

A Child's Christmas in Wales

by Dylan Thomas
featuring Richard Partington

December 12, 2020 – January 3, 2021



Programme

Wexford Carol — Irish traditional

Kelly Lefaive, fiddle • Derek Gray, Tibetan singing bowls • Maria Case, piano

Deck the Halls — Traditional carol

Melanie Conly, soprano • Maria Case, alto • Joshua Clemenger, tenor • Parker Clements, bass

Duetto buffo di due gatti — Gioacchino Rossini

Melanie Conly, soprano • Julia Lewis, soprano • Maria Case, piano

Fyre, fyre! — Thomas Morley

Melanie Conly, soprano • Maria Case, soprano • Anne Lee, piano

Ding Dong! Merrily on High — French carol

Melanie Conly, soprano • Maria Case, alto • Joshua Clemenger, tenor • Parker Clements, bass

Patapan — Burgundian carol

Kelly Lefaive, fiddle • Derek Gray, drum • Maria Case, piano

Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind — Thomas Arne

Melanie Conly, soprano • Maria Case, piano

To Drive the Cold Winter Away — John Playford

Parker Clements, bass • Joshua Clemenger, tenor • Anne Lee, piano
Kelly Lefaive, fiddle • Derek Gray, drum

Far from Home/Homeward Bound — Maritime traditional

Kelly Lefaive, fiddle • Derek Gray, drum • Maria Case, piano

Ar hyd y nos — Welsh traditional

Joshua Clemenger, tenor • Maria Case, piano • Kelly Lefaive, fiddle

Song for a Winter's Night — Gordon Lightfoot, arr. Robin Salkeld
The Annex Singers

Programme Notes

In *A Child's Christmas in Wales*, Welsh poet and writer Dylan Thomas (1914–1953) recalls the Christmases of his youth in a series of vignettes featuring friends and relations, neighbours and postmen, feasting, singing, and adventures in the snow. This was a time “when there were wolves in Wales, and birds the colour of red-flannel petticoats whisked past the harp-shaped hills.” One of the great pleasures of the story is the musicality of the language. Through extensive use of assonance, alliteration, internal rhymes, and often hilarious newly invented compound words, Thomas provides a feast for the reader — these are words meant to be savoured. One hears echoes of the Bible, Welsh folk tales, and Anglo-Welsh poets such as Gerard Manley Hopkins in Thomas's rhythm and syntax; however, he always claimed that the poems that had influenced him the most were the *Mother Goose* rhymes that he learned as a child.

The musical selections for our presentation have been chosen to punctuate the text and reflect the events of the story, often in a humorous way. We are delighted to welcome an array of guest singers and musicians who help us illuminate the story. Bookending the narrative, you will hear the voices of some of our choir members as they share their own memories of the season or hopes for the future. You will find more choristers' “reflections” and greetings at our website: www.annexsingers.com.

— Maria Case, Artistic Director, The Annex Singers

Performers



Artistic Director **Maria Case** is a highly regarded artist and educator in Toronto's music community, working as a pianist, singer, choral conductor, and composer. She maintains a busy private studio and is active as an examiner and lecturer on piano and theory pedagogy. She has led The Annex Singers since 2005 with dynamic and imaginative programming. The majority of Maria's compositions celebrate the voice.



A longstanding member of The Annex Singers and a professional actor for more than five decades, **Richard Partington** has performed in theatres from coast to coast. He has given voice to such figures as Gerard Manley Hopkins, Andre Breton, Octavio Paz, Luigi Pirandello for the CBC Radio documentary series *Ideas*. In addition to his passion for theatre, Richard has a deep love of choral music and is an avid recorder player.



Anne Lee, collaborative pianist for The Annex Singers since 2011, began piano studies at a young age in Vancouver. She studied English literature and Music Performance at Queen's University, participating in various musical ensembles as a chorister, accompanist and instrumentalist. Anne is valued for her sensitive artistry and profound understanding of choral collaboration.



Soprano **Melanie Conly** is acclaimed for her distinctive voice and musical understanding. An experienced chamber musician and recitalist, she often performs as a soloist with orchestras and choirs and is frequently sought out for her compelling performances of new music. Melanie maintains a voice and piano studio in Toronto and has developed a series of workshops called “Empower Your Essence” that explore tools for performance, creativity and life.



Tenor **Joshua Clemenger** holds a bachelor's degree in Performance from Western University (London, Ontario) and has recently completed a master's degree in Opera at the University of Toronto. He currently performs in operas and concerts across southern Ontario. A compelling performer, comfortable with diverse styles, he is also an experienced lead chorister and an inspiring teacher of English, voice, piano and ukulele.



Originally from Prince Edward Island, baritone **Parker Clements** holds a master's degree from Western University (London, Ontario) and is completing a Diploma in Operatic Performance at the University of Toronto. He is an experienced chorister and soloist (currently singing with Tafelmusik and VOCA Chorus of Toronto) and avid recitalist. He will perform the role of Des Grieux in *Le portrait de Manon* (Massenet) in U of T's upcoming spring production of one-act operas.



Since graduating from Humber College's renowned contemporary music program and completing his master's degree in Ethnomusicology at York University, **Derek Gray** has travelled the world studying, performing and teaching. At home in Toronto, Derek works as a bandleader, composer, and sideman playing drums/percussion with a variety of projects, including Gray Matter, Ventanas, and the Indo-Jazz ensemble Monsoon.



Kelly Lefaive is a violinist and singer-songwriter currently studying in the Master of Music Therapy program at Wilfrid Laurier University. Originally from Penetanguishene, Ontario, Kelly co-leads the traditional French-Canadian family band Ariko. Since graduating from the University of Toronto jazz program on violin in 2011, she has toured with various artists in Canada, Europe and the US. Her musical interests include swing era jazz, Canadian traditional fiddle music, Mexican mariachi and Brazilian forró.

The Annex Singers

Soprano — Rachel Ariss, Celine Carvalho, Tessa Cernik, Joanne Eidinger, Victoria Fisher, Carol Hensley, Dale Hensley, Adrienne Huang, Nora Klemencic, Elizabeth Koester, Julia Lewis, Sally McBeth, Freda Miller, Carolyn Sealfon, Ghislaine Taylor • **Alto** — Diane Faught, Tanya Gopaul, Anne Lee, Gail Littlejohn, Laura Murray, Patricia Rios, Maggie Rogow, Ann Rosenfield, Jean Ann Stewart, Luba Tichonova, Ruth Wahl • **Tenor** — Joshua Clemenger, Dawn Keenan, Brian Gottheil, Darcy Martin, Don Melady • **Bass** — Alan Ackerman, Michael Bunce, Rizwan Dar, Darryl Wadsworth, John Warden

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