

TEXTS OF THE CAROLS – DECEMBER 20, 2020

BREAK FORTH, O BEAUTEOUS HEAVENLY LIGHT

Break forth, O beauteous heavenly light, and usher in the morning.
Ye shepherds, shrink not with affright, but hear the angel's warning.
This child, now weak in infancy, our confidence and joy shall be,
the power of Satan breaking, our peace eternal making.

Words: Johann Rist (1607-1667), tr. John Troutbeck (1832-1899)

Music: Johann Schop (1590-1667), harm. Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

ADAM LAY YBOUNDEN

Adam lay ybounden, bounden in a bond; four thousand winter thought he not too long.
And all was for an apple, an apple that he took, as clerkes finden written in their book.
Ne had the apple taken been, the apple taken been, ne had never our lady a-been heaven queen.
Blessed be the time that apple taken was. Therefore we moun singen: *Deo gratias!*

Words: 15th Century Music: Peter Warlock (1894-1930)

STAR-CHILD

Star-Child, earth-Child, go-between of God, love Child, Christ Child, heaven's lightning rod,
This year, this year, let the day arrive when Christmas comes for everyone, everyone alive!
Street child, beat child, no place left to go, hurt child, used child, no one wants to know, *This year....*
Hope-for-peace Child, God's stupendous sign, down-to-earth Child, Star of stars that shine, *This year....*

Words (after Matt. 2:1-12): Shirley Erena Murray (1931-2020) Music: Carlton R. Young (b. 1926)

VIRGIN'S SLUMBER SONG

Amid the roses Mary sits and rocks her Jesus child,
While amid the treetops sighs the breeze so warm and mild.
And soft and sweetly sings a bird upon the bough:
Ah! Baby, sleep, dear one. Slumber now!
Happy is Thy laughter, holy is Thy silent rest,
Lay Thy head in slumber fondly on Thy mother's breast!

Words: Edward Teschemacher (1876-1940) Music: Max Reger (1873-1916)

BETHLEHEM DOWN

'When he is King we will give him the King's gifts, myrrh for its sweetness, and gold for a crown.
Beautiful robes,' said the young girl to Joseph, fair with her firstborn on Bethlehem Down.

Bethlehem Down is full of the starlight – winds for the spices, and stars for the gold.
Mary for sleep, and for lullaby music songs of a shepherd by Bethlehem fold.

When he is King they will clothe him in grave sheets, myrrh for embalming, and wood for a crown.
He that lies now in the white arms of Mary, sleeping so lightly on Bethlehem Down.

Here he has peace and a short while for dreaming, clos-huddled oxen to keep him from cold,
Mary for love, and for lullaby music songs of a shepherd on Bethlehem fold.

Words (1927): Bruce Blunt (1899-1967) Music (1927): Peter Warlock (1894-1930)