

Mp3 Silverwood Quartet - To Drive The Cold Winter Away



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Stunning arrangements that reflect an older, earthier and simpler view of Christmas, winter and the holiday season for flute/Celtic harp, violin, viola and cello. Join us for a Christmas pudding and some wassail. 26 MP3 Songs CLASSICAL: Contemporary, WORLD: Celtic Details: Silverwood Quartet: Andra Bohnet: flute, alto flute, Irish flute, A fife, soprano recorder, C, D F whistles, Celtic harp, triangle, tambourine, finger cymbals Tom Morley: violin, Irish bouzouki, tambourine Jonathan Clark: viola, bodhran, maracas, cymbal Barbara Gabriel: cello, djembe "This disc is an intimate alternative to the big choral and orchestral Christmas albums. You can almost imagine snowflakes falling while you listen." --- Mississippi Public Radio Liner Notes Okay, so what do we do for an encore? Fall 2001 marked the release of our first Christmas CD, Gifts of the Season, which quickly became a holiday favorite with our fans, who make a point to tell us that they like to play it all year around and not just during the Christmas season. With the addition of cellist Barbara Gabriel to the quartet in 2003, we have been stimulated both artistically and creatively and we want to share this excitement with you in a new holiday offering! In keeping with the Silverwood tradition, we wanted to feature repertoire associated with the season but not the typical A-list Christmas fare. As we began our quest for tunes, we didn't really have a specific style or theme in mind, but the playlist gradually took shape and Andra wrote the arrangements. Besides our usual instrumental lineup of flute, violin, viola and cello, you'll hear wooden flutes and whistles, Celtic harp, Irish bouzouki, and percussion instruments, creating a kaleidoscope of instrumental colors throughout the CD. Although ultimately the music came from a variety of styles and sources (including a brand new work by Brian Joyce written especially for this project), as we rehearsed it common musical threads began to assert themselves. Our selections reflect an older, earthier and simpler view of Christmas, winter and the holiday season. So start a fire in the hearth, light some candles, gather some

fragrant evergreen boughs, and join us for a Christmas pudding and some wassail! The opening Gaudete! presents an atmosphere of joyous festivity. It comes from the *Piae Cantiones*, a collection of Medieval Latin songs published in Finland in 1582. The infectious rhythm mirrors the text of the refrain, "Gaudete, Gaudete! Christus es natus, Ex Maria virgine: Gaudete!" (Rejoice! Christ is born of the Virgin Mary, Rejoice!) In contrast to this is *The Wishing Tree*, a beautiful air by the Irish violinist/fiddle player Samus McGuire, which was recorded in 1995, but sounds much older and evokes feelings of nostalgia. It really is not a holiday tune at all, but for us the title brings memories of speculation of what was inside all of those beautifully wrapped presents... The Christmas Concerto of Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713) is his best known work and a reasonably typical *sonata da chiesa*, with the exception of the final movement, *Pastorale ad libitum*, which was intended for performance only on Christmas Eve. In a similar vein is *Ges Bambino*, by Pietro Yon (1886-1943). This is the most modern sounding piece on the CD, but it also includes the 18th century tune *Adeste Fidelis*. The *March of the Dreoilin* comes from an ancient Irish tradition connected to St. Stephen's Day (Dec. 26). Folklore says that the dreoilin or wren bird betrayed this first Christian martyr when he was hiding from his enemies. Traditionally, young boys would hunt and kill a wren, tie it to a holly branch, then go door to door playing a simple tune and asking for pennies or other offerings in memory of the bird. This piece pairs beautifully with *The Mummer's Dance* by Loreena McKennitt. Mumming is also an ancient European tradition, involving a group of performers dressing in masks and costumes and processing from door to door as well. These Mummer's processions can take place at various times of the year, including the weeks before Christmas through New Year's Eve. *Taladh Chriosda* (Christ Child Lullaby) is a tune from the Hebrides Islands of Scotland and features Andra's Celtic harp. The original Gaelic text has 29 verses and although published sources from 1855 give authorship to Father Ronald Rankin, there are several existing older variants of the melody. Antonio Vivaldi's (1678-1741) *Four Seasons* are his most popular works and among the earliest examples of program music. Each concerto is based on a sonnet of Vivaldi's, which appears line by line throughout the score. The inscriptions in *Winter* describe trembling in the icy cold, cruel winds, chattering teeth, warming up by the fire, and slipping on icy paths. Although this was composed as a violin concerto, the solo part has been adapted for many other instruments over the years, and in our version is played by Andra on the flute. *To Drive the Cold Winter Away* is a traditional English tune found in several sources including John Playford's *English Dancing Master* published in 1651. It also occurs in Simpson's *The*

British Broadside Ballad as *When Phebus did rest* with the additional melody heard in the flute. Tom is playing the Irish bouzouki on this one to help recreate the atmosphere of the Elizabethan consort. One of our very favorite Christmas arrangements is *And Therefore Be Merry* by Brian Joyce, which we recorded on *Gifts of the Season*. When we were discussing repertoire for this new CD, we summoned up the courage to ask him if he would consider writing a new arrangement for us. We were absolutely thrilled when he agreed to do so, and the happy result is *Hear Ye Newes Today - (Christmas) Songs from the (Silver)Wood*. The six movement suite employs a variety of instrumental timbres from the quartet: several flutes, Celtic harp, heavy practice mutes on the strings to recreate the sound of a consort of early instruments, and the fun of everybody playing percussion instruments. The opening movement concerns two melodies, the Gloucestershire Wassail, an old English carol collected by Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) and *Puer Natus in Bethlehem*, a northern German hymn often associated with Michael Praetorius (1571-1621) but probably based on a much older plainsong. Brian says, "A little taste of Bach is also thrown in to give the piece some much needed class." The second movement is a setting of the Spanish carol *Riu, Riu, Chiu* from a collection *Villancicos de diversos autores*, published in 1556 and often listed by Mateo Flecha. This arrangement evokes a Moorish effect with the percussion, not quite Spanish and not quite Arabic, but with suggestions of both. A bit of non-western tuning between Andra and Tom also simulates the sound of the Middle Eastern binou. *Kyngesmarche* is an original work by Brian in a pseudo-medieval style depicting the trek of the wise men across the desert. *Gabriel Fram Heven-King (Angelus ad Virginem)* is a 13th century English tune that tells of the Annunciation to Mary and is set simply for violin and harp. This simplicity leads directly into a lush and beautiful setting of *The Wexford Carol*, a traditional Irish tune. The suite comes to a rousing finish with the old French carol, *Masters in this Hall*, done up in Celtic dress complete with Jonathan playing the bodhran. Although *Newes* ends the formal program, we couldn't resist adding a few encores. We have included as bonus tracks newly recorded versions of some of our favorite arrangements that fit the mood of this CD. *Veni Emmanuel*, based on Gregorian chant, and *Greensleeves*, one of the big hits of Renaissance England, are at the heart of the traditional Christmas repertoire. *Jesous Ahatonia (Huron Carol, text by St. Jean de Brebeuf based on a 16th century French Carol called Une Jeune Pucelle)* dates from 1643. *Noel Nouvelet/Le Sommiel de l'enfant Jesus/The Kings Travel East* is a set consisting of carols from France and Brittany and a dance tune with an Eastern flavor arranged in a quasi-Celtic style. Thanks for

listening!!! We hope you enjoy the music and we wish you and yours all the love and joy of the holiday season!

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