

A Christmas Round

voices and piano

Paul Ayres

& English traditional melody (bars 110-127, in GROUP I)

Medium tempo, one-in-a-bar (♩ = about 144)

ALL VOICES

or SOLO(s) ad lib

ENGLISH

mp *espressivo e legato*

Peace to all

10

peo - ple on earth, Glo - ry to God in the high - est. Glo - ri - a,

10

18

glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o, et in ter - ra pax ho - mi - ni - bus.

18

performance, pronunciation and programme notes on page 6

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27 GREEK FRENCH

Do - xa en hyp - sis - tys the - o, ke e - pi gis i - ri - ni. Gloire à

36 ARABIC

Dieu, au plus haut des cieux, et paix sur la terre. Al maj - dou lil la - hi fil

44 HEBREW

*aa li wa *aal - al ar - dis sa - laam. Ka - vod le - lo - him bim - 'ro - mim,

52

u - va - 'a - retz sha - lom l - 'chol a - dam.

60

GROUP I

Peace to all peo - ple on earth, Glo - ry to God in the

69

high - est. Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o et in ter - ra

78

pax ho - mi - ni - bus. Do - xa en hyp - sis - tys the - o, ke e - pi

GROUP II

Peace to all peo - ple on earth, Glo - ry to God in the high -

86

gis i - ri - - ni. Gloire à Dieu, au plus haut des cieux, et

est. Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o, et in ter - ra

94

paix sur la terre. Al maj-dou lil la - hi fil *aa li wa *aal-al ar - dis sa - laam.

pax ho - mi - ni - bus. Do - xa en hyp-sis - tys the - o, ke e - pi

GROUP III

Peace to all peo - ple on earth, Glo - ry to God in the high -

102

Ka - vod le - lo - him bim-'ro - mim, u - va - 'a - retz sha - lom l-'chol a -

gis i - ri - - ni. Gloire à Dieu, au plus hauts des

est. Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o, et in

109 (I)

dam. We wish you a mer-ry Christ - mas, we wish you a mer-ry

(II)

cieux, et paix sur la terre. Al maj-dou lil la - hi fil *aa li wa *aal-al ar - dis sa -

(III)

ter - ra pax ho - mi - ni - bus. Do - xa en hyp-sis - tys the - o,

GROUP IV

Peace to all peo-ple on earth, Glo-ry to God in the

109

117

Christ - mas we wish you a mer-ry Christ - mas, and a hap - py

laam. Ka - vod le - lo - him bim - 'ro - mim, u - va - 'a - retz sha -

ke e - pi gis i - ri - - - ni. Gloire à Dieu, au plus haut

high - est. Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o,

117

124 first time(s) repeat as group IV last time

New Year! Year!

first time(s) repeat as group I last time

lom l-'chol a - dam. We dam.

first time(s) repeat as group II last time

des cieux, et paix sur la cieux, et paix sur la terre.

first time(s) repeat as group III last time

et in ter - ra pax ho - ter - ra pax ho - mi - ni - bus.

124 first time(s) last time

COMPOSER'S NOTE

A Christmas Round sets the words "Glory to God in the highest, and peace to all people on earth" in English, Latin, Koine Greek, French, Arabic and Hebrew. The music works as a round in four parts, and the traditional melody of "We wish you a merry Christmas" also appears at the end. I wanted to write something for Christmas that could be sung effectively by young children and by experienced singers, in the context of a carol service or as a concert item, fairly simple - but not simplistic! The words are those sung/spoken by the angels in the Christmas narrative of St Luke's Gospel, which was written in Koine, or Common, Greek - the common language of the Levant in Roman times - not quite the same as ancient/classical Greek. (One could argue for hours over what actual language the angels used: Aramaic? the language of Music itself?) I thought it would be wonderful, as well as educational, to underscore the idea of "all people" by using different languages, from various eras. The piece was first performed in December 2010 by pupils from Holy Trinity Primary School Northwood with The Walbrook Singers, and by the choir of London College of Music.

PERFORMANCE SUGGESTIONS

The first section (from the beginning up to bar 57) could be sung by full choir, or by a soloist, or by six soloists (one for each language), or by semi-chorus. For the second section, a choir could be divided into four equal groups, or into sub-groups of soloist(s), men's voices, women's voices, children and/or audience - anything at all! When you get to bar 125, you may cut to bar 127 "last time", or repeat as many times as you like. The music should always be sung *espressivo e legato*. Dynamics are at the discretion of the conductor.

PRONUNCIATION

As choral singers know, there are plenty of different ways of pronouncing English, French and Latin (these are at least fairly familiar to Western classical musicians), so I am wary of writing about how to tackle the other languages, not being, alas, a linguist. In the case of Koine Greek, even academic experts have to admit there is no way of knowing for sure how the words were sounded. For Hebrew and Arabic, the best thing to do, if possible, would be to find a speaker of these languages, and have him or her read the text aloud to the singers. In the Arabic transliteration I have used *aa to notate the "ayn" (sometimes written as *a3* in the Western alphabet). I have been told that for this sound "there is no equivalent in European languages. It is a pharyngeal glide/semivowel. Perform *y* as in yellow but far back in the throat - the throat muscles and base of tongue contract to create the voiced glide." Good luck. Ultimately we (I'm writing in the main to fellow Anglophones) must try our best to make the correct sounds, and thus respect the languages in which we sing, but our aim is a beautiful and convincing musical performance. I would like to thank Susie Beresford, Jacques Cohen, Ralph El Hage, Yara Abu Er-Rubb, Simon Lawford, Joel Levy, Paul Meers, Alexander Murugasu, Simon Pulleyn, Adrian Shaw, Edouard Torikian, Victor Tunkel and Ralph Yaacoub for their advice.

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