

BAND:
 Janice Kerckamp, *flute*
 Jason Caron, *trombone*
 Alessandro Arizza, *violin*
 Alexander Smith, *violin*

CHOIR:
 Jason Caron
 Lora Crighton
 Jay Lambie
 Jennifer McCallum
 John Meadows
 Tim Neufeldt
 Janet Nichols
 Jean Nichols
 Dorothy Parr
 Carol Percy

CAST, IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER
 Sara Ciantar *Gib (a shepherd)*
 Jeff Crighton *Third Shepherd, Messenger*
 Alice Degan *God, Balthasar (a king)*
 Theo Ipema *Joseph*
 David Jones *Jack, Herod's retinue*
 Julia Meadows *Mary*
 Rob Mitchell *Herod*
 J.P. Napier *Herod's retinue*
 Madeleine Redican *Gabriel*
 Martin Reinink *Melchior (a king)*
 Maureen Somerville *Elizabeth*
 Timothy Wright *(a shepherd),*
 John Horn *Jasper (a king)*

PRODUCTION
 Kimberley Radmacher *Director*
 Charlotte Steenbrugge *Assistant Director,*
 Linda J. Phillips *Co-producer,*
 Fr Rob Mitchell *Costume Designer*
 Katherine Belyea *Clerical Consultant,*
 Laina Southgate *Co-producer*
 Bryan Martin *Stage Manager*
 Madeleine Redican *Assistant Stage Manager*
 Katherine Belyea *Music Director*
 Julia Meadows *Master Puppeteer;*
 Construction
 Katherine Belyea *Assistant Puppeteers*

Charlotte Steenbrugge
 Alice Degan
 Julia Armstrong *Publicity*
 Irenaldo Coleman *Poster Design*
 Marilyn Ramsingh *Front of House*
 Thomas J. Sheridan *Photographer*
 Willem Hart *Graphics*

SPECIAL THANKS TO:
 Barbara O'brai, The Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies at the University of Toronto

ABOUT PLS
 The mission of PLS (Poculi Ludique Societas) is to rediscover the theatrical traditions of the Middle Ages and Renaissance through textual research and dramatic experimentation, and to bring those traditions to life for contemporary audiences of all ages. PLS sponsors productions of early plays, from the beginnings of medieval drama to as late as the middle of the seventeenth century. As part of the Centre for Performance Studies in Early Theatre, PLS operates in affiliation with the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies at the University of Toronto. PLS also collaborates with the theatre history research project Records of Early English Drama (REED) at the University of Toronto.

ABOUT ST. THOMAS'S ANGLICAN CHURCH
 St. Thomas's Anglican Church is a parish of the Anglican Church of Canada. It was one of the earliest Anglo-Catholic congregations in Canada. It was established in 1874, moving twice before settling into its present Arts and Crafts building, designed by parishioner and renowned Toronto architect Eden Smith. St. Thomas's has a strong tradition of musical excellence and involvement in the arts.

Next from PLS: 'Lancelot of Denmark' and 'Of Winter and Summer' In the Spring PLS will produce two plays (abele spelen) translated from the Middle Dutch Van Hulthem Manuscript (dated 1400-1410). 'Lancelot of Denmark' was an extremely popular romance which continued to be performed well into the 18th century.



POCULI LUDIQUE SOCIETAS &
 ST. THOMAS'S ANGLICAN CHURCH PRESENT

A Medieval Christmas: *Such splendid sight was never seen*



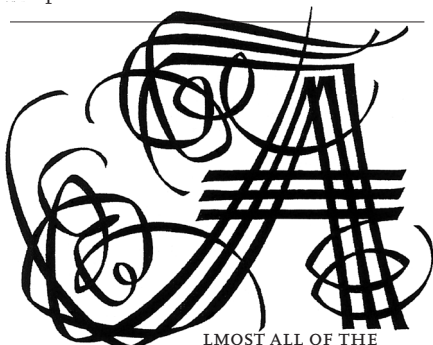
Friday, December 13, 7:30 pm
 Saturday, December 14, 2:00 pm & 7:30 pm
 at St. Thomas's Church
 383 Huron Street, Toronto



WELCOME TO THE FOURTH
CO-PRODUCTION OF

Poculi Ludique Societas and St Thomas's Church. Our creative partnership has proven a match made in heaven, combining the diverse talents of both groups into one formidable team of actors, musicians, historians, and production personnel. Many of those involved in our productions have commented on how they found themselves both challenged and enlivened creatively and spiritually. It is our great pleasure, therefore, to present *A Medieval Christmas: Such Splendid Sight Was Never Seen*, and we hope that both our performance today and the days and weeks ahead will be for you a time of joy and wonder.

The Rev. Robert Mitchell
Associate Priest, St Thomas's, and play
Co-producer



ALMOST ALL OF THE MUSIC you will hear comes from two of the earliest sources of "traditional" English Christmas carols, with the tunes to which they were formerly sung in the West of England (1822, 2nd ed. 1823), by Davies Gilbert (1767-1839), and *Christmas Carols, Ancient and Modern*, including the most popular in the west of England, with the tunes to which they are sung (1833), by William Sandys (1792-1874). These seminal collections stand at the beginning of the Victorian era's fascination with the revival of Christmas traditions, a phenomenon that included Charles Dickens' novella *A Christmas Carol*, as well as Prince Albert's introduction of the Christmas tree and other German customs to England.

Gilbert and Sandys were from Cornish families, and this connection was especially important for their carol collections. Cornwall was both remote and conservative, which made it an ideal place for the development and retention of folk songs and customs, making Cornwall one of the richest source of British folk carols. There is a definite pre-Reformation flavour to many of these, with an emphasis on such topics as the fall of man and the virgin birth. The music, however, seems to be related to the gallery choir and band tradition that sprung up in the eighteenth century, and was just beginning to wane when these collections were published.

We have created a small gallery choir and band, with instruments that were commonly available. The music frequently only includes the tune and a bass line; the rest would have been created by the performers or their leaders. I owe a great debt to the editors of *The New Oxford Book of Carols*, Hugh Keyte and Andrew Parrott, who fleshed out many of these tunes with additional parts in an appropriate style. Most of the arrangements are based on these; I can claim credit only for the distribution of parts, as well as for the arrangements of the first carol (*The Lord at First Had Adam Made*) and the instrumental version of the last (*The First Nowell*).

Of course, none of this could be done without the generous assistance of my friends and colleagues. My heartfelt thanks go out to all of you!

Bryan Martin

MUSIC:

- 1 The Lord at First Had Adam Made (Sandys 1833)
- 2 Hark! What News the Angels Bring (Joseph Stephenson, fl. 1760-1775) (instrumental; based on the Walton (Buckinghamshire) waits' version, collected 1919 by H. E. D. Hammond)
- 3 When God at First Created Man (to verse "An angel then from Heav'n was sent") (Gilbert)
- 4 When Righteous Joseph Wedded Was (Gilbert)

- 5 God's Dear Son, Without Beginning (Gilbert)
- 6 Come, Landlord, Fill the Flowing Bowl (English traditional, from 19th-century versions)
- 7 Christians, Awake! (John Wainwright, ca. 1723-1768, as in Gilbert) (sung twice)
- 8 Hark! Hark! What News the Angels Bring (Joseph Stephenson, fl. 1760-1775) (Sandys 1833)
- 9 In Those Twelve Days (instrumental; Sandys 1833)
- 10 Hark! Hark! What News the Angels Bring (see no. 2)
- 11 Hark! Hark! What News the Angels Bring (see no. 2)
- 12 The First Nowell (instrumental: Sandys 1852; vocal: arr. John Stainer, 1840-1901)



THIS year we have undertaken a very ambitious project, using scripts from the Towneley manuscript—which were known as the Wakefield Cycle when I was an undergrad. I am particularly pleased to get to work with these plays again, since the very first play I ever directed was the Wakefield Noah's Flood. I feel a nostalgic affinity to these plays for that reason. And nostalgia is the underlying theme of our production this year. The Christmas we celebrate today, of course, is inflected with pagan nuances and influences from many cultures, not to mention a more recent rampant consumerism that threatens to overtake the spiritual underpinnings of this celebration. But for me, as a child, Christmas was a time of wonder and enchantment. I loved the Christmas tree and decorating cookies and making Christmas cards and learning to sing the carols. These are all aspects of Christmas celebration that we have inherited from the 19th century. So when our music director, Bryan Martin, suggested using music from that era I jumped at the idea. Our entire production is inspired by the musical choice. Our efforts to recreate the absolute charm of light and scenic spectacle that marked theatre production in 19th-century England, especially, along with romanticised depictions of

the distant past through costumes and shadow puppets, we hope, will transport you, for a while, into that world of utter delight.

Although the scripts we use are always different from the ones produced in previous productions of *A Medieval Christmas*, the characters will all be familiar. Poor Joseph has no idea what's going on: How in the world did his sweet maiden wife come to be with child?! There are the rustic shepherds whose mean world is brightened by the promise of salvation. And there are the noble kings whose wisdom and scholarship lead them to Bethlehem where they humble themselves before the Saviour. And of course we have the infantile Herod whose insecure hyperbole creates endless hilarity. As in previous years, we have selected an arrangement of plays that form a Nativity sequence. But in the Towneley manuscript we are presented with two shepherds' plays, so we had to choose just one. The best known of the two is *The Second Shepherds Play*, which typically appears in English textbooks and undergrad survey courses. I've performed in and/or been involved with productions of that play a number of times. So I am pleased to have had the opportunity to produce the lesser-known *First Shepherds Play* for you this year. This rarely-produced play is less sophisticated in form and structure than its better-known brother, but I hope you will appreciate how charming it is in its own right.

My thanks to the entire team—especially Katherine Belyea and my collaborator, Linda Phillips. And to Madeleine who made my crazy dream of light and spectacle come to life.

Kimberley Radmacher

SOURCES:

- Davies Gilbert, *Some Ancient Christmas Carols*, 2nd ed. (1823) (Gilbert)
William Sandys, *Christmas Carols, Ancient and Modern* (1833) (Sandys 1833)
William Sandys, *Christmastide: Its History, Festivities, and Carols* (ca. 1852) (Sandys 1852)
Hugh Keyte and Andrew Parrott, eds. *The New Oxford Book of Carols* (1992)