

Daron Hagen

# Silent Night



American Repertory Singers  
Leo Nestor, director

Robert La Rue  
cellist



Daron Hagen  
**Silent Night**

Music for the Christmas Season

Robert La Rue, cellist  
American Repertory Singers, Leo Nestor, director

1	Lullay	4:23
2	O Come, O Come, Emmanuel	8:15
3	God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen / O Come, Emmanuel	5:07
4	Silent Night	5:58
5	Once In Royal David's City	5:37
6	Sussex Carol	6:06
7	What Child Is This?	5:00
8	At Bethlehem Proper	8:17
9	Hosanna	4:06

Total CD Time: 52:52

Recorded direct to digital master April 20 & 21, 1997 at the Cathedral Church of St. Matthew the Apostle, Washington, DC, and in studio at Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY on May 30, 1997.

Recording engineer, Washington, DC: Edward Kelly, Mobile Master, Hyattsville, MD  
Recording & mixing engineer, Bard College: Benjamin Milstein

Producer: Robert Schuneman, Arsis Audio, Boston, MA

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**Genesis**

Scene: Restaurant in Manhattan, at dinner & with a good bottle of wine.

Time: September, 1996.

Characters: Composer (Daron Hagen) and record producer (Robert Schuneman).

Narrative goes something like this:

**Producer:** *Daron, I've got this crazy idea to create a CD full of Christmas choral music sung by the American Repertory singers, but with accompaniments done in studio as we do with pop music. Mind you, something very creative, but really different from the usual classical seasonal fare. Could you do something like that?*

**Composer:** *Cool idea! Sure I can do it. When do you need it?*

**Producer:** *I need choral charts by Dec. 1, everything will need to be in can by April of next year. Wanna do it?*

**Composer:** *Sure! Sounds like fun! Yes, let's do it.* (What followed was a long discussion of what might be included.)

And so, here is the result — an extraordinary set of carol arrangements. As is the case with virtually all of Daron's music, he takes the listener on an unusual journey, frequently only alluding to tunes or portions of tunes already more than familiar to the listener. As one would expect of a composer who has devoted so much of his work to vocal music and the relationship between text and music, surprising things occur. Some songs rely on our long-held memories for the words which are never sung, as in the first part of *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*, that long fugue vocalized on the old melody made from medieval chant, a fugue so sustained as to welcome the outburst of words on "rejoice." Or as in *What Child Is This*, in which the insistently compiled clusters urgently ask the question "who?" and get their answer in the short outbursts of "This, this, is Christ the King whom shepherds guard and angels sing," but yet finishes still with the question "Who?" as if to acknowledge some human doubt. And then there is *God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen*, the tune of which is alluded to only by the cello, and that only briefly, before it slowly and lyrically melts into the yearning of *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* again. Bells pealing, reminiscent of the crystal, cold winter's nights in its native Austrian village squares, mark the blurred and distant atmosphere of *Silent Night*. Using earlier versions of the well-known tune, the women are accompanied by an opulent cello part in *Once in Royal David's City*, as are the men in the virile *At Bethlehem Proper*. All of this begins with the wonder-full lullaby *Lullay*, with its polyrhythms. Appropriately, the program ends with a jubilant *Hosanna in excelsis*, the words shouted by old and young alike at Christ's entry into Jerusalem shortly before his death, and which the Church has traditionally appropriated for the next to last Sunday before Christmas to herald his entry into the world. How nice a gift for the season so celebrated throughout the world! Enjoy.

— Robert Schuneman

## Texts

### 1. LULLAY

Lullay my liking, my dear son, my sweeting:  
Lullay my dear heart, mine own dear darling!  
— Refrain excerpt, 15th C. English Carol

### 3. GOD REST YE MERRY, GENTLEMEN/ O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL

*Original music based on the traditional English Carol and the previous plainsong melody.*

### 4. SILENT NIGHT

Silent Night, holy night, All is calm, all is bright  
Round yon virgin mother and child. Holy infant, so tender and mild, Sleep in heavenly peace.  
— Text: Joseph Mohr (1792–1848), tr. John Freeman Young (1820–1910)  
— Tune: Franz Xaver Gruber (1787–1863)

### 5. ONCE IN ROYAL DAVID'S CITY

Once in royal David's city stood a lowly cattle shed, Where a mother laid her baby in a manger for his bed: Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ her little child.

Jesus came to earth from heaven, who is God and head of all, Sheltered in a rustic stable, cradled in a common stall; With the poor and with the lowly lived on earth our Saviour holy.

And through all this wondrous childhood Jesus honored and obeyed, Loved and watched the tender mother whose strong arms a cradle made. So like Jesus, we should be serving God obediently.

Jesus is our childhood's pattern, daily like us lived and grew, Jesus, little, weak and helpless, tears and smiles and comfort knew: Jesus felt the pain of sadness, and the joyous lift of gladness.

We at last shall meet our Saviour, font of God's redeeming grace. For that child so dear and gentle reigns within a glorious place; leading all God's children on to the heaven where saints have gone.  
— Cecil F. Alexander, ca. 1848

### 6. SUSSEX CAROL

*This textless version for cello is based on two tunes; the first is a traditional carol tune from Monk's Gate, Sussex; the other is a traditional carol from Dublin, mid 1880s.*

### 2. O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lowly exile here  
Until the Son of God appear.  
Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall comfort thee, O Israel.  
— adapted from Latin plainsong, ca. 9th C.

### 7. WHAT CHILD IS THIS

What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping?  
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.  
— Text: William Chatterton Dix (1837–1898); music based on traditional English melody "Greensleeves"

### 8. AT BETHLEHEM PROPER

A virgin most pure as the prophets do tell, hath brought forth a baby as it hath befell,  
To be our redeemer from death, hell, and sin which Adam's transgression hath wrapped us in:  
And therefore be merry, rejoice and be ye merry, set sorrows aside;  
Christ Jesus our Saviour was born on this tide.

At Bethlehem proper a city there was, where Joseph and Mary together did pass,  
And there to be taxed with many one more, for Caesar commanded the same should be so:  
And therefore be merry. . .

But when they had entered the city so fair a number of people so mighty were there,  
That Joseph and Mary, whose substance was small could find in the inn there no lodging at all.  
Aye and therefore be merry. . .

Then were they constrained in a stable to lie, where horses and asses they used for to tie;  
Their lodging so simple they took it no scorn, but against the next morning our Saviour was born.  
Aye and therefore be merry. . .

The king of all kings to this world being brought small store of fine linen to wrap him was sought;  
And when she had swaddled her young son so sweet, within a manger she laid him asleep:  
Aye and therefore be merry. . .

Then God sent an angel from heaven on high to certain poor shepherds in fields where they lie  
And he bade them no longer in sorrow to stay because Christ our Saviour was born this day.  
Therefore be merry. . .

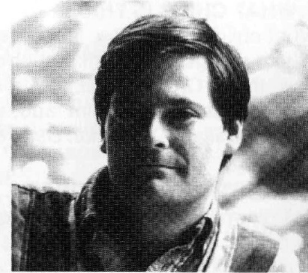
Then presently after the birthing the shepherds did spy a number of angels that stood in the sky;  
They joyfully talked and sweetly did sing, to God be all glory, our heavenly king.

— Text: traditional English; music is based on three tunes, one by Davies Gilbert in 1822, another by Cecil Sharp in 1911, and the third an original tune by Daron Hagen.

### 9. HOSANNA

*Original music to the shout which means "Praise to God in the highest!"*

**Daron Hagen's** orchestral music at the age of 15 attracted the attention of Leonard Bernstein. While still a student at the Curtis Institute, his music was introduced by the Philadelphia Orchestra. Before graduating from Juilliard, he had begun fulfilling commissions from the New York Philharmonic and other major orchestras. He has written a major opera, *Shining Brow*, based on the life of Frank Lloyd Wright, premiered in Madison, Wisconsin, and revived in 1997 by the Chicago Opera Theater. His works include songs (including four cycles recorded on ARSIS CD 106), chamber works, three symphonies and other orchestral works, works for solo piano, and a cabaret theater work, *Vera of Las Vegas*.



**Robert La Rue** is widely acknowledged as one of the finest young cellists of his generation. He was First Prize Winner in the 1992 National Society of Arts and Letters Cello Competition, selected by a jury chaired by Mstislav Rostropovich. He has appeared as soloist with the American Symphony Orchestra, the Orchestra Society of Philadelphia, the opera orchestra of the Banff Festival, and symphony orchestras in Phoenix, Denver, and Boston. As a recitalist and chamber musician he has been heard throughout the United States and abroad. An enthusiastic proponent of contemporary American music, he recently performed in recital with composers Lukas Foss and Ned Rorem. Born in Washington, D.C., Mr. La Rue grew up in the Midwest. He is a graduate of the Curtis Institute and of New England Conservatory of Music; he also attended Indiana University and the Juilliard School. His teachers have included Bernard Greenhouse, Janos Starker, Aldo Parisot, Tsuyoshi Tsutsumi, David Soyer, and Laurence Lesser.

The **American Repertory Singers** under the artistic direction of **Leo Nestor**, is a professional vocal ensemble resident in Washington D. C., where Dr. Nestor is also Director of Music at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. The Ensemble has already recorded four compact discs on the ARSIS label, and has gained national acclaim for its performances heard throughout the country on FM radio. Singers on this recording include

<b>Soprano</b>	Joellen Brassfield, Susan Crowder, Elizabeth Holt, Linda Kennedy-Sill, Claire Michaud
<b>Alto</b>	Anne Meyer Baker, Patricia Caya, Lisa Koehler, Taryn Kollar, Virginia Wallace
<b>Tenor</b>	Jeffrey Barnett, Nevin Bender, Chris Candela, Douglas Gaddis, Boyd Galloway
<b>Bass</b>	John Boulanger, Charles Bowers, Mark Cobb, David Eberhardt, Ted Faris, Steve Kerchoff
<b>Rehearsal Assistant:</b> Jay R. Rader	