

# Music for a Christmas Feast

A programme of cheerful Christmas music, perfect as a background to a Christmas meal or family get together. Old favourites and ancient Christmas melodies combine in the perfect album of contrasting music for Christmas dining.

- 1 In dulci jubilo
- 2 O little one sweet
- 3 Gabriel from evene king
- 4 Noël Suisse
- 5 Good Christian men, rejoice
- 6 Nowell, Deus vous garde
- 7 Gloria in excelsis
- 8 God rest ye, merry gentlemen
- 9 Laudibus in sanctis
- 10 Bethlehem down
- 11 Seven joys of Mary
- 12 Sussex carol
- 13 Alleluia – dies sanctificatus
- 14 Long, long ago
- 15 Twas in the winter cold
- 16 Come now, O saviour
- 17 Holly bears a berry
- 18 A solis ortus cardine
- 19 What child is this?
- 20 I sing of a maiden
- 21 Gaudete te

The Choir of Worcester College, Oxford  
(tracks 1, 12 & 20)

Singscape (tracks 2 & 21)

John Rowlands-Pritchard (track 3)

Martin Souter (tracks 4 & 16)

The Cherwell Singers (tracks 5 & 15)

The Choir of Queens College, Cambridge  
(tracks 6, 10, 14 & 18)

The Monks & Novices of Saint Frideswide  
(tracks 7 & 13)

The Choir of Magdalen College, Oxford  
(tracks 8 & 19)

English Renaissance (track 9)

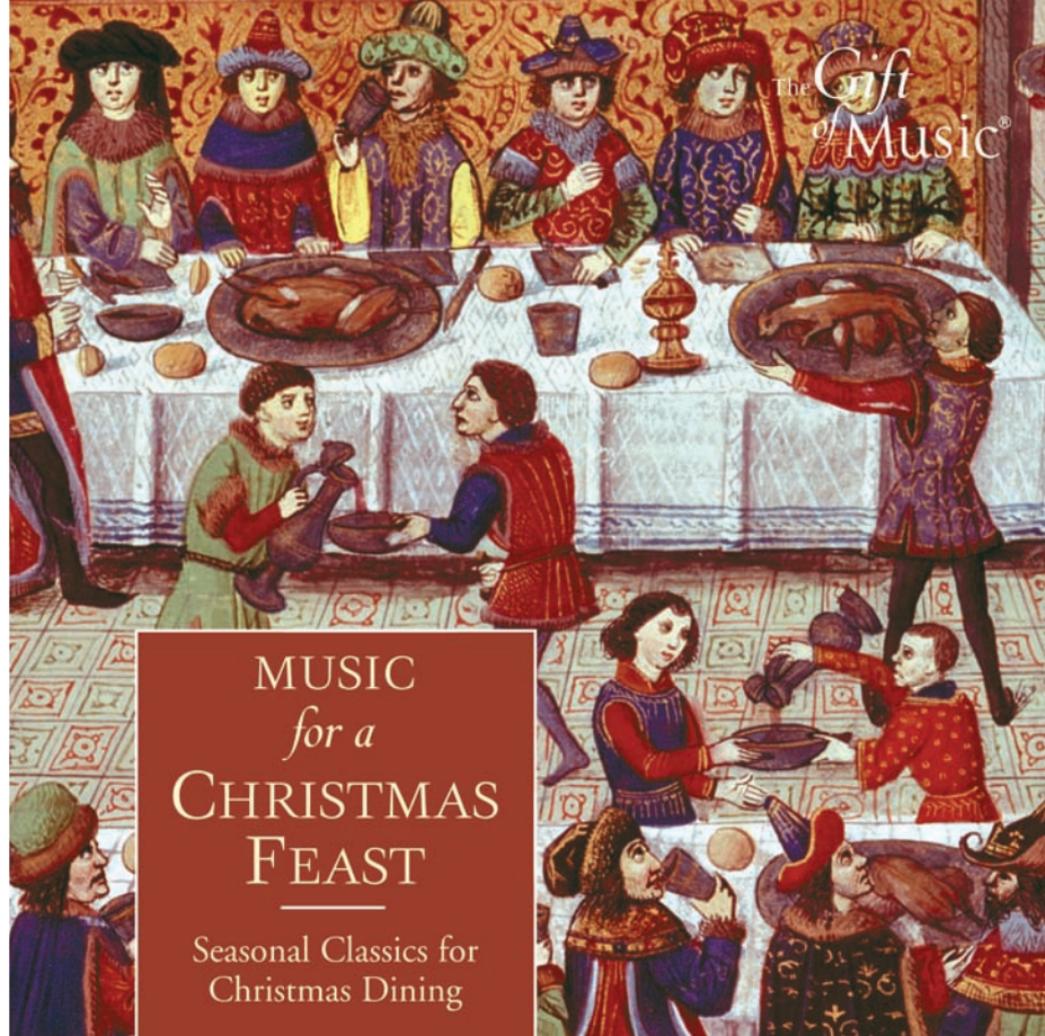
Ian Giles (tracks 11 & 17)

**CCL CDG1078**

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MUSIC  
for a  
CHRISTMAS  
FEAST

Seasonal Classics for  
Christmas Dining

This delightful collection of music to accompany a Christmas feast includes music from several centuries, and from different parts of Europe. The word for Christmas in late Old English is Cristes-Maesse, the Mass of Christ, first found in 1038, and Cristes-Messe, first noted in 1131. In Dutch it is Kerst-misse, in Latin Dies Natalis, from which comes the French Noël, and Italian Il natale; in German Weihnachtsfest, from the preceding vigil. The term Yule is of disputed origin.

Prudentius, in the fourth century, composed a hymn for the Nativity, '*Vox clara*' for the monastic church service of Lauds in Advent. The earliest Weihnachtslieder date from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the earliest noëls from the eleventh, the earliest carols from the thirteenth. '*Adeste Fidelis*' is, at the earliest, of the seventeenth century. These essentially popular airs, and even words, must have existed long before they were put down in writing.

Although there is much evidence to suggest that Christ was not actually born on December 25th, many scholars concur that the establishment of this date as the celebration of the Nativity had much to do with early church leaders wishing to substitute a Christian holiday for the well-established Saturnalia. Quite clearly, this plan was a success. Medieval England is credited with a most important contribution to the festivities, centuries after the date was established, namely the word Christmas.

Christmas is clearly part of an ancient festival and tradition, which all but disappeared in England after the Puritan Revolution of the seventeenth century, when it was considered to be too cheerful – and possibly too pagan! But in the nineteenth century, Prince Albert, husband of Queen Victoria, was instrumental in the reinvention of the English Christmas, for in his native Germany Christmas had never disappeared. He introduced the first

Christmas tree at Windsor Castle, and this quickly became an institution throughout England and Wales. The practice of tree worship has been found in many ancient cultures. Often, trees were brought indoors and decorated to ensure a good crop for the coming year. Trees have also been linked to divinity. Egyptians associated a palm tree with the god Baal-Tamar, while the Greeks and Romans believed that the mother of Adonis was changed into a fir tree.

The custom of sending Christmas cards also began in Victorian times. Earlier, Christmas letters had been sent but they took time to write and deliver, so people wanting to share the season's greetings with many others faced a daunting task. In 1843, British businessman Sir Henry Cole asked the artist John Halcott Horsley to print some Christmas cards. One thousand cards were printed in black and white and then coloured by hand. The design, which depicted a happy family raising a toast to the recipient, was criticised for promoting drunkenness! London-based printers, Charles Goodall & Sons became the first to mass-produce Christmas cards. In 1862 they created cards saying '*A Merry Christmas*'. Later they designed cards with various designs, including robins, holly, mangers, snowmen, and even Little Red Riding Hood.

We now invite you to enjoy our seasonal helping of carols. Each contains a timeless message of goodwill and joy and we sincerely hope that every one of you has a truly, happy Christmas.

Programme notes by Martin Moritz.