

* **The Wren (The King) - Fanfare for the King's Supper - Gloucester Wassail**

Wren Day, 26 December, celebrated in Ireland and some other Celtic countries, involves masks, straw suits and colourful motley clothing, parading through town with a fake wren ("the king") on a decorated pole, and céili (dance) music. It's traditional, so it doesn't have to make sense.

The Fanfare-Rondeau is by Jean-Joseph Mouret, an 18th c. French composer.

"Wassail," from the Anglo-Saxon "wes hal," means "good health" (literally, "be whole"). English Wassailers went from door to door singing for ale and sometimes even a bite to eat.

Wassail, wassail all over the town, Our cup it is white and the ale it is brown.
Our cup it is made of the good ashen tree, And so is the malt of the best barley.

* **Eight Bells ★ Christmas Eve Reel**

A poem by Cicely Fox Smith, from SAILOR'S DELIGHT (1931), set to a tune by songwriter Andrew Calhoun. A gruff exchange between sailors at the changing of the watch, as holidays come and go while the routine of sailing the ship continues on. And a tune by Tommy Coen.

Here's grub whenever you're hungry, drink whenever you're dry,
And "Happy New Year," says Ginger. "Same to yerself," says I.

* **The Serving Girl's Holiday ★ Es Ist Ein Rose**

This lyric - a modern translation from Middle English - was rather bawdy before English folksinger Maddy Prior edited it. She set it to the melody from a medieval French carol, 'Orientis Partibus,' which was associated with The Feast of the Ass (January 14).

Spindle, bobbin & spool away. What joy that it's a holiday!

* **I Saw Three Ships**

Yes, it's a Christmas sea chantey. Yo ho ho ho. We intersperse the melody of the French Christmas song 'Un flambeau, Jeannette, Isabelle,' and follow it with a sprightly jig called 'The Scotsman Over the Border.'

I saw three ships come sailing in on Christmas day, on Christmas day
I saw three ships come sailing in on Christmas day in the morning.

Mirie It Is ★ The Landlord's Scourge

A fragment of manuscript from the 12th century preserved this single verse, the oldest surviving secular song in the English language, reflecting the typical enduring English attitude toward the Winter season. The musical interludes are a tune from hurdy-gurdy player Steve Tyler, and some other stuff we like...

Winter (When Icicles Hang by the Wall)

A poem from Shakespeare's "Love's Labour's Lost" set to the 16th c. tune "Packington's Pound." To "keel the pot" is to prevent it from boiling over - a cozy image of domestic warmth to contrast the chilly references in the verses.

Tu-whit to who, a merry note / While greasy Joan doth keel the pot

Jolly Old Hawk ★ The Moon and Seven Stars

A litany of odd gifts for the traditional twelve gifting days from Christmas to Epiphany, from the Waterson family of Yorkshire, and a sprightly jig from Scotland. Or England. Or possibly Ireland.

Jolly old Hawk and his wings were grey, Sent to my love on the 12th-most day

Oystering Time

The actual published title of this song by Janie Meneely is "Freezin' Our Butts Off." This looks much nicer in the programme, doesn't it?

Gonna pull on my boots, gonna button my coat
Gonna head for the harbor and untie my boat
The stars are still out and the sky is still gray
It's oystering time on the Chesapeake Ba—a—a-a-a-ay
It's oystering time on the Chesapeake Bay

Solstice Song

A song for the turning of the seasons from our friend Karen Gillmore in Victoria BC.

World, sun, moon, stars - dance in the circles of night
Wind, tide, tree, stone - sing in the cycles of light



Song of Solstice ★ Princes Royal

Jennifer Cutting, a friend from Maryland, wrote this song to honor the midwinter as a time of reflection and growth, as well as looking forward to the returning light. Princes Royal comes from the old English morris dance tradition.

Raise the Song of Solstice high, through the wind and weather
Welcome Yule with frost and fire, and sing we all together.

* **The Trees Are All Bare**

Traditional English song from the Copper family of Sussex. An earlier version of this verse was attributed to one "Thomas Brerewood, esq." in 1783.

Now Christmas is come and our song is almost done
For we soon shall have the turn of the year
So fill up your glasses and let "your health" go round
For I wish you all, for I wish you all a joyful new year (repeat)

Tordion ★ Winter Wie Ist Nu Dein Kraft

A 15th century French dance and an early 13th century German song by Neithart von Reuental. With a twist, just because we're a little bit twisted.

Good King Wenceslas ★ Sandy Boys ★ Pretty Little Dog

Famous lyrics by John M. Neale (1818-1866), inspired by stories of the 10th century Duke Wenceslaus I of Bohemia, which are usually sung to a 13th century Finnish melody. We decided instead to use a tune closer to the author's own time: an American old-time fiddle tune.

* **The Woodcutters Song (Oak Logs)**

Some versions of this song start with this explanation:

*Logs to Burn, Logs to burn, / Logs to save the coal a turn,
Here's a word to make you wise, / When you hear the woodman's cries.
Never heed his usual tale, / That he has good logs for sale,
But read these lines and really learn, / The proper kind of logs to burn. (cont'd overleaf)*

Surely you will find, There's none compare with the hardwood logs
That are cut in wintertime, sir.

Elf und Zwölf

These tunes were numbered 11 and 12 in the Terpsichore, a collection of dance music compiled by German composer Michael Praetorius in the early 17th century.

Noël est Arrivée ★ Danse d'Ours

A traditional French song about shepherds in the hills spreading the word that Christmas has come. But they'd rather not have to walk. The chorus means "My leg hurts. Saddle up, saddle up. My leg hurts. Saddle my horse." We weave in a few snatches of the Flemish "Bear Dance."

La jambe me fait mal, Boutte selle, boutte selle
La jambe me fait mal, Boutte selle à mon cheval

Johann Pachelbel's Canon in D ★ The Boar's Head Carol

Written in the 1600's, this now ubiquitous tune disappeared into obscurity for centuries, and didn't come back into popularity until the 1970s. It's been making up for lost time.

This song, first published in the early 16th century, refers to a Yule custom that is even older, and probably dates back to pre-medieval Scandinavian traditions. Christmas ham is thought by some historians to trace through the boar's head all the way back to the old ritual of sacrificing a wild boar to the Norse god Freyr.

Caput apri defero (*The boar's head I offer*)
Reddens laudes Domino (*Giving praises to the Lord*)

Chariots

John Kirkpatrick wrote this as part of a commission to write some new carols for a "Wassail" tour in the north of England in 1995.

With chariots of cherubim chanting, and seraphim singing hosanna
And a choir of archangels a-carolling come. Halleluja, hallelu!
All the angels a-trumpeting glory, in praise of the prince of peace.

Winter's Return is a collaboration between four world touring musicians. **William Pint and Felicia Dale** (www.pintndale.com) join **Tania Opland and Mike Freeman** (www.opland-freeman.com) to perform songs of the season on hurdy-gurdy, octave mandolin, hammered dulcimer and more. For more about these two duos see their web pages (above) or visit www.wintersreturn.com

* These songs are on our duo CDs: The Woodcutter's Song, The Trees are all Bare, I Saw Three Ships and Ring in the New Year all appear on *When I See Winter Return* (Pint & Dale). The King/The Wren, Gloucester Wassail and the Candle Blessings can be found on *Winter's Time* (Opland, Dale, Geisler). Hatching Day is on *Sunset's Gold* (McCaffrey, Opland, Freeman), and Eight Bells and The Serving Girl's Holiday are on the mini album *Eight Bells* (Pint & Dale).

Winter's Return

A Celebration in Music



Felicia Dale - hurdy gurdy, tinwhistle, violin

Mike Freeman - guitar, percussion

William Pint - guitar, octave mandolin

Tania Opland - violin, recorder, dulcimer, hurdy gurdy



www.wintersreturn.com



Programme - 2017