

IN WINTER'S HOUSE

DECEMBER 14, 2023

Kay Meek Arts Centre

DECEMBER 16, 2023

Evergreen Cultural Centre

JOANNA MARSH In Winter's House

REENA ESMail Winter Breviary

- I. WE LOOK FOR YOU (EVENSONG - RAAG HAMSADHWANI)
 - II. THE YEAR'S MIDNIGHT (MATINS - RAAG MALKAUNS)
 - III. THE UNEXPECTED EARLY HOUR (LAUDS - RAAG AHIR BHAIKAV)
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JUHI BANSAL Winter's Vow

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SAUNDER CHOI Meet Me for Noche Buena

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Walking in the Air

ADOLPHE ADAM, ARR. TROMBONE SHORTY ET AL.

O Holy Night - Fantasy

HAGUE/GEISEL, ARR. LANE PRICE

Welcome Christmas

MUSICA INTIMA PERFORMS AND OPERATES ON THE STOLEN
TERRITORY OF THE COAST SALISH PEOPLES, INCLUDING
THE TERRITORIES OF THE X^wMƏŌK^wƏYƏM (MUSQUEAM),
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Growing up, the animated short film *The Snowman* was an important part of the holidays in my family. We had a old VHS with it, taped from some TV broadcast, and later we actually purchased the proper video - I loved the animation, I loved singing along with *Walking in the Air*, and, even at a young age, I think the tragically beautiful lesson about the impermanence of snow, and indeed, life, resonated with me. To this day, though, my favourite part is the very opening - a static shot of the author, Raymond Briggs, walking towards the woods, on what I imagine is a cold, grey December morning in the English countryside. Before the animation begins, he reminisces: ***“I remember that winter, because it brought the heaviest snow that I had ever seen. Snow had fallen steadily all night long, and in the morning I awoke in a room filled with light and silence. The whole world seemed to be held in a dream-like stillness.”***

A dream-like stillness - what better way to describe the quiet that comes when land is blanketed in fresh snow? Juhi Bansal's icy *Winter's Vow* evokes this stunning atmosphere, and we imagine the river Joni Mitchell longs to skate away on. Yet even these coldest moments are filled with “light and silence” - Bansal's work gives way to vows of spring, and this program is filled with light. We look towards the heavens, peer in a window at a glowing hearth, and look for the light within ourselves. Reena Esmail takes us on a journey through winter's woods, while Joanna Marsh describes winter's house itself. T'uy't'tanat-Cease Wyss has given new voice to the sounds of the natural world; the trees and plants that are explored in these texts and in our daily lives. Saunder Choi and Aileen Cassinetto share Filipino Christmas traditions and Maria Corley's arrangement was written for her family to sing together - whether we gather around the fire, around the mulled wine, or around 'How the Grinch Stole Christmas' - it's those with whom we share our light with that complete the holidays.

“Behold! The dawn, within...inside of my throat a rise of the gold, inside my chest I thaw.” Rebecca Gayle Howell's words are set by Esmail; bringing to mind a pure light that blooms from within our selves, and then glows gold in the joys, sorrows, challenges, and revelry of the holidays. Tonight, may we all be held in the dream-like stillness, and feel the gold rising as we share songs and thaw our hearts *In Winter's House*.

In Winter's House

Joanna Marsh / Jane Draycott



Described in *The Guardian* as “one of today’s leading composers for the voice”, award-winning British composer Joanna Marsh has since 2007 divided her life between Dubai and the UK. Joanna’s life in the Middle East has led to many unique musical opportunities including writing an orchestral work to celebrate the building of the Burj

Khalifa, a commission for the BBC Symphony Orchestra for the BBC Proms in Dubai, and a fanfare for the Queen’s visit to Abu Dhabi. Recent commissions include music for I Fagiolini, *Tenebrae*, and the United Strings of Europe and *Gandini Juggling*. Her 2021 choral piece *All Shall Be Well*, commissioned for the ORA Singers, won the choral section of the Ivors Composer Awards 2022.

Joanna was Composer in Residence at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge from 2015 through to 2020. She is a Co-Founder of ChoirFest Middle East in Dubai, an annual celebration of the region’s choral music scene that reached its tenth anniversary in March 2020. She is also Founder of the Dubai Opera Festival Chorus: a large body of singers set up for the BBC Proms in Dubai that continues to undertake concert performances of various types across the UAE.

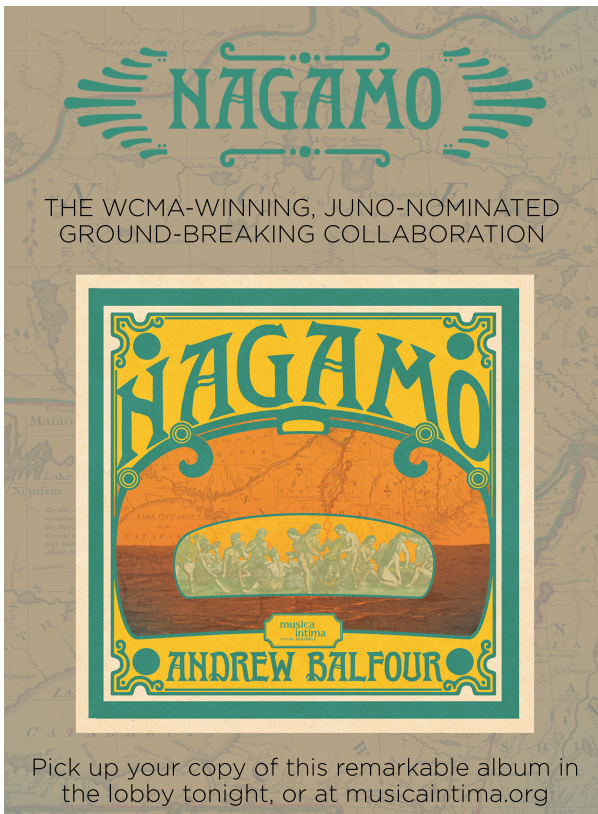
In winter’s house there’s a room
That’s pale and still as mist in a field
While outside in the street every gate’s shut firm,
Every face as cold as steel.

In winter’s house there’s a bed
Is spread with frost and feathers,
That gleams in the half-light like rain in a disused yard
Or a pearl in a choked-up stream.

In winter's house there's a child
Asleep in a dream of light that grows out
Of the dark, a flame you can hold in your hand
Like a flower or a torch on the street.

In winter's house there's a tale
That's told of a great chandelier in a garden,
Of fire that catches and travels for miles,
Of all gates and windows wide open.

In winter's house there's a flame
Being dreamt by a child in the night,
In the small quiet house at the turn in the lane
Where the darkness gives way to light.



Winter Breviary

Reena Esmail / Rebecca Gayle Howell



Indian-American composer Reena Esmail works between the worlds of Indian and Western classical music, and brings communities together through the creation of equitable musical spaces. Esmail divides her attention evenly between orchestral, chamber and choral work. She has written commissions for ensembles including the Los Angeles Master

Chorale, Seattle Symphony, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and Kronos Quartet, and her music has featured on multiple Grammy-nominated albums.

Esmail is the Los Angeles Master Chorale's 2020-2025 Swan Family Artist in Residence, and was Seattle Symphony's 2020-21 Composer-in-Residence. She also holds awards/fellowships from United States Artists, the S&R Foundation, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and the Kennedy Center.

Esmail holds degrees in composition from The Juilliard School (BM'05) and the Yale School of Music (MM'11, MMA'14, DMA'18), and she received a Fulbright-Nehru grant to study Hindustani music in India. Esmail was Composer-in-Residence for Street Symphony (2016-18) and is currently an Artistic Director of Shastra, a non-profit organization that promotes cross-cultural music connecting music traditions of India and the West.

She currently resides in her hometown of Los Angeles, California.

This set of three carols, on new texts by poet Rebecca Gayle Howell, traces a journey through the solstice, the longest night of the year. The texts follow the canonical hours of Evensong, Matins and Lauds, and the music maps onto Hindustani raags for those same hours (Raag Hamsadhwani, Malkauns and Ahir Bhairav). This set is a meeting of cultures, and of the many ways we honor the darkness, and celebrate the return of light. (RE, 2021)

I. We Look for You (Evensong – Raag Hamsadhwani)

Eventide, our single star,
One looking star, this night.
Next to me, the sparrow hen,
Two pilgrims small and bold.
Dusking hour, that lonely hour
The sky dims blue to grey.
Our forest road will fade,
We look for You.
Pines glisten wet with sleet,
She looks with me,
We look for You.
Fog falls in
So close, my breath,
She looks with me,
We look for You:
Great Silent One Unseen,
We look for You.
Eventide, our single star,
One looking star, this night.
We look for You,
Forgiving light, our guide.

II. The Year's Midnight (Matins – Raag Malkauns)

The longest night is come,
A matins for beasts, they low, they kneel,
O, their sleep, their psalm sung.
A matins for trees, they slow, they stem,
O, their reach, their psalm won.
Hush, hush,
Can I hear them?
Can I hear what is not said?
Hush, hush,
Can I hear You?

Ev'ry need met.
To light, the path is dark,
Our star has gone.
Beneath my feet a year of leaves fallen, frozen, done.
I walk these woods,
The longest night is come,
Above me, the sparrow,
She brings our new seed home.
Brown true sparrow,
Take tomorrow home.

III. The Unexpected Early Hour (Lauds – Raag Ahir Bhairav)

Praise be! praise be!
The dim, the dun, the dark withdraws
Our recluse morning's found.
The river's alive
The clearing provides
Lie down, night sky, lie down.
I feel the cold wind leaving, gone,
I feel the frost's relief.
My tracks in the snow can still be erased
In us, the sun believes.
Winter is, Winter ends,
So the true bird calls.
The rocks cry out
My bones cry out
All the trees applaud.
Ev'ry hard thing lauds.
Lie down, night sky, lie down.
I know the seeding season comes,
I know the ground will spring.
My fate is not night
I don't need to try
Behold! The dawn, within.

Horizon lights across my thoughts,
Horizon lines redraw.
Inside of my throat a rise of the gold
Inside my chest I thaw.
Winter is, Winter ends,
Nothing stays the same.
The moon strikes high,
The sun strikes high and
Now I hear your name:
Earth's Untired Change.
Praise be! praise be!
The unexpected early hour
grows the good light long.
Our darkness ends,
O mercy sun,
Trust can warm us all.
Begin again, again, again,
O may our day begin!

Io, Io!

Jocelyn Morlock



The late Jocelyn Morlock (1969–2023) was one of Canada’s leading composers, who wrote compelling music that has been recorded extensively and receives numerous performances and broadcasts throughout North America and Europe. Born in Winnipeg, she studied piano at Brandon University, and later earned a master’s degree and

a DMA from UBC, where she was recently an instructor and lecturer of composition. David Pay wrote: “Jocelyn said that her music was inspired by birds, insomnia, nature, fear, other people’s music and art, nocturnal wandering thoughts, lucid dreaming, death, and the liminal times and experiences before and after death.” Jocelyn left us six pieces of choral music.

lo, lo! portrays the joys that we experience, from brief moments of delight to a more transcendent, spiritual peace.

The first section is a joyful celebration in an energetic, excited style, using an excerpt of Philipp Nicolai's 'In dulci júbilo.' The second section is a loose translation of Nicolai's text that draws on 1 Cor 2:9 - no one has seen or heard what God prepares for those who love him - these words are sung with increasing anticipation and hope.

The final vocalise is an expression of joy connecting these ideas musically, suggesting that the joy that no one has yet seen or heard might be ours right now, connecting our fleeting joy living in this beautiful world to the joy of a perfect, eternal future. (JM, 2018)

lo, lo! was commissioned by Paula Kremer and the Vancouver Cantata Singers in 2018.

lo, lo!
Eternally, in dulci júbilo!
No eye has ever seen,
No ear has ever heard
Such joy as ours - such joy as our joy.

River

Joni Mitchell

Singer-songwriter Joni Mitchell described herself as a painter derailed by circumstance. “I sing my sorrow,” she said, “and I paint my joy.” Celebrating her eightieth birthday last month, Mitchell has nine Grammys to her name, and has collected a variety of honorary degrees and other awards over the past decade, including the Kennedy Centre Honours (2021) and the Library of Congress Gershwin Prize (2023).



This arrangement of River has been continually revised since Lucy and I first performed it in 2017. It was originally written before I met her, and continues to grow as she and I recently celebrated our fourth wedding anniversary. This most recent version retains the Lauridsen-inspired harmonies of the original, but with a new ending inspired by a recently released session from the Joni Mitchell Archives. Blue, the album from which River comes, was written as a reaction against the fame Mitchell was starting to experience, and around the time she purchased land on the Sunshine Coast as a retreat. To me, the album and the song have always invoked the aesthetic of a West Coast winter in the forest. Mitchell says “There are kinds of loneliness which are very beautiful. Sometimes I go up to my land in British Columbia and spend time alone in the country surrounded by the beauty of natural things. There’s a romance which accompanies it...” (JG, 2023)

It’s coming on Christmas
They’re cutting down trees
They’re putting up reindeer
And singing songs of joy and peace
Oh, I wish I had a river
I could skate away on

But it don't snow here
It stays pretty green.
I'm going to make a lot of money
Then I'm going to quit this crazy scene.
Oh, I wish I had a river
I could skate away on
 I wish I had a river
 so long
 I would teach my feet to fly
 Oh I wish I had a river
 I made my baby cry.
He tried hard to help me
He put me at ease,
He loved me so naughty
Made me weak in the knees.
Oh, I wish I had a river
I could skate away on
I'm so hard to handle
I'm selfish and I'm sad.
Now I've gone and lost the best baby
that I ever had
Oh, I wish I had a river
I could skate away on
 I wish I had a river
 so long
 I would teach my feet to fly
 Oh I wish I had a river
 I made my baby say goodbye

Meet Me for Noche Buena
Saunders Choi / Aileen Cassinetta

Saunders Choi is a Los Angeles-based Filipino composer and choral artist whose works have been performed internationally by various groups including Conspirare, the Philippine Madrigal Singers, Santa Fe Desert Chorale, Los Angeles Master Chorale, Pacific Chorale, World Youth Choir, and many others.



Saunders believes in music as advocacy, using the media as a

platform for diversity, equity, inclusion, justice. His compositions are focused on narratives and conversations surrounding immigration, racial justice, LGBTQ+ advocacy, climate justice, and representations of his identity as a Filipino-Chinese. He is currently Director of Music at Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Santa Monica and a teaching artist with the Los Angeles Master Chorale.

Growing up, a paról was both a familiar and expected sight during the holidays— hanging by windows, attached to street lamps, all around malls and other public spaces, in the zeitgeist of every Filipino. They can be as simple as ones crafted from bamboo and colorful Japanese paper, or as elaborate as those made from capiz shells and even LED lights. Aileen’s poetry paints a joyous, nostalgic, and colorful picture of Noche Buena — a Christmas Eve celebration shared amongst Spanish colonized countries. The ubiquitous Philippine star lantern forges a link between past and present. It symbolizes the transfer of tradition from one place to another, bringing along with it other holiday traditions like bibingka (a traditional baked rice cake) and queso de bola (a ball of red Edam cheese) — because is it even a Filipino gathering without tons of food?

In the middle of this new carol, as we “sing our favorite Christmas songs,” I took the opportunity to quote one of my favorite ones

while growing up — Payapang Daigdig (Peaceful World) by Felipe De Leon — our version of Silent Night. I specifically included the phrase sa bughaw na langit (in blue sky) because it is an image that is shared amongst cultures no matter where you are.

At its heart, Meet Me for Noche Buena is really about journeys and relationships; people bringing and sharing their various holiday traditions in new places — whether you're an American in Japan, an Italian in Argentina, or, like Aileen and myself, Filipino immigrants who have found a home in California. (SC, 2022)

(Pasko na naman!)

It's Christmas once again!

Follow the story of the paról
Haggled and hand-carried, tarried, gloried and ferried
From Quiapo to San Francisco, now hanging on my window

Follow the string of lights
We'll sing carols tonight, everything's big and bright
A little Christmas charm greets you with open arms

Meet me for Noche Buena
Where it's not quite like home, but a different kind of warm
Meet me for Noche Buena, where it's merry at midnight
Gather and give thanks, gather old friends new

We'll countdown to midnight
Have some hot tsokolate *hot chocolate*

Bibingka and Queso de Bola
At iba pa *et cetera*

We'll open presents, be children again for a moment
Making star lanterns with bamboo and paper
To light our way back home

You'll find me where the holidays
Are merriest (look for the paról)
Brightest in darkest night
I'll be singing my favourite Christmas song.
All I want is home.

In the Bleak Midwinter

Gustav Holst / Christina Rossetti (1830-1894), arr. Maria Corley



Maria Thompson Corley was born in Jamaica and raised in Canada. She has appeared as a solo or collaborative pianist on radio, television, and/or concert stages in North and Central America, the Caribbean, Bermuda and Europe. Her compositions and arrangements have been commissioned and/or recorded throughout North America, and

Dr. Thompson Corley's choral and solo vocal literature is published by Walton, NoteNova, Classical Vocal Reprints, and North Star. She has released several albums, including *Soul Sanctuary*, a disc of her arrangements of spirituals and hymns, which was released by Navona Records in February 2022. Her recording *Soulscapes 2* (MSR Classics), consisting of music by Black women from all over the diaspora, was released in November, 2021. WRTI's John T.K. Scherch included it on his list of 12 "don't miss" classical releases for 2022.

Inspired by the jazz harmonies of vocal groups like Take 6, Corley's arrangement was written for her friends and family to sing together at church. We love this arrangement of the classic carol so much that we included it on our new EP, MIDWINTER.



MIDWINTER, our digital seasonal EP is available to stream now on Spotify, Apple Music, Tidal or your favourite platform! You can also purchase a download on Bandcamp to support the ensemble. For more info: www.musicaintima.org/midwinter

In the bleak mid-winter
Frosty wind made moan
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter
Long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold Him
Nor earth sustain,
Heaven and earth shall flee away
When He comes to reign:
In the bleak mid-winter
A stable-place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty —
Jesus Christ.

Angels and Archangels
May have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim
Thronged the air;
But only His Mother
In her maiden bliss
Worshipped the Beloved
With a kiss.

What can I give Him,
Poor as I am? —
If I were a Shepherd
I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise Man
I would do my part, —
Yet what I can I give Him, —
Give my heart.

Walking in the Air

Howard Blake, arr. Joanna Forbes L'Estrange



Joanna Forbes L'Estrange is a London-based professional musician with 25 years of experience in contemporary vocal music as a singer, composer and choir director. After graduating with a Master of Arts degree in Music from Oxford University, she joined the five-time Grammy® Award-winning vocal group, The Swingles, as soprano and Musical

Director, and now enjoys a varied career performing, recording, composing and directing contemporary vocal music.

Raymond Briggs's 1978 picture book, The Snowman, was the inspiration for a 1982 animated special of the same name, directed by Dianne Jackson. Nominated for an Academy Award, the film is notable for its complete lack of dialogue, with the only words in the whole work being the sung text to 'Walking in the Air'. A Christmas tradition for many of us born in the 80s and 90s, this arrangement includes trademark Swingle stylings, while staying true to the lush orchestration of the original. The film opens with a shot of Briggs walking at the edge of a forest in winter, which gradually becomes obscured by the animated snow. He narrates, "I remember that winter, because it brought the heaviest snow that I had ever seen. Snow had fallen steadily all night long, and in the morning I awoke in a room filled with light and silence. The whole world seemed to be held in a dream-like stillness. It was a magical day, and it was on that day I made the snowman."

*We're walking in the air
We're floating in the moonlit sky
The people far below are sleeping as we fly
I'm holding very tight
I'm riding in the midnight blue
I'm finding I can fly so high above with you
Far across the world
The villages go by like dreams
The rivers and the hills
The forest and the streams*

*Children gaze open mouthed
Taken by surprise
Nobody down below
believes their eyes*

*We're surfing in the air
We're swimming in the frozen sky
We're drifting over icy mountains floating by*

*Suddenly swooping low on an ocean deep
Rousing up a mighty monster from his sleep*

*We're walking in the air
We're dancing in the midnight sky
And everyone who sees us greets us as we fly*

O Holy Night

Adolphe Adam, arr. W.G. Snuffy Walden/Trombone Shorty

Born Troy Andrews, he got his start (and nickname) earlier than most: at four, he made his first appearance at Jazz Fest performing with Bo Diddley; at six, he was leading his own brass band; and by his teenage years, he was hired by Lenny Kravitz to join the band he assembled for his Electric Church World Tour. Since 2010, he's released four chart topping studio albums; toured with everyone from Jeff Beck to the Red Hot Chili



Peppers; collaborated across genres with Pharrell, Bruno Mars, Mark Ronson, Foo Fighters, ZHU, Zac Brown, Normani, Ringo Starr, and countless more; performed four times at the GRAMMY Awards, five times at the White House, on dozens of TV shows, and at the star-studded Sesame Street Gala, where he was honored with his own Muppet; launched the Trombone Shorty Foundation to support

youth music education; and received the prestigious Caldecott Honor for his first children's book. Meanwhile in New Orleans, Shorty now leads his own Mardi Gras parade atop a giant float crafted in his likeness, hosts the annual Voodoo Threaxdown shows that have drawn guests including Usher, Nick Jonas, Dierks Bentley, Andra Day, and Leon Bridges to sit in with his band, and has taken over the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival's hallowed final set, which has seen him closing out the internationally renowned gathering after performances by the likes of Neil Young, the Black Keys, and Kings of Leon.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, many New Orleans musicians were displaced across the US, and without work. Around the holidays, LA studio musicians started calling in sick, so that New Orleans musicians could make some extra money, and it was this story that inspired the appearance of Trombone Shorty and a band comprised of several displaced New Orleans horns (Mervin "Kid Merv" Campbell, Kirk Joseph, Roderick Paulin, Frederick Shepherd, and Stephen Walker) on the Aaron Sorkin show 'Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip'. While first arranged by the shows composer, W.G. Snuffy Walden, he said "As much as anything, primarily it's [Trombone Shorty]. So much of it is what he brought to it." This new adaptation for voices keeps the fragmented style of the original instrumental performance - phrases aren't completed, the melody moves around constantly, and the freedom of individual line which is so crucial to New Orleans music is retained.

*O holy night! The stars are brightly shining.
It is the night. Long lay the world in darkness.*

*The thrill of hope, the world rejoices,
Yonder breaks a new and glorious morn,
O can you hear the thrill of hope,
Led by light, raise our voices...*

*Fall on your knees, hear the angel voices.
O night divine, O holy night.*

Welcome Christmas

Dr. Seuss / Albert Hague, arr. Lane Price

Lane Price began training as a vocalist at the University of Regina where he found his passion for composing by exploring the choral works of Poulenc, Britten, and Tormis. After moving to Vancouver to study voice and composition, Lane focused on jazz theory with interest in such innovators as Metheny, Monk, and Ellington.

Lane's works have been performed by various choirs and jazz ensembles across the world, and have recently been broadcast on CBC Radio Canada. His insight as a singer as well as his deep understanding of jazz harmony has contributed to a distinctive style of writing. Lane also has arranged scores for short film and musical theatre.



As a professional singer Lane has performed with the Vancouver Chamber Choir, Phoenix Chamber Choir, Vancouver Cantata Singers, musica intima, Laudate Singers, VocaJava, NiteCap, and founded the vocal quintet Profusio. Lane can also be heard as a singer on commercials, radio & musical recordings. Lane currently resides in Vancouver with his wife Reanne and children Aleena, Naomi, Cadence and Sawyer.

The story of How the Grinch Stole Christmas! by Dr. Seuss is one of my favourite children's books. The climax for me is when an entire village who lost all their treasured Christmas possessions decided to joyfully sing together anyway. "As long as we have hands to grasp" is a line that willfully fights the heartbreak of evil with gratitude, particularly the gratitude of being with those you love. For the television special Albert Hague wrote this Christmas hymn full of anthem like melodic lines, as well as romantic coloured chordal progressions. I tried to honour the festive orchestral vibrancies in this acappella version with bell-like vocals and playful lines on the variations of the themes. Come away and be inspired at the glory of the village of Whoville. (LP, 2023)

SUNG TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Fahoo fores, dahoo dores,
Welcome Christmas come this way.
Fahoo fores, dahoo dores,
Welcome Christmas, Christmas day.
Welcome, welcome, fahoo ramus,
Welcome, welcome dahoo damus.
Christmas day is in our grasp
So long as we have hands to clasp.

Fahoo fores, dahoo dores,
Welcome Christmas bring your cheer.
Fahoo fores, dahoo dores,
Welcome all Who's far and near.

Welcome Christmas, fahoo ramus
Welcome Christmas, dahoo damus
Christmas day will always be,
Just so long as we have we.

Fahoo fores, dahoo dores
Welcome Christmas bring your light.

Welcome Christmas, fahoo ramus,
Welcome Christmas, dahoo damus,
Welcome Christmas while we stand
Heart to heart and hand in hand.

Fahoo fores, dahoo dores,
Welcome, welcome Christmas,
Christmas day.

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