The Washington Revels
PRESENTS

CHRISTMAS REVELS®

IN CELEBRATION OF THE WINTER SOLSTICE,
A MIDWINTER’S TALE OF

THE KING AND THE FOOL

WITH

Piffaro, the Renaissance Band
The Stonecastle Carolers
The Welspent Youth
The Sprytle Children
The Lord of Misrule
The Royall Noyse Brass
The Foggy Bottom Morris Men

Matthew Nielson AS THE KING
AND
Mark Jaster AS THE FOOL

Roberta Gasbarre ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
Elizabeth Fulford Miller MUSIC DIRECTOR
Jason Morris PRODUCTION MANAGER
John Clewett EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND PRODUCER

LISNER AUDITORIUM
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
21ST AND H STREETS NW, WASHINGTON, DC
DECEMBER 3–5 AND 10–12, 2004
For a twenty-second year, The Christmas Revels brings to Washington the ancient and joyous celebration of the year’s rebirth at ‘the shortest day’ – the winter solstice.

We find ourselves in the Great Hall of a medieval castle, awaiting the arrival of King and court, and the commencement of the royal midwinter festivities. Our companion in waiting is the Fool.

The King embodies temporal power, and his kingdom relies upon him for its sense of security. The Fool is much closer to the earth, more attuned to the natural order. Together, they reflect the tension between human power and the forces of nature. It is only when these forces are in balance that peace and harmony can prevail.

When danger is at hand, the power of the Fool comes into play. It calls to us from one chaotic age to another, beware! We are entering into the time of the Feast of Fools, when nothing is sacred, and every convention will be tested.

― December 2004

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**Part One**

**Setting the Stage**

Bailiff, Lock Handley
Fool, Mark Jaster

1. **Brass Prelude**

Dating from 1325, this estampie comes from a fragmentary manuscript known as the Robertsbridge Codex, which preserves the earliest known keyboard music. Brass arrangement by Charlie Pilzer.  

The Royall Noyse Brass

2. **Deo Gracia Anglia – ‘The Agincourt Carol’**

This anonymous carol, written in 1415, recounts the remarkable victory of Henry V at the battle of Agincourt. We sing it here to welcome our King. The Latin refrain can be translated as Give thanks unto God, O England, for victory.

Greg & Christopher B. Lewis, Constance Ridgway & Jim Lazar, Gary Cowons & William Wurzel, Zoe Henderson & Douglas Baunegardt, SINGERS

Piffaro, The Renaissance Band

3. **In Dulci Jubilo**

In Dulci Jubilo is one of the oldest and most famous of ‘macaronic’ songs, which combine Latin and a vernacular language such as English or German. The melody dates from 14th-century Germany, and the words are attributed to the German mystic Heinrich Suso (ca. 1295-1366), who is said to have had a vision in which angels sang these words as he joined them in a dance of worship. The brass arrangement is by Charlie Pilzer, and the English paraphrase and handbell parts are by Elizabeth F. Miller.

Greg Lewis, LEADER
Leah de La Beanjardiere, Andrea Blackford, Gillian Hollar & Constance Ridgway, HANDBELLS

The Royall Noyse Brass

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**ALL SING:**
4. Border Morris Dance

A raucous style of morris dance from the Welsh border country to rout evil spirits and bring in luck for the new year. The dancers, often miners, would wear masks or blacken their faces with coal dust for anonymity. This particular dance, Hunt the Squirrel, is derived from the morris traditions of Shropshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

The Toppy Bottom Morris Men
Piffaro, The Renaissance Band

5. The King’s Dance

Step Stately is a courtly English country dance from John Playford’s collection, The English Dancing Master, ed. 1650. The tune to which it is danced is called Jack Pudding.

Matthew Nielsen & Elisabeth Myers, Susan & Greg Lewis, Sara Moses & Christopher B. Lewis, DANCERS
Piffaro, The Renaissance Band

6. A Courtly Interlude

A three-part chanson by Italian composer Antonello de Caserta (late 14th c.), Beauté parfaite sets a poem by the famous French poet and composer Guillaume de Machaut. Reflecting the *ars subtillor* (more subtle art) style of the late 14th century, each part moves in its own independent and complex rhythm, yet the overall effect is of a flowing and elegant unity.

Piffaro, The Renaissance Band

7. Personent Hodie

This jubilant Latin Christmas carol rejoices in the birth of the baby, the wise men following the star, and the angels singing ‘Glory to God in the Highest.’ The tune first appeared in the Moosburg Gradual of 1360, although with different words. The present setting, arranged by English composer John Rutter, is based on the text and tune as they appeared in Piae Cantiones, a Scandinavian song-book published in 1582.

The Stonecastle Carolers
Douglas Baumgardt, Monica Hosky, Gillian Hollar, Michael Matheson & Julianne Harden, HANDBELLS
Piffaro, The Renaissance Band

8. Somerset Wassail

The word ‘wassail’ comes from the Anglo-Saxon phrase wæs hal – an everyday greeting that can be translated as ‘be healthy.’ The phrase was eventually contracted into one word, and came to refer to the act of toasting someone’s health. Wassailers would travel from house to house, singing, with a ‘wassail cup’ which their hosts were expected to fill. Cecil Sharp collected this folksong in the early 1900s from the Drayton wassailers in Somerset. The brass arrangement is by Brian Holmes.

**Riddler:** William Wurzel
The Stonecastle Carolers
The Royall Noyse Brass

9. Children’s Songs

**Villagers All!**
Words from the carol sung to Mole and Rat by the field mice in The Wind in the Willows, by Kenneth Grahame.

**Miri it is**
One of the earliest surviving English secular songs with music, dating from 1220. Sung in early English, it can be loosely translated as *Summer while it lasts is merry with the song of birds. But now the blast of the wind and foul weather is coming. El, El! How long is the night! And I with so much wrong, sorrow and mourning.***

**There Was a Pig Went Out to Dig**
An old agrarian mummers’ carol from Bedfordshire, linking the Christmas season with the cycle of planting and harvesting.

Piffaro, The Renaissance Band

10. The Lord of Misrule

As in Medieval times during the Feast of Fools, a Lord of Misrule is chosen from the populace to preside in topsy-turvy fashion over the celebration.

**O Tocius Asie**
This medieval song dates from the Crusade of 1248, but its music represents a style current some fifty years earlier.

Piffaro, The Renaissance Band

Make We Merry Both More and Less
This anonymous text, from a medieval manuscript found at Balliol College, Oxford, is said to be connected with festivities associated with the Lord of Misrule. The tune, a late 13th-century *Nota* or untitled dance, is found in the same manuscript as the well-known round *Sumer is icumen in*.

The Stonecastle Carolers
Piffaro, The Renaissance Band

11. Ding Dong Merrily on High

The music for this popular Christmas carol first appeared in the Orchesographie, a 16th-century book of dances written by Johan Tabourot (1519-93). This *Branle l’Officiel* was to be danced by ‘lackeys and serving wenches and sometimes by young men and maids of gentle birth masquerading as peasants and shepherds.’ The English lyric was written in the early 20th century by George Ratcliffe Woodward. The verse two harmony, verse three descant and handbell parts are by Elizabeth F. Miller.

Greg Lewis, LEADER
Gillian Hollar & Diane Kresh, HANDBELLS
The Stonecastle Carolers
The Royall Noyse Brass
ALL SING:

1. Ding dong! mer-ri-ly on high
2. Ding dong! ve-ri-ly the sky
3. May you beau-ti-ful-ly shine

12. The Contest
In many cultures, the testing of the king in combat is a necessary ritual to preserve the power and spirit of the office. One version of this incantation, published in an early Mother Goose collection, has been connected to the tragic Battle of Culloden in 1746, in which Bonnie Prince Charlie and his Highland clansmen were defeated by British troops.

The Sprytlice Children

13. Te Deum Laudamus
An anonymous 13th-century English hymn, offered here as a prayer for the King’s success. The text is credited to Nicetas, Bishop of Remesiana (ca. 335-414), in what is now Serbia.

The Stonecastle Carolers Men
Piffaro, The Renaissance Band

14. The Battle
A Shadow Knight comes from the natural world to bring forth winter’s deepest darkness. As the contestants meet, we hear the keening of human voices and of nature. The chant is O virga ac diadema by Hildegard von Bingen; the soundscape design is by Matthew Nielson.

Claudia Dulmage, Ryan Greene-Roesel, Zoe Henderson, Diane Kresh, Nancy Lynn, Sean Mack, Celia Murphy & Donna Simonton, SINGERS

15. Fortz Chausa Es
This planh, or elegy, written in Provençal by troubadour Gaucelm Faidit (fl. 1170-1205), laments the death of Richard Lion-Heart, who died in 1199 from an infected arrow wound received in battle against the rebelling Limousins.

Elisabeth Myers, SINGER
Greg Lewis, LUTE
Katy Warren, DANCER

16. Lord of the Dance
Sydney Carter’s contemporary lyrics to the Shaker song Simple Gifts were choreographed for the first staged Christmas Revels in 1971 by Carol Langstaff with Shag Graetz and Jonathan Morse, using figures from the English morris dance tradition. Morris dances brought fertility and luck to the fields and villages in which they were performed.

Greg Lewis, SINGER
Christopher B. Lewis, Andrew Marcus & Phinney McIntire, DANCERS (ALTERNATING)
The Royall Noyse Brass

ALL SING REFRAIN:

‘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

Instrumental Prelude
A setting by Heinrich Finck (1444-1527) of the ancient German song Greiner Zanner.
The Royall Noyse Brass

17. O Rubor Sanguinis
Written by Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179), this homage to St. Ursula of Cologne evokes the image of red blood flowing between Heaven and Earth: O redness of blood, who have flowed down from that height which divinity touched: you are the flower that the winter of the serpent’s breath never withered. The influential German abbess also wrote major works on theology and natural history as well as poetry and plays, and was an advisor to bishops, popes and kings.

Julianne Harden, Mallary Forbes & Ryan Greene-Roesel, SINGERS
Andrew Blackford, Zoe Henderson, Helen Fields & Elisabeth Myers, HANDBELLS

18. Abbots Bromley Horn Dance
The ancient ceremony of ‘deer running,’ once a mid-winter ritual dance of the hunt, is still danced every year in the English village of Abbots Bromley in Staffordshire, ‘bringing in the luck.’ The first written account of the horn dance dates from 1226 at the Barthelmy Fair, but carbon dating indicates that the reindeer antlers still used today at Abbots Bromley date to 900 A.D., about the time of the Danish invasion. The dance’s supernumerary characters – the Fool, Hobby Horse, Man-Woman and Boy Archer – link it with the mumming tradition of Old Christmas.

The Foggy Bottom Morris Men, WITH Joan Kimball, RECORDER

19. Man mei longe him lives wene
An anonymous English minstrel song from the 13th century: Man may expect long life, yet often, for him, there waits a trick. Fair weather often turns to rain, and sunshine is wondrously made. Therefore, man, bethink thyself – all thy green youth shall fade. Well-a-day! Neither King nor Queen shall escape the drinking of death’s draught. Man, ere thou fallest off thy bench, quench thy sin.

Grant Herreid, SINGER
20. Danse Macabre
A variant on the medieval dance of death, which underscores the cycle of life, death and rebirth.
Interpreted by Mark Jaster from original choreography by Geoff Hoyle.

Mark Jaster
Piffaro, The Renaissance Band

21. Change Ring
The tradition of ringing church bells to call and gather the community goes well back into the Middle Ages. The later innovation of mounting each bell on a full wheel allowed greater precision in ringing, which led to the development of intricate patterns of change ringing. Change ringing is also done on handbells, and is done now to bring in the year.

Douglas Baumgardt, Zoe Henderson, Julianne Harden & Gillian Hollar, Handbells

22. Sun Turning
This traditional English street chant evokes the cycle of the seasons, from Yule to Yule!

The Sprytle Children

23. Resonet in Laudibus
First appearing in the Moosburg Gradual of 1360, this popular German Christmas carol is associated with the medieval custom of cradle-rocking, where a cradle was placed before the altar and rocked to the singing of Wiegenlied (cradle-songs) at Christmas services. In the later Middle Ages, Resonet in Laudibus was also associated with dancing – large cradles depicting the town of Bethlehem were erected in churches, and young boys would leap around them, singing and clapping their hands.

The Stonecastle Carolers

24. Please to See the King
A traditional carol from Pembrokeshire, South Wales, commemorating the ritual hunting of the wren on St. Stephen’s Day, December 26. Its opening words, ‘Joy, Health, Love and Peace,’ have become a favorite Revels expression of good wishes. We sing it now as our King emerges, evoking the Green Man, an icon of the return of Spring.

The Sprytle Children

25. Alle Psallite
An anonymous 13th century conductus from the Montpellier Codex, used here as a coronation hymn.

Claudia Dulmage, Helen Fields & Sara Moses, Handbells

26. Salutation
From a letter written by Italian monk Fra Giovanni to a friend on Christmas Eve, 1513.

Matthew Nielson, King

27. Round for Peace: Dona Nobis Pacem
The Latin words mean ‘give us peace.’

Greg Lewis, Leader

28. The Twelve Days of Christmas
A traditional English ‘forfeit’ carol (those who sang at the wrong time were expected to forfeit a candy, or a kiss, to their neighbor), arranged for brass and tympani by Kenneth Pulig for Revels in 1979.

Greg Lewis, Leader

29. Saint George and the Dragon
A compilation by Revels founder John Langstaff of several medieval mummers’ plays celebrating fertility, death, and rebirth. The sword dance and ritual execution survive from a time when the death of the hero, also known as the ‘Sun King,’ was considered necessary to assure fertility and the return of light and warmth. The sword dance performed by the Foggy Bottom Morris Men is from the ‘Ampleforth’ play of the North Riding, Yorkshire.

30. In dulci jubilo
This setting of *In dulci jubilo*, by Samuel Scheidt (1587-1654), is a jubilant double-choir motet in the Venetian style, with a musically athletic *obligato* part for two descant trumpets. Please join in singing the final 'Alpha es et O!'  

Greg Lewis, Leader  
The Stonecastle Carolers  
The Sprytlie Children  
Piffaro, The Renaissance Band  
The Royal Noisy Brass

31. The Shortest Day
Written by Susan Cooper in 1977, this poem has become an annual tradition in all Christmas Revels performances throughout the country.

32. The Sussex Mummers’ Carol
This carol was traditionally sung at the end of the mummers’ play in Horsham, Sussex, and has become the parting song in each of the eleven American communities where The Christmas Revels is performed. Brass transcription by Brian Holmes; descant and final verse harmonization by Ralph Vaughan Williams.

ALL SING:

Washington Regional Transplant Consortium
Salutes
The Washington Revels’ 22nd Season!

“Dance, then, wherever you may be…”

During this time of thanksgiving and gift giving, when families come together to celebrate seasonal traditions, take a moment to think of those who are waiting for a second chance at life. Organ and tissue donors save or improve the lives of hundreds of Americans each day. Almost 2,400 people in the Washington, D.C. area are waiting for a donation, and many will die before receiving this incredible gift. You can help. Get the facts about donation. Talk it over with your family now.

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I want you to know how much I appreciated your Ode to my life at my retirement party. Thank you for sharing your talent!

Former US Senator Chuck Robb, McLean, Virginia

What a novel approach you took for our sister’s baby shower—writing a poem from the baby’s point of view. It brought tears of joy to our eyes. We cannot express how truly great you are.

MK Proot, H Lang, and J Economou, Boca Raton, Florida

Your poem for our granddaughter’s Bat Mitzvah was simply brilliant! I was delighted to present it, and everyone says it captures her to a T. How do you do it, PrimeTimeRhymes?

R Wine, Washington, DC

The poem you wrote for my friend’s milestone Birthday was truly amazing. It was the highlight of our celebration—and now it’s framed on her wall as a lasting gift.

MM Stewart, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

Having you write my best man’s toast for my brother’s wedding was a smart decision. Your Ode so eloquently—and humorously—captured the many nuances of the groom and bride. You gave me the words I couldn’t find, and your creativity was truly the crown jewel of a sparkling day.

B Murphy, Alexandria, Virginia

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Many cheerful hearts and willing hands have made this year's show a reality. Of the many to whom we are grateful, we wish to offer particular thanks to:

- Lowell School for support in many areas, and in particular for providing audition, rehearsal, meeting and office space for The Washington Revels.
- The Potomac School, The Washington Episcopal School, Bethesda Elementary School and Crossway Community for providing rehearsal space, and St. Columba's Episcopal Church for providing audition space.
- The Friends of the National Arboretum, and All Halloows Guild of Washington National Cathedral, for providing wonderful venues for our Bringing in the May festivities.
- The Maryland Renaissance Festival for allowing The Washington Revels to have a table at the Festival for three weekends this fall.
- The Philadelphia Revels, Cindy Speas, Mary Eugenia Myer and Diane Bebrens Winslow for the loan of antlers of deer, elk and moose to adorn the Great Hall.
- Arena Stage and Chris Lewton for the loan of a fog machine.
- The Shakespeare Theatre for costumes.
- Dennis Mulligan of Montgomery College for the loan of props.
- Mary Eugenia Myer and Tommy Wang for assistance with props design and construction.
- Eric Anni, Collin McGee and Terry Espechic of Lisner Auditorium for skillfully and cheerfully, above and beyond the call of duty, helping construct our set.
- Bill Clague and Bruce Miller for constructing the trophy poles mounted on stage.
- Laurie Cullen, Lois Dunlop, Joyce Duffy Bilanow and Steve Bilanow for constructing the backdrop and side curtains for our set.
- Steve Campanella of Montgomery College for constructing the pillory for the Fool.
- Lois Dunlop and the Wednesday Night Volunteers for constructing, among many other things, the motley robe for the Lord of Misrule.
- Peter Austin & Elizabeth Thornton of Quail Hill Farm for the poplar trees used onstage.
- John Langstaff, Master of 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, and Washington Revels Founder Mary Swope for planting and nurturing the Revels tradition in Washington, D.C.
- Revels Artistic Director Patrick Swanson for the original conception of the production we present this year.
- Susan Cooper, Mary Swope, Mary Eugenia Myer, Elizabeth Fulford Miller and Joan Kimball for material upon which the program notes are based.
- Shappard Ferguson for publicity photos of the King and the Fool.
- Mark Jaster, Donna Simonton, and Charlie and Cecily Pilner, for providing hospitality for our guest artists.
- Helen French for database technical support.
- Bruce Miller and William Wurzel for their many volunteer hours in the office, and in particular for their database systems analysis.
- Elizabeth Fulford Miller for web design and support of our public and production websites.
- All those who provided production support to the Third Annual Washington Revels Gala, and to Steve Hickman, Joan Kimball and Charlie Pilner for their music.
- Drink More Water for providing water for our cast at Lisner Auditorium.
- Mary Flannery of Flannery Design for creative design work under deadline pressure.
- Cindy Speas for her help in dozens of ways, from costumes and set construction to editorial and strategic advice, and for her immeasurable support to the Washington Revels office staff.

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Concert Hall
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In this Centennial year of the Potomac School of McLean, VA, The Washington Revels honors and celebrates the historic connections between the Revels and Potomac. Those connections began with the introduction and incubation of Christmas Revels traditions in the school by Revels founder Jack Langstaff as a Potomac music teacher from 1955 until 1967. They continued with key contributions by members of the Potomac community to the founding of The Washington Revels and to its first productions. And they extend on through today and into the future!