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FROM THE DIRECTOR

This year's *Christmas Revels* explores the joyful eruption of music, dance, and drama that characterized the Elizabethan age. While the Queen herself is very much present, our setting is not a palace, but rather the provincial town of Norwich and the woods nearby. There, one eventful solstice season, courtiers and yokels, nature and invention, Shakespearean poetry and folk rhyme, elegance and low humor all intersect.

Loosely based on an actual historic event, our production follows Shakespeare's clown, Will Kemp, as he completes his most ambitious stunt: dancing all the way from London to Norwich, away from the artificiality of court life, through the countryside where life is lived to nature's rhythms. Kemp may be at the height of his fame, but he discovers that his rustic cousins can still teach him a thing or two about comedy. Our Queen also undergoes a journey—a *Midwinter Night's Dream*—which reminds her that even the great and powerful are very small, compared to the ever-turning cycle of death and rebirth. She may be revered as Gloriana in courtly pageants, but it is as Good Queen Bess that she joins her people in their simple, age-old yuletide pleasures.

As the Washington Revels embarks on its 25th year, we welcome back many old friends, including Mark Jaster (who began his Revels foolery in 1985), Oran Sandel (who first Reveled with us as the Sun Fool in 1993's "Celestial Fools" production), and Katrina Van Duyn (who seems to specialize in monarchs having played the Queen of Hearts in our 1989 "Storybook" show). Together with Piffaro, The Renaissance Band—whose shawms and sackbuts have serenaded us since 1990—they take us back to the familiar territory of Old England, to which Revels founder John Langstaff introduced us almost a quarter-century ago.

As always, the core of Revels is the creation and celebration of community. We encourage you to take hands with the people of Norwich and with friends old and new across the aisles at Lisner, as we dance together away from our fast-paced lives into the timeless realm of tradition.

Welcome Yule!

— Roberta Gasbarre, December 2007



Building tradition through music, dance and drama

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On Henry, Elizabeth, and Two Wills—Kemp and Shakespeare

Today, most of us think of Henry VIII as a fat, even ridiculous figure, whose claim to fame was his six wives. In fact, Henry, who ruled from 1509 to 1547, was an able warrior and canny politician as well as a poet, sportsman, and scholar. An expert singer with a clear tenor voice, he played lute, flute, recorder, cornett, and virginals. He composed sacred music and secular songs, and made his court a center of musical culture.

Henry's love of music passed to his daughter Elizabeth, who ruled from 1558 till her death in 1603. She was a skilled instrumentalist, and danced a demanding *galliard* every morning to keep herself fit. Elizabeth's love of song, dance, and theater made her a great patroness of the arts, inspiring a wealth of music and written word. Under her reign, church music flourished, as did that glorious form of secular music meant for social singing, the madrigal. Elizabethans of all classes enjoyed the dramatic stories told in ballads; taverns resounded with rounds and catches, often bawdy.

The playwright William Shakespeare (1564-1616) referred to, or quoted from, over 150 popular ballads and dance tunes in his plays. This music was not incidental, but was consciously used to heighten the drama; because his audience was musically literate, a simple reference to a known ballad was enough to evoke a sense of sadness or to emphasize a joke. In creating the 2007 *Christmas Revels*, we owe a debt to Ross W. Duffin's recent study, *Shakespeare's Songbook*, which showed us how to use some of these pieces onstage to portray the chill of winter, a playful argument, and the mystery of death.

Shakespeare's theater company, named the Lord Chamberlain's Men after its patron, the Queen's cousin, made frequent appearances at Elizabeth's court. Part of the troupe's success was due to the talents of comic actor Will Kemp, a partner in the company, who portrayed Shakespeare's clown characters and performed the farcical sketches, songs, and dance routines that occurred during intermission or after the plays.

In 1599, the 20-year veteran was replaced by a younger comedian with a more intellectual style. Perhaps in reaction, Kemp sold his shares in the newly-built Globe Theatre and embarked on one of the boldest publicity stunts of the day: a one-man Morris dance from London to Norwich (a hundred miles away) that he called "Kemps Nine Daies Wonder." He laid wagers with skeptics and set out on a February morning with one musician, one servant—and an overseer to ensure he didn't cheat. Kemp later captured the adventure in a book, embellished with the woodcut that appears on the next page of this program.

In this production, we imagine what might have ensued if Kemp had danced his "Wonder" a few weeks earlier, during Yuletide, and if his visit had coincided with one from the Queen. There was no need, however, to imagine the musical riches and creative vigor (both courtly and rustic) of the age in which he lived. And, as in all Revels, we acknowledge the power of music to express the deepest feelings, salve pain, and heighten our joy in human life, love, and friendship. As Shakespeare himself said in *Henry VIII*,

In sweet Music is such Art,
Killing care, and grief of heart.

Kemp information is based on an essay by Jan Elliott. Read "Kemps Nine Daies Wonder" at www.scholarsbank.uoregon.edu. For more on Tudor music, read music director Elizabeth Fulford Miller's complete essay at www.revelsdc.org.

❧ PART ONE ❧

1. *Prelude: Suite of Almands*

Much of the early Elizabethan dance repertoire was imported from the Continent. The stately processional dance called the *almand*, or *almain*, seems to have originated around Nuremberg; this suite comes from a collection published by the Parisian Claude Gervaise in the 1550s.

BOAR'S HEAD BRASS

PIFFARO, THE RENAISSANCE BAND

AT THE GATE

2. *Prologue*

MARK JASTER, *Will Kemp*
KAREN HANSEN, *pipe and tabor*



3. *Pastime with Good Company*

An accomplished musician and sportsman, King Henry VIII (1491-1547) loved lavish entertainments, dancing, jousting, hawking, and the hunt. Known as “the King’s balade,” this piece with words and music by Henry is found in a period manuscript that preserved dozens of his songs, as well as others popular at his court. “Pastime” reflects his youthful commitment to “good company” and “honest,” active pleasures.

NORWICH TOWNE SINGERS

PIFFARO, THE RENAISSANCE BAND

4. *Children’s Songs and Games*

Up and Down

The words of this round are spoken by Puck in Shakespeare’s *Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

Who Liveth So Merry

This song, depicting rustic town life, was collected by Thomas Ravenscroft (1582-1635), who preserved the largest collection of popular vocal music of his time in three printed volumes: *Pammelia* (1609), *Deuteromalia* (1609), and *Melismata* (1611). Clearly intended for a broad rather than a courtly audience, these three works comprise the longest surviving collection of English popular song.

Dame, Get Up and Bake Your Pies

The tune of this singing game is related to that of “Greensleeves,” a piece long credited to Henry VIII, though scholars now doubt the attribution, since it did not appear in England until decades after Henry’s death.

GLORIANA CHILDREN

PIFFARO, THE RENAISSANCE BAND

5. *Fum, Fum, Fum*

A 16th-century Catalan carol. The recurring “Fum, fum, fum!” may imitate the sound of a drum, or perhaps a guitar.

GREG LEWIS, *leader*
OLDE TOM BELLS

TOWNE FOLK OF NORWICH
BOAR’S HEAD BRASS

ALL SING FOLLOWING LEADER



6. *Border Morris*

The Border Morris dance tradition, hailing from the counties along the Welsh border, is known for boisterous exuberance. This dance is based on one from Much Wenlock, Shropshire; the tune is “Highland Mary,” as collected by Frank Kidson.

FOGGY BOTTOM MORRIS MEN PIFFARO, THE RENAISSANCE BAND

7. *Whoso That Will Himself Apply*

This part song by Rysbye also comes from the Henry VIII manuscript. The words here seem to refer to tournaments at Henry’s court during his early years.

NORWICH TOWNE SINGERS PIFFARO, THE RENAISSANCE BAND
BOAR’S HEAD BRASS

8. *The Rude Mechanicals*

Our rustic actors are based on the troupe of “rude mechanicals” (coarse and untutored workmen) created by Shakespeare in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. These “Three Merry Men” conclude with a three-part song from George Peele’s *Old Wives’ Tales* (1595), as referred to by Sir Toby in Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*.

MATT NIELSON, *Dogberry* ALAN PEEL, *Rafe* COLIN SANDEL, *Colin*

9. *Tan Ta Ra Cries Mars*

Thomas Weelkes (ca.1576-1623) was one of the most prolific and respected Elizabethan composers of madrigals and ballets. In a lighter vein, songs like this one from his *Airs or Fantastic Spirits for three voices* reveal the humor and quirks of Weelkes and his drinking companions.

MEN OF THE NORWICH TOWNE SINGERS

AT THE REINDEER INN

10. Galliard, “The Fairy Rownde”

Composer Anthony Holborne, who wrote primarily for instrumental consort and for cittern (a wire-stringed relative of the mandolin), described himself as “gentleman and servant to her most excellent Majesty.” Most of his 150 works are dances, reflecting the importance of dancing to the Elizabethans. “The Fairy Rownde” is from *Pavans, Galliards, Almains and other short Aeirs, both grave and light, in five parts for Viols, Violins, recorders or other Musically Wind Instruments* (1599), the largest collection of its kind and a milestone in the development of English chamber music.

BOAR’S HEAD BRASS

11. And Let Me the Cannikin Clink

This song is used by Iago in Shakespeare’s play, *Othello*, to incite Cassio to drink while on duty.

GRANT HERREID, *singer*

TOWNE FOLK OF NORWICH

12. A Cup of Wine

This three-part round uses text spoken by the character Silence in Shakespeare’s *Henry IV*.

GREG LEWIS, *leader*

ALL SING

The image shows three staves of musical notation in treble clef, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is simple and repetitive, consisting of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are written below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across notes. The first staff ends with a comma, the second with a colon, and the third with a period.

A cup of wine that's brisk and fine,
and drink un - to the Le - man mine:
and a mer - ry heart lives long - a.

13. When Icicles Hang by the Wall

This verse, “Winter,” ends *Love’s Labour’s Lost*. When the owl sings “tu-whit, tu-who,” Shakespeare describes her cry as merry, in contrast to the many icy images in this poem.

ANDREA BLACKFORD & JOY RODRIGUEZ, *singers*
WOMEN OF THE NORWICH TOWNE SINGERS

GRANT HERREID, *guitar*

14. *Blow Thy Horn, Hunter*

This partsong, by William Cornysh (ca. 1468-1523), belongs to the repertory of “foster” songs (from the word “forester”). These were probably performed as part of the courtly May-games or the many pageants enjoyed by Henry VIII and his court. Typically written for three voices, foster songs were often filled, like this one, with bawdy double entendre.

NORWICH TOWNE SINGERS

PIFFARO, THE RENAISSANCE BAND

15. *Wooing Songs*

“I have house and land in Kent” begins our first wooing song from Ravenscroft’s *Melismata*. The second piece, a dialogue recalling a line from Shakespeare’s *Taming of the Shrew*, uses a tune based on a consort song of the period by Richard Nicholson.

DICK KOVAR & DONNA SIMONTON, *singers*
GRANT HERREID, *guitar*



16. *The Queen and Lord Chamberlain of Misrule*

The idea of a holiday exalting the poor and the foolish, ridiculing the powerful, and turning all social conventions topsy-turvy is an ancient one, extending back at least as far as ancient Rome. In Europe, between Christmas and Twelfth Night, it was traditional to choose a Lord of Misrule, who would preside over these antics. The tune that accompanies our foolish festivities is “The Widowes Myte” by Anthony Holborne.

BOAR’S HEAD BRASS

17. *The Boar’s Head Carol*

This carol saluting the central dish of the Christmas feast has been sung at Queen’s College, Oxford, since the 1600s.

WILL WURZEL & LOUIS SILVANO, *singers*
TOWNE FOLK OF NORWICH

BOAR’S HEAD BRASS

18. *Morris Caper*

This dance is based on “Saturday Night,” a tune and dance from the village of Bledington in Gloucestershire.

FOGGY BOTTOM MORRIS MEN

PIFFARO, THE RENAISSANCE BAND

19. A Shakespeare Compendium

As an actor and part-owner of the troupe called the Lord Chamberlain's Men, the playwright William Shakespeare (1564-1616) often entertained Elizabeth and her successor, James I. This lighthearted moment is built on a collection of some of the Bard's most tragic lines.

MARK JASTER, *Will Kemp*
TOWNE FOLK OF NORWICH



W. Shakespeare

20. Ding Dong Merrily on High

The tune of this well-known carol is a dance (*branle de l'official*) found in the *Orchésographie* (1588, 1596). This record of 16th-century music and choreography, published under the pseudonym Thoinot Arbeau, was written by a monk for his nephew, a young nobleman. A *branle* is a bouncing dance performed by lackeys and serving wenches; the words came centuries later from the Englishman G. R. Woodward (1848-1934).

GREG LEWIS, *leader* TOWNE FOLK OF NORWICH
OLDE TOM BELLS BOAR'S HEAD BRASS

ALL SING:



1. Ding dong! mer-ri - ly on high___ in heav'n the bells are ring - ing:
2. *sung by the chorus*
3. Pray you du - ti - ful - ly prime___ your mat - in chimes, ye ring - ers;



Ding dong! ve - ri - ly the sky___ is riv'n with an - gel sing - ing:
May you beau-ti - ful - ly rime___ your eve - time song, ye sing - ers.



Glo - - - - -



- - - - - ri - a, Ho - san - na in ex - cel - sis!

AT TWILIGHT

21. *In Commendation of Music*

This moving text is attributed to Richard Edwards (1525-1566) and quoted in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. The music is found in the *Mulliner Book* (1558-1564), but the composer is unknown.

NORWICH TOWNE SINGERS

PIFFARO, THE RENAISSANCE BAND

22. *Come Live With Me and Be My Love*

This ballad, also known as "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love," is mentioned by Sir Hugh in Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor*. The poem is attributed to Christopher Marlowe.

JOANNA FRANCO & CHRISTOPHER LEWIS, *singers*

GRANT HERREID, *lute*

23. *Green Growth the Holly*

This haunting carol from the Henry VIII manuscript invokes the power of holly and ivy, both evergreens, to provide hope for the end of winter.

GLORIANA CHILDREN

PIFFARO, THE RENAISSANCE BAND

RHIANNA NISSEN, TERESA MARMORELLA, GRACE VANDERVEER,

KATHERINE YOUNG, *singers*

24. *Lord of the Dance*

Sidney Carter's modern lyrics to the Shaker song "Simple Gifts," adapted by Revels founder John Langstaff, are here translated into dance using a compilation of traditional Morris steps.

GREG LEWIS, *singer*

BOAR'S HEAD BRASS

MARC LEWIS, ANDREW MARCUS, GUS VOORHEES, JIM VOORHEES, *dancers (alternating)*

ALL SING REFRAIN AND DANCE!

"Dance, then, wherever you may be;
"I am the Lord of the Dance," said he,
"And I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,
And I'll lead you all in the dance," said he.



❧ INTERMISSION ❧

❧ PART TWO ❧

25. *The Silver Swan*

“The silver swan, who living had no note; when death approached unlocked her silent throat,” begins this madrigal written by Orlando Gibbons (1583-1625). Gibbons is also well known for his sacred choral music, of which he left a substantial volume. His best-known madrigal, “The Silver Swan,” is one of the most popular English madrigals from the period.

BOAR’S HEAD BRASS

IN THE FOREST

26. *Abbots Bromley Horn Dance*

This ancient ritual dance is still performed every year in the Staffordshire village of Abbots Bromley. Its original meaning has been forgotten. The mystery is compounded by the fact that the set of horns used by the village performers are reindeer antlers, not deer’s horns, and have been carbon-dated to around 1000 A.D., a time when reindeer had long been extinct in England. The characters of the folk fool, the man-woman, the hobby-horse, and the boy archer also link the dance with the mumming traditions of Christmas.



FOGGY BOTTOM MORRIS MEN

JOAN KIMBALL, *recorder*

TERRY WINSLOW, *man-woman*; ALAN PEEL, *hobby-horse*; MATTHEW LEONE, *boy archer*;
SCOTT MATHESON, *fool*

27. *Have You Seen But a Bright Lily Grow?*

The words of this lute song come from Ben Jonson (1572-1637), a friend of Shakespeare and fellow writer of plays. Jonson’s enduring reputation rests on comedies such as *Volpone* (often regarded as his masterpiece), *The Silent Woman*, *The Alchemist*, and *Bartholomew Fair*.

GRANT HERREID, *singer and lute*





28. Weep O Mine Eyes

This melancholy madrigal by John Bennet (ca. 1575-1614) uses a falling four-note figure (or “tetrachord”) common to laments of the time.

NORWICH TOWNE SINGERS

29. Puzzle Canon

Serving as both priest and later a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, Welshman John Lloyd (ca. 1480-1523) accompanied King Henry VIII to the famous “Field of the Cloth of Gold” in 1520. This piece, one of only a handful known to have been composed by Lloyd, is built around a four-note pattern that increases in tempo with each repetition.

PIFFARO, THE RENAISSANCE BAND

30. Come Again, Sweet Love

Composer and master lutenist John Dowland (1563-1626) arranged his “Come Again” both for lute and as a partsong. Although his *First Booke of Songes or Ayres of Foure Parties with Tableture for the Lute* (1597) was so successful that it was reprinted at least four times, he never achieved his dream of being appointed court lutenist to Elizabeth I, perhaps because of his famous melancholy temperament.

NORWICH TOWNE SINGERS

PIFFARO, THE RENAISSANCE BAND

31. Sweet Nymph Come to Thy Lover

A two-part canzonet by Thomas Morley (1557-1603), composer, performer and teacher of music. The son of a brewer, Morley was born in Norwich and probably received his earliest musical education as a local chorister. His *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke* (1597) is the classic period manual for instruction in singing, vocal music, and composition.

RACHEL CARLSON & ELISABETH MYERS, *singers*

IN THE GUILD HALL, NORWICH

32. Contest of the Holly and the Ivy / Country Dance (Le Brandevin)

In England, the traditional rivalry of holly (masculine) and ivy (feminine) for mastery of the Christmas season seems to have been reenacted into the 17th century. The association of these two evergreens with the promise of fertility and continuation of life during the bleak winter months dates back to pagan times; ivy was sacred to Dionysus, and holly often symbolized the winter deity who was sacrificed at the winter solstice to summer’s Oak King. This late medieval text was set to music by singer/instrumentalist John Fleagle. The country dance is performed to “Le Brandevin,” an English fiddle tune of the period.

TOWNE FOLK OF NORWICH

PIFFARO, THE RENAISSANCE BAND

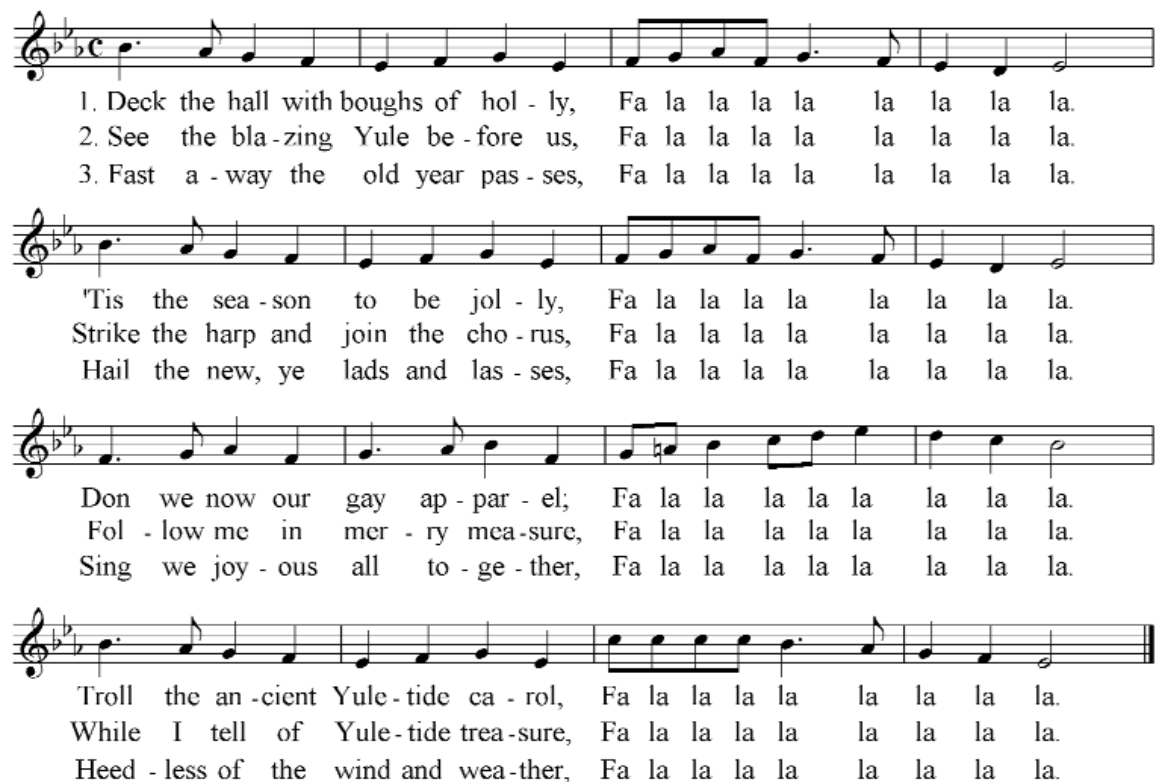
33. *Deck the Hall*

An old Welsh dance tune. The traditional fa-la-las were common in Renaissance music.

GREG LEWIS, *leader*
BOAR'S HEAD BRASS

TOWNE FOLK OF NORWICH
OLDE TOM BELLS

ALL SING:



1. Deck the hall with boughs of hol - ly, Fa la la la la la la la la.
2. See the bla - zing Yule be - fore us, Fa la la la la la la la la.
3. Fast a - way the old year pas - ses, Fa la la la la la la la la.

'Tis the sea - son to be jol - ly, Fa la la la la la la la la.
Strike the harp and join the cho - rus, Fa la la la la la la la la.
Hail the new, ye lads and las - ses, Fa la la la la la la la la.

Don we now our gay ap - par - el; Fa la la la la la la la la.
Fol - low me in mer - ry mea - sure, Fa la la la la la la la la.
Sing we joy - ous all to - ge - ther, Fa la la la la la la la la.

Troll the an - cient Yule - tide ca - rol, Fa la la la la la la la la.
While I tell of Yule - tide trea - sure, Fa la la la la la la la la.
Heed - less of the wind and wea - ther, Fa la la la la la la la la.

34. *That Sir, Which Serves*

These words, spoken by the Fool in Shakespeare's *King Lear*, are sung here to the ballad tune known as "Peg a Ramsey."

ORAN SANDEL, *Lord Chamberlain* THE RUDE MECHANICALS

35. *Fanfare "Vivat Regina"*

Arranged here by Washington Revels Music Director Elizabeth Fulford Miller, this fanfare is based on theatrical music of the period. The original composer is unknown.

BOAR'S HEAD BRASS

36. *Gaudete! (Rejoice!)*

This jubilant song is one of the most popular from the *Piae Cantiones*, published in 1582.

FLAWN WILLIAMS & ELIZABETH MILLER, *singers*
NORWICH TOWNE SINGERS
BOAR'S HEAD BRASS

OLDE TOME BELLS
PIFFARO, THE RENAISSANCE BAND

37. O Comely Queen

Shakespeare referred to this tune, known as “The Bellman’s Song,” in *As You Like It*. The arrangement here is by Revels, Inc. Music Director George Emlen.

JOANNA FRANCO & ELEANORE FOX, *soloists*
WOMEN OF THE NORWICH TOWNE SINGERS

38. The Old Year Now Away is Fled

This early version of the 16th-century tune “Greensleeves” was composed on an Italian bass line. The text, from a 1642 collection, is given as “A Carrol for New-yeares day. To the tune of, Green Sleeves.” The arrangement is by George Emlen.

THE TOWNE AND ROYAL GUESTS OF NORWICH
PIFFARO, THE RENAISSANCE BAND



Elizabeth

39. What Child is This?

A third version of the tune “Greensleeves” is the basis for this 19th-century carol with text by William Chatterton Dix.

GREG LEWIS, *leader*
BOAR’S HEAD BRASS

THE TOWNE AND ROYAL GUESTS OF NORWICH

ALL SING:



1. What child is this—who, laid to rest on Ma-ry's lap—is sleep-ing, Whom
2. So bring him in-cense, gold and myrrh, come pea-sant, king—to own him; The



An-gels greet—with an-thems sweet,—while shep-herds watch are keep-ing.
King of kings—sal-va-tion brings,—let lov-ing hearts en-throne him.



This, this—is Christ the King,—whom shep-herds guard and An-gelssing.
Raise, raise—a song on high,—the vir-gin sings—her lul-la-by.



Haste, haste, to bring him laud,—the babe—the son—of Ma-ry.
Joy, joy—for Christ is born,—the babe—the son—of Ma-ry.

40. Pavan

The *pavan* is a slow, processional court dance, named after the *padoanna*, an ancient dance from Padua in Italy. The music is by Anthony Holborne.

BOAR'S HEAD BRASS

41. Children's Songs and Games

Orpheus With His Lute

These beautiful lyrics about the calming powers of music are sung in Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* to soothe Queen Katherine. The tune here is from a setting of "O Mistress Mine," found in Thomas Morley's *First Booke of Consort Lessons* (1599).

Well Rung, Tom

This round, collected by Thomas Ravenscroft, combines the sound of tolling bells with the cuckoo call to great effect.

Roman Soldiers

A singing game from the city of Bath.

GLORIANA CHILDREN

PIFFARO, THE RENAISSANCE BAND

42. The Buffens

A courtly sword dance, "Les Bouffons" is documented in the famous French dance manual *Orchésographie*. With its high leaps and stylized swordplay, this dance is thought to be in the line of martial dances descending from those performed at the Roman festival of Mars.

YOUNG TUDOR DANCERS

PIFFARO, THE RENAISSANCE BAND



43. When Kemp Did Dance Alone / Galliard Lavolta

This madrigal by Thomas Weelkes (1576-1623) commemorates Will Kemp's celebrated dance of endurance. The English madrigal school peaked with Weelkes, one of the outstanding musicians of the Elizabethan Renaissance. The dance which follows—one that Elizabeth claimed to have danced daily before breakfast—is the *galliard*. The final *lavolta* figure, where the woman is lifted and turned, is said to have been the Queen's favorite.

YOUNG TUDOR SINGERS

PIFFARO, THE RENAISSANCE BAND

44. The Queen's Masque

Originally from a book of dances for the lute, this piece has been arranged by Grant Herreid for mixed instruments in early-17th-century "broken consort" style.

PIFFARO, THE RENAISSANCE BAND

45. Fra Giovanni's Salutation

This excerpt is from a letter written by the Franciscan Fra Giovanni on Christmas Eve 1513 to his friend the Countess Allagia degl' Aldobrandeschi, then living in Florence.

KATRINA VAN DUYN, *Queen Elizabeth I*

46. Dona Nobis Pacem (Give Us Peace)

GREG LEWIS, *leader*

THE TOWNE AND ROYAL GUESTS OF NORWICH

ALL SING:

1. 
Do - na no - bis pa - cem, pa - cem, do - na no - bis pa - cem.

2. 
Do - na no - bis pa - cem, do - na no - bis pa - cem.

3. 
Do - na no - bis pa - cem, do - na no - bis pa - cem.

47. St. George and the Dragon

A compilation of several mummers' plays—seasonal folk plays with stock characters, plot, and dialogue. The sword dance and ritual execution of St. George survive from ancient solstice ceremonies where the death of a hero was considered necessary to ensure the return of light, warmth, and fertility.

SABRINA MANDELL, *Room*

CHRISTOPHER LEWIS, *St. George*

WILL WURZEL, *Father Christmas*

COLIN SANDEL, *Dragon*

MATTHEW NIELSON, *Giant*

ORAN SANDEL, *Doctor*

MARK JASTER, *Will Kemp*



48. Sword Dance

The dance is from the village of North Skelton, in Yorkshire. The tunes are “The Lass O’Dallogil” and “The Fairy Dance.”

FOGGY BOTTOM MORRIS MEN

49. *Haec Días*

“This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it,” begins this jubilant psalm setting by William Byrd (1543-1622) from his *Cantiones Sacrae*. Named a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, Byrd enjoyed the patronage of Queen Elizabeth I despite his open Catholicism. He became such a favorite that in 1575 she granted him and his mentor Thomas Tallis exclusive license to print and publish music in England.

NORWICH TOWNE SINGERS
BOAR’S HEAD BRASS

PIFFARO, THE RENAISSANCE BAND

50. *The Shortest Day*

This poem about the winter solstice, written for Revels by Susan Cooper in 1977, has become a traditional part of *Christmas Revels* performances across the country.

MARK JASTER, *speaker*

51. *Sussex Mummers’ Carol*

This carol, traditonally sung at the end of the mummers’ play in Horsham, Sussex, has become the parting song for all performances of *The Christmas Revels* across the country. The brass transcription is by Brian Holmes. The descant and final verse harmonization are by Ralph Vaughan Williams.

GREG LEWIS, *leader*

THE TOWNE AND ROYAL GUESTS OF NORWICH

ALL SING:



1. God_ bless the mas - ter_ of this house, With hap - pi - ness be -
2. God_ bless the mis - tress_ of this house, With gold chain round her____
3. God_ bless your house, your_ chil - dren too, Your cat - tle and your____

side, Where - e'er his bo - dy rides or_ walks, His God must be his
breast; Where - e'er her bo - dy sleeps or_ wakes, Lord send her soul to
store; The Lord in - crease you day by_ day, - And send you more and

guide,____ his God____ must_ be____ his guide.
rest,____ Lord send____ her_ soul____ to rest.
more,____ And send____ you_ more____ and more.

❧ *The End* ❧

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Queen Elizabeth I
 Claudia Dulmage, *Queen's Lady*
 Oran Sandel, *Lord Chamberlain*

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 Pete Brown
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About Washington Revels

The organization. A cultural institution in the D.C. area for almost 25 years, Washington Revels creates community celebrations based on traditional music, dance, stories, and drama from different times and cultures. Staged or informal, large or small, Revels celebrations involve adults and children of all ages, mixing professionals and non-professionals alike. Audience participation is a hallmark: whether singing, dancing, or becoming part of the drama, Revels audiences are always invited to be an integral part of the community.

Washington Revels is one of nine independent non-profit Revels organizations in the U.S. (with two more in birthing pangs), each with its own board, office and artistic staff, and separate finances. An umbrella organization, Revels, Inc., maintains artistic standards for all Revels organizations, researches traditional material, and provides or approves scripts and music for Christmas Revels productions.

Revels activities. Our flagship event is The Christmas Revels. Professionally staged and directed, its nine performances in mid-December—including an Outreach Performance for over 1,200 people who could not otherwise attend—draw over 10,000 people annually. Originally based on English material and set in the Middle ages, the productions now explore traditions from many cultures and eras: Celtic, French, Italian, Tudor and Victorian English, Romani (Gypsy), Russian, Scandinavian, and American (including Afro-American, Appalachian and Native American).

Washington Revels also mounts two annual Spring Celebrations, a Summer Solstice Festival, various community sings and dances, and numerous other small productions. We are now planning for a travelling troupe of Revels performers that can stage celebrations throughout the year. Also in the planning stage is a full-fledged “Summer Revels.” Our educational partnership with the Library of Congress has ended, but we are seeking new ways to bring both historical tradition and community celebration to school children. Under our new Community Initiative, described in detail elsewhere in the program, Washington Revels partners with church, school, and other groups to help them celebrate and build their own communities by putting on performances together.

But what is Revels—really? Revels is ultimately about community celebration. The core celebrations address the cycle of life as reflected in the circle of the seasons. Dark is followed by light; individuals die, but others are born; and humankind gathers together for support in times of sorrow and times of joy.

Exploring these themes through the prisms of different cultures, Revels not only illustrates customs that reflect the common humanity that binds us all together, but creates a celebration in which that common humanity is experienced by cast, crew, and audience members. The essential message, and we hope the experience, is that all of us—adults, children, people from all walks of life—are part of a community that stretches across national boundaries and through the ages of time.





Washington Revels' 25th Anniversary Year: Looking Backward and Forward

This being Revels, as our 25th annual *Christmas Revels* kicks off Washington Revels' 25th Anniversary Year, it seems only fitting to begin with a song (or at least its lyrics):

In '83 did Mary Swope and a hardy little band,
Start Reveling in Washington, with a seed from Langstaff's hand.

We did three shows at Lisner and we made the rafters ring,
There's no one can resist him, when Jack tells them to "Sing!"

Ancient rituals strike the themes that echo in our soul,
And liven up long winter nights; please pass the Wassail bowl.

The mummers' plays, the dances too, and all the songs we sing—
They bring us close, and make us laugh, and help to bring the spring.

So here's to Jack, Pied Piper, for every girl and boy,
With lots of help from Mary Swope, he taught us to Take Joy.

We sang these verses at the 1993 celebration of our 10th anniversary. Fifteen years later, it is remarkable both how far Revels has come and how apt the song still is in describing core Revels values and methods as well the continuing connection to our two creators—John (Jack) Langstaff, who developed the Revels concept and founded the first Revels organization, and Mary Swope, whose 1983 founding of Washington Revels made this the fourth area in the country to produce *The Christmas Revels*.

Revels' Washington Roots. The Washington area played an important role in the birth of Revels. In 1954, Jack became a music teacher at the Potomac School (McLean VA), whose headmistress Carol Preston had years before introduced student Jack to traditional Appalachian and British music and to Morris dancing. For the next 12 years, Potomac served as the laboratory in which Revels was created.

The first *Christmas Revels* productions were staged in New York in 1957 and Washington, D.C. in 1958, followed by a televised (NBC) version in 1967, with Dustin Hoffman as the dragon. By 1971, Jack had moved to Cambridge, MA, and he and daughter Carol staged two *Christmas Revels* performances. It was an instant success. But even as Revels was developing in the northeast, the Revels/Washington connection continued: in 1975, Jack organized a special "Spring Revels" at Lisner as a Potomac School fundraiser.

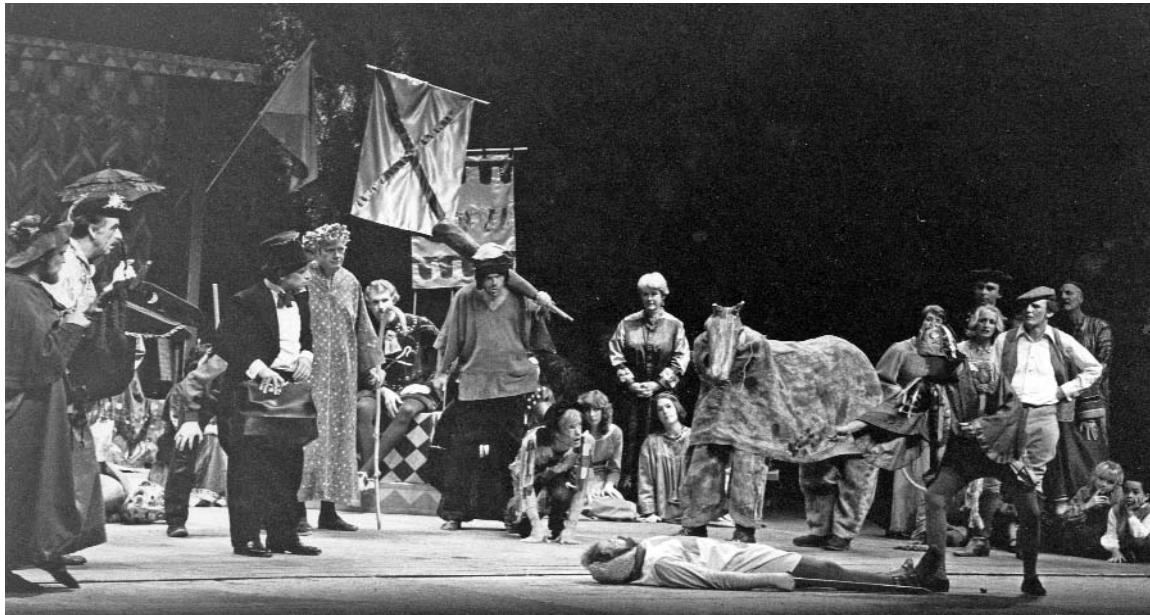
Washington Revels Past. In April 2008, it will be 25 years since the indefatigable Mary Swope and a "hardy little band" founded Washington Revels. For years she ran—"carried," really—Revels from her study and later her basement. Given limited resources, her principal focus was the *Christmas Revels*. Mary also sought other opportunities for community celebration, however. She began an annual May Day production in 1985 that continues to this day; occasional and eventually annual Pub Sings; some "mini-Revels" at the Birchmere and Alexandria First Night; and other occasional events, including a 1991 appearance at the White House.

Washington Revels Present. Since Mary's 1998 retirement, Revels' staff and volunteers have nourished the seed she planted. The list of annual activities has now expanded to include a Spring Celebration at the National Arboretum; Summer Solstice Festival Day at which experienced and brand-new Revelers put together and perform a mini-Revels in about five hours; outdoor Community Sings in parks; end-of-summer Barn Dances; and an annual Gala. "Runout" performances have included the National Theater, Embassy of Finland, THEARC, Smithsonian Institution, World Bank, Shakespeare Theater and many other locations. In 2008, Revels events will be held every month except August.

In addition, the Washington Revels Singers, under our Music Director Elizabeth Miller, perform formal and informal concerts in places ranging from the National Cathedral to open-air settings. As part of a 3-year partnership with the Library of Congress, over 7000 students saw performances based on material from three of our Christmas shows. Now we partner with the World Bank/IMF Community of Artists to present traditional performers in as many as 25 D.C. schools. In 2007 we inaugurated Washington Revels' new Community Initiative program, through which we assist other D.C. groups to create their own community celebrations (see separate article).

Washington Revels Future. Revels has exciting plans for further activities. One priority is the creation of a traveling troupe of Revels performers that can stage performances throughout the year. We also want to develop a larger-scale "Summer Revels," and are looking at new kinds of educational programs. We plan to scale up performances of the three current Community Initiative productions, and to create others.

Core Revels Values. The 10th Anniversary song speaks of ancient rituals that "echo in our soul," bring us close, and help to bring the spring—bringing light after darkness, bringing life after death. Combined with the invitation to "take joy," these expressions lie at the heart of Revels. Revels uses theater to dramatize historical customs that address universal and timeless human traits and needs, including the need for community, while at the same time transcending theater to become a "real-time" celebration for cast and audience. In all it does, Washington Revels seeks to build on this core.



A moment from the St. George and the Dragon mummers' play in the 1983 *Christmas Revels*—
Washington Revels' very first production

Washington Revels' Community Initiative

Imagine showing up at noon, learning sketches, songs, and dances, and staging a performance by dinnertime. Sound crazy? But that's what 150 adults and children did last November at Cedar Lane Unitarian Church in Bethesda, launching Washington Revels' new Community Initiative to help churches, schools, and other groups in the D.C. area celebrate and build their communities by putting on performances together.

Every year, the adults, teens, and children who stage *The Christmas Revels* form and strengthen their own community as they work together for months to prepare the show. Now, Revels is helping other groups share a similar experience. "We introduce them to the Revels 'Aha!' of communities coming together in large-scale celebration centered around traditional material," says Greg Lewis, Executive Director of Washington Revels. Like all Revels productions, the program brings together people of all ages, abilities, and experience; many have never performed or worked on a production before. Revels supplies a basic production staff; the partner community supplies performers, much of the production team, and the audience—who are invited to participate, of course.

Community Initiative productions take two forms: one-day affairs such as Festival Day, and scripted productions with a longer rehearsal schedule. The longer shows include *Noye's Fludde*, a dramatization of the Noah's Ark story by English composer Benjamin Britten; and *Bridges of Song*, which celebrates the music and history of African-American communities east of the Anacostia River. New productions are planned.

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Bridges of Song grew out of the 1998 Christmas Revels. After a performance of *Bridges of Song* with a Revels cast, Lewis asked Carolyn Scales, an associate minister at Allen Chapel AME Church on Alabama Avenue in Southeast D.C., if she would like to stage the production with her church. "When Greg asked me this, I almost started to cry," she wrote later. The church partnered with Revels to put on two shows with 125 adults and children at THEARC, a community center near the church with a professional stage; nearly 500 church members helped with the production or came to watch and participate as audience. "The positive impact on the individuals who performed, many of whom had never acted or believed they could sing...and the pride in the audience members...was wonderful to see."

For *Noye's Fludde*, about 60 children at St. Columba's Episcopal Church in Tenleytown appeared as animals from mice to giraffes, while others took on the parts of Noah's sons and their wives or played in the orchestra; 35 adults rounded out the performers. During the six weeks of rehearsal, parishioner Graeme Browning was assistant director to Roberta Gasbarre, artistic director of Washington Revels. "She directed and I just scurried around behind her taking notes and trying to stay out of her way," Browning says. "I'd never had so much fun in my life." Now she is volunteering on the wardrobe crew for *The Christmas Revels*, making sure all the costumes stay presentable and in good repair throughout the run of the show.

Washington Revels has now hired a full-time Community Initiative Director. While the first productions have been with churches, the singing animals, bridges of song, and festival day joy will be branching out to schools and neighborhood communities. Coming together in Revels style is magic. What better way to start a new quarter-century of Revels in Washington than to share that magic with other communities?



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Collecting Revels Stories – We Want to Hear from You

Describing the essence or impact of Revels is notoriously difficult. However, many people have stories about Revels—relating either to Revels experiences (happy, sad, inspiring...) suggesting what Revels means to them, or to big and small ways in which Revels has affected them. Here is an example:

After the children's chorus finished its on-stage rehearsal, some of the children stayed on stage and began parodying (verbatim) adult parts of the show. 'Madam, I have come to court you,' sang one boy, and a girl ran over and joined in. 'Mince pies hot! Mince pies cold!' They goofed around, singing the melodies and hamming up lines the adults knew so well. After several minutes, the adult chorus members smiled at each other with the realization that the scene was a beautiful demonstration of how ritual and folklore are passed through the generations.

Stories by Revels participants of all ages and connections—chorus and “backstage” volunteers; professional performers, musicians, and directors; and especially our audiences—are necessary to capture Revels' full meaning. We are collecting such stories: short, long, funny, or philosophical, for a 25th Anniversary publication in 2008.

Please send your stories to twinslow@revelsdc.org.

Merry Christmas



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25th Anniversary Events in 2008

January 12 ~ Saturday Morning at the National Theater
February 17 ~ Discover Strathmore at Strathmore Hall
February 24 ~ Pub Sing at McGinty's Public House
March 8 ~ 25th Anniversary Gala at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce
April 26 ~ Madrigals, Morris & Maypole at the National Arboretum
May 4 ~ May Revels at the Audubon Naturalist Society
May/June ~ Adult Auditions for *The Christmas Revels*
June 14 ~ Summer Solstice Festival Day at Fort Hunt Park
Summer ~ 25th Anniversary Reunion Gathering
September ~ Child and Teen Auditions for *The Christmas Revels*
Fall ~ 3rd Annual Harvest Barn Dance & Dinner Party
December ~ *The Christmas Revels*: a French-Canadian Winter Celebration
... *plus* special anniversary events and performances throughout the year.

Be sure to sign up for our free monthly e-newsletter to get all the latest details about **performances, Community Sings, auditions, volunteer opportunities, and special announcements.**

Visit www.revelsdc.org.

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Erin Schwartz for volunteering her time and skills in photographing many of our events and productions.

Bruce Miller for building costume racks and a privacy screen for dressing rooms.



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Gus Voorhees for helping out in the office for half-days every Wednesday during the Fall.

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The late John Langstaff, Master of the Revels, for assembling such a rich body of traditional material and dramatizing it so that it comes alive for thousands of people in communities across America.

Washington Revels Founder Mary Swope for planting and nurturing the Revels tradition in Washington, D.C.



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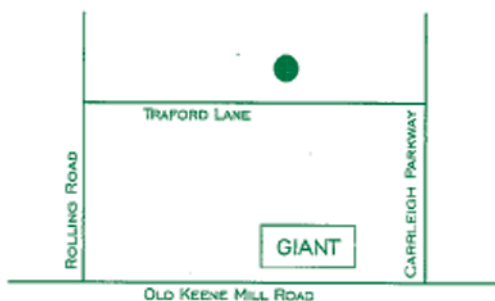


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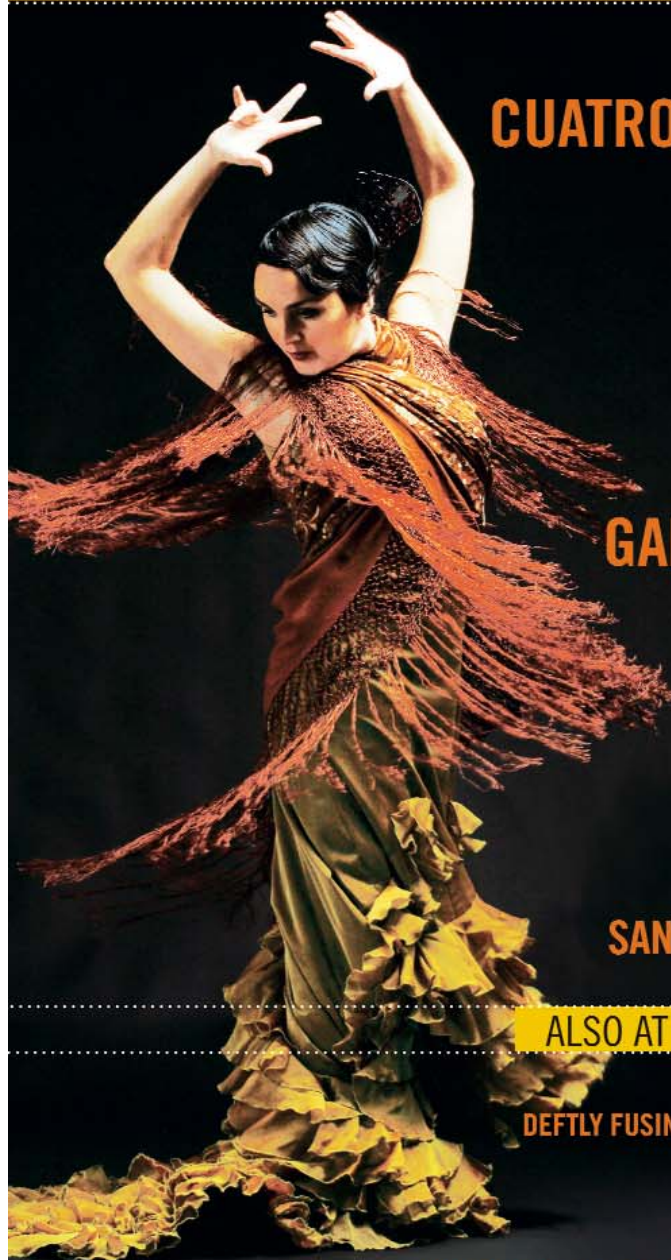
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BALLET FLAMENCO EVA YERBABUENA

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ALSO AT GW LISNER AUDITORIUM THIS SPRING

SAT MAR 29, 8pm

DEFTLY FUSING ROCK AND OPERA East Village Opera Company

SAT APR 12, 8pm

THIS AMERICAN LIFE'S Ira Glass

THURS APR 24, 8pm

INDIAN PERCUSSION LEGEND Zakir Hussein's Masters of Percussion

SAT MAY 3, 8pm

IRRESISTIBLE RHYTHMS FROM WEST AFRICA Andy Palacio & the Garifuna Collective

GW **Lisner**auditorium

Additional information + sound clips available at

WWW.LISNER.ORG

TICKETS: Lisner Box Office, TicketMaster Outlets,
PhoneCharge (202) 397-SEAT and on line at
www.ticketmaster.com