalyst Collaborative@MIT, CST's science theater partnership. She led partnerships with Mount Auburn Cemetery and the National Park Service (*Roots of Liberty-The*

Haitian Revolution and the American Civil War). Productions Wise helmed have won Elliot Norton awards, including *Vanity Fair*; *black odyssey boston*; *The Convert*, and *Constellations*. Acting appearances at CST have included *Angels in America*, *Half-Life of Marie Curie*, *Homebody*, *Copenhagen*, *Einstein's Dreams*, *Arabian Nights*; other stages include Commonwealth Shakespeare, New Rep, Speakeasy, Boston Playwrights, and the Public in NYC (*The Haggadah*, designed by Julie Taymor). She has adapted for the stage works by Dickens, Grace Paley, Lewis Carroll, and Gregory Maguire. She developed the *Art Works for Schools* curriculum with Harvard's Project Zero, the DeCordova Museum, and area schools. Wise left her CST Artistic Director position in 2022 to invite diverse leadership; she continues as CoChair of the CC@MIT Advisory Committee. She co-authored a digital book on URT's history (URTheaterEbook.com) and her third audiobook, *The Witch of Maracoor* by Gregory Maguire, was released this fall. She is honored to be working with Paddy Swanson and to join the remarkable Revels.



Elijah Botkin (*Music Director, Revels Music Director*), a Boston-based conductor, arranger, choral educator, and performer, was named Revels' Music Director in December of 2021. He graduated from Northeastern University in 2015 with bachelor's degrees in Music History & Analysis and Mathematics. While at Northeastern, Elijah founded and directed the Northeastern Madrigal Singers, served as President and Assistant Conductor for the NU Choral Society, and sang with and arranged for the award-winning a cappella group Distilled Harmony. Elijah's work on Distilled Harmony's quarterfinal-winning performance set won the distinction of Outstanding Arrangement from the International Championship of Collegiate A Cappella. His arrangement of "Nothing Feels Like You" by Little Mix also won a CARA (Contemporary A Cappella Recording Award) for Best Mixed Collegiate Song. In 2014, Elijah was granted the Gideon Klein Award in order to write his composition "The Closed Town", which was premiered by the Northeastern University Chamber Choir in April 2015. In addition to his role with Revels, Elijah continues to direct the NU Madrigal Singers and was recently named the Spring Music Director of the Reading Community Singers. He is also a frequent performer with a variety of professional ensembles in the Boston area, with recent and upcoming performances including appearances with Carduus and the Renaissance at New England Conservatory's First Mondays concert series, with the Nightingale Vocal Ensemble for their concert, *Avian Menagerie*, and with the NU Madrigal Singers for their Tenth-Year Anniversary Concert in April 2023.



Scan the QR code to learn more about our featured artists!



David Coffin (*Master of Ceremonies*) has been in Revels since 1980 and Master of Ceremonies since 1990. He also presents interactive School Enrichment Programs, narrates Boston Harbor history, runs the crew onboard the stunt boat Codzilla, and takes 10,000 kids to the harbor islands every summer through Save the Harbor/Save the Bay. David created over 600 videos on TikTok to teach people about sea chanteys (i.e. NOT WELLERMAN!) and used the platform to create the album *The Sound of Time*. David has several solo CD's to his credit and was featured in the Amazon movie, *Blow the Man Down*, as the Singing Fisherman.



René Collins (*Folly*) is a multi-disciplinary artist from the Bay Area. He received notoriety developing acrobatic and clowning skills in Make*A*Circus and playing Antonio in *Twelfth Night* and Lucius in *Julius Caesar* with the CA Shakespeare Festival. He also played Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Gratiano in *The Merchant of Venice*, Enki in *Queen of Swords*, Andre in *Ain't Misbehavin'*, and Joseph Johnson in *La Sirène*, his inaugural production as artistic director of California Revels.



Eliza Rose Fichter (*Fiasco*) is an interdisciplinary artist from Massachusetts. She has worked with The Huntington Theatre (Summer Workshop Series - *Oxbow*), BEDLAM and The Nora Theatre (*The Crucible*), Central Square Theater (*The Revolutionists*), Underground Railway Theatre (*Matchless & The Happy Prince*), and Olney Theatre Center (*Macbeth, The Comedy of Errors*), and is a current Artist-in-Residence at Mount Auburn Cemetery. Eliza also works as a printmaker, and was delighted to contribute original designs for this year's program! elizafichter.com



Roger Reed (*Flop*), aka Roger the Jester, has left a trail of smiles and laughter throughout 25 countries since 1974. From circus ring to Broadway stage, family gatherings to festival grounds, he has amused generations with his concoction of juggling, magic, music, and improvisation. His roots as a Boston street performer make it sweet to return as a fool in the year's *Midwinter Revels*. He lives with his wife on the west coast of Massachusetts, the Berkshires.



Vincent Ernest Siders (*King*) is a stage director, actor, producer, educator, and theater consultant. Currently he is the Director and Lead Instructor for the 'Ambassadors,' the touring division of Youth Underground at Central Square Theater. Vincent has served as Artistic Director for two theater companies, both in Boston: New African Company and TYG Productions — Home of the Family Beef Feast Festival. In March of 2024, Vincent will perform as Othello at the Apollinaire Theater in Chelsea.



Laurel Swift (*Boney*) is a performer, composer, and workshop leader. She is an instigator of creative new projects and performances rooted in folk arts, and has taught Morris Dance and choreographed for theatre and film. Laurel plays double bass and clog dances with Gadarene, plays fiddle in The Glowworms, and is currently absorbed in *Travelling with Thomas*, a project to write a folk musical in public, inviting people to come on the journey and witness the artistic process.



Karen Burciaga (*Vielle, Strings*) is an early strings specialist who bridges the worlds of classical and folk music, performing on violin and viol across New England and Texas. A lifelong love of Celtic music led her to discover Scottish, Irish, English, contra, Cornish, and Breton styles. When not making music, she can be found petting cats or climbing small mountains. After years of attending *Midwinter Revels*, she is thrilled to join the cast on stage this solstice.



Austin Comerford (*Tuba*) received his Bachelor of Music degree from The Boston Conservatory and his Master of Music degree from University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. His primary teachers are Steven Campbell and Kenneth Amis. Comerford works at New England Conservatory as the assistant director of enrollment and maintains an active performance and teaching schedule in the Boston area. He is the instructor of tuba and euphonium at Bridgewater State University and Weston Public Schools.



Tom Duprey (*Trumpet*) has been freelancing in Boston since the mid 1980s. Tom has performed and recorded with the likes of Johnny Mathis, Dionne Warwick, Tommy Tune, Robert Goulet, Serj Tankian, Madeleine Peyroux, Amanda Palmer, and with David Hawthorne's band Time Ghost on their release *Reading For Cigar Makers*. He has played with the band TickleJuice, led by James Merenda, for over 15 years. Tom has been blessed to play on many Revels productions and recordings, starting around 1999.



Abe Finch (*Percussion*) is especially passionate about his role in choral music. There is a moment in a song where the chorus must breathe, and that is the moment for the percussionist to fill the gap, either to raise the intensity and propel the voices, or to provide a soft landing. Creativity and dedication to his craft lie in choosing a unique timbral quality, inspired by the words and the mood, and placed perfectly in time.



Greg Gettel (*Trumpet*) is a versatile trumpet player and teacher who has spent over 25 years in the local music scene. Greg's musical interests include chamber music, theater, and historical performance. He has appeared in musical theater productions at ART, Boston College, and the Fringe Festival in Edinburgh; with orchestras such as Boston Ballet, Emmanuel Music, Portland Symphony, Harvard Baroque, and the Providence Baroque Orchestra. He sings in the Family Folk Chorale and teaches trumpet in Lexington.



Barbara Allen Hill (*Vocalist*) is a multi-genre, multi-era performing and recording artist. Recent solo performances include Mozart's *Requiem* and Britten's *The Company of Heaven*, as well as appearances with Seven Times Salt and the Henry Purcell Society of Boston. Ensemble affiliations include Emmanuel Music, The Crossing, and Nightingale Vocal Ensemble. Barbaraahill.com



Ben Matus (*Dulcian/Winds*) is a specialist in historical wind instruments from Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, and Classical periods. Trained originally as a bassoonist, Ben now performs regularly on recorders, shawms, dulcians, bagpipes, and whichever other wind instruments he has access to all along the East Coast. With his Medieval Music Ensemble, Alkemie, Ben prepared and recorded the soundtrack to recent award-winning video game, *Pentiment*.



Philip Swanson (*Trombone*) has had a wide-ranging career as trombonist, pianist, organist, composer, and teacher. He received his D.M.A. from New England Conservatory, M.M. from Eastman, and did his undergraduate study at Oberlin and U of Miami. He's performed with the Boston Symphony, Boston Pops, and numerous classical and jazz ensembles, and has released 8 CDs for trombone and piano. He is a Professor of Music at Salem State University, where he teaches trombone, piano, and theory.



Hideki Yamaya (*Lute, Guitar*) is a performer of lutes, early guitars, and early mandolins based in Connecticut. Born in Tokyo, he spent most of his career in the West Coast before settling in New England, where he is a freelance performer and teacher. In demand as a soloist and as a continuo/chamber player, Hideki has performed with Portland Baroque Orchestra, Portland Opera, Santa Cruz Baroque Festival, Los Angeles Opera, Folger Consort, and Shakespeare's Globe Theatre.



Jeff Adelberg (*Lighting Designer*) celebrates his 13th year designing for Revels! A Boston-based designer, he is responsible for over 300 productions in New England and beyond. Jeff has won four Elliot Norton Awards and four IRNE Awards for his designs. He attended the University of Connecticut and teaches at Harvard University and Boston College. A member of IATSE/USA-829, Jeff lives in Holliston, Massachusetts with wife Tess and daughter Jo. jeffadelberg.com instagram: @jdadelberg



Jeremy Barnett (*Scenic Designer*) is a Detroit-based scenic designer and professor of theatre at Oakland University. Boston credits include Opera Boston, The Opera Institute at BU, and Gloucester Stage Company. Jeremy has assisted designers at The Lyric Opera of Chicago, The New York Philharmonic, The Pasadena Playhouse, Arena Stage, and Huntington Theatre Company. He holds an MFA from Boston University and a BFA from Carnegie Mellon University, and co-founded Amarant Design Collective, an organization that produces site-specific artwork in Detroit.



Susan Dibble (*Choreographer*) is a choreographer, teacher, dancer, and painter. She is an Emeritus Professor of Theater Arts at Brandeis University, where she taught for 34 years. Susan has been teaching and choreographing productions at Shakespeare & Co. in Lenox, Massachusetts for 40 years.



Heidi Hermiller (*Costume Designer*) has designed Revels costumes for 30+ years! Along with the Revels, Heidi has designed the Harvard Hasty Pudding, but wherever she is in Cambridge Heidi loves the crazy-ness, research, and joy of designing for director Paddy Swanson; Sanders statues brought to life, dragons, trolls, killer fish, dancing crabs, tiny ballerinas—anything to make The Revels magic burst into life! She would like to thank her husband, John, for his love, patience, and understanding.



Stephen Lewontin (*Props Artisan*) is a photographer, painter, and former engineer who's worked in Boston area theater for 30+ years. He's made shadow puppets (*Creation of the World*, *Underground Railway Theatre*), a village of miniature houses (*A Christmas Carol*, *Central Square Theater*), and even a 15-foot puppet of Toussaint L'Ouverture (*Roots of Liberty*, URT, starring Danny Glover). Stephen's photographs have been published in newspapers and magazines worldwide, including *The New York Times*, *The Boston Review*, and *Popular Photography*. He was the winner of the 1984 *Boston Globe* and Kodak International photography prizes.



Elizabeth Locke (*Props Coordinator*) is celebrating her 28th year on the Revels production crew, either as props coordinator, assistant stage manager, or both! Credits include being props coordinator for four years at Actors Shakespeare Project, creating props for Central Square Theater, stage managing at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, and helping found Cornerstone Village Cohousing. Revels is a family affair; all three of Elizabeth's children, two grandchildren, two ex-husbands, and her current partner have appeared on the Revels stage.



Bill Winn (*Sound Designer/Engineer*) has toured all over the world working with top acts such as Whitney Houston, Herbie Hancock, and Joni Mitchell. He has designed and implemented sound for the DC Jazz Festival, Barbara Streisand Live at Shrine Auditorium, and the Thelonious Monk Jazz Competition. His television-broadcast work has included the Emmy Award-nominated *Front Row Boston*, *The United Nations International Jazz Day*, and *White House Tribute to Thelonious Monk*. Bill has been working with Revels since 1995.

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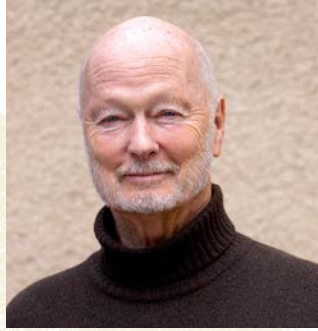
ALEX HALL 'OBBY OSS FUND

Revels is pleased to announce this annual programming fund in memory of Revels performer, volunteer, and recent Board Member Alex Hall, who passed away in September 2023. Alex first attended Revels as a child and has performed in dozens of Revels programs. Alex was a dedicated "all in" volunteer, on stage and off, loading chairs, singing, dancing, working puppets, roaring as Nigel the dragon or ushering in the spring as the Padstow 'Obby 'Oss. He represented the enduring value of the Revels community.

We will carry Alex along with us in our song and dance this December and take joy from his legacy of hope throughout the year.



THAT IS THE QUESTION.



Throughout human history civilizations have puzzled over the great mysteries of life and death. From stone age observation of the natural cycles of the sun, moon and earth and their relationship to the event that they characterized as the dying of the year, to the present scientific study of black holes, quantum mechanics, nanotechnology, and parallel universes, we seem to be no closer to understanding. The search for meaning in the pattern of birth, life and death in nature pushes the boundaries of human imagination. Science digs for explanations of the natural world but acknowledges that the solid land of human knowledge is forever bordered by an ocean of mystery. To cross this shoreline requires learning the language of metaphor, the grammar of mythology and religion, and the syntax of storytelling and magic.

The ancient Greeks and our African, Asian, and other aboriginal ancestors created myths to explain creation, and populated the heavens with fallible gods that gave meaning to human behavior. Their triumphs and passions, their jealousies and conflicts, mirrored the complex and messy inner universe of humankind, and offered an external perspective on human relationships. Monotheistic religions followed explaining existence through the lens of faith within a comprehensive and all-knowing divine plan. No matter the God or gods, the theories, or the beliefs, there seems to be a consensus on the limits of human understanding that brings us at the end of life to the shores of the sea of mystery.

The limen, the door or threshold in ancient Rome, was looked after by a god named Janus who was depicted as having two faces – one an old man looking backwards the other a young man looking forwards. Having a foot in both worlds was a rare gift extended to gods, priests, shamans, and, tellingly, to fools. Lacking the constraints of reason, the liminal fool leaps before he looks and is rewarded for his folly with access to mysteries beyond the human experience. The paradox of the wise fool runs through history and literature alongside a trickle of humor that can swell into the laughter of recognition, arguably the greatest gift of the gods.

Paddy
Paddy Swanson
December 2023



Mission

Revels brings together people of all ages and backgrounds through musical and theatrical celebrations of our world's cultural and seasonal traditions. Through a network of affiliates around the country, Revels combines artistic excellence with the lively participation of audience and volunteers in our performances and programs, inviting the communities we serve to join us, sparking appreciation and respect for the diverse world in which we live, and awakening a renewed sense of joy and connection.

Revels productions are 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. *Midwinter Revels* program © 2023 Revels, Inc. "Christmas Revels," "Sea Revels," "Midsummer Revels" and "Revels" are ® service marks of Revels, Inc., Cambridge, MA. All rights reserved.

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IMAGES IN FEAST OF FOOLS TO DRIVE THE DARK AWAY



Our *Feast of Fools* is set loosely in the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance (say, 14th to 16th centuries), on an imagined island and in mythical environs referencing cultures in areas we now know as northern Europe and Britain. Though fantasy, our story centers potent objects and traditions with deep roots in documented practices for celebrating the winter solstice — the shortest day of the year.

We think of a crown as indicating power and rank, but the metaphorical crown of immortality has been represented throughout history. Sometimes it is a circle of stars, or a laurel wreath. An Advent crown of candles and evergreens is worn to mark St. Lucy's Day, and is connected to the winter solstice. Holly (a symbol of eternal life) and mistletoe (considered a magical fertility blessing, probably leading to today's tradition of kissing under the mistletoe) both figure in our story.

The Yule log dates back to early solstice ritual bonfires. Common practice calls for burning a portion of the log in the hearth each evening until Twelfth Night (Jan. 6th), an emblem of the return of the sun. What remains of the log would sometimes be placed beneath the bed for protection from (ironically) fire, and saved to light the following year's Yule log. People would search for shapes or sparks made by the Yule log's fire to forecast the future new year. Candles would be lit from the Yule log by the youngest person present, while all were silent and made a wish. Used as far back as ancient Rome to represent the reborn sun, candles are at the center of scores of seasonal traditions, including Hanukkah, the Jewish festival of lights.



Another path for lightening the darkness is, of course, laughter.

Our Fools hearken to court jesters in Medieval Europe, when they emerged from a wide range of backgrounds: a university dropout who wrote poetry, a monk thrown out of a priory, the apprentice of a village blacksmith whose fooling amused a passing nobleman, a talented dancer or musician. Often these jesters were rewarded with land as payment for loyal service. A fool named Roland le Pettour was given 30 acres by England's King Henry II, on condition that Roland returned to court every year on Christmas Day to "leap, whistle and fart." In most cases, the fool had the right to sit at table with the King, and say whatever came into their head. Outside the court, there were 'Fool Societies', particularly popular in France; these amateurs sometimes performed at Christmas, a tradition that feels connected to the Mummers' tradition as it is reflected in our *Feast of Fools*.

Although the jester died out as a European court institution by the eighteenth century, the Fool transcends time. As theologian Harvey Cox writes, the Fool is "tricked, humiliated, and tromped upon... infinitely vulnerable, but never finally defeated." There are connections to explore between the medieval jester, the sufi dervish, the Jewish badhan, the Hopi Koshare, the zen monk, the primitive trickster, the circus clown, the stand-up: buffoonery that is an invitation to discovery and a celebration of possibilities.

Let us emulate in this New Year the Fool's joyful and irrepressibly radical hope: a talent for seeking — and being surprised and delighted by — the return of the light.

Debra Wise

Debra Wise

Sources include:

[Fools Are Everywhere — The Court Jester Around the World](#), by Beatrice K. Otto; [A Feast of Fools](#), by Harvey Cox; [About Revels — A Collection of Essays](#), edited by Elizabeth Lloyd Mayer; *History Extra*: the website for BBC *History Magazine* and *BBC History Revealed*.



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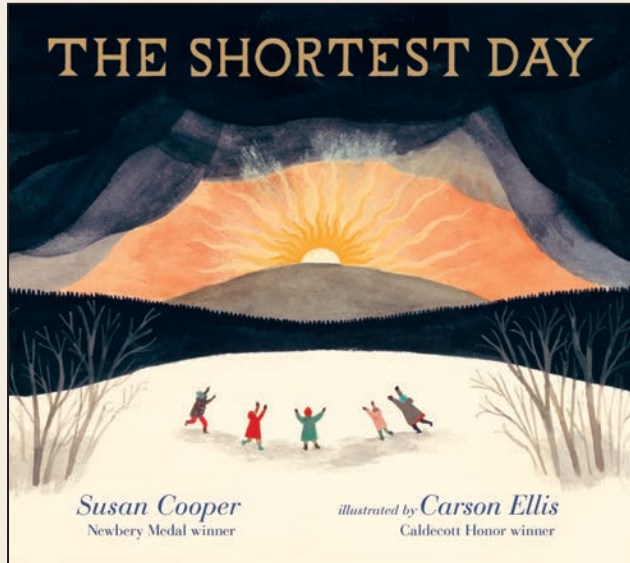
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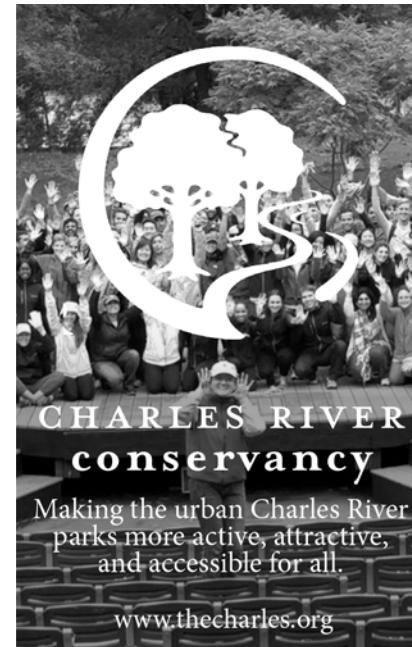


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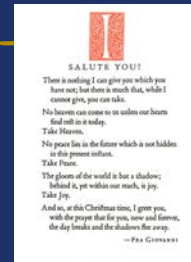
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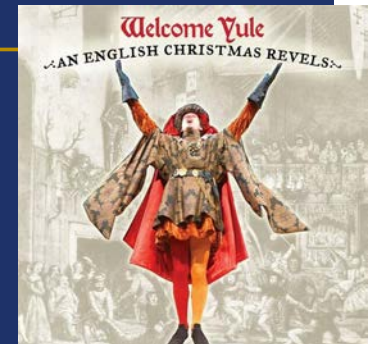
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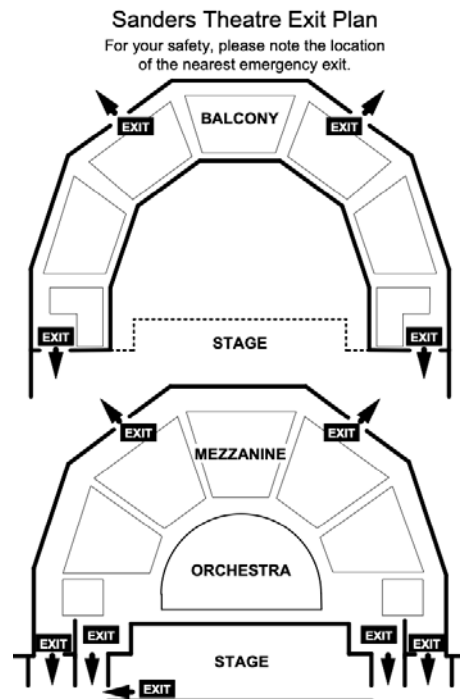
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