

# A child is born

## Carols and music for Christmas

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A programme of music spanning a thousand years of Christmas celebrations, from the evocative medieval plainchant of the Sarum Rite to the warmth and joy of modern Christmas carols. Ethereal choirs from Oxford and Cambridge contrast with robust organ music and some famous and well-loved carols such as 'Away in a manger'.

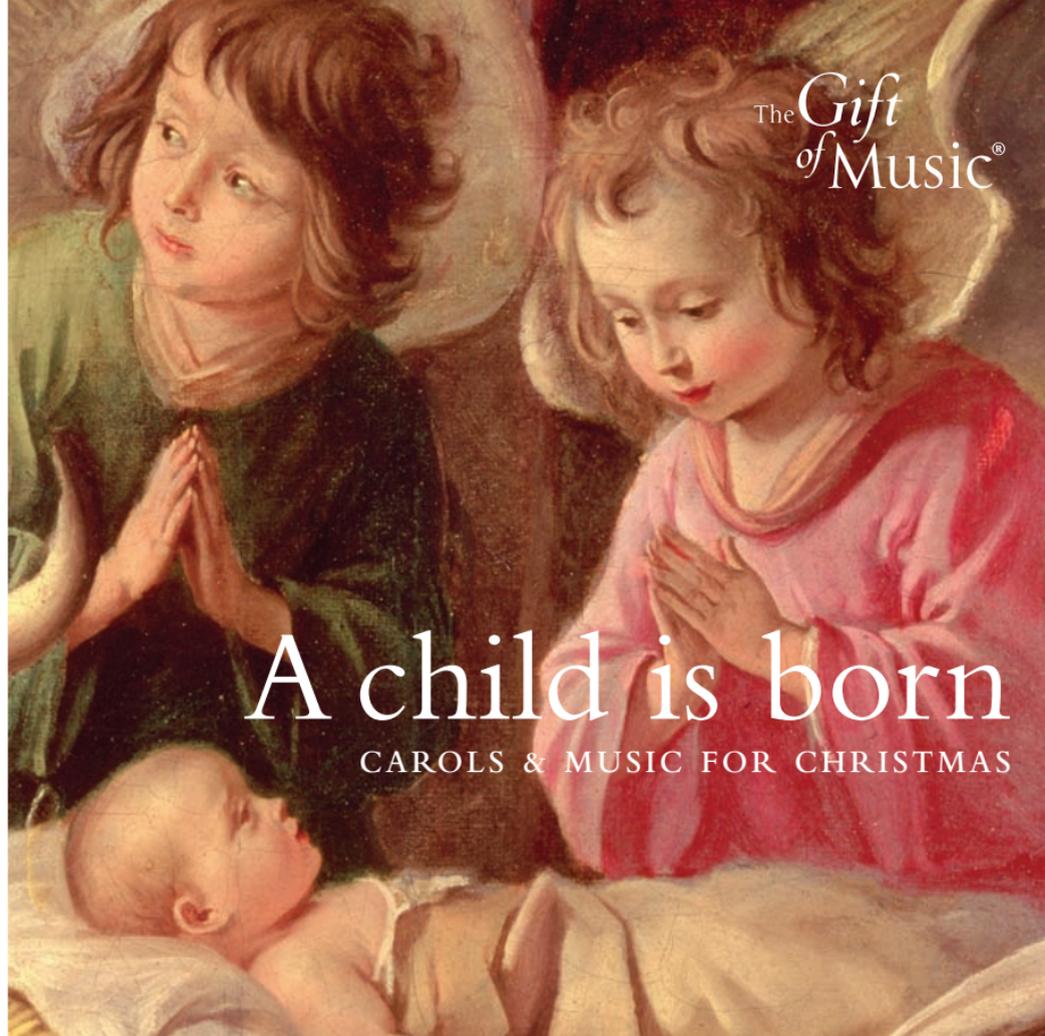
- 1 **A solis ortus cardine**  
Plainsong – Sarum chant
- 2 **Nowell: Dieus wous garde**  
Richard Smart
- 3 **Ther is no rose of swych vertu**  
fifteenth century
- 4 **Lullay, lullow: I saw a swete semly syght**  
fifteenth century
- 5 **Swete was the song the Virgine soong**  
Arranged Thomas Hammond
- 6 **Lullaby, my sweet little baby** William Byrd  
*The Choir of Queens' College, Cambridge*  
directed by James Weeks
- 7 **Laudibus in Sanctis** William Byrd  
*English Renaissance* directed by Michael Stoddart
- 8 **Gabriel fram evene king** fifteenth century
- 9 **Angelus ad virginem** fifteenth century  
*The Oxford Girls' Choir and soloists*  
directed by Richard Vendome
- 10 **The Coventry Carol** Arranged J Stainer
- 11 **See amid the winter's snow** John Goss
- 12 **Sleep, holy babe** J B Dykes  
*The Choir of Magdalen College, Oxford*  
directed by Grayston Ives
- 13 **Sleepers, awake!** J S Bach *Martin Souter*
- 14 **We three kings of Orient are** J H Hopkins
- 15 **I saw three ships** Arranged J Stainer  
*The Choir of Magdalen College, Oxford*  
directed by Grayston Ives
- 16 **Away in a manger** W J Kirkpatrick
- 17 **Past three o'clock** Traditional  
*Sara Stowe, Matthew Spring and Martin Souter*
- 18 **God rest ye merry, gentlemen**  
Arranged John Stainer
- 19 **The Wassail Song** Traditional  
*The Choir of Magdalen College, Oxford*  
directed by Grayston Ives
- 20 **In dulci Jubilo** Johann Sebastian Bach  
*Martin Souter*

**CCL CDG1184**

Cover image: *Adonation of the shepherds* Antoine and Louis Le Nain d.1648 & Mathieu 1607-77  
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CAROLS & MUSIC FOR CHRISTMAS

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A programme of music spanning a thousand years of Christmas celebrations, from the evocative medieval plainchant of the Sarum Rite to the warmth and joy of modern Christmas carols.

In 1871 Sir John Stainer (1840–1901) published a small volume of Christmas carols, ‘Carols New & Old’. The contents echoed those of that great nineteenth century hymnbook, ‘Hymns Ancient and Modern’ which had appeared a few years earlier – a collection of new hymns and arrangements specially composed, and mixed in with some of the most ancient music of the Christian church. Stainer’s book, both in its elaborately illustrated form, or more often in simple format, became a worldwide best seller, and helped to re-establish the Christmas carol as a traditional musical mainstay of the Christmas season. Christmas had always been important, of course, as a major festival of the Church’s year, but, since the seventeenth century, it had not been celebrated in as warm and expansive a way as has developed since Stainer’s time.

This collection contains music by Stainer sung by the choir from his old Oxford college, Magdalen, where he worked and studied before moving to even

greater prominence in London. Stainer was always inspired by the music of the past. He was a significant scholar of Medieval and Renaissance music and one of the great early musicologists whose initial observations of manuscripts and other, often unpromising, material formed the basis of so much of our current opinions and views on the music of the past, the intervening years of increased scholastic rigour notwithstanding.

So it is fitting that this collection should begin with ‘A solis ortus cardine’, plainchant from the Sarum Rite, an English usage or version of Gregorian chant which held sway throughout Southern England for centuries. Medieval carols follow, and music by William Byrd (c.1543–1623), both a lullaby for the baby Jesus, and a song of praise using the text of Psalm 150. Carols from Stainer’s collection follow, by Stainer himself or from Goss and Dykes. ‘Away in a manger’ was not part of the collection, but has remained a constant favourite for more than a century. Bach’s impressive organ music punctuates and concludes the programme, played on the 1986 organ in Magdalen’s chapel, and benefiting from its famous acoustics.