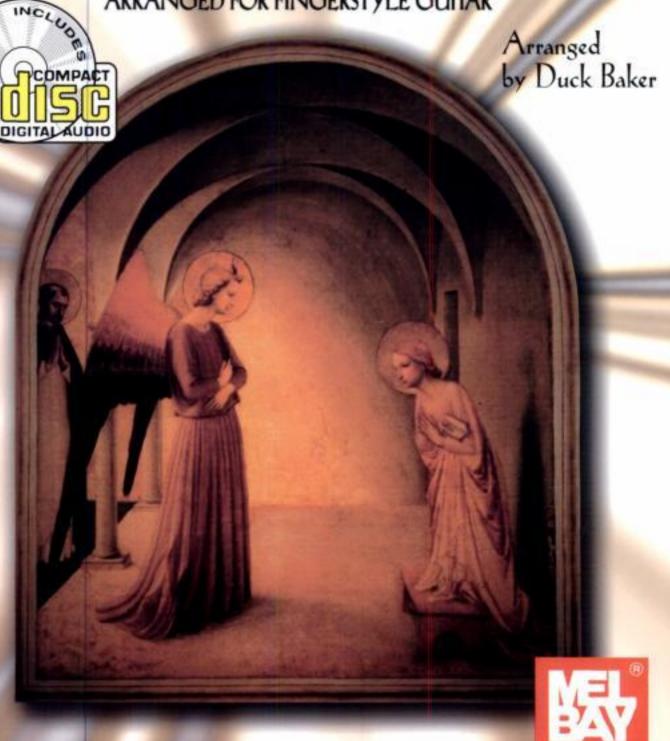
Mel Bay Presents

THE SALUTATION

A COLLECTION OF CHRISTMAS CAROLS FROM ENGLAND, IRELAND, SCOTLAND, SWEDEN, GERMANY, ITALY AND FRANCE, ARRANGED FOR FINGERSTYLE GUITAR



MEL BAY PUBLICATIONS, INC., #4 INDUSTRIAL DRIVE, PACIFIC, MO 63069 Tal

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A COLLECTION OF CHRISTMAS CAROLS FROM ENGLAND, IRELAND, SCOTLAND, SWEDEN, GERMANY, ITALY AND FRANCE ARRANGED FOR FINGERSTYLE GUITAR

Arranged by Duck Baker

CD CONTENTS

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- 2 Angelus Ad Virginum [2:41] The Blessed Virgin's Lullaby
- The Bagpipers' Carol [2:24]
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- 4 The Wexford Carol [2:05]
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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0



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Photo by Jordan Kilgour

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Introduction

Sometime in the late seventies, as he was negotiating London traffic on the way to one of the many gigs he had set up for visiting Kicking Mule recording artists, Stefan Grossman caught my eye in his rearview mirror and said "You know what you should do, Duck? You should make a Christmas record." He was thinking, I knew, of the John Fahey records which had proved to be steady sellers over the years, but my reaction to the idea was complex. I remembered the carols I had heard a child, some of which had a melodic depth that was almost intensely joyful. I thought of the ancient, mysterious feeling of "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" and of the song I knew as "Sing We Noël," as lovely a folksong as one could ever hope to hear, and the sweet melodic perfection of "I Saw Three Ships." I caught a glimpse of something that was expressed in these carols, when the old northern mid-winter rites that vouchsafed the spring's return were still fresh in the collective memory, and thought that this might be a project I could really get my teeth into. I probably also knew that I wasn't musically ready for the demands of arranging theses songs, and I that needed to know a lot more about the subject.

Stefan had impressed upon me in those days the importance of making records that were coherent projects, rather than just a trip to the studio to put down whatever I was playing at the time, as I had for my first two Kicking Mule records. So I followed with a record devoted to swing, another to jazz, and a third that was primarily Irish tunes. Setting such things as goals really helped my development, which is one of the things I have to be thankful to Stefan for. Once I became accustomed to working this way, I was slowly but surely drawn toward the Christmas idea. I remember attending a Christmas concert at my daughter's school in late 1979, during which one of the classes sang a beautiful song I had never heard, called "The Apple Tree," and trying without success to get the music from the group's instructor. But the seed was planted, as it were.

It must have been in late 1981 that I actively started looking for material. That year was a very difficult one, personally. I had a very painful break-up that was followed by a sort of breakdown. Between the two I was graced with an extremely powerful spiritual experience. With one thing and the other, I was, as one might imagine, receptive to the symbolism of winter, Christmas, and returning spring. I remember walking into a bookstore off Charing Cross Road in London, picking up a marked-down copy of "The Second Penguin Book of Carols" by Elizabeth Poston, and finding, to my delight, "The Apple Tree" (which, I later learned, Poston had appropriated from the shape note tradition and considerably improved). In my state of mind, it was like finding a sign. Over the next several years, collecting books of carols became a hobby with overtones of obsession. I remember long walks in Brussels, Amsterdam, Cologne, London, and Paris looking for used bookstore and record stores, trying to find carols I had never heard. My thinking was that I would need around thirty tunes, and, given that I wouldn't be able to arrange every one I liked, that meant that I needed to find about a hundred that I liked. I knew that I could expect the songs that didn't appeal to me to far outnumber the ones that did, so I figured that I needed to find several hundred songs to consider.

I discovered that there are relatively few really serious collections of carols, and that most of those are English and American. The Oxford Book of Carols is regarded, quite rightly, as the standard collection, and it features a superb historical introduction. I learned there that the folk carols which had so appealed to me (and everyone else) were a spontaneous expression of musical joy that occurred over much of northern Europe in the fifteenth century, coinciding with the dawning of the modern age and the ending of the long medieval night. If such a reading seems overly poetic, it nevertheless conforms to the accepted view. One of the first things one realizes when making a serious approach to the carols is that they are, by far, the oldest songs that most people know. By comparison, Irish folk music, which many modern listeners assume to be quite ancient, cannot be dated back more than three or four hundred years, according to the best scholarship. The carols were driven underground in England by the Puritans, but survived in the countryside until a renaissance in Victorian times, at the beginning of a wave of interest in traditional culture that would encompass ballads, dances and folk in customs of all kinds.

I remember my disappointment in learning that the French have no study comparable to the Oxford Book of Carols, which is a pity as they certainly have a great tradition. I did learn that Province is a particularly fertile region for the French Noël, that the Welsh have a strong and characteristic body of songs (some of which are quite well-known), that the Scottish have only a few carols and the Irish almost none, outside of County Wexford. The Germans have carols galore, as do the Polish, but relatively few from either country are especially attractive. There are vital traditions in Spain, Sweden, and Hungary, and a very interesting tradition of carols which has grown up among Indians in northern Mexico. The 19th century renaissance led, naturally, to the composition of newer songs, many of which are lovely. But the basic feeling we associate with Christmas carols is that of the songs that were created by the plain folk of Northern Europe in response to the arrival of the real "New Age," more than half a millennium ago.

I began recording "The Salutation" in 1987, after I had moved back to the US from Europe. Bob Fisher, who was managing me, arranged the recording and then tried to get it released. The only nibble came from Wendy Newton at Green Linnet Records, who loved the project and wanted to put it out, but Bob didn't understand the necessity of moving quickly. Christmas projects have to be rolling by late spring, and by the following year, Wendy had cold feet; I've always suspected that another Christmas record that did poorly colored her thinking. Meanwhile Bob printed up some cassettes and we kept talking to other companies, who kept asking, basically, "Where's 'Frosty the Snowman'?" Then Bob got out of the business, and in an ugly turn of events, the master tape was lost when his ex-landlady sold belongings that he had had to leave in her basement while he underwent an operation and a divorce.

In this digital age, however, such disasters are not always the final chapters that they used to be. I had always figured I would have to redo "The Salutation," but fortunately a pristine copy of the original surfaced and William Bay thought it was time to get it back in circulation, so we agreed on a book-CD.

The reader will have gathered that this project is dear to my heart. In fact, "The Salutation" is easily my favorite of all my records, the only one that I actively enjoy listening to. Not that there aren't little mistakes that bug me, but for once I feel that I managed to do what I set out to, and captured something of the ancient feeling I had glimpsed. Of course my love-affair with carols didn't end with this recording. I arranged several others to perform with the great traditional singer, Molly Andrews, including the one that started it all, "The Apple Tree." But, despite doing a radio show based on that material for the BBC, it was never recorded, and Molly and I are no longer working together. Bill felt that for now it was better to limit the arrangements in this book to those on the original recording, and I like keeping "The Salutation" in its original form.

There's always the chance of a follow-up.

Duck Baker February, 2001 Richmond, California

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many of the arrangements in this book were made while I was living at the home of Kieran and Frederique Fahey in Brussels. Both Kieran and Dave Evans offered constructive ideas about the project. The biggest debt of thanks is to Bob Fisher, who produced the original recording in 1986, which was made at Mobius Studio in San Francisco. Pat Kirtley converted the analog recording to digital format. As always, I am indebted to copyist John Roberts. John and his partner, Tony Barrand, are among the finest performers of traditional Christmas songs on the scene. John's deep familiarity with the subject enabled him to make some valuable contributions to the text in addition to his usual stellar job of spotting lacunae in my musical manuscripts. John and Tony's four Nowell Sing We Clear recordings are strongly recommended to lovers of traditional singing.

Notes on the Tunes

The only thing that the carols in this book all have in common is that they all have beautiful melodies. When looking for material, I was interested in including a fair number of tunes that weren't overly familiar. Like many who consider themselves folk musicians, I feel that it's important to seek out and present forgotten music. Given a choice between a familiar and an unfamiliar song, your true traddie has usually opted for the latter, feeling that, like Frost's road less traveled, it was grassy and wanted wear. Nonetheless, many of the tunes, like "I Saw Three Ships," "Good Christian Men, Rejoice" and "The Holly and the Ivy," are quite well-known. Others, like "A Virgin Most Pure," "The Bagpipers' Carol" and "Noël Nouvelet" are popular in their native lands and reasonably well-known elsewhere. At the other end of the spectrum are pieces like "Trettondedagsmarschen," "In Bethlehem" and "The Virgin Gives Birth," which are unfamiliar even in their homelands. It should be noted that the words to carols like "Away in a Manger," "Angels from the Realms of Glory" and, here, "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks" have been set to different tunes, often one being preferred in England and another in America. In fact there's no law against using any tune for any set of words that fits, the setting of "What Child is This" to the melody of "Greensleeves" being an obvious example. Even though I grew up singing that song to that tune, I felt it would be sort of cheating to use it here, though I must admit that there I was not at all consistent about using only original melodies. A couple of these tunes were adopted from classical sources by carol arrangers of the fairly recent past, while others were taken from folk tunes. This is all in keeping with the practice of hymnists, who have always considered any tune from any source as fair to their purposes.

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

This well-known plainchant tune is quite old, dating from the 13th century or possibly earlier. It has found its way into many hymnals and is one of the most popular Advent hymns. Of the millions of people familiar with this song, how many know any other melody of comparable antiquity?

Angelus Ad Virginum — The Blessed Virgin's Lullaby

"Angelus Ad Virginum" is a 14th century Advent hymn, widely known through Europe in its day and very popular in England. It is sung in Chaucer's The Miller's Tale by Nicholas, the clerk of Oxenford.

"The Blessed Virgin's Lullaby" is set to the well-known 16th century dance tune "Sellenger's Round"; William Byrd also wrote variations on this theme.

The Bagpipers' Carol - The Snow Lay on the Ground

The "Canzone di Zampognari" is the only widely known Italian folk carol, which Handel borrowed for a part of "The Messiah". It is widely played by street musicians all over Italy to this day around Christmas time but originated in the south, probably near Naples.

"The Snow Lay on the Ground" is a Victorian English carol. This song is not as popular as many of its contemporaries like "Once in Royal David's City," but is every bit as charming.

The Wexford Carol

Carols of all sorts are rare in Ireland. In fact the very concept of the folk hymn is alien to Irish singers. But a small region of Wexford has a carol tradition that is the subject of an excellent recent study (The Wexford Carols, edited by Diarmuid O'Muirithe with commentaries by Seoirse Bodley, Dufour Editions, 1982). This spectacular melody is found in *The Oxford Book of Carols* and has therefore popped up in various places over the years, but the version that inspired me to learn it was a recording by pianist Michael O Suilleabhain (Gael Linn 046).

While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks — Furry Day Carol — Il Est Né

I remember singing this melody to "While Shepherds Watched" in church as a child, though the Episcopal hymnal of the time doesn't include it, but two others. It is certainly known by many tunes. The "Furry Day Carol" is a Cornish tune usually associated with spring carols and commonly played by brass bands at that time of year in contemporary Cornwall. "Il Est Né" is one of the best-known French carols. Various translations have had some currency, including the one I remember hearing, "Now is Born the Divine Christ Child."

Rorate

Like the Irish, the Scots are poor in carols, but this song set to an old Scottish tune works well. I am unsure whether the tune is actually traditional, as the Oxford Book implies, though it seems likely enough. I have been told that it is a borrowing from an early Scottish composer, which is also easy to imagine.

What is This Fragrance?

Here is another beautiful French carol ("Quelle est Cette Odeur Agreable") that has been translated variously. The arrangement here is more ambitious than the others in this collection. I even altered and borrowed a brief passage from one of my own tunes ("The Blood of the Lamb"). As a good modern citizen I am considering suing myself. I imagine several solicitors will offer their services — that is, if any listen to recordings of Christmas music and read anything but contracts. Maybe I won't get many offers at that.

Trettondedagsmarschen

When working on this project I asked Tom Paley if he knew of anything that might help me — Tom is not only one of the finest revivalist American musicians but he has a good grounding in Swedish fiddle music and an incredible memory. He wrote out and sent me this one, which means "Thirteenth Day March" (evidently the Swedes are among those whose celebration falls on the original gift-bearing day of Epiphany). As Tom quickly pointed out on hearing this, I play it far below the march tempo. And as I told him, I couldn't resist prolonging this beautiful, typically Swedish, tune. This is, incidentally, the only recording I've ever done with a twelve-string guitar.

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

This somber and striking melody is in the Episcopal Hymnal I grew up with, not as a Christmas but as a Communion Hymn. It appears in the Christmas section of the Moravian Hymnal, however. Its inclusion there led me to wonder whether the tune might be German or even Czechoslovakian, but the Episcopal hymnal lists it as 17th-century French, and at some point I heard it played by musicians who told me it was a French dance tune (what kind of dance, something out of Bergman's "The Seventh Seal"?).

I Saw Three Ships - Good Christian Men Rejoice

Here are two very well-known tunes. "I Saw Three Ships" is a classic example of the early English folk carol, and "Good Christian Men Rejoice" goes so well with it that one might assume a similar background, but it is a 14th century German carol usually denoted by its original Latin title, "In Dulci Jubilo." No less a personage than Edward Heath has pointed out that the "Good Christian Men" version that most of us know requires the melody to do considerable violence to make the words fit. Would that latter-day tories gave their attention to such things.

Es Ist Ein' Ros' Entsprungen

This is a straight transcription of Michael Praetorius' adaptation of this 15th century German song, another leading entry in the "most attempted translations" category. I decided to arrange it after hearing my daughter, Saana, sing it in a school recital.

A Virgin Most Pure — The Holly and the Ivy

Here are two very famous English folk carols that can apparently be traced back to about the seventeenth century but are likely enough even older. "The Holly and the Ivy" would seem to be a pagan reference. Holly always is, as is mistletoe.

The Boys' Carol — Patapan — Noël Nouvelet

The first carol is usually sung in it's Latin form "Personent Hodie" which dates from medieval Germany. The tune may be slightly later and may be Scandinavian. "Patapan" is an excellent Burgundian carol whose text is the prototype of the little drummer boy theme. "Noël Nouvelet" is another French tune that has had many translations. Can a stronger melodic phrase than the first two measures of this tune be found anywhere?

The Virgin Gives Birth

This painfully beautiful Provençal folk carol was learned from my favorite recording of Christmas music, Provençal Christmas (Arion) by Les Musiciens de Provence. The title on the record is "La Vierge s'es Acouchado," which is apparently dialect. I couldn't resist a short improvisation on this theme.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Although it was first published in 1928, The Oxford Book of Carols remains the cornerstone of serious study. 1992 saw the publication of The New Oxford Book of Carols, from which The Shorter New Oxford Book of Carols was drawn. Obviously you only need one or the other of these excellent volumes, depending on your degree of interest. The other collection that I would place at the top of any listing is also English but far less known. That would be the University Carol Book, published by H. Freeman & Co. in 1961. A paperback edition of this collection, which contains an impressive number of little-known carols, was available in England in the 80's. I don't know whether it is currently in print.

Two excellent collections that should prove easier to find are *The Penguin Book of Carols* and *The Second Penguin Book of Carols*, both edited by Elizabeth Poston, whose writing is always edifying and entertaining. Poston also had a hand in another commendable volume called *A Book of Christmas Carols*, published by Prentice Hall Press, which has been widely available in recent years.

Contemporary American tax laws discourage publishers from keeping books in print, so any bibliographical information should be given with the understanding that the best place to look for the books in question may be in second hand stores (shopping on the internet is good for some things, but Christmas carol collections might not be seen as worth the trouble of listing, and supporting your local used bookstore is an honorable goal in any case). Here are some titles that I found particularly useful. I have included a few from overseas because one never knows where one's audience finds one, and because it's always amazing what can turn up at a second hand shop.

The Christmas Revels Songbook, compiled by Nancy and John Langstaff and published by David R. Godine of Boston in 1985, is a nice collection that shouldn't be hard to find. Several English publishers besides Oxford and Penguin have published desirable books that have been reprinted in various editions over the years. Of these, the Novello and Faber collections are especially commendable.

Two early English books which may prove harder to locate deserve mention as particularly useful. The Cowley Carol Book, (A. B. Mowbray, 1902), contains some songs I haven't found elsewhere, while Christmas Carols, New and Old (Novello, 1871) is an interesting collection which played a significant role in the carol renaissance. Both were in print for long enough to have sold lots of copies, and can be occasionally found in English stores.

Das Buch der Weihnachslieder, published by Shott in 1982, is the best German collection I have found, while the only French books I can recommend are two paperbacks from Editions A Couer Joie: Noëls de France and Noëls di Provence, consisting of songs written by Micoulau Saboly (1614-1675). The last collection is especially worthwhile. Of course these books are in German and French and hard to read unless you know those languages, but nothing compared to Hen Garolau Plygain published by Y Lolfa in 1987. There are some great tunes in this Welsh book, but it probably doesn't travel far from Wales.

Every year sees the publication of new carol collections, and it's impressive how many contain just about three or four unfamiliar songs along with fifty that everyone knows. Anyone who sets out to learn lots of carols will wind up looking at all the books and buying those with material he/she doesn't already know.

I should add that I am still on the lookout for good collections. I still think there must be some good French books, and from what I've seen in general collections, am impressed with the traditions of Sweden, Spain, and (former) Czechoslovakia as well. I would be grateful if anyone who knows of collections of interesting carols that have escaped my attention could send such information to me c/o Mel Bay Publications.

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O COME, O COME EMMANUEL

Drop D Tuning: DADGBE



*N.B.: Downstem in tab indicates notes played with the r.h. thumb



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ANGELUS AD VIRGINUM



THE BLESSED VIRGIN'S LULLABY



^{*} Strike 4th & 5th strings with side of right thumb





THE BAGPIPERS' CAROL



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THE SNOW LAY ON THE GROUND





THE WEXFORD CAROL





THE SALUTATION







IN BETHLEHEM





WHILE SHEPHERDS WATCHED THEIR FLOCKS



FURRY DAY CAROL





IL EST NÉ







RORATE



Trettondedagsmarschen





LET ALL EARTHLY FLESH KEEP SILENT







I SAW THREE SHIPS





GOOD CHRISTIAN MEN REJOICE





WHAT IS THIS FRAGRANCE?

Drop D Tuning: DADGBE











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Es Ist Ein' Ros' Entsprungen





A VIRGIN MOST PURE





THE HOLLY AND THE IVY



THE BOYS' CAROL









PATAPAN

Standard Tuning

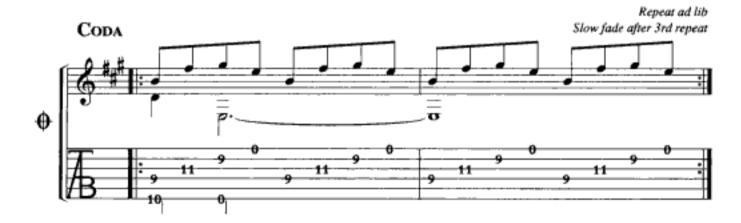


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