



EPHEMERAL
MODERN LOVE CHORAL

IN CONCERT

A MIDNIGHT CLEAR
a festival of carols and poetry

DECEMBER 4, 2025 • 8:00PM
ST MARY-LE-BOW, LONDON

it came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold:
"peace on the earth, good will to all,
from heaven's gracious king."
The world in solemn stillness lay
to hear the angels sing.

A MIDNIGHT CLEAR

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2025

ST MARY-LE-BOW

LONDON

Tonight, we gather to sing and to share stories of Christmas, stories filled with innocence and wonder, rooted in traditions far beyond our memories. Though these narratives begin with a religious and historical moment, they have grown into something universal: a shared tapestry of rituals, memories, and emotions that define the season. Christmas may surround us everywhere, but it still has the power to stir nostalgia, inspire generosity and idealism, and remind us of a collective good in a weary world.

The performance is arranged in two halves: the first is a journey through anticipation: the darkness, the stillness, the waiting, and the cold mystery of a clear midnight. The second half explores the joy of Christmas morning, how various composers and cultures have given melody to what Christmas means to them. Indeed you'll recognize some familiar carols tonight, but we hope you leave with the memory of some new favorites.

We are honored to present the world premiere of a new carol, *While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks By Night*, composed for us by Andrew Campling. Listen for how the music tells the very story of the events of Christmas night, with both wonder and humility. We are so grateful to Andrew for this gift and so proud that this is our first commissioned carol.

Every new piece of choral music begins with a text, with language that puts emotion and experience into words, with imagination and meaning. We are delighted that Selina Cadell joins us to share poetry and prose of the season, reminding us that words lie at the heart of the telling of the Christmas story and the very armature of the choral art.

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US TONIGHT

The Program

**Advent 'O' Carol
Invocation
Midnight Clear
Away in a Manger
The Oxen
On This Silent Night
As With Gladness Those of Old
The Darkling Thrush
Lullaby on Christmas Eve
Lay Down Your Staffs
Gloucestershire Wassail**

interval

**Il Est Né le Divin Enfant
Quem Pastores Laudavere
O Little Town of Bethlehem
Christmas
In The Bleak Mid-winter
Go, Tell It On the Mountain
O Come, All Ye faithful
Commentary: Christmas
While Shepherds Watched
Their Flocks By Night
What Child Is This?
O Be Joyful
Joy To The World**

**PLEASE HOLD YOUR APPLAUSE UNTIL THE END OF EACH HALF.
WE THINK YOU'LL EXPERIENCE THE EVENING BETTER THIS WAY.**

THERE WILL BE A TWENTY MINUTE INTERVAL.

PLEASE TURN OFF YOUR ELECTRONIC DEVICES.

ADVENT 'O' CAROL

Joanna Forbes L'Estrange

O Sapientia

O Wisdom

We long for coming, O Wisdom;
we long for coming, O Lord.
Come and teach us the way of understanding;
You are the living word.

O Adonai

O Lord and Ruler

We long for you Lord and ruler;
we long for your coming, O Lord.
Come and stretch out your arms and redeem us;
You are the living word.

O Radix Jesse

O Root of Jesse

We long for you, O root of Jesse;
we long for your coming, O Lord.
Come to deliver us and do not tarry;
You are the living word.

O Clavis David

O Key of David

We long for you, O key of David;
we long for your coming, O Lord.
Come and bring forth the captive from his prison;
who sits in the shadow of death.

O Oriens

O Dawn of the East

Dawn of the east,
we long for your coming, O Lord.
Come and lighten those who sit in darkness
and in the shadow of death.

O Rex Gentium

O King of the Gentiles

We long for you, O king of the Gentiles;
we long for your coming, O Lord.
Come and deliver us whom you have formed
out of the dust of the earth.

O Emmanuel! When will you come?
Come to save us, O Lord our God.

Tomorrow, I will come.

text from the 7 Advent antiphons,
with additional lyrics by
Joanna Forbes L'Estrange

INVOCATION

MIDNIGHT CLEAR

Russell Schulz-Widmar

It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to all,
from heaven's gracious king."
The world in solemn stillness lay
to hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come
with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heavenly music floats
o'er all the weary world;
above its sad and lowly plains
they bend on hovering wing,
and ever o'er its babel sounds
the blessed angels sing.

Yet with the woes of sin and strife
the world has suffered long;
beneath the heavenly hymn have rolled
two thousand years of wrong;
and warring humankind hears not
the tidings which they bring;
Oh, hush the noise and cease your strife
and hear the angels sing!

For lo! the days are hastening on,
by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold,
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendours fling,
and all the world give back the song,
which now the angels sing.

- Edmund H. Sears

AWAY IN A MANGER

W.J. Kirkpatrick

ALL STAND AND SING



1. A - way in a man - ger, no crib for a bed, The lit - tle Lord
2. The cat - tle are low - ing, the ba - by a - wakes, But lit - tle Lord
3. Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask thee to stay Close by me for



1. Je - sus laid down his sweet head. The stars in the bright sky looked
2. Je - sus no cry - ing he makes. I love thee, Lord Je - sus! Look
3. e - ver and love me, I pray. Bless all the dear chil - dren in



1. down where he lay, The lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.
2. down from the sky, And stay by my side un - til morn - ing is nigh.
3. thy ten - der care, And fit us for hea - ven to live with thee there.

- Anonymous

THE OXEN

Jessica French

Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock.

"Now they are all on their knees,"

An elder said as we sat in a flock
by the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where
they dwelt in their strawy pen,
Nor did it occur to one of us there
to doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave
in these years! Yet, I feel,
If someone said on Christmas Eve,
"Come; see the oxen kneel!"

"In the lonely barton by yonder coomb
Our childhood used to know,"
I should go with him in the gloom,
hoping it might be so.

- Thomas Hardy

ON THIS SILENT NIGHT

Sarah Quartel

Frosty fields are laid to rest.

In the air, an arctic breath brings snow,
blowing snow is drifting deep.

Frozen trees, protectors, see me safe in sleep,
wrapped in dreams while the cold winds blow.

Cloaked in slumber with firelight dancing,
and all is calm on this silent night.

Sleep in heavenly peace.

Cloaked in slumber with firelight dancing,
yet all is calm while the storm blows on.

Cloaked in slumber with firelight dancing,
wrapped in sleep with dreams enchanting,
yet all is calm while the storm blows on,
on this silent night.

- Sarah Quartel

AS WITH GLADNESS THOSE OF OLD

C. Kocher

ALL STAND AND SING



ALL 1. As with glad - ness those of old did the guid - ing star be - hold,
ALL 2. As with joy - ful steps they sped To that low - ly man - ger - bed,
CHOIR ONLY 3. As they of - fered gifts most rare At that man - ger rude and bare,
ALL 4. In the heav - 'nly coun - try bright Need they no cre - a - ted light;



1. As with joy they hailed its light, Lead - ing on - ward, beam - ing bright,
2. There to bend the knee be - fore Him whom heav'n and earth a - dore,
3. So may we with ho - ly joy, Pure, and free from sin's al - loy,
4. Thou its light, its joy, its crown, Thou its sun which goes not down:



1. So, most gra - cious God, may we Ev - er - more be led to thee.
2. So may we with will - ing feet Ev - er seek thy mer - cy - seat.
3. All our cost - liest trea - sures bring, Christ, to thee our heav - 'nly King.
4. There for ev - er may we sing Al - le - lu - yas to our King.

- W. Chatterton Dix

THE DARKLING THRUSH

Thomas Hardy

LULLABY ON CHRISTMAS EVE

F. Melius Christiansen

Mother her vigil is keeping,
Hush, little babe to her song;
Rest thee secure in thy sleeping,
Grow thee more stately and strong.

Slumber, slumber,
gently thine eyelids close;
slumber, slumber,
cradled in sweet repose.

Babe of my bosom, be winging
softly where dreamlands begin,
Christmas Eve bells are a-ringing,
festively calling thee in.

Kling-kläng, kling-kläng,
dream of the child divine;
kling-kläng, kling-kläng,
dear little baby of mine.

- Albert J. Lange

LAY DOWN YOUR STAFFS

traditional French

arr. Alice Parker and Robert Shaw

Lay down your staffs
O shepherds, leave your sheep!
From hamlets come
your flocks will quiet keep;
Come, weep no more,
your souls with joy renew,
Come, hasten to adore
the Christ who comes to comfort you.

There you will see
him lying in a stable,
An infant poor,
and languishing and feeble;
Oh, wondrous love
of him, our faithful shepherd,
Who comes to love;
He is the faithful shepherd.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

WASSAIL

traditional English

arr. Vicente Chavarría

Wassail! wassail all over the town!
Our toast it is white and our ale it is brown;
 our bowl it is made of the white maple tree:
 with the wassailing bowl we'll drink to thee!

So here is to Cherry and to his right cheek!
Pray God send our master a good piece of beef,
 And a good piece of beef that may we all see;
 with the wassailing bowl we'll drink to thee!

And here is to Dobbin and to his right eye!
Pray God send our master a good Christmas pie,
 A good Christmas pie that may we all see;
 with our wassailing bowl we'll drink to thee!

So here is to Broad May and to her broad horn!
Pray God send our master a good crop of corn,
 A good crop of corn that may we all see;
 with our wassailing bowl we'll drink to thee!

And here is to Fillpail and to her left ear!
Pray God send our master a happy new year,
 And a happy new year as e'er he did see,
 with our wassailing bowl we'll drink to thee!

And here is to Colly and to her long tail!
Pray God send our master he never may fail.
 A bowl of strong beer; I pray you draw near,
 And our jolly wassail 'tis then you shall hear.

Come, butler, come fill us a bowl of the best,
And we hope that your soul in heaven may rest;
 But if you do draw us a bowl of the small,
 then down shall go butler bowl and all!

And here's to the maid in the lily-white smock,
Who tripped to the door and slipped back the lock,
 Who tripped to the door and pulled back the pin
 For to let these jolly wassailers in!

Wassail! wassail all over the town!
Our toast it is white and our ale it is brown;
 our bowl it is made of the white maple tree:
 with the wassailing bowl we'll drink to thee!

INTERVAL

IL EST NÉ LE DIVIN ENFANT

traditional French, arr. Ben Parry

Il est né le divin enfant,

He is born, the heavenly child,
jouez hautbois, résonnez musettes;
oboes play; set bagpipes sounding.

Il est né le divin enfant,

He is born, the heavenly child,
chantons tous son avènement.
Let all sing his nativity.

Depuis plus de quatre mille ans,

'Tis four thousand years,
nous le promettaient les prophètes,
prophets have foretold his coming,
depuis plus quatre mille ans,
'tis four thousand years,
nous attendions cet heureux temps.
have we waited this happy hour.

Ah ! Qu'il est beau, qu'il est charmant,

Ah, how lovely, ah, how fair,
Ah ! Que ses grâces sont parfaites !
What perfection is his graces.
Ah ! Qu'il est beau, qu'il est charmant !
Ah, how lovely, ah, how fair,
Qu'il est doux, ce divin enfant !
Child divine, so gentle there.

Une étable est son logement,

In a stable lodged is he,
Un peu de paille est sa couchette,
straw is all he has for cradle.
Une étable est son logement,
In a stable lodged is he,
Pour un dieu quel abaissement !
oh how great humility!

O Jésus ! O Roi tout-puissant

O Jesus, O king with power,
Tout petit enfant que vous êtes,
though a little babe you come here,
O Jésus ! O Roi tout-puissant,
O Jesus, O king with power,
Régnez sur nous entièrement !
rule over us from this glad hour.

QUEM PASTORES LAUDAVERE

14th century carol, arr. Susan LaBarr

Quem pastores laudavere,

Shepherds sang their praises over him
quibus angeli dixerunt:
called by angels to adore him:
"Absit vobis jam timere,
"Have no fear, but come before him,
natus est rex gloriæ!"
born is now your glorious King!"

Ad quem magi ambulabant,

Eastern sages came to view him,
aurum, thus, myrrham portabant,
Judah's conquering lion knew him
immolabant hæc sincere
Gold, and myrrh, and incense to him
Leoni victoriæ.
As their tribute offering.

Exultemus cum Maria

On this child, rejoicing, gaze we;
In cœlesti heirarchia:
Led by Mary, anthems raise we;
natum promant voce pia
reverently, with angels, praise we
dulci cum melodia;
with the sweetest melody.

Christo regi, Deo nato,

Christ our king, from Mary springing,
per Mariam nobis dato,
God made man, salvation bringing,
merito resonet vere:
Thee we worship, ever singing:
"Laus, honor, et gloria!"
"Honor, praise, and glory be!"

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

Kenneth Jennings

O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.

O holy child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in;
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels,
the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel!

- Phillips Brooks

CHRISTMAS

John Betjeman

IN THE BLEAK MID-WINTER

Gustav Holst

ALL STAND AND SING



1. In the bleak mid - win - ter fros - ty wind made moan,
2. Our God, heav'n can - not hold him Nor earth sus - tain;
3. An - gels and arch - an - gels May have ga - thered there,
4. What can I give him, Poor as I am?



1. earth stood hard as i - - ron, wa - ter like a stone;
2. heav'n and earth shall flee a - way when he comes to reign:
3. Che - ru - bim and se - ra - phim Thronged the air; But
4. If I were a shep - herd I would bring a lamb,



1. Snow had fal - len, snow on snow, snow on snow,
2. In the bleak mid - win - ter A sta - ble - place suf - ficed The
3. on - - ly his mo - - ther In her maid - en bliss
4. If I were a Wise Man I would do my part, Yet



1. In the bleak mid - win - ter Long a - - go.
2. Lord God Al - might - y Je - - sus Christ.
3. Wor - shipped the Be - lov - ed With a kiss.
4. what I can I give him, Give my heart.

GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN

Spiritual



Go tell it on the moun - tain, O - ver the hills and ev - 'ry - where;



Go tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!



1. While shep - herds kept their watch - ing O'er si - lent flocks by night,
2. The shep - herds feared and trem - bled When lo! a - bove the earth
3. Down in a low - ly man - ger The hum - ble Christ was born,



1. Be - hold through - out the heav - ens There shone a ho - ly light.
2. Rang out the an - gel cho - rus That hailed our Sa - viour's birth.
3. And God sent us sal - va - tion That bless - ed Christ - mas morn.

O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL

Composer Unknown



1. O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant, O come ye, O
2. Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion, sing, all ye
3. Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born on Christ - mas morn - ing, Je - sus, to



1. come ye to Beth - le - hem; Come and be - hold him born the King of An - gels:
2. cit - i - zens of heav'n a - bove; Glo - ry to God In the high - est:
3. thee be glo - ry giv'n; Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing:



O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore, him,



O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord.

- F. Oakeley, W.T. Brooke

CHRISTMAS

Jessica Nelson North and Harriet Monroe

Adapted from commentary in
Poetry: A Magazine of Verse
December 1928

WHILE SHEPHERDS WATCHED THEIR FLOCKS BY NIGHT

Andrew Campling

WORLD PREMIERE PERFORMANCE

While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
all seated on the ground,
the angel of the Lord came down,
and glory shone around.

Glad tidings of great joy I bring
to you and all mankind.

To you in David's town this day
is born of David's line
a saviour who is Christ the Lord,
and this shall be the sign:

the heavenly babe you there shall find
to human view displayed,
all meanly wrapped in swathing bands,
and in a manger laid.

Thus spake the seraph and forthwith
appeared a shining throng
of angels praising God,
who thus addressed their joyful song:

Glory be to God, all glory be to God on high,
and to the earth be peace.

Good will henceforth from heaven to men,
begin and never cease.

- Nahum Tate

WHAT CHILD IS THIS?

Becky McGlade

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.

Why lies he in such mean estate,
where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christians fear: for sinners here
the silent word is pleading.

Nails shall pierce him through,
the cross be borne for me, for you:
Hail! hail the word made flesh,
the babe, the son of Mary.

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;
come, peasant king, to own him!
The king of kings salvation brings:
let loving hearts enthrone him!

Raise, raise the song on high!
The virgin sings her lullaby.
Joy! joy for Christ is born,
the babe, the son of Mary.

- W. Chatterton Dix

O BE JOYFUL

Toby Young

O be joyful, earth and sky,
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Unto us God's Son came nigh,
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

He for our salvation
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Left God's habitation,
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Here the fairest rose we see,
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Blooming forth from Jesse's tree,
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

He, the great incarnate Word,
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Jesus Christ doth help afford,
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

- anonymous, 15th century

JOY TO THE WORLD

Lowell Mason

ALL STAND AND SING



1. Joy to the world! the Lord is come; Let earth re - ceive her king. Let
2. Joy to the world! the Sa - viour reigns; Let us their songs em - ploy, While
3. No more let sins and sor - rows grow, Nor thorns in - fest the ground; He
4. He rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the na - tions prove The



1. ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him room, And heav'n and na - ture sing, and
2. fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains re - peat the sound - ing joy, re -
3. comes to make his bless - ings flow Far as the curse is found, far
4. glo - ries of his right - eous - ness And won - ders of his love, and



1. heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
2. peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
3. as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.
4. won - ders of his love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

- Isaac Watts

OUR MUSICIANS

Sarah Amandes Margaret Bentley Chas Cerveny Danniella Downs Laoise Fleming
Shelbi Forrest Leah Gulley Elliot Hampton Vincent Hon Jez Ireland
Minna Jeffery Evie Jones Freya Joseph Sasha Nyamakanga Lucy Robinson
Jack Rolls Alex Simpson Page Starr Sarah de Winter Ida Wrona
Weifeng Jiang, piano David Bird, organ
Ryan Connolly, artistic director

OUR THANKS

The Choirs and Congregation of St Peter de Beauvoir Town Barb and Jim Connolly
Simone Pietropaolo Ilyas Iliya Andrew Campling Fr Simon Cuff Danniella Downs Vivette Ferguson
Leah Gulley Farrah Smith & Smith Design House National Association of Choirs Resound Ensemble

SING WITH US

We're always excited to welcome new singers to join us. If you love singing four-part unaccompanied music, read choral scores confidently, and thrive in a collaborative rehearsal environment, we'd love to meet you. Our rehearsal calendar is deliberately short to allow busy singers to join us, while still maintaining other commitments.

To audition, please fill out the form on our website, and we'll contact you to schedule a time with our Artistic Director.

ephemerallove.org/sing-with-us/

SUPPORT US

We're passionate about bringing more concerts to London audiences, commissioning more new music like tonight's world premiere, and deepening our artistic impact within London and beyond.

Like many arts organization, the revenue from ticket sales **only covers about 25%** of the costs of tonight's concert. We're grateful for the generosity of donors—past and current singers, our artistic director, and friends and family of members of the ensemble—that believe in our singers and our mission and want us to succeed. The beautiful collaboration on the stage tonight is only one part of the collaboration that makes this organization possible.

We've set a goal **to raise £1200** to cover expenses not paid by ticket sales, and we're well on our way toward meeting that total. If you've enjoyed tonight's concert and if you believe in what we're doing, please consider a donation to close the small gap that remains and set us up for a successful 2026. If everyone in tonight's audience gave £10, we'd exceed our target of £1200. Visit justgiving.com and search for Ephemeral Love, or use the link below.

justgiving.com/crowdfunding/ephemeral-love-a-midnight-clear

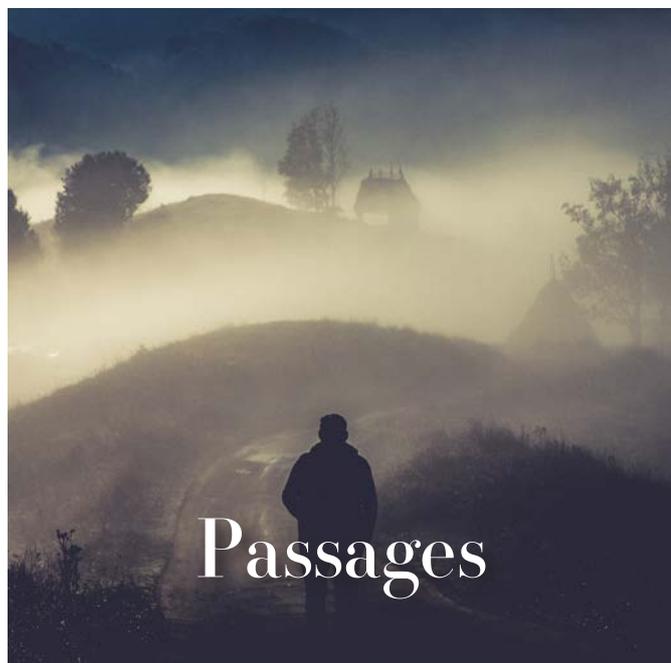
FOLLOW US

As we work to expand our reach into the world, both about our concerts and events as well as other content central to our mission, we regularly post on social media and have just started a YouTube channel. Please follow our pages on the following social media platforms by searching for Ephemeral Love.



OUR FUTURE CONCERTS

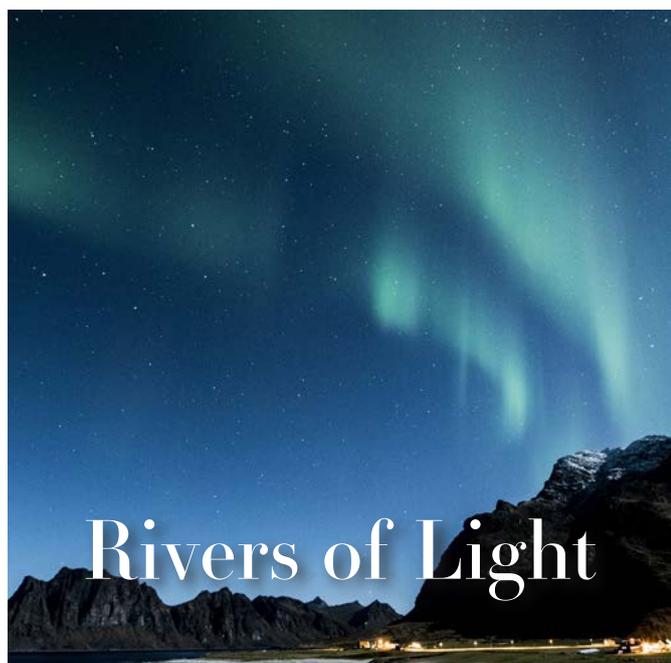
We're excited to share that several concert programs are currently in development for 2026 and beyond. We would love to welcome you back to one of our upcoming events! Below is a preview of what's ahead in the coming months, and we hope you'll join us. For more information, please visit our website at ephemerallove.org.



Passages reflects music of our human journeys: from the beginning of life, through jubilant discovery and poignant loss, from small moments of awareness to grand expression of arrival. This evening reflects the passages through our lives, both physical and emotional.



To Sit and Dream, an exploration of what we hope for—both in the tangible world and in the fleeting moments of slumber. From what we want our world to be, to the fantasies that come alive when we fall asleep, this evening will connect us to our most optimistic selves.



Rivers of Light, a meditation on depictions of heaven, from the vaulted dome of ancient stories to modern ideas of eternity, to explorations into other traditions of what the next place is, this evening will bring an idea of heaven to the concert stage in its many facets.



Tidings, our festival of Christmas carols, choral music, and poetry, sharing unique and common themes of the Christmas season in a concert setting that is both nostalgic and modern. Start your festive season with both comfort and joy!

EPHEMERAL MODERN LOVE CHORAL

Ephemeral Love is a new choral ensemble dedicated to bringing innovative programming to the vibrant artistic landscape of London. Born from a passion for choral music in all its forms, Ephemeral Love champions collaboration, uniting singers who share a deep connection to this art, and welcoming audiences of every background into that experience.

Our music is created together, exists only in the moment, and takes on its full meaning when shared. In performance, we aim to evoke the feeling of exploring somewhere new, discovering beauty and surprise around every corner, and holding those experiences long after the final note has faded. "This is an invitation to participate," declares our manifesto.

We strive to build choral experiences that challenge, inspire, and uplift, with poetry and texts that provoke thought with musical textures ranging from the simplicity of chant to intricate, multi-layered harmonies. Along with beloved standards and fresh arrangements, we are committed to presenting exciting new commissions that expand the choral art.

Conductor Robert Shaw once said: "Let's realize first that the Arts are not an Ivory Tower of retreat. They are a doing. They are a making. In their Sanskrit etymology 'Art' and 'arm' have the same word-root: something made 'by hand.' They are sweat, strain, cramps, blisters, tears, blood, profanity and mocking laughter." He also said that the arts "express that which is beautiful and intelligent and noble about being human."

Though the name Ephemeral Love may feel unusual for a chamber choir, it speaks to what we cherish most: musical moments, however fleeting, can resonate deeply, connecting us to one another in ways that are human and real, that endure long after the music ends.

ephemerallove.org